

Surname: Sherwood	First Name(s): Lilian Ellen	Army Number: W/57419	
Maiden name (if applicable): Garbett	Name used during service: Sherwood	Rank: Corporal	
Main base: Stratford-on-Avon	Training base: Beaumaris, Wales	Enrolled at: Norton Barracks, Worcester	
Platoon/Section:	Company/Battery: 515 S/L Battery	Group/Regiment: D B Group	Command:
Year(s) of service: 16/5/1941 to 28/6/1945	Reason for discharge:	Trade: Plotter	
Uniform Issued: Stockings Cap Brassieres Corset belt Gloves Jersey Jacket Shoes – brown Shoe – canvas Skirt Knickers Panties Shirts Steel Helmet	Photo: 		
Description of daily tasks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst at Stratford-on-Avon during the day – telephonist, during the night – plotting searchlights, homing damaged aircraft and practising for being bombed at Biggin Hill. Dover to Folkestone – plotting to our own guns. The area was known as Hell Fire Corner. Planes were being brought down by our own guns. If they came in low, it was impossible to get a plot on them. • Daily P T • Testing weather 		

right on the aerodrome. The air raid shelter was right across the other side! Barrage balloons were tethered at the base, but we were still bussed from billets, to meals to work because we were not allowed to stay near the operations room when off duty. Once the buzz bombs started, they came over constantly on their way to London.

- The Spitfire pilots used to perform a trick that I have had people refuse to believe. They would touch wings with the buzz bombs and send them off course.
- Eventually, we were bombed off the aerodrome and were sent to a former private school at Chislehurst. We made ourselves very comfortable, but not for long. Above-ground accommodation was not considered safe enough, so we slept in the Chislehurst caves after night duty. Our section belonged to the school and was relatively civilised. A larger section however was being used by civilians who had been bombed out of their homes in the Battle of Britain. They lived in squalor. Children were suffering from malnutrition. There were no shops in the area so the families had to wait for dad to come home with food.
- I have spoken to many Londoners since who were not even aware of the Chislehurst caves. They were damp and frighteningly dark when the lights were off. We begged to come out, and were eventually allowed back into the school.
- Then came the V2s. There were no counter-measures for these terrible weapons. There was no warning of their approach, just a massive explosion. To avoid panic, the authorities encouraged the fiction that they were gas main explosions.
- We still managed some pleasures. After a night on duty, instead of going straight back to our billets in the bus, we would walk back, calling at a truck stop where a dear man would cook us a lovely breakfast.
- On one occasion, we went to the pictures in the afternoon. We were due on duty, but walked out into a typical London pea-souper. We felt our way along the street, our task hampered by the lack of railings, which had gone to the war effort. By a stroke of luck, we ran into a fireman who was going the same way. It was a miracle we got to the "ops" room on time. Luckily, the fog had brought air activity to a halt, so we were saved.
- By this time, we were practising for what turned out to be D Day.- June 5, 1944. When it came, we were on duty and plotted one great mass of armaments moving across the Channel. Our excitement was tempered by orders that we must return directly to our billets in the bus and not speak to outsiders for 24 hours. By then, the news was out.
- As the invasion of Europe continued, the V1 and V2 sites were progressively captured. So our work was coming to an end. Things began to relax. The authorities let it be known that we had done our job and granted us extra leave and theatre tickets until our discharge time. My husband had returned from Burma with a tropical disease called sprue. He was lucky to have had bad weather at Portsmouth, and been disembarked at Glasgow where there was tropical diseases hospital. During his six-month stay, I was granted leave to visit him. I collapsed myself and was advised that four years of duty every third night had taken its toll.
- As a married woman, I was discharged in one of the first groups on 28 June, 1946 at Hereford.
- No-one in their right senses would wish for war, but my time in the army was the greatest experience of my life. It stood me in good stead for the challenges to come.



**W/57419 War Substantive Corporal Lilian Ellen SHERWOOD nee GARBETT
Auxiliary Territorial Service**

Enrolled into the Auxiliary Territorial Service	23.04.41
Embodied and joined	16.05.41
Posted to Auxiliary Territorial Service Wing, Infantry Training Centre	16.05.41
Posted to 'G' Company 11 th Anti-Aircraft Command	11.06.41
Attached to 515/83 Searchlight Regiment for all purposes	12.06.41
Posted to 12 th Warwickshire Platoon 'B' Company 11 th Anti-Aircraft Group	13.06.41
Posted to 'D' Company, 11 th Anti-Aircraft Group	29.03.42
Attached to 11 th Anti-Aircraft Divisional School for all purposes	08.06.42
Ceased to be attached to 11 th Anti-Aircraft Divisional School and attached to 515/83 rd Searchlight Regiment Royal Artillery	01.07.42
Appointed Acting Lance Corporal	21.09.42
Posted to 'B' Company 54 Anti-Aircraft Brigade Group	01.10.42
Posted to 1/83 rd Searchlight Platoon 'D' Company 54 Anti-Aircraft Brigade	04.10.42
Appointed Lance Corporal	13.10.42
Promoted Acting Corporal	21.12.42
Granted rank of War Substantive Corporal	21.03.43
Attached to 'B' Company 27 th Anti-Aircraft Group	07.06.43
Posted to 515/83 rd Searchlight Battery Platoon, 'F' Company 27 th Anti-Aircraft Brigade ATS group	18.08.43
Posted to 'D' Company 27 th Anti-Aircraft Brigade Group ATS	21.06.44
Redesignated to 'H' Company 71 Anti-Aircraft Brigade Group	19.01.45
Posted to 'C' Company 71 st Anti-Aircraft Brigade Group	05.06.45
Proceeded to No.8 Dispersal Centre	28.06.45
Relegated to Unemployed List	24.08.45
Discharged:	01.04.54

