
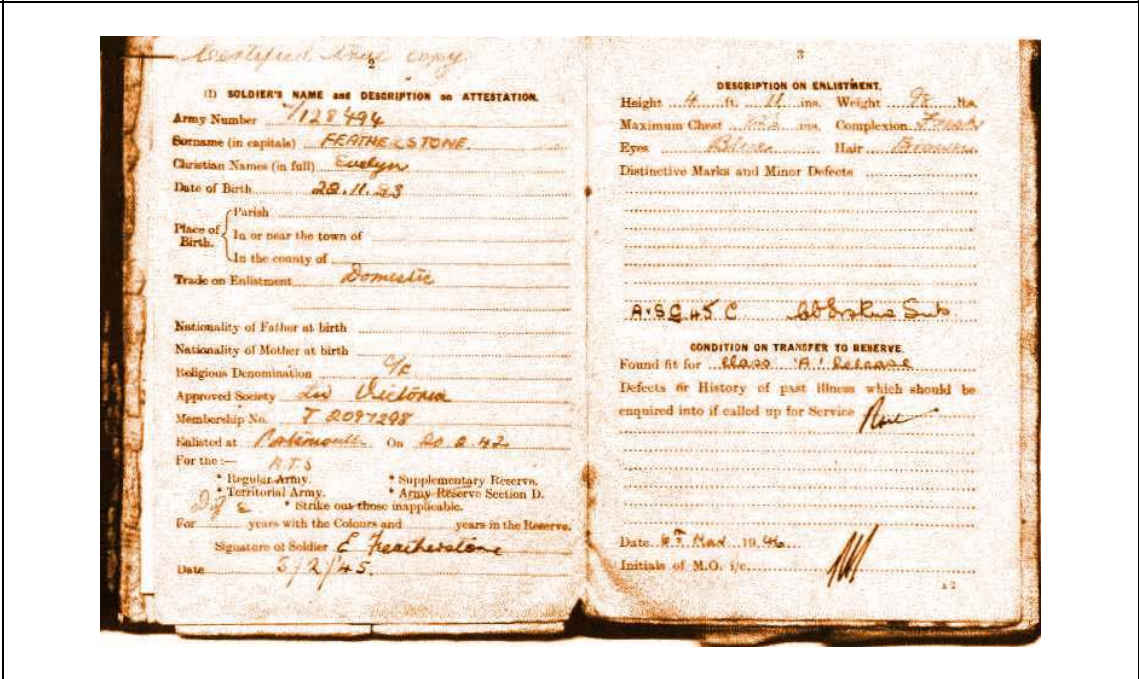


Surname: Shave	First Name(s): Evelyn	Army Number: W/128494	
Maiden name (if applicable): Featherstone	Name used during service: Featherstone	Rank: Private	
Main base: Devizes Dunfermline Invergordon Tynemouth Nr Newcastle Cromer Old Dalby	Training base: Honiton	Enrolled at: Portsmouth	
Platoon/Section:	Company/Battery: 540 (M) Battery	Group/Regiment: Royal Artillery	Command: A.A. Command
Year(s) of service: 20/2/1942 to 3/3/1946	Reason for discharge: Demob	Trade: Predictor Operator	
Uniform Issued: Underwear Stockings Shirts Tie Hat Jacket Skirt Dungarees Boots Gaiters Leather jerkin Overcoat Shoes (Glengarry black) Lanyard Battle dress	Photo:  <p>Evelyn Shave at 18.5 years</p>		
Description of daily tasks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 am roll call, Ablutions, Breakfast. • Then inspection of huts and persons on parade. • Dress for the day dependant on the tasks we were detailed to do. • Maintenance – dungarees, boots, gaiters, leather jerkins and tin hats. These were worn at all times on the gun sites. • Maintenance including cleaning and polishing the instruments and checking that all was “ready for action”. • Topping up batteries if needed, cleaning the shells, and making sure the fuses were ready to be set easily. 		

