

Surname: Leadbeater	First Name(s): Noel	Army Number: W/212511	
Maiden name (if applicable): Davies (Married 20/01/43)	Name used during service: Leadbeater / Davies	Rank: Private	
Main base: Loughborough, Leics	Training base: Droitwich, Trowbridge, Wilts, Douglas, Isle of Man	Enrolled at:	
Platoon/Section: 37 Squad	Company/Battery: Royal Signals	Group/Regiment: WOY Grp (War Office Y Group)	Command:
Year(s) of service: Sept 1942 – July 1945	Reason for discharge:	Trade: Wireless Operator	
Uniform Issued: S.D. Dress on duty: B.D.	Photo: 		

<p>Description of daily tasks:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I became a member of 37 Squad in October 1942 at the camp in Trowbridge, we slept in wooden huts and learned and practised morse code in Nissen huts. We sat with an instructor every day for at least five hours, listening and taking down morse. We started very slowly and gradually our speed built up. • The training at Trowbridge also included the basics of electricity and magnetism, map reading, what to do during air raids with or without gas attacks. • P.E. every day and hours of drill. • On completion of training our job was to listen to enemy wireless transmissions and record them for our Intelligence Department. We were warned that, as we had signed the Official Secrets Act, we could possibly be shot and certainly imprisoned if we broke faith. • After being taught the procedures used by the German Army when sending radio messages, we learnt how to pick out the morse of individual senders from the surrounding signals which battered our ears. We had to distinguish one particular signal and no other, no matter how many other dots and dashes were being transmitted at the same time on almost the same radio frequency. This was difficult and nerve-wracking – it was so easy to slip on to another message as they were all in five letter blocks. We were wracked with the thought that if we got it wrong then lives could be lost – this was too much for some of the girls. • Following the completion of the intensive training in Loughborough itself, we were split into four watches, A B C & D and sent to camps in surrounding villages. At first we worked in a system of mornings one week, afternoons the next, then nights but this soon altered to a shift system of 13.00 to 18.00, 18.00 to midnight, midnight to 7.00 and 7.00 to 13.00 hrs followed by 18 hours off and so on. The MO studied our duties and decided that we could not be asked to undertake any chores other than keeping our own living accommodation clean. We were also ordered to take adequate exercise, lots of sleep and time to relax.
<p>Pay book:</p>	<p>Not available</p>
<p>Memorable moments:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During first four weeks of initial training, recruits were issued with uniforms, given various injections against T.B., Typhus and other illnesses and underwent tests to determine their suitability for further training. • The camp in Trowbridge was very cold in October of 1942 as the official day for switching on the heating had not arrived. My mother-in-law sent me a hot water bottle – never had I received a gift with more gratitude. • One enthusiastic corporal, Sonia Warren, on seeing an officer on a bicycle approaching as we marched along a fairly narrow path, called ‘eyes right’ and gave a superb salute. Stupidly, whilst endeavouring to return this correct military courtesy, the officer wobbled dangerously and he and his bike splashed into the stream, which bordered the path. ‘Squad – at the double’ whispered Sonia and we all disappeared smartly! • After being moved to Douglas, Isle of Man we were billeted in former boarding houses and hotels. Morse training continued until we all took and passed our BII Signallers Exam. This led to us receiving an extra two or three shillings more pay per week. • The dances at Loughborough Corn Exchange Hall, where quite a few romances blossomed. • We were stationed at Beau Manor in the village of Old Woodhouse in Loughborough – the buildings around the perimeter of the grounds where our radio sets were installed were variously disguised. One looked like a cottage. Every morning two bottles of milk were placed on the doorstep; There were potting sheds, greenhouses and plywood cows to deceive any enemy pilots who might fly over. What could not be disguised was the forest of wireless masts and

	<p>aerial that surrounded the estate. It is difficult to imagine how security was maintained – here were hundreds of quite ordinary girls and dozens of villagers who could not all be fooled surely, and yet the secret was kept.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Friendships made in those years have endured – we do not forget those years. We were proud to be Special Operators and were proud to serve our country.
Photos:	Not available