

Dorothy Rainey - Interview

"Now I am sorry I have kept you waiting this long. You've listened to what we had to say to Priscilla, would you like to tell us, in your own words, how your career in Auxiliary Units went along? Do you want to give a sort of brief outline before the war as you - before the war as well?" I mean, I don't mean before the war, I mean the early stages of the war when I told you I was in the WVS - I was in a sort of 'flying squad'. Oh no, before my Canteen work, I was in a curious organisation. Anyone who happened to have a car - and they said in our case at Chelsea Town Hall, with their car, and we were a 'flying squad' and we had to be prepared to go anywhere in London, wherever there was an emergency. In my case, it was quite intriguing because I had no less a person than Diana Sandys - daughter of Winston Churchill, as one of the Volunteers in my car so I really had quite a precious cargo. She was the famous name but there were two other people (quite famous) but not so well known so I won't mention them. That was the sort of thing we did. We went, in this particular instance we went to the City of London - had to clock into somewhere around Canary Wharf way and get our orders. We would then be sent off with blankets for the Air Raid Shelters. I had one awful job when I was asked to take some next-of-kin of some people who'd been killed during the air raid, to the mortuary to identify them which was quite tough for a youngish person to do because it really was the biggest- I think the biggest mortuary, in London - it was THE ONE, and it was literally a case of walking up and down rows of sacks with labels with numbers and names, you know, pretty shattering. The most shattering thing, of course - stop me if I'm rambling because it's so easy to do - the most shattering thing was to find my little, rather clapped out, Morris Minor was absolutely alive with fleas from these Poles whoever it was, I think they were Polish, who I had taken to identify their relatives. The car had to be fumigated and so on. So that's a brief outline of what I was doing at that stage of the war and then the - when the Blitz stopped I was, well no, I ...? but after the flying squad bit I was setting up canteens as you probably read, in the City of London again for Firemen and ARP workers because I had, in the meantime, taken a course at Chelsea Town Ball on catering for this sort of thing. When we came out of our course we were put in charge of a canteen wherever. So that briefly, is what I did, I was doing before and then when all of that finished was when I was invited to join Auxiliary Units. I think that the man I was married to, who was in Auxiliary Units in the technical side, it was - did I - you read this bit do you want it recorded? *"Please. Yeah."* Well he was - he had been, before the war, involved with some Finnish whiz kids in radio technology, called 'Hacker' and I think - *"they played quite a part in the equivalent that Auxiliary Units were using and in"* - what do you call it? - *"SOE?"* - radio-tele - you know the radar thing that was being set-up - *"they were playing quite a big part because I do remember John Monck-Mason referring to Watts, and Watts who is, again, someone quite familiar to you. Yes. "So he's been playing around as a civilian in all this but then I believe, it was, you know" - we parted - "that he joined the Royal of Corps of Signals and I think that's" - and he put forward my name to Auxiliary Units and I was invited to go and meet Beatrice Temple in Harrods. "Just before we go there. John Monck-Mason, I think I'm right in saying, has his photograph in "The Last Ditch", does he not?"* He might have I

