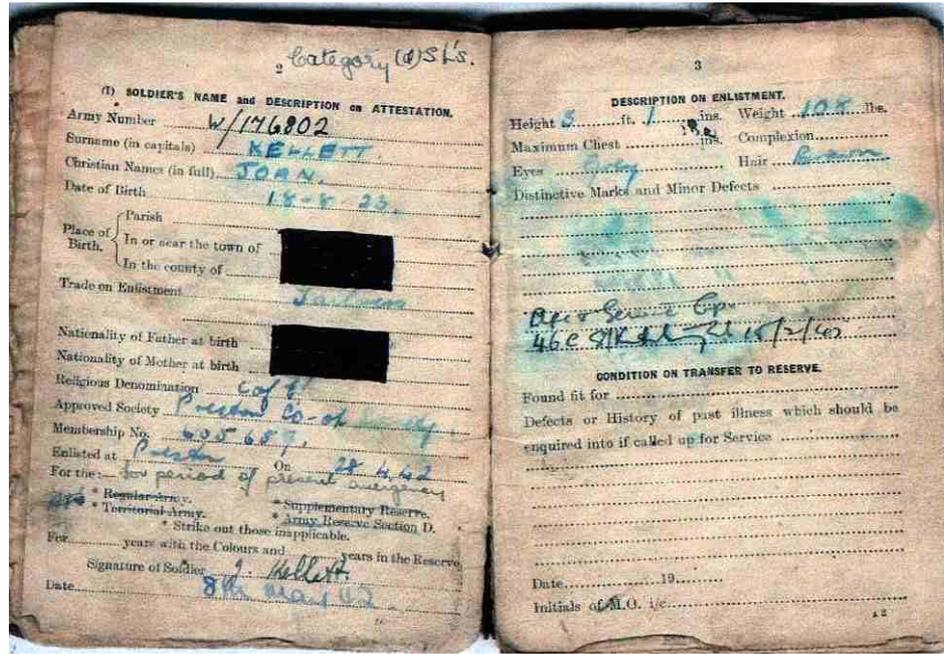


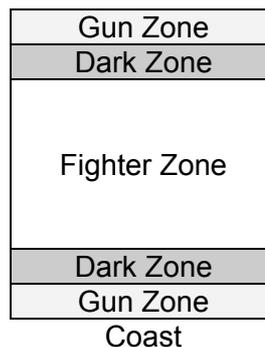
Surname: Fowler	First Name(s): Joan	Army Number: W/176802	
Maiden name (if applicable): Kellett	Name used during service: Kellett	Rank: Private	
Main base: London and Kent areas	Training base: Kimmel Park, Wales	Enrolled at: Volunteered Preston 28/04/1942 Enrolled Wrexham 08/05/1942	
Platoon/Section:	Company/Battery: 342 Battery	Group/Regiment: 93 rd Regiment	Command: Royal Artillery
Year(s) of service: 08/05/1942 to 08/05/1946	Reason for discharge: End of hostilities	Trade: Searchlight Operator	
Uniform Issued: Shirts Underwear Collars Shoes Ties Stockings Dress uniform Cap Greatcoat Battledress Grey socks Boots Gaiters Denim overalls 'Fur' coat White kid mitts	Photo:		
Description of daily tasks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of Equipment • Manned the Radio Transmitter in shifts • Called out to operate searchlight each time enemy aircraft crossed the South Coast 		

Pay book:



Memorable moments:

- I was an only child and both my parents worked, so home life was quiet. I joined the army in May 1942 and suddenly found myself in a barrack room full of girls which was quite a shock. For two weeks we had medicals and interviews, jobs and went through various types of gas.
- Over 2,000 of us were then sent to Kimmel Park Barracks near Rhyl and learned we were to form a Searchlight Regiment. Our daily routine – by 9.00 am we had eaten breakfast, made the beds and had rooms inspected and done 1 hour drill on the Barrack Square with no mercy because we were women. During the rest of the day we attended classes, had to learn aircraft recognition, Morse code, electrical circuits, radio transmitters, radar and generators. This was a three month course for the men but we had to do it in six weeks as we were to take over from a regiment of men who were going abroad. The course ended with a series of tests, then after a short leave we formed a regiment – 3 batteries of approximately 500 in each. It was the 79th Regiment, but was quickly changed to the 93rd Regiment, thereafter we were known as the famous 93rd or that monstrous regiment of women!
- Each crew was posted to a site – mainly in country districts from Hertfordshire to London. Our mornings consisted of maintenance of the equipment, cleaning our rooms etc, afternoons were more or less free, the main work being between dusk and dawn, we 'took post' every time enemy planes crossed our coast, so we kept pretty busy.
- Our part of the country at that time was divided into boxes:

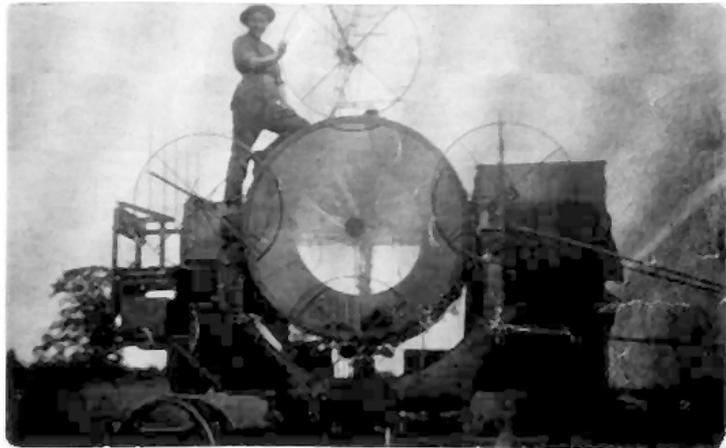


Coast

We were in the fighter zone. Any enemy planes which got through the gun zone entered the dark zone so had to go back through the guns or enter the fighter zone. We were then in action, lighting the planes for spitfires and hurricanes to attack. There were many dog fights above our heads.

- We also did 'orbit', this was a 90 cm light with a slatted shutter on the front glass, the planes had their own area – A.B.C. etc. One orbit light was in each area. The beam was straight up and stationary. When pilots got disorientated they looked for the light flashing Morse code. I was in area B which was -... in Morse.
- When the V2 rockets started they could not be tracked on our radar, so the 90 cm light was loaded on a lorry and we spent the night illuminating the area where the V2 had fallen so that rescue teams could carry on searching.
- We had our lighter moments, one girl, who shall be nameless, would take a large jug and disappear over the fields, when she returned the jug would be full of milk. She had milked the cows in the fields! The same girl once returned with 2 chickens which caused great excitement – cook made us a wonderful meal and no questions asked.

Photos:



342 Battery 93rd Searchlight Regiment
150 cm at Holtsmere End



342 Battery 93rd Searchlight Regiment
Hunton Bridge



Girls from 342 Battery 93rd Searchlight Regiment
Hunton Bridge