

Surname: Crook	First Name(s): Martha	Army Number: W/167681	
Maiden name (if applicable): Kelly	Name used during service: Kelly / Crook	Rank: Private	
Main base: Liverpool Southampton	Training base: York Arbourfield Bude	Enrolled at: Newcastle-on-Tyne	
Platoon/Section: B	Company/Battery: 560 Battery	Group/Regiment: 154 Regiment, Royal Artillery	Command: Northern and Southern
Year(s) of service: 13/4/1942 to 19/7/1945	Reason for discharge: When married ATS were being released	Trade: Predictor Operator	
Uniform Issued: Skirt and tunic Shirts Tie Shoes Stockings Cap Knickers Pyjamas Groundsheet Overcoat Shoulder bag (later) Battle Dress Boots Socks Gaiters Jerkin Long johns	Photo: 		
Description of daily tasks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room inspection, on gun park on predictor or guard duty, whatever was on the rota. • Potato bashing, PT when any. 		

Pay book:

OLDIER'S NAME AND DESCRIPTION ON ATTESTATION.

Number W/167651

Service Number (in capitals) ROBERT BEECH

Christian Name (in full) MARTIN BEECH

Date of Birth 24.8.22

Parish [redacted]

In or near the town of [redacted]

In the county of [redacted]

Place of Enlistment Romford, S.G.2

Nationality of Father at birth [redacted]

Nationality of Mother at birth [redacted]

Religious Denomination Protestant

Approved Society Protestant

Membership No. 10794847

Enlisted at Newcastle On 13.4.42

For the:—

* Regular Army. * Supplementary Reserve.
* Territorial Army. * Army Reserve Section D.
* Strike out those inapplicable.

For 5 years with the Colours and 10 years in the Reserve.

Signature of Soldier [redacted]

Date 13.4.42

DESCRIPTION ON ENLISTMENT.

Height 5 ft. 7 1/2 ins. Weight 116 lbs.

Maximum Chest 38 ins. Complexion [redacted]

Eyes Grey Hair Red Brown

Distinctive Marks and Minor Defects

CONDITION ON TRANSFER TO RESERVE.

Found fit for [redacted]

Defects or History of past illness which should be enquired into if called up for Service

Date 10

Initials of M.O. [redacted]

Memorable moments:

- After failing the medical for W.A.A.F. some months earlier I was determined, and enlisted in the A.T.S. at Newcastle on April 13th 1942.
- I travelled with 2 girls I met at the medical - we arrived at York on May 1st. The Barrack room was large with about 30 beds; being an only child this was quite a shock, however, I soon made friends and enjoyed the company. After a meal where one soon learnt to fend for oneself, we queued up for uniform where size was guesswork.
- In the morning I heard reveille and woke the others up only to find out that it was for another barracks (the cavalry, I believe) and not us. I never did that again otherwise I would have been lynched. We had our injections and vaccinations, it was lucky we were given time off for when we had the reactions.
- The yelling of the R.S.M. when we were being trained to march took some getting used to, being reduced to a jelly. Unfortunately, in time I developed blisters on my heels which the Medical Orderly burst, then the khaki stockings caused them to turn septic, so I was in sick bay when the others all had a weekend leave.
- We had a group of A.T.S. AckAck come and demonstrate as they wanted recruits; several of us volunteered. We were sent to the Royal Artillery barracks at Arbourfield where we were given our numbers on Predictors and Range finders. Also lots of Aircraft recognition lectures. We were issued with more uniform, battledress boots, gaiters, jerkins and long johns. After this course we went to Bude firing camp - a beautiful spot, best food we ever had. We soon got used to the noise of the guns. We had our first leave before being posted as a mixed battery 560 to West Derby in Liverpool. At first the men were wary of us but respected us and kept an eye on us.
- We were given a palli-asse and told to fill it with straw – that was our mattress. Early days brought catering problems, smokey tea, sugar in potatoes, salt in the pudding, rice we had for several days white, pink then chocolate. As we passed the stores we helped ourselves to a cooking apple. Several of us were detailed to go and prepare for another battery going to Warrington we were right by the canal. After some time we were posted to Speke by the Rootes factory where they were doing lots of war work. We eventually visited and enjoyed a show there. The

	<p>local people were kind, inviting us to their homes for a bath and a meal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everywhere they seemed to have a canteen and welcome us. At one point we were taken to a naval base on the Mersey to have a go on the Lewis gun, luckily the plane towing the target survived. We went for a spell at Ty-Croes, Anglesey firing camp. • On site when not on operational duties you did guard duty, spud bashing where our tongues wagged as much as the peelers, or any other duties needed. • On the Command Post we took our duties seriously and worked as a team, we were also instructed on plotting. At first we were scared but got used to it. • I had the unfortunate experience of being admitted to Liverpool Workhouse suffering from animal ringworm as our site was on what had been farmland. The family who had befriended me were disgusted at this. • Suddenly we were moved to Southampton, here we had wooden huts instead of Nissen, there was a Home Guard platoon that came in to man one of the 4 guns. Later there was an American camp near us and they used to come over to our N.A.A.F.I. and talk about their families and homes. When they heard of us having the awful biscuits used for odd meals where food was being stowed for the invasion, they sent trays of pork chops etc over to our cookhouse. When we came back from dances at the U.S.A. aerodrome we were given tins of fruit, a real luxury. • When we went to Brightstone, I.O.W. firing camp I was taken ill and ended up in a turret room in sick bay. I used to watch all the activities of boats in the Channel not realising what it was all about. The New Forest and Southampton were jam packed with services yet it was a surprise when we were confined to barracks and all mail censored. We were on the Command Post in the early hours of D Day. As all the planes were going over our Sergeant led us in prayer for all concerned. We were taken down to the Docks to see the wounded being brought back. • In September as we were not needed we were moved to Westbourne in Sussex and started being sent for retraining. I was sent to Gresford N Wales on a driving course after a few weeks I asked to come off it, so did dining room duties until posted to Bovington to the R.E.M.E. store where we had several divisions of Guards and Tank troops. • When someone came and told us the war was over we donned our battledress over pyjamas and went out to where Nat Gonella the jazz musician led us all around the camp. Thunder flashes were thrown, it was certainly a night to remember. Next day V.E. day we were supposed to stay in the area the Londoners went to London the rest of us only to Weymouth. • Eventually I was demobbed at Taunton on 19 July 1945 and made my way home to Southampton to my husband's family. • Although life was hard at times the comradeship made it an unforgettable experience.
<p>Photos:</p>	<p>Not available</p>