FOLKSTONE
12.14.41

Service with the Colours: 16.05.41 to 24.08.45

Military Conduct: Exemplary

Your Testimonial on discharge states the following:-

A most conscientious and hardworking NCO who has been employed for a period of 2 ½ years on operational duties. Plotting and maintained the very high standard of speed, accuracy, mental agility and responsibility necessary throughout the period, although frequently working under direct enemy air attack.

Medals issued: Defence Medal
War Medal 1939/45

OF14a

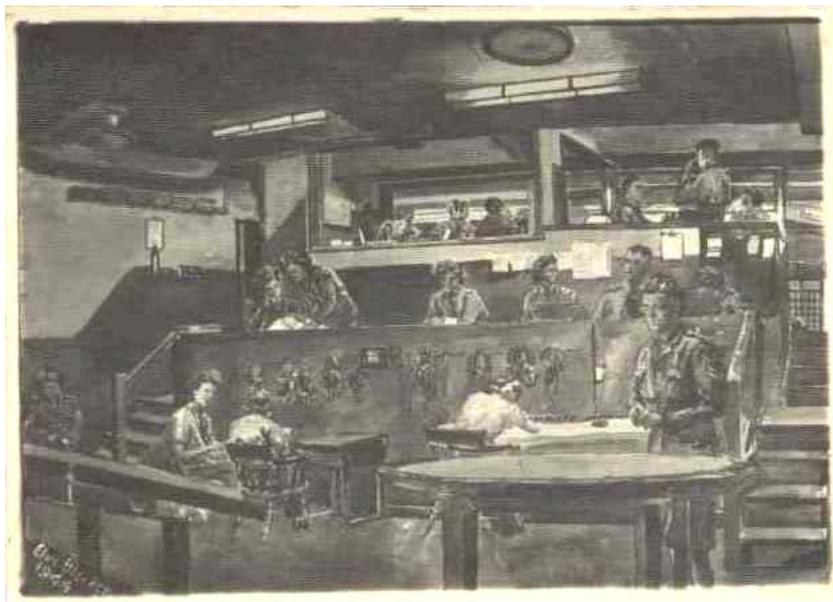
Photos:



Stratford-on-Avon 1943



Lily Sherwood second from left



Operations room – Biggin Hill

Watercolour painted by a friend. Lily Sherwood is seated in her normal position on the far left of "the podium". Leaning over her is her friend Edna Peak. Lily's duties were to relay information gained from the plotting room floor to the ten gun sites situated from Dover to Folkestone. Lily also posed as the plotter standing at the table in the right foreground. The raised booths at the rear were know as "the fishbowl". Army officers faced towards Lily's area, Airforce officers faced towards an identical plotting room on the other side of the booths.

RELEASE LEAVE CERTIFICATE

A.P. X 202/D

28 AUG 1945

Army No. W/5749 Present Rank W/CAI
 Surname (Block Letters) BARNWOOD
 Christian Name/s LILLIAN ELEN
 Coy. and Group/Unit REGIMENTAL BATTAL
 Date of Last enrolment 16.2.45 *Calling up for military service
 *Strike out whichever is inapplicable

(a) Trade on enlistment Tailors (c) Special Trade Plotter
 (b) Trade courses and trade tests passed (d) Any other qualifications for civilian employment

Military Conduct: Excellent

Testimonial: A most conscientious and hard working NCO, was employed for a period of 2 1/2 yrs on operational duties, plotting and maintained the very high standard of speed, accuracy, mental agility & responsibility necessary throughout that period although, frequently working under duress during an attack.

Coy. and Group/Unit Overseas or United Kingdom Stamp



Place UK Date 27 June 45
 Signature of Officer Br Hayton
 Signature of Auxilliary Member L. B. Barnwood

* Army Education Record (including particulars under (a), (b), (c) and (d) below) - this Section will not be filled in until the receipt of further War Office Instructions.

(a) Type of course (i)* (ii)* (iii)* (iv)* (b) Length (c) Total hours of instruction (d) Record of achievement.

* 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. 1/2 Records, accompanied by the applicant's A.B.44, 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.P. 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/o Record Office. All personnel released are liable to recall if necessary during the continuing period of the emergency.

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