can't - I saw the Last Ditch - but I can't remember. It was a long time ago it was published wasn't it? *"It was. '68, 1968."* Yes, well, I think probably yes. *"Anyway, it was through him that your name was put forward and Beatrice Temple invited you to meet her."* Yes, that's right. *"Could you tell us about the Harrod's meeting then."* Well, it's as simple as that. I went up the Rest Room at sitting with a red carnation in her button hole or red rose, was it, whatever and - *"Was that agreed, by the way, that you were looking for someone with a red carnation?"* Oh yes. *"Oh that's absolutely classic isn't it?"* Oh, indeed. Oh yes. Ridiculous isn't it? We had tea and talked, really rather vaguely about things and not really specifically about this - not at all specifically in fact - but would I be interested in working in something which was sort of secret, very confidential and couldn't be told anything about it. I said yes, of course, you know, great fun and then at the end, quite a short tea-party, she said I would be expected to sign the secrecy thing and then as Priscilla and all the others were eventually called up - I - you were a civilian you see, weren't you - and I was a civilian. We went to Edinburgh, in mufti of course, and all those thousands - it was a huge place- oh I should think there were about 2,000 ATS there - and they were mostly NOCs who'd done well and were being promoted, being promoted so they were totally 'au fait' with everything but, you know we, we were civilians, we hadn't the slightest idea about drill or Part I, Part II Orders, anything. So there were a small bunch of us, I don't know, we worked together but I think I went up with two others - I met them in the train and there were a few more civilians, civvies there. *"Yes Dorothy, we interrupted you there, but you had arrived at Edinburgh for OCTU and you were going to tell us more about that"* - I and two others I met on the train. I don't think I met them before, also civilians and, as I say, probably 2,000 or 3,000, well, call it 2,000 ATS being up for promotion. So we were really odd people out completely. We were the only three/four civilians there I think. So there we were. It was quite a while before they kitted us out and also the other awful thing about Craigmillars in the mid—bitter, bitter winter was it - there was absolutely no heating whatsoever. Of course you were sleeping on iron beds, stone corridors, some of the windows didn't fit, etc - I think the most awful thing was when we had to do drill - this was shortly after we'd been given our uniform and we had to lie down in the snow in our khaki knickers and our shirt and do all our exercises, you know, but anyway, that's one little thing but the most amusing thing was when we were taken out on our first parade through Princes Street. Again they were all in uniform - we, the four of us in civilian clothes and hadn't the least idea what was happening and they were marching very correctly and suddenly there was a sort of change in the sort of tenor, of feeling of the whole parade - quite a few of them there - and apparently three senior officers were just coming out of that famous restaurant - the name of which I forget [*Crawfords*] - in Princess Street, and, of course they were all getting ready to go an 'eyes right' and we hadn't the last idea of what was happening so of course the three who were stuck at the back, didn't 'eyes right' at all, nor were we marching properly and the whole thing was a bit ridiculous but that's that, I won't waste any more of our time on that aspect. Well, after the period of instruction there we all, as you remember, had to give a lecture of our own choice. Quite a short one but it seemed like an hour, it was only ten minutes or something, at the most. I got by all right but a friend of mine thought the whole thing - one of the ones who came up with me in

civilian clothes - thought the whole thing rather ridiculous and so she decided to speak on the history of the kilt. Of course, the whole of the front row of the audience was filled by senior ATS Officers - a great many of them were in kilts - and she knew this because she'd seen another lot pass out a week before and she'd planned her speech. It was really quite a turn - I mean there was a deathly hush as you can imagine when she started to speak about the history of the kilt in rather derogatory terms and very salty terms too. Of course they got stiffer and stiffer and it was quite evident that she'd put up a 'big black', not that she cared a bit. So afterwards the whisper got round that she was going to be turned down of unseemly behaviour, speech and so on so I quickly telephoned Belinda [*Beatrice Temple*] and told her that Florence was being - was going to be turned down and it was a great shame because she was in fact an excellent candidate. I mean I don't know why I should have butted in because we were equal rank and Belinda got her passed through because she was a highly intelligent and very able person - but that was the sort of thing that happened. So there we were, we passed out and I was then, - my first posting was to Alnwick, to Doxford Hall - near Alnwick. That was the home of Lord Runciman - and Lord Runciman, I think he was the Foreign Secretary or something at that time — but it was he who went with Chamberlain and one other to try and stop the whole war thing - and you might remember, someone might remember, the famous remark as they came down, back from Germany - 'there will be Peace in our time', which, of course, there wasn't. So it was Lord Runciman who was in that team and Lord Runciman, I think was so shattered to have been involved in such a fiasco that he decided to leave Doxford Hall and go to his home on the Isle of Eigg - his other home - I think partly because they wanted, quite wanted to requisition Doxford Hall but he could have probably have protested but decided not to. So this is where we were billeted, in part, I think it was more or less the servants' quarters, as you would expect. We had a Batwoman to look after us - so there were three of us there - IO was a man called Victor Goss, Captain Victor Goss, who was a pain in the neck – and - oh, I shouldn't say that should I? *“Definitely”* Oh, perhaps he's dead now and so - the amusing thing there was that there was a - the Butler had gone with Lord Runciman to the Isle of Eigg but the Keeper, the Game Keeper was called Christmas and he remained in Doxford Hall and he used to bring us in the most wonderful goodies from the garden and if you want to hear the odd little amusing thing that happened - was when Lord Runciman and Lady Runciman came back to Doxford Hall for a few days, probably to get a change of clothes or something and we were invited to dinner with them. Oh, the Butler had come down before hand to prepare things for them and also to collect some wine to take back to the Isle of Eigg, but anyway he was there. He quite often left a bottle of Claret or something in our quarters but when Lord and Lady Runciman came to - came back and we were invited to dinner – we - the same Claret - I can't remember what it was, of course - appeared on the table and the Butler was standing behind Lord Runciman's back winking at us and we were having a job to keep a straight face. These sorts of things that...So there we were. *“Are we in 1940 now?”* Early on, 1941 I think. *“Did you have a Radio Unit of some kind or other?”* Oh yes - I'm just giving you the background on that. We had a - the Hut and the Zero – *“and the bunker, did you?”* Yup, which we – *“You don't remember your Code?”* I can't remember