- Some days we had an aircraft flying over us towing a drogue, which we fired at for practice.
- Most of us took turns at cleaning the huts, showers etc, and also a turn in the cookhouse.
- P.T. was fitted in between tasks, and consisted of just a few exercises, or a walk round the perimeter of the camp.
- In and out of camp when we were not working, we wore battledress, which consisted of trousers, blouse top, boots and gaiters.
- When we went to town on short leave, we wore our dress uniform, and were allowed to wear our side hats, which were dark brown with orange piping round the edge. We were also allowed to wear the Artillery badge of which we were very proud. You will notice from my photo that we wore a white lanyard, and a 'bomb' above our pocket. We were the only regiment to be allowed to wear it. The lanyard being a throwback from many years ago when they were used to fire the guns.

Pay book:



Memorable moments:

- My friend and I had worked in the Queen Alexander Hospital, Cosham, Portsmouth for 2.5 years, right through the 'blitz' on Portsmouth, which was our home in those days, then when things quietened down, we decided to join the Army.
- We passed our medicals, and were both posted to a training camp in Honiton in Devon for basic training. After that we didn't see each other until the end of the war. I was sent to Devizes for further sorting and wanted to drive an ambulance, but on being tested, I was found to be too short to drive some of the other vehicles, and at that time you were not allowed to alter the seats so that anyone could use the cars in an emergency.
- From there I was posted to another camp which I can't remember the name of, for nerve training, gas chamber etc, prior to being posted to a gun site.
- Our guns were the largest used in the British Army at that time. We had 2 x 3.7 and 2 x 4.5 guns on our site. I was a predictor operator, and as the photo below shows, I worked with a team of six girls (all taller than me). On site we had Radar, Range and Height Finder and a Predictor.
- We picked up the planes at night with Radar, and during the day, the range finder operators were our lookouts. They gave us the height, range and speed of the

incoming aircraft, which was transferred to us verbally and my team would eventually pick them up in their telescopes and would then call out the necessary co-ordinates, which would eventually register on the dial the photo shows me looking at. From this information, I had to determine the 'fuse' for the gunners to set on the shells and then tell them when to fire. This information was called to the gunners via a "Tannoy" speaker by the duty officer.

- I was stationed in several places in Scotland, Dunfermline, Invergordon, also at Tynemouth Nr Newcastle, Cromer on the N.E. coast of Norfolk, as well as several others.
- We worked hard and were entitled to 24 hours leave per week if there was time. This went from 12 noon to 12 noon, so we would go out in the evening, if we could get into town and back, this wasn't always easy as we were stationed quite a way from towns and villages, because of the noise of the guns breaking windows in the houses. My Battery was No 540, and our Captain's name was Dawson. We also had a Lieutenant Snell and one woman officer, whose name escapes me, but all the officers were very nice.
- All of our cooks were Welsh, and had lovely voices. They sang like angels, and swore like troopers, but they kept us going in the lonely places with their singing. Deanna Durbin was the star at the time and we could hear them singing while we were working. We also had two soldiers from transport to keep the lorries serviceable, and one man from the Pioneer Corp, whose job it was to keep the wash houses and ablutions clean. I felt very sorry for him as he was petrified of the noise the guns made, so we used to hide him where the least noise was and I'm sure that was the reason that we had the cleanest ablutions in the Army.
- When we were not at action stations, we had other jobs to do, such as maintenance of the equipment etc. One day another girl and myself were detailed to 'clean' the brass fuses on the shells, which were stored underground, in fact under the gun emplacements, which meant when we had cleaned them ready to be set for firing, they had to be carried up the steps and placed by the guns for firing.
- One particular day 'Tubby' a huge man had the job of taking the shells from us to the guns, was holding about 4 shells in his arms when one fell off, and rolled down the steps towards us needless to say we 'crossed everything', and hoped the fuse didn't hit the wall. However, we caught it at the bottom much to Tubby's relief, and ours. Poor fellow when we handed him back the shell, he could hardly speak, but as they say, alls well that ends well.
- You should have seen us when the 'powers that be' way down in their London Shelters, decided to give us a wake up call in the middle of the night. Several gun sites were involved, the idea being to see who could report 'ready for action' first. We never knew whether it was an air raid, or just an exercise. The funny part was us, imagine, pyjamas and boots, no time for gaiters etc tin hat and overcoat, what a sight, wouldn't do much for today's fashion world.
- Another time I was detailed to take a team of girls on a fitness run. There wasn't much to look at on the road to Tynemouth, until we came to a fun fair, so you can guess what comes next. Yes – we went on the big wheel, and the darned thing broke down and we were stuck up at the top, then it rained. Eventually we were on the ground again thank goodness. Imagine us in our "Classy Brown Divided Skirts" called shorts and Tee-shirts with orange trim, walking back to camp. A lorry came by and the driver offered us a lift, we were not supposed to, but after some persuading, we accepted, and they dropped us off short of the camp looking like drowned rats.
- The last six months of my service were spent at a large holding camp at "Old Dalby" between Nottingham and Melton Mowbray as the 2nd world war with Germany was over, and the gun sites disbanded. As we were still considered to

