

Surname: Melby	First Name(s): Dorothy May	Army Number: W/238801	
Maiden name (if applicable): Dobson	Name used during service: Dobson	Rank: WS / Cpl	
Main base: Tonbridge Hatchford Park, Cobham Bristol Oslo Liverpool Shrewsbury	Training base: Northampton	Enrolled at: Stoke-on-Trent	
Platoon/Section:	Company/Battery: D Coy, W.B.S.D. Gp A.T.S. A.T.S. Rehabilitation Unit	Group/Regiment: R.A.S.C. (Tonbridge, Oslo, Shrewsbury) R.A.M.C.	Command: Southern Command
Year(s) of service: 5/3/1943 to 22/8/1946	Reason for discharge: Released Military Dispersal Unit, Ashton-under-Lyne	Trade: Clerk, Company Office	
Uniform Issued: 1 Housewife 2 sets uniforms 2 sets underclothes 4 pr stockings 2 pr shoes 1 greatcoat 1 shoulder bag 1 uniform hat 1 tin hat For fire watch at Hatchford 1 pr slacks In Norway (Sept) 1 winter jacket, white	Photo: 		
Pte Dorothy Dobson 1945			

Description of daily tasks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tonbridge – usual office work, filing etc. Acting as escort to A.T.S. on various charges. P.T. each weekday KI.7 in the garden. • Hatchford – receiving and recording admissions. Making hospital appointments – giving 'getting there' information. Making appointments for the Dentist (Dental caravan in the garden). Regular nightly fire watch, training with the Sgt in charge. P.T. each weekday KI.12 in the garden. • Bristol – Diverse cleaning jobs, injections, many clothing checks. No P.T. • Norway – usual office work. Much typing, sometimes very interesting. No P.T. • Shrewsbury – Bookkeeping mainly on food distribution. No P.T. – but a long walk each day to get to the office.
Pay book:	<p>Not available.</p> <div data-bbox="727 607 1225 1261" data-label="Image"> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Release Certificate</p>
Memorable moments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I did my basic training at Northampton Military Camp and then went to R.A.S.C. Tonbridge as Clerk in the Company Office. We were billeted in nice private houses with gardens. Some houses had all the rooms used as bedrooms and others had dining rooms, and kitchen and cooking in the basement. • At Hatchford Park, Cobham I was Reception Clerk at the A.T.S. Rehabilitation Unit. Officers were billeted in the housekeepers house, HQ Staff in the main house with lovely bedrooms (luxury!). Trainees were eventually housed in huts. There were tennis courts, a bathing pool with surrounding magnolia trees and woodlands. It was usually a 4 week stay for unfit A.T.S. usually after an accident. There was gymnastic training, massage etc and weekly supervision from a Doctor. One Sergeant and five soldiers manned the Fire Engine and did maintenance. Trainees looked after the gardens. There was a church by the main gate – Church parade every month with transport to Cobham for Methodists and Catholics. Major Large was the Officer in command on opening and after her Major Inch. • Early in 1945 I was posted to Bristol Holding Unit. This was in one of the orphanages – buildings of Dr Muller. There were three grey old fashioned buildings in yards with high walls. Huge bedrooms with cold stone floors. Here there were medical checks, painful injections, and all clothes were checked. There was a daily march out. Luckily I had met, on Birmingham Station, a girl from Southern Command, as I was. We decided to be friends, without even

knowing each other. It was a happy decision. Bristol was tough.

- Eventually after V.E. Day a small party was posted to Scotland, Joy and I were pleased. We were met at Edinburgh Station and taken to Sir Andrew Thorne's H.Q., a big private house surrounded by an ordinary camp. There was a small A.T.S. unit in a homely atmosphere. They were leaving for Norway in a few days by boat. The next day an ambulance took us to Edinburgh Castle for X-rays – we had tea and cakes and saw Herr Hess in the walled garden.
- We returned to H.Q. and typed lists along with some American soldiers. It was a change, but when Joy and I returned to the Office the Staff Sgt informed us that Joy and I were leaving by air the next day to report to the American Colonel in charge in Oslo. An early breakfast and start.
- Next morning Joy and I scrambled into a truck already full of American soldiers. It was quite a long drive to St Andrews Airport. Our plane was a green Dakota troop carrier – metal seats along the sides. Trapdoor by our feet. An A.T.S. Officer arrived to see us off and she asked an elderly Officer to help us if necessary. We landed at Gardemoen in a Field (the ordinary terminal was reckoned unsafe). British Soldiers in red berets and poor ragged Russians stood around. A German truck took us down to Oslo. Joy and I sat with the driver. The sky was blue, Oslo was very quiet, only British troops about.
- Eventually Joy and I were driven to the Belle Vue Hotel on the main street opposite the Cathedral. In the evening two English Officers arrived to see if we were OK. We heard about eating arrangements in another Hotel and where to find the Colonel at the H.Q. in Slorgaten 33. The owner of the Hotel had showed us to a room for four. It was nice and clean. We had replaced the German girls!
- We saw the American Colonel the next day. I was sent to Administration Dept. Joy to the Department dealing with Russian Prisoners. However, when the H.Q. people arrived, having sailed along the coast, the R.A.S.C. Sgt found me and I was in his office pretty quickly. There had arrived two other A.T.S. and the R.A.S.C. had plenty to do with weapon collection and all sorts of odd things. Our Staff Sgt was there, the American Colonel and a Lt, an English Major and top Sgt Louis H Cordova the third and a lively pair of office boys, as American as could be.
- Our cooks had arrived so the A.T.S. unit was at home with an 'in night' on Monday and lights out as usual. Now the town was crowded. Processions of prisoners coming home and Crown Prince Olav and later King Haakon and family. The lilac bloomed by the road to the Palace. It was a fantastic experience.
- We came home for Christmas on a very crowded boat. After leave I was posted to Liverpool Holding Unit, both soldiers and A.T.S. here. A miserable place. I think we from Oslo were sent in all directions. I spent one night in a huge camp at Rhyl, slept in a huge tent. Next day I was posted to a small accountancy office in Bangor (finally in my civilian job). There I lived in an ordinary house quite near, along with another A.T.S. We each had our own bedroom. N. Wales is dreary in the winter. Italian prisoners came with tea and Christmas cake each day, otherwise we ate meals with our hostess. An A.T.S. Staff Sgt with one soldier and myself worked in the Office.
- Then the Office closed and I was posted to the Accountancy Office in Shrewsbury. Now I found myself sleeping with perhaps ten or so others in an attic of the Headmaster's House at The Fine Boy's School at Shrewsbury. After a few days I moved to a private house across the road, but here the cooks were in the kitchen.
- In June or July I was discharged, it was good to be at home again.
- I would like to mention the grateful feelings I know we all had for the kindness of the people at home. In the crypt of the Church on the hill in Bristol there was a cup of tea and (if I remember rightly) pancakes and marmalade, table tennis and piano music in the evenings. In Tonbridge the ToCh, in Chapel Halls in many

small towns and in railway stations, the farmer's wives Y.W.C.A. etc often waited with the ever welcome cup of tea. A free weekend could also be spent in a hostel run by perhaps the Salvation Army. Delayed by fog I once spent the remains of a night in the Y.W.C.A. hostel right near Euston Station. All these things helped to make life in uniform easier.

Photos:



Pte Joy Newman, Pte Dorothy Dobson
Holmenkollen, Oslo 1945



Group of H.Q. A.T.S. taking it easy with the P.T. Sgt



Hatchford Park – Picture from the tennis courts