the Code there. I can only know, remember a few of the Codes - which one applied to Alnwick, I do not know. "No, no, and you don't know if your particular Unit had a Code name like, as I say, Alpha Zero or something like that?" I can't remember that. "No, no, OK." I can only remember our Call Signs to various Stations. "Do you remember those?" Some of the ones like, 'Omah', 'Byfield' and - what else. "But not your own?" Not my own. "Bowling doesn't mean anything to you?" No. "We've had a lady called 'Bowling 4' ring us and she won't give us her name but she's been very encouraging in all other respects." No, I don't remember that "But Bowling does not mean anything to you?" No, not at all. "Nor to you, Priscilla?" No, no. "I think she - I've not been able to trace her. Anyway, I am sorry. I've interrupted you." It's all right. Not at all. "There you are in your - with your IO Goss and the Base Station and the Zero Station?" That's right. "Do you think you had a 17 Set I as well?" I think so, yes. "I was - do you think that was the name of it as far as you remember?" I THINK IT was fairly standard, yeah. "And did you have the famous installation of aerals at any stage?" Oh yes. I can't remember that installation there but I can remember it when I was in Blandford because you know they drilled a little hole up the tree didn't they, or whatever, you know and they sunk the aerial into it didn't they and then they covered it with moss and bark. Brilliantly, yes. "Yeah." We were training with the Outstations - we just switched on and we kept watch the whole time and we were all the time searching to pick up Call Signs and then we'd answer them. Does that make sense? "Oh absolutely because you'd only got a 6-volt battery whereas in a Tank they had banks of 12 volt. Absolutely makes sense. Yes. They had limited range consequently but they were amazingly clever sets because they were the first, pretty well, in the world where you could speak to one another, albeit with a limited range but with a 6-volt battery as its power, it was quite amazing - and you presumably had the Royal Corps of Signals come to service your Unit in the same way that Priscilla did?" Oh yes, it was that - it was they who brought the 6 volt batteries and they came to change them, ("Yes") from time to time. "Fine. So that's working into a pattern now anyway and I think we can safely say that with yourself, Yolande Alston and Priscilla that we are seeing a bit of how the work and the Network went - (Yeah) - but I think we still remain completely non-plussed about the Code - the Code that was used for 'obscuring', for security purposes what you were talking about." I thought that we just wrote up practice messages and we worked them out and then we practised with our Outstations and presumably they did the same thing. I'm bit hazy - I think we had our Message Block, didn't we, and we wrote out a message in rough and coded it according to - no, there wasn't a Code there was there? "I don't know whether it worked in the same place - in different places in the same way but we're pretty sure that there were 500 keywords that were encoded and rotated. A more sophisticated system developed fruit that afterwards, in the Cold War but at that time, it was a fairly crude business but you were quite revolutionary in speaking to one another. Nearly every other transmission was by Morse Code in the Intelligence World, and that of course, could be encoded quite easily - (Yeah) by word of mouth was a different kettle of fish altogether. Anyway, let's not - we won't pursue that" - In that - when I was at Doxford, at Alnwick, and I talked regularly to a very jolly chap, at one point I think he sent a message through - did I like salmon - and I replied of course, you know, so he told me then that there

