


Surname: Humphreys	First Name(s): Joyce Margaret	Army Number: W176266	
Maiden name (if applicable): Watts	Name used during service: Watts / Humphreys	Rank: Private	
Main base: Heaton Park, Manchester. Fort Borstal, Rochester, Kent.	Training base: Wokingham	Enrolled at: Volunteered – London Rec. Centre Enrolled - Northampton	
Platoon/Section: 'C' Section	Company/Battery: 566 (M) H.A.A. Battery	Group/Regiment: Royal Artillery	Command: A.A. Command
Year(s) of service: 12/06/1942 to 15/08/1945	Reason for discharge: Marriage (12/06/1945)	Trade: Aircraft Spotter, Operating Telescope Identification (T.I.)	
Uniform Issued: S.D. (brass buttons) Field Cap Stockings & Shoes Shirts Tie Artillery Grenade Badge <i>Command Post Duty:</i> B.D. Boots & Gaiters Steel helmet (when not on command post duty, soft cap and tie worn with B.D.) <i>Fatigue Duties:</i> Denims	Photo: 		
Description of daily tasks:	06:00 Reveille Four Sections per R.A. Battery (A, B, C &D) Two sections on duty a.m. and other two on fatigues.		

	<p>09:00 Battery Parade Battery Commander dismissed to duty and fatigues. <i>Duty:</i> Section marched to gun site where equipment checked, cleaned and polished, guns and instruments lined up.</p> <p>Stick Guard on site barrier during day. (Men mounted armed guard at night)</p> <p><i>Fatigues:</i> Cookhouse, Officers/Sgt Mess, Ablutions/General Fatigues.</p> <p>Lunch</p> <p>14:00 Training or recreational periods (including P.T.)</p>
	<p><i>Duties as Aircraft Spotter:</i> On 24 hour cycle from 14:00, working 1 hour on and 2 hours off, from dawn to dusk. Watching the sky for aircraft, hostile or friendly regardless of any warnings from the operation centre. When action alarms sounded all guns and equipment manned.</p> <p><i>General Information:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay – 10/- (50p) per week. • Half-day passes were issued to enable quick trips to town. • 24 hr passes issued every two weeks or so. • 10 day pass issued every three months – with railway warrant. • Sweet ration issued weekly. • Outgoing mail was censored. • Qualified for Defence Medal. • Most of the A.T.S. were in their early 20s, whereas the males in the mixed battery were generally older. At that time most able bodied, young men had been sent to fight on other fronts. • As many action alarms sounded at night, A.T.S. would go to bed in their blue and white stripped pyjamas with them tucked into their socks. This meant that when the alarm sounded, they could quickly pull their B.D. on top of the pyjamas, stick their feet into their boots, throw on a greatcoat and tin hat and rush to the gun site in the quickest possible time.
Pay book:	Not available.
Memorable moments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When based in Manchester, it was rare for us to see a target, as it rained so much that most of the activity went on above the cloud! • Fort Borstal in Rochester was one of the many forts that Henry VIII built to withstand a possible invasion from France. It was surrounded by a dry moat; the

guns were mounted on one side of the ramparts and the command post on the other. The offices, stores and men's quarters were in the centre of the fort whilst the A.T.S. accommodation was located on the outside of the moat, necessitating a walk across a fixed 'drawbridge'. The site entrance and guardroom were situated on the perimeter by the main road.

- The Princess Royal, Commandant of the A.T.S. was due to visit Fort Borstal and I was selected for 'stick' duty on that day. My saluting proved to be the best and it was therefore my job to stand by the barrier at the appropriate time. Along came the staff car and I stepped forward, with my arm raised, stopped the vehicle and examined the passes. Naturally, all was in order and I raised the barrier and saluted the car, which moved forward. This was the nearest I have ever been to Royalty.
- Just across the road from Fort Borstal was a young offender's establishment (this is how the name 'Borstal' became used for that type of detention centre). Sport teams from our unit sometimes played the boys – these were always 'away' games, for obvious reasons. One day a group of us returned to the hut after duty when one of the girls realised that her uniform was missing. Others in the group realised that someone had also been through their equipment and so the incident was reported. Some time later we discovered that one of the offenders from the Borstal had escaped and had broken into our hut. He had stolen the A.T.S. uniform and being of slight build, had managed to wear it for his escape. He had apparently taken the train to London. Unfortunately for him, he had forgotten to take a cap and so once he arrived in the Capital, an eagle-eyed M.P. spotted him as being A.T.S. incorrectly dressed and he was arrested.

Photos:



Peggy Wigger Lynn Wharton Anna Porte Esther Artley
Maureen Pond Edith Melleney

Joyce Watts Joyce Crockett Dinkie Horne Irene Bambridge