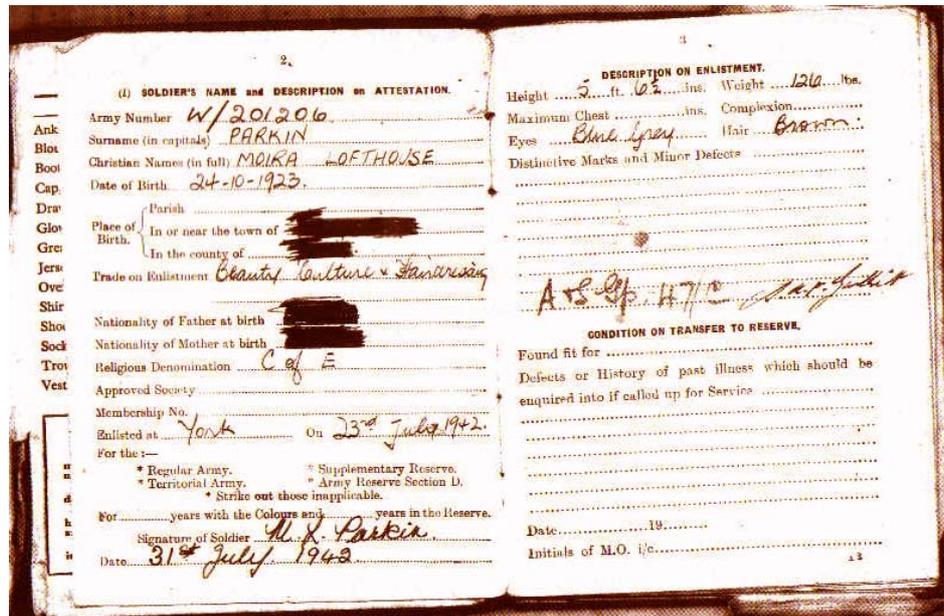


Surname: Brown	First Name(s): Moira	Army Number: W/201206	
Maiden name (if applicable): Parkin	Name used during service: Parkin	Rank: Cpl	
Main base: Newport Manchester Tunbridge Wells	Training base: Halifax Oswestry Ty-Croes, Anglesey Porthcawl Bude, Cornwall Bristol Chilton Polden Hampstead	Enrolled at: York	
Platoon/Section:	Company/Battery: 612 (M) H.A.A. Battery	Group/Regiment: Royal Artillery	Command: Ack Ack Command Southern Command
Year(s) of service: 23/07/1942 to 17/05/1946	Reason for discharge: Demobilized	Trade: Radar Operator Tyburn Company	
Uniform Issued: General Issue: Skirt Jacket Hat Shirts Tie Ground sheet Stockings Underwear Shoes – leather Shoulder bag Top coat Gas mask Gunsite kit: Battledress top Trousers Long johns for winter Boots – leather Gaiters – leather Tyburn Comp issue: Tropical Issue kit Sandals	Photo: 		

Description of daily tasks:

- Maintenance of power unit, check aerial set correctly, daily.
- Keep our sleeping quarters clean and tidy.
- Do some washing.
- P.T. but cannot remember how often.
- Drill on parade ground.
- When on duty, been in action position within 2 minutes.
- I remember the siren going to 'man' our station immediately when on duty, the welcome days off and even home leave. The overwhelming friendships of the Welsh people I came into contact with when stationed in Rogerstone through members of the Home Guard who did duties on site during the night, at the guns.
- I briefly operated a searchlight in the Newport area, also an occasional guard duty at the entrance to the searchlight site.
- Playing mixed hockey for Southern Command occasionally when we were free was enjoyable.
- Every morning kit was laid out for inspection on our bed.
- I remember entertaining on the piano. I also remember representing my 216 (M) Z.A.A. battery R.A. when in Manchester to wonderful concert in a large building in St Anne's Square with buffet lunch, meeting Geraldo, a well known dance band leader, entertained by popular radio comics of the day; Arthur Askey was one.
- There were sports days, wining a medal, prizes, I was an athlete in those days. Just light recreational fun in the Manchester days.
- Drilling a large platoon on the drill square, shouting orders was a new experience; quick march, halt, about turn, slow march, eyes right, at ease etc. I enjoyed that!

