

<b>Surname:</b> Rees	<b>First Name(s):</b> Pauline Dorothy	<b>Army Number:</b> W/235918	
<b>Maiden name (if applicable):</b> Zoeller	<b>Name used during service:</b> Zoeller	<b>Rank:</b> L/Corporal	
<b>Main base:</b> Pontefract	<b>Training base:</b> Pontefract	<b>Enrolled at:</b> Kingston Upon Thames	
<b>Platoon/Section:</b>	<b>Company/Battery:</b> HQ Company.	<b>Group/Regiment:</b> A.T.S., York and Lancs Regiment	<b>Command:</b> Northern Command
<b>Year(s) of service:</b> 6/11/1942 to 16/5/1946	<b>Reason for discharge:</b> Demob	<b>Trade:</b> Clerk	
<b>Uniform Issued:</b>  Shirts Tie Stockings Jacket Skirt Greatcoat Shoes Flat cap	<b>Photo:</b>  February 1943		
<b>Description of daily tasks:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early morning P.T.</li> <li>• Bugle Practice Filing documents, typing. Recruits documents, interviewing.</li> </ul>		

Pay book:

The image shows an open military enlistment form with handwritten entries. The left page is titled '(1) SOLDIER'S NAME AND DESCRIPTION ON ATTESTATION' and contains fields for Army Number (W/935918), Surname (ZOELLER), Christian Names (PAULINE DOROTHY), Date of Birth (2-12-21), Place of Birth (Blach), Nationality of Father at birth, Nationality of Mother at birth, Religious Denomination (C/E), Approved Society, Membership No., Enlisted at (Pontefract) On (6-11-42), and Signature of Soldier (Pauline Zoeller). The right page is titled 'DESCRIPTION ON ENLISTMENT' and contains fields for Height (5 ft 6 1/2 ins), Weight (110 lbs), Maximum Chest (35 1/2 ins), Complexion (Fair), Eyes (Blue), Hair (Brown), and Distinctive Marks and Minor Defects (49c). Below this is a section for 'CONDITION ON TRANSFER TO RESERVE' with fields for Found fit for, Defects or History of past illness, Date, and Initials of M.O. i/c.

Memorable moments:

- I was living in Newquay Cornwall in 1942 when “called up” – you are sure to get a Southern Command posting after basic training “they said”.
- Basic Training was quite some thing. With the letter “Z” for my surname I was always last for everything and more often than not left standing on the parade ground, when the Sgt Major Said “A to H to the store for kit”, and so on through the alphabet until the letter ‘W; where he seemed to think the alphabet ended. “What’s the matter with your girl – are you deaf?” he would SHOUT at me. Me replying in a little trembling voice “Please Sir, I am a Z”. However, after two and a half weeks we were sent on leave and then back to get our postings.
- An intake of 250. It was December 2<sup>nd</sup> my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, the day came at last. I was transferred to HQ Company, the only one left. Needless to say any post for me was addressed to No 9 T.C. I was sent across the other side of the Barracks to HQ Huts. No post for three days. I really did think I had been forgotten.
- At HQ we were billeted in Nissen huts. My work was in the documents office. I did not go on a clerks course until I had been in the A..S. for about one year. I used to enrol the new recruits in each intake which entailed interviewing and getting information about the girls, which proved to be very hilarious at times. The Barrack Blocks where the new intake were billeted were named after various Battles in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War or Crimea i.e., Arabica, Medena etc. One day I had enrolled about 10 girls. Said to the Sgt “These are going to Arabia” so can they go to the stores for their kit – great wailings “Please Miss – do we get embarkation leave?”
- Odd jobs too – me being unfamiliar with work in Northern Towns where most of the intake come from. One person told me she was a paint sprayer, the name of the company and type of business was Furrier. Me “You just told me you were a Paint Sprayer”. “Please Miss – I sprayed the stripes onto fur coats.” Another was a “Back wash minder” very puzzling. One young lady announced at about 4.00 pm she was generally having cocktails at that time. One person was announces as ‘Lady Jane’ ...!! Oo! We were all excited, someone posh coming! But it was her Christian name that was LADY.
- We had a Connie O’Nions and Sgt Siddebottame (Sidebotham). We had some very nice officers. Just like us really of course we were not supposed to go out together, at the cinema you had to book seats in advance so we used to book

adjacent seat numbers so could socialise a bit. Also we used to bring fish and chips for them. Not allowed in Barracks, we used to smuggle it in, and eat ours in the ablutions so that it wouldn't smell in the dormitories. For the Officers, they used to let a basket down on a rope out of the windows and we would put the packet in so they could haul it up. In the photo off HQ company outside the Officers' mess you can see the building behind and the windows too.

