

<b>Surname:</b> Whitfield	<b>First Name(s):</b> Dorothy	<b>Army Number:</b> W/252941	
<b>Maiden name (if applicable):</b> Whitfield	<b>Name used during service:</b> Whitfield / Billingsley	<b>Rank:</b> Private	
<b>Main base:</b> Hayes Common, Bromley Northern Ireland Romney Marshes Isle of Sheppey Dartford Gillingham	<b>Training base:</b> Glen Parva Barracks Leicester Oswestry Burrow Head	<b>Enrolled at:</b> Volunteered	
<b>Platoon/Section:</b>	<b>Company/Battery:</b> 490 (M) H.A.A. Battery	<b>Group/Regiment:</b> Royal Artillery	<b>Command:</b> Ack Ack Command
<b>Year(s) of service:</b> 16/4/1943 to 1/10/1945	<b>Reason for discharge:</b> End of war and recent marriage	<b>Trade:</b> Telephonist Aircraft Spotter	
<b>Uniform Issued:</b> S.D. Battledress Leather jerkin Tin hat Shoes and boots  Khaki denim overalls for fatigues	<b>Photo:</b> 		
<b>Description of daily tasks:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Shifts</b> - There were three teams of four people, working over a three day period. There must have been an extra person taking the place of someone on leave. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Day 1 – Early afternoon to mid-evening. On call if needed during the night.</li> <li>Day 2 – Early morning (7 or 8 am?) to early afternoon. On call from then until mid-evening for if the alarm sounded, then night shift.</li> <li>Day 3 – Early morning, end of duty. We then had the use of baths in accordance with a rota for all ATS. Two of the four people could take a 24 hour pass from 12 noon until 12 noon. The other two could take an evening pass.</li> <li>Day 4 – (am) The two not on a 24 hour pass would scrub the dining room tables and would also be on call if needed at the command post. Early lunch and then on duty again.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• While on duty in the daytime, two would man the telephones for weather forecasts</li> </ul>		

and other messages and also send messages regarding wind speeds in accordance with the Beaufort scale. At night, two would have a nap for half night and the other two would man the phones, then change over.

**Pay book:**

26 NOV 1945

RELEASE LEAVE CERTIFICATE

A.F. X 202 C

Army No. W/252941 Present Rank PRIVATE

Surnames (Block Letters) SULLIVAN

Christian Name/s DEBORAH

Coy. and Geop. Unit 490 Hy. (M) A.A. BATTERY R.A.

Date of Last enrolment 14 APRIL 43 \* Calling up for military service 14 APRIL 43  
 \* Strike out whichever is inapplicable.

(a) Trade on enlistment CLERK (c) Service Trade TELEPHONE P.A.

(b) Trade courses and trade tests passed (d) Any other qualifications for civilian employment

Military Conduct Developed by her unit & has received an award of Efficiency for services rendered

Testimonial: Has been with this unit for over 2 years. Brave and unassuming, she has always been a willing worker. Trustworthy and reliable.

Place GREEN ST. GREEN N. PARFORD KENT. Date 1 OCTOBER 45

Signature of Officer Commanding 490 Hy. (M) A.A. Battery R.A.

Signature of Auxiliary D. Sullivan

\* Army Education Record (including particulars under (a), (b), (c) and (d) below). —  
 \* This section will not be filed in until the receipt of further War Office instructions.

(a) Type of course. (b) Length. (c) Total hours of instruction. (d) Record of achievement.

(i)\*  
 (ii)\*  
 (iii)\*  
 (iv)\*

\* Instructors will insert the letter "I" here to indicate that in their case the record refers to courses in which they have acted as instructors.

Signature of Unit Education Officer

NOTES:  
 (1) Further details of service and of medals to which entitled may be had on application to O. i/c Records, accompanied by the applicant's A.F. 64, Part I.  
 (2) If this certificate is lost or mislaid, no duplicate can be obtained.

THE ABOVE-NAMED PROCEEDED ON RELEASE LEAVE ON THE DATE SHOWN IN THE MILITARY DISPERSAL UNIT STAMP OPPOSITE

N.B.—A certificate (A.F. X 202/D) showing the date of transfer to the Unemployed List in the case of A.T.S. auxiliaries, and the termination of release leave in the case of V.A.D. members, will be issued by the Officer i/c Record Office.