Pay book:



Memorable moments:

- I walked into the recruiting office in York to join the A.T.S. in early 1942, leaving a wonderful occupation with the feeling that I must do my duty.
- My papers arrived to make my way to the initial training centre at the Duke of Wellington's Barracks in Halifax, Yorkshire, with other new recruits.
- Uniform was then provided, inoculations and medicals to be followed soon afterwards with essay writing, papers on ability, spelling, mathematics, dexterity tests, initiative experiences, more like a return to school days. Then military drill with parades, lectures then the introduction to our future.
- After a few weeks of this initial training, I with some others, were posted to

Oswestry in Shropshire, a very large camp to train as a Radar operator. Back to a classroom situation, learning physics, electrical competence, more examinations, much practical operating in the Receiver and Transmitter units. Here I gained my first stripe – lance corporal. After a few more weeks of training, I was asked to stay to help train other new recruits, but I declined as our team had been preparing for our first operational duty in South Wales, near Newport to guard the largest aluminium factory in the world.

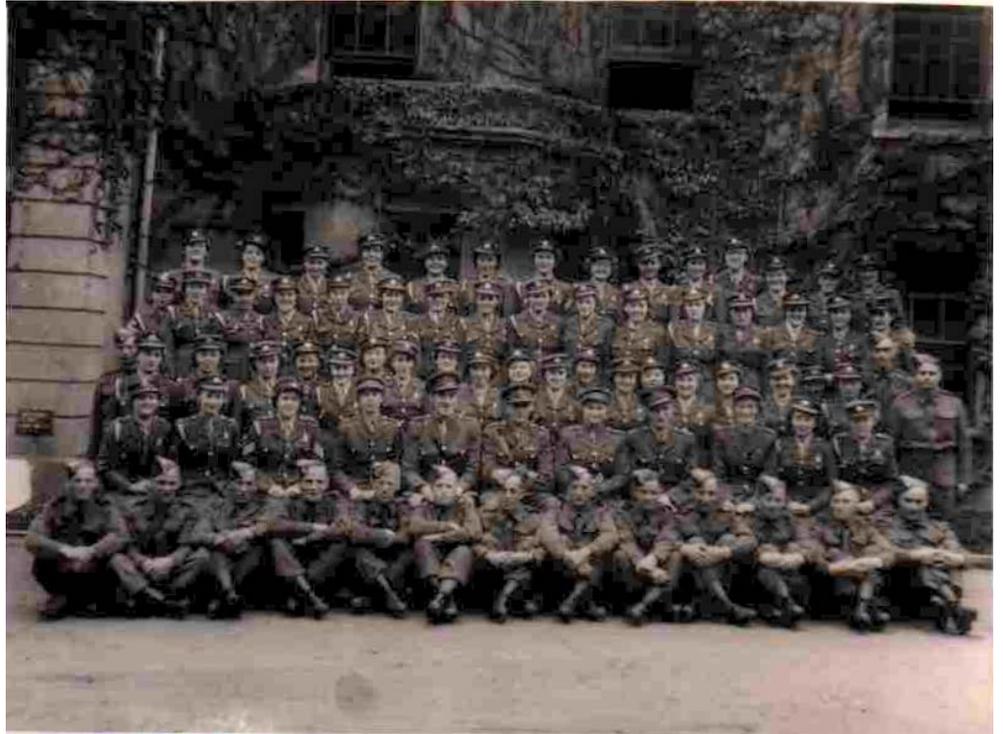
- I was now in charge of my own small team attached to a Heavy Ack Ack gun site of 3.7 and 4.5 heavy guns. There were three or four teams of Radar operators, ready to be in action on shift duty in two minutes, day and night if enemy aircraft approached our area; coming up the Bristol Channel, we would know the speed, height, distance with all information given to the guns by me or other leader of the duty team by transmission over a mouthpiece and earphones. Our equipment at that time seemed very sophisticated to me with my first experience of a radar screen.
- However, after some weeks we, as a unit went to Ty-Croes on Anglesey to practice tracking aircraft flying a 'sleeve' as our pretend target over the sea. After two or three weeks of this training the whole gun-site was now ready and co-ordinated for action back at Newport.
- I was now a full corporal, ready to accept whatever was to come, also looking after the girls in my team if there were any problems, to keep their spirits up. Good comradeship with some fun.
- During my stay at Newport I went on a scientific course with other NCOs to Porthcawl, staying in the Seabank Hotel.
- Later on, another short firing camp move to Bude in Cornwall, then back to Newport.
- There were innumerable encounters which would fill a book, but one took place when travelling by train from South Wales to London, in uniform and probably 1943. I was in one of those carriages with a corridor at one side and a door to exit from the carriage at the other side, with passengers facing each other. The carriage was full except for one seat opposite me, eventually taken at one of the stops by an elderly gentleman with a large hat and plenty of hair on his face. I was reading poems by Rupert Brooke at the time when this gentleman leaned forward to speak to me, asking me what I was reading, then enquiring if I had read any of George Bernard Shaw. I could not remember at that moment so our conversation was short. I may have said no, to which he said that I should. It was only when we parted that I realised he was George Bernard Shaw!
- After about two years I received instructions to go to a rocket site on the outskirts of Manchester but this turned out to be only for a short time about four months. One never knows why, never questioned, received train tickets with information, pack kit bag and go, leaving behind colleagues, becoming as 'ships in the night'.
- At this time in Manchester, we girls were asked to entertain personnel in the Drill Hall. Having found out that one of my new team could play the piano, we teamed up with me singing some Gilbert and Sullivan. There was a sense of low morale and gloom just before D Day. At this critical point I was instructed to attend an interview with my senior officers, the outcome being that I pack up again with all information to go immediately for an interview at the War Office in London (actually held in a large house in Tadworth, Surrey)
- A small band of chosen personnel from Army, Navy and Air Force assembled to hear we were chosen for an important project but we all had to volunteer, so could not be told of the outcome. Those who were not adventurous enough could leave and go back to their units, then we volunteers were sworn to secrecy, to communicate with no-one, perhaps no leave in the year ahead. Most of us did agree to volunteer.