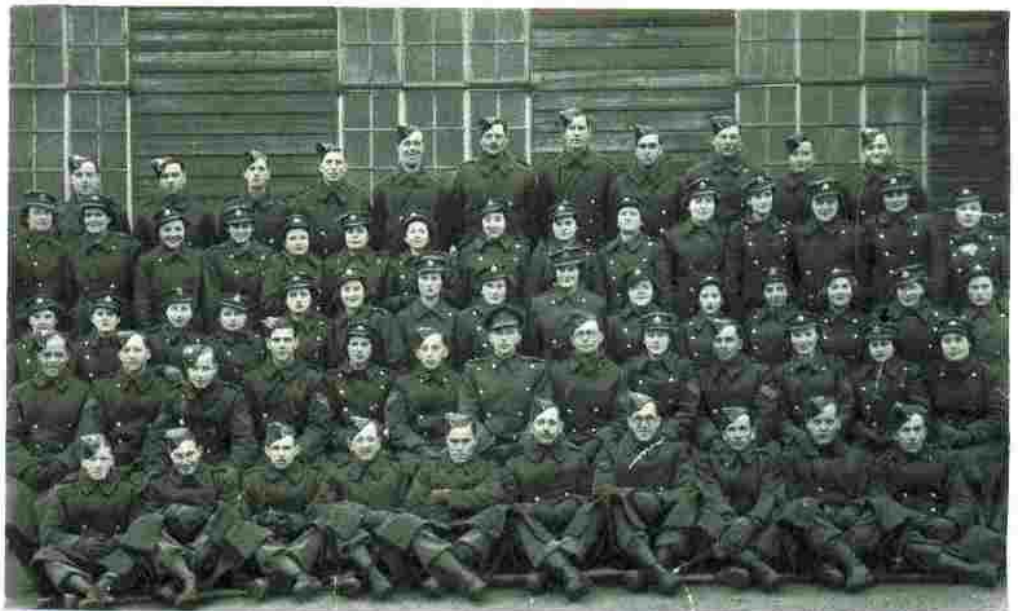
be on active service, we were stationed there, and had German and Italian prisoners of war in the camp. They were of course kept separate and were all well behaved and most of the Germans were professional people, doctors etc and the Italians looked after all the gardens and paths around the camp. We were being held there in case we were needed in Australia or elsewhere in the world as the Japanese were still a problem.

- I was de-mobbed in March 1946.

Photos:



540 Battery in action. Evelyn Shave



540 Battery, Royal Artillery
Evelyn Shave 2nd row from top, 2nd left