All personnel released are liable to recall if necessary during the continuing period of the emergency.

MILITARY DISPERSAL UNIT  
 No. 4  
 20 OCT 1945  
 LONDON

Pay book not available – Release Leave Certificate

**Memorable moments:**

- I grew up in Hemel Hempstead in Hertfordshire. I left school in 1941 and worked as a junior records clerk at a local hospital for two years, which was regarded as a reserved occupation at that time. However, to avoid being sent to a munitions factory if this was changed later and because I wanted to be involved in the war effort, I decided to volunteer for the WAAF or the ATS. I joined the ATS at the age of 17 years, 10 months.
- 16 April 1943 – I went to Glen Parva Barracks in Leicester for three weeks, where we were transformed from clerks and shop girls into army personnel, some, like me, hardly more than schoolgirls.
- May 1943 – After 48 hours leave, some of us were sent to Oswestry camp for six weeks. This seemed a strange isolated area after living 25 miles from central London and only seven miles from the Watford Junction end of the Bakerloo Line. At the end of the course, we had a week's leave but had to take all our kit with us. Then we went to Droitwich in the West Midlands whilst postings were sorted out. We stayed in a commandeered hotel, which made a pleasant change after Oswestry. Three of us were sent to Kent.
- July 1943 – November 1943 – This was spent on a gunsite at Hayes Common, near Bromley in Kent. We could see fires in London some nights. In the daytime, we saw Spitfires from Biggin Hill in the other direction.
- November 1943 to August 1944 – We were sent to Northern Ireland:
  - Hyde Park Camp, near Glengormley, Co Antrim
  - Groomsport, near Bangor, Co Down
  - Hollywood, between Belfast and Bangor but not in the barracks. The

gunsite was near the Lough

- During this period we did not have leave for seven of the nine months due to preparations for D-day. We used to travel on the Lorne to Stranraer ferry, a shorter journey than others between Northern Ireland and the mainland. We did not feel particularly welcome there but there would have been criticism if there were raids and we were not there. It was a very quiet time there, which was probably the reason for moving the batteries around after being in Kent. In spite of this, we were glad to return to the mainland. There were some members of the ATS from Southern Ireland at this time. They came to England with us and it was strange to see them leaving camp in 'civvies' when travelling on leave to Dublin (Southern Ireland being neutral during the war).
- August 1944 to October 1944 – We spent six weeks on Romney Marshes and then two weeks on the Isle of Sheppey. I remember we shared a field with a herd of cows. At night some of them would lie across the footpath leading to the Command Post. As we only had one torch between several of us there was always a risk of walking into them. We also had to wear 'wellies' because of mud. Unfortunately, men with small feet got to them first and we had to wear larger sizes over gym shoes to avoid blisters! Another memory was that of smelly toilets (the oil drum type) as the previous occupants of the gunsite obviously had a lower standard of hygiene.
- October 1944 – April 1945 – This period was spent at a gunsite at Green Street Green, Dartford, Kent. We could hear V2s landing and there was one very near to us. Fortunately, it landed in a field outside the camp and not on our munitions store. Little damage was done, as with dropping on the soft soil, the blast was directed upwards, damaging roofs of houses in the village. It could have been a great deal worse.
- April 1945 – We were sent to a firing camp at Burrow Head, south of Wigtown in SW Scotland, even though the war in Europe was nearly over. Aircraft spotters spent an enjoyable afternoon at Prestwick airport. It was almost like being on holiday.
- April 1945 to May 1945 – We came back to England and spent two weeks at a site a few miles from Gillingham in Kent. VE day occurred while we were there. We knew the war was over when the NCOs brought us breakfast in bed!
- May 1945 to October 1945 – We returned to our old site at Green Street Green and I was there until I was demobbed at barracks near Regents Park London.

**Photos:**



On leave June 1943



On leave August 1943



My friend Winnie Lillie, 14 December 1943,  
who left the ATS to become a nurse