- The girl 4<sup>th</sup> on the right next to me is Dot Weaver who became godmother to my son who was born in 1953. Sgt Boothroyd who is standing on the right, second row, worked in the stores and would often bring chocolate for us.
- I was told one day that I would be on an exchange as a Sergeant with a girl who wanted to come north. It was to be at Lingfield Surrey not too far from home. On the day I was already packed and Dad had a car waiting for me at the London Terminus (St Pancras) only to be told she had changed her mind. She was put on a charge and I stayed in the Liquorice City.
- At Christmas we could either go on leave or if not must not leave Barracks. Officers brought us breakfast in bed and put on entertainment.
- One day 'Ann' started to barrack her bed and pack her kit. She said "I am going home, my kit is ready for the stores so you won't need to pack it up." So off she went for 3 days – on her return she was put on the inevitable charge. 2 weeks C.B. Got fed up with staying in so off she went to town, wearing a Non issue tie, great sin. She saw some MPs approaching so she held up a newspaper to hide her tie, another sin, newspapers had to be folded and carried under the arm. "Put that paper away" said the MP. Instead of saying sorry and walking on, she had a little argument. Another charge. After her first charge she was asked what she would think if soldiers at the front went absent without leave her reply "Good luck if they could get away with it". On this second charge more 'confined to Barracks' "Do I have to add it to the charge I'm already on", This time not only C.B. but sleep in the orderly room.
- There I stayed in Pontefract until January 1946 when I was posted to various camps for short stays and apart from Cadre Courses etc.
- I played netball for Northern Command as goal shooter. We travelled to many places to play other units.
- I was also volunteered to collect for National Savings. Once a week I was transported to a coal mine, taken down in the cage to the screening sheds, we had to ask the miners if they would sign a form to have 6d (sixpence) per week stopped from their pay for National Savings. I believe I went into most of the pits in the South Yorkshire coalfields. This was probably because I had done a similar exercise at Aeronautical and General Instrument s(A.G.I.) when I worked before joining the A.T.S.
- On May 29<sup>th</sup> 1943 my beloved brother aged 22 years was killed in a flying accident during Wings for Victory week at Pershore, Worcestershire so I was granted 7 days compassionate leave. Upon my return there must have been something serious, the authorities were expecting a huge intake of wounded troops . A company of us A.T.S. girls were taken to Pinderfields Hospital to get beds ready and put hot water bottles in the beds. Huge baths were filled with very hot water and we plunged the rubber bottles in to fill them and then take them to the wards to put in the beds.
- Went to the M.O. one morning with a bad cough. Prescribed a dose of cough mixture – was waiting for the medical orderly to give me a spoonful, nestling my sore arm the while, after a recent TAB Jab. "Where do you want it," she asked, "In your arm?" I enjoyed going on courses, only 2. One a clerk's course at Wandsworth, so could go home, by this time my parents went back to East Sheen. My father was administrator of Queen Mary's 'Roehampton' Hospital. Also a Cadre course at Newark Sisper.

- My very last posting was to Chiseldon, Nr Swindon, Wiltshire. A vast camp of Nissen Huts which I think had a P.O.W. Camp. Very isolated and freezing cold. So cold a mug of water by the bed would freeze solid by the morning. I was sent to Guildford for Demob from here and on my last night the girls had filled my bed with dried peas. Where did they get them from ??
- Sometimes we went into Swindon to the NAAFI which was always packed. So much so that often we had jam jars to drink the tea from, there were never enough mugs. Someone would play a piano and we had sing songs and some of us would do a monologue. I did a Joyce Grenfell occasionally.
- Though I longed to go home, we did have some happy times.
- I spent most of my time in Yorkshire. I used to say I don't care if it snows so long as I go home – I was demobbed on May 16 1946 at Guildford in a snow storm!

**Photos:**



Pauline Zoeller with MBE (Mibs) Lawrence,  
Pontefract 1943



Pontefract Castle



HQ Company, No 9 TC, Pontefract  
Pauline Zoeller third from right, second row



9 Training Company A.T.S., Pontefract