

Oct 09

1966/67 WAAF Life & after

Aged about 17 yrs old  
I befriended a girl  
named Doreen at the  
Red Cross evening class  
One day she said  
I've volunteered for the  
WAAF as a Radar Operator  
later on I began to  
feel I would like to  
join & train as a  
Nursing Orderly, but  
you needed to be  
18 yrs old & I was 17 yrs  
& 9 mths - I couldn't wait.  
I asked my parents if  
they would allow me  
to volunteer - they didn't  
mind.

So I went ahead and  
at the recruiting office  
in George St Edinburgh  
I was ~~introduced~~ <sup>enrolled</sup> as a  
Teleprinter Operator & was  
off to Wilmotow  
Training camp for 4 wks  
on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1944.

There we were kitted  
out with all our uniforms  
taught service discipline  
& about all ranks in the  
RAF, respecting your  
seniors, saluting officers  
at all times.

Our drilling & PE came  
rather tough for us not  
being used to all that  
exercise, but gradually

became accustomed  
to it. (we had to).  
I soon settled down  
to life in a Nissen Hdt.  
after 4 wks. I learned  
to mix in with about  
a dozen girls from  
all walks of life &  
many parts of the UK.  
I felt a little home-sick  
at odd times but I was  
accustomed to living  
away from home.  
We were not allowed  
out of camp for 4 wks.  
We were taken out on  
two occasions as a group  
& marched into Wilmotow  
town - to the YMCA.

Blitzary parades every fortnight  
you had to walk through the streets  
to pass the belligerent eyes of the Army officers  
all some girls went wild  
not having been with in  
men's company for who?

There were two girls  
who broke out of camp so  
the discipline was  
peeling potatoes &  
washing & cleaning  
ablutional toilet for 2 days.

After finishing  
Elementary Training  
at Wilmslow I was  
posted to RAF Beaufort  
on a Signals course  
as a Teleprinter Operator.  
I loved the life there  
for 10 wks June/Jul/Aug.  
A very good summer

5.  
I was billeted in a  
married quarters house  
3 girls to 1 room -  
not short of space.  
The Sgt in charge  
of our house was the  
WAAF ~~Betty~~ <sup>Major</sup> ~~Young~~  
on the down. She  
was a superb person,  
elegant - built her position  
- fair hair & tall & attractive.  
Our house was on the  
edge of the airfield -  
then we light aircraft  
trainers. - we used to sit in  
the garden watching them.  
It was all very new - not  
having seen the flying  
before. (me)

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The Linoprinter operators  
 marched to music &  
 typed to music three  
 becoming touch typists.  
 The camp was not far  
 from Sleaford - a small  
 village/town where we would  
 walk to the shops <sup>railway station</sup>.  
 There was plenty of  
 entertainment on camp.

In bat evenings  
 there was always a  
 dance held in the  
 Apprentices Lynd Hall with  
 their own Band. Their  
 signature tune was  
 "You Take The Train".  
 I loved it, - I had  
 an Apprentice friend but

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I can't remember  
 his name. He gave  
 me a cap badge  
 - it was the Apprentice  
 Wheel - which I attached  
 to my handbag - but  
 that was lost. He was  
 a very nice young  
 fellow several  
 months younger  
 than me at just  
 18 yrs old.

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> course finished  
 mid Aug & we then  
 had an end of course  
 parade in front of  
 Granville College. Then  
 there was a vast parade  
 ground. We

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Air Commandant  
of the WAAF

'Lady Welsh' took the  
salute while the  
various Apprentices  
Bands played and  
others.

I ran well was a  
happy time for me  
in the WAAF.

From I ran well  
I was posted to:-  
14 MU Carlisle  
(Maintenance Unit).

We were given  
7 days leave from  
end of course so  
I travelled from  
Edinburgh to Carlisle

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My train journey  
turned out to be  
a bit of a disaster.  
The train was rather  
long & mostly full  
of service personnel  
so when we arrived  
at Carlisle Station -  
I was all set to get off  
but being in one of the  
two end carriages we  
were not by a platform -  
& the train pulled away  
I was devastated all  
but tears, but there  
were plenty of comforters -  
male & female around -  
so my journey continued  
to York.

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On my return to Bastid  
there are always military  
Police by the gate - so I  
had to explain to them  
in order to use the transport.  
I arrived face the  
Station Warrent Officer  
who starts bellowing at  
you about a lot "Well"  
Not a very good welcome  
I learned later that  
his nick name was "SPAM"

The Signals Section  
was large & accommodated  
many telephone cables &  
post office machines. So  
we served many small units  
around & bastide Post Office

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- We had civilian superiors
- That is where I earned  
my LACW.
- (Leading Aircraft Woman.)
- We lived in Nissen  
Huts about 14-16 girls.
- Our heating was a  
large coke stove in the  
middle of the Hut.
- Our beds wrought-  
iron unspurring
- 7 3 horse hair biscuits  
like large flat cushions
- white coarse sheets 7
- 3 very rough gray blanket.
- 1 bolster pillow.
- looking more like a  
draught excluder.

The ablutions were about 50 yds away - Baths were limited in as much as they were always occupied or there was no plugs.