- I was sent firstly to Bristol to Southmead Hospital for a crash course on bacteriology, then to Chilton Polden, near Bridgwater in Somerset to the Army Blood Supply depot for a short visit. Somewhere about this time I spent two or three weeks in Devizes, just waiting.
- Then it was to London to the National Institute for Medical Research in Hampstead to have another intensive course on laboratory techniques for three or four weeks.
- During this training, we chosen few were told we were working for Burroughs Wellcome, the medical organisation. After this intensive training we eventually all came together at an establishment near Tunbridge Wells in Kent. Without going into detail, the outcome was to produce a scrub typhus serum to be flown to the Far East as our troops were dying of this disease. It was endemic. I did feel privileged to have been chosen to take part with eminent scientists on this tremendous project lasting about a year. This was known as Operation Tyburn and was not known to many as it was classed as secret work. For a time letters were censored, leave was nil.
- Following this, I was on an Officer's course but I could not sign up to remain in the services for more years, the war was about over, my previous job way back in 1942 was being kept for me and I had done my duty to my country so about three remaining months before my demobilisation I lived in Cadogan Gardens off Sloan Square, London looking after service girls working in an Army Hostel providing accommodation and meals for troops in transit.
- I enjoyed my time at theatres etc in London before returning to York to be demobilised just short of four years, about May or June.
- These were adventurous times during four years of my youth, of course these accounts leave out all the friends made along the way with whom I am still in touch but also the many exciting occasions, of people that I met and places visited that I took advantage to visit when off duty. Pleasurable, historical occasions introducing me to county towns of charm with beautiful countryside.

Photos:



Manchester days of the girls on the Rocket Site, about the time of D Day.



Newport (Rogerstone) days



The Tyburn Company at Ely Grange.



Oswestry 1942
Mary and Moira



Group near our Radar Equipment
Moira in the middle at the back