The NAAFI was quite good -

We had a number of W/Indian lads there. They usually worked in the workshops - sometimes on your way into the NAAFI in the winter evenings.

You got a scare from a few of them hanging around the entrance - black faces white eyes. Piercing at you.

Then I played netball & got my little finger (pinky) of my right hand bent.

I joined the E.V.T. classes Educational Vacation Training toward a leather writing case - with thonging all around the edge & a zip. My friend Mary and I used to go out to Haslille quite a lot - to Cinema. Also there was marvellous new NAAFI Club - lots of entertainment & hot boys. Aircrew was the attraction. I became friendly with a fellow called Peter - he was posted into 14 H.S. with

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many other aircrew -  
he was they were made  
redundant at the end  
of their course - he was  
a navigator. I was  
friendly with him for  
awhile & then he  
was posted away to Stafford.  
He came up to Edinburgh  
for a long weekend &  
met my parents, John & Anna  
in Selside Ferry.  
He had mentioned about -  
or going over to Longtown  
not far from Carlisle to  
meet his mother however  
it just happened that we  
met by accident in Carlisle  
but I got the feeling I was not  
welcome -

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There were a group of seven  
7 WAAF who always gathered  
round a table in the NAAFI -  
including Peter - Also there  
was an Airman very much  
senior to all of us & distinguished  
so there was lots of discussion  
going on. However  
many years later  
in Bideford with  
Amy, Linda & a bump I  
saw this man whom  
we named the Professor -  
I felt annoyed with  
myself for not making  
myself present with  
my family.  
"That is me"

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At Basildon we had a number of Jamaicans on camp - they all seem to fit in well & often one the girls loved to jitterbug with them. (at least some of the girls).

Sometimes they were a bit scary in the dark on our way to the NAAFI.

Our Signals Section was supervised by civilians. One of the supervisors invited Mary & me to her home in Basildon where she lived with her mother very comfortably. She invited us to have a bath & meal & then took

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us to the cinema - we saw 'Song of Bernadette' (Jennifer Jones). I loved watching her (mainly about life in a convent). We both thoroughly enjoyed our Sups generosity. On D Day +<sup>5</sup> some of us WAAF stood or sat on one of those long trailers called a Queen Mary. (a bit like one of our long car trailers we have today 2000) parading through Basildon. (not very enjoyable). On camp we were given a special meal served (officers

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All the boys were given a cigar.

Next to our camp was a small airfield 15 FTS Kingston.

They trained on tiger moths.

The Pub in Kingston was the first time I had a drink with the girls - a shandy which I disliked.

During my time in the WAAF I never went out drinking even after.

In 1946 I was posted to 90 Group Eginton Hall Desford but - a large country house - with a river

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running through the estate. The story went that there was a ghost "A White Lady". I never saw her.

but felt nervous at times when we would have to walk by that area where she was suppose to be on our way to evening or night shift.

Not many personnel on the station. Our Sig Office was what would have been a servant's bedroom level with the const yard.

There were a small number of Italian prisoners there wandering around sweeping up. Sometimes I would push open

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my window level with the ground & have a chat with them.

My friend Joan was telephonist there. She liked classical music. Sometimes we would go into the Reading Room where you could play records. Joan liked George's Bar but next time we found it broken. Our nearest town was Derby for entertainment & Market Bosworth was walking distance.

In camp some of the girls of RAF would go moonlight bathing in the river.

I played table tennis there.

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I was there for 6 months. While there for a few months I was made an acting corporal on temp basis while they awaited a permanent one. I wasn't exactly happy - felt to concessions. However it was only a few mths. from there I was posted to 16 MU Staffords Handforth near to Winslow where I trained for the WAAF. It was a very scattered station. We lived in groups of wooden huts - isolated from our place of work.

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This was 1946/47 - the very bad winter where everything froze. We used to fill a pan with ice to heat up for my hot water bottle - which four of us would share the hot warm water to wash in a.m.

Each day a truck called a 15 tonner with seats & cover would collect us for work 8<sup>00</sup> hrs.

The ablution were about 200yds up a slope from our huts. They were all frozen & baths

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As you can imagine desperation for baths etc

Whilst living there Mary & I went to Bell Inn stadium to watch the Scramble dirt-track racing. It was at this camp, I had my purse stolen from my bedside locker. It upset me, mainly because the purse was a gift from an Uncle I miss I was sick in the shape of a cold & flu but I became friendly with a lpt there for a short time. He wanted to be serious & said we could make a go of it, but

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I said no, I'm still  
very young & finished  
He was much older than  
me by about 8 yrs.

He came from Messy.  
I was released from  
there Oct 1947.

Two signals officers -  
gave me a very  
nice report.

After WAAF life - I lived  
at home for a short  
time while I worked at  
Romein & Palestron in  
Princes St; Edinburgh  
for some months with  
their firm in Boston doing  
the ~~Expo~~ Export work.

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Still trying to find  
a job as a Teletypewriter  
operator. Then I found  
a job as a Dictaphone op  
at Bovce Pebleys engineering  
firm for a short time  
by then a job as a Teletypewriter  
op for MOD Redboe Coatwick.  
All these jobs while  
short term I quit them  
them - I didn't ever  
feel settled but I  
made friends &  
from these I met  
Dad in Edinburgh &  
the rest is history.