would be a salmon, put on the train at Berwick - (obviously he didn't say 'Berwick' in the message) and I could pick it up at Alnwick Station, which I did. Much later, I happened to go in to Berwick (on a day off) and I went to get the usual sort of essentials, haberdasheries, and I thought I recognised - there were very few people behind the counter in those days - but an upstanding chap came and served me and I recognised his voice, or thought did and I did, and it was, in fact, it was the chap I'd been talking to and who sent me the salmon. He also had a Haberdashery shop in Berwick and he caught that salmon himself, on the Tweed and sent it down by train and we had a wonderful feast at Doxford Hall, because you can imagine all the wonderful feast at Doxford Hall, vegetables and things that we had to go with it, unheard of in those days. Anyway, that's that. *"I think that shows the Aux Units were great value anyway, at least passing the salmon around and probably totally confusing the German listeners at the same time. What was your next posting?"* My next post was - oh, I think I went whizzing down to Blandford. Again, there we lived in a lovely country house belonging to Colonel and Mrs. Percy Brown. I think the woods were within short sighting distance and it was the same set-up there and we carried on the same exercises. We covered the Dorset and Hampshire area to the Coast. *"Was it there that you had Anthony Quayle as your IO?"* No, no. We had, Owen Hall-Hall was IO there and he was at Tarrant Hinton, I think, he lived. I don't think we were meant to meet the IO - oh yes, we did of course, they did call didn't they? I went to have dinner with them, he and his wife Jocelyn, yes. *"The Security arrangements vary from place to place. There were some general guide lines given from the Centre but a good deal of liberty was allowed to individual IOs, that's certainly a fact - but Anthony Quayle came into the picture later then, didn't he?"* Later, yes, when I was posted to - *"I thought he was in Northumberland."* He might have been at one time - *"at one time but not when you were there"* - He certainly in, it must have been Salisbury, when we were - yes, when we were stationed at in Salisbury and he was the IO there. *"Yeah. He had the reputation of meeting his Patrols by coming in through an open window".* Really? He never came into my open window, bad luck - he was gorgeous man but he was very happily married man throughout the war so it wouldn't have applied but - no he was a very, a really nice man. He just had - all of us just had to fall in love with him because he was such a genuinely nice person, as well as being very attractive, you know, we just loved him. *"Blandford to?"* - Salisbury, *"and that's where you met him?"* Yeah. *"Similar set-up there because you're in military country there very much aren't you, in Blandford?"* Yes. We were billeted on a little old, a very nice cottage. I don't think she wanted - liked having - no one wanted to have people billeted on them but she was all right. *"You had Army officers pay came through in the normal way?"* I think it was paid into our Bank, wasn't it? *"Do you remember, Priscilla?"* (I can't remember but I think you're right because I can't remember any money) I think so. *"Did you carry the Royal Corps of Signals insignia on your arms? You just carried one pip and nothing else?"* Yes. Didn't it become two pips in the end? *"Yes but no indication of the Unit you were attached to - not even a front of any kind?"* No. *"No, I see. Some ladies carried the Royal Corps of Signals insignia one way or the other - as a front because our experience is that the Aux Units were allowed to carry out any subterfuge they wished to do in order to remain secret and secure".* What nationality do you suppose that

chap was with me because I can't remember. I've got a feeling that he was in some kind of training to get to know the lie of the land, the British Isles. I have a feeling that he was an odd nationality like Czechoslovakian or - they didn't have a Free - *"Not a German I trust?"* They didn't have a Free Czech Army? *"Yes we did, yes."* Oh, did we? That's the thing - or he might have been Norwegian or something like that. *"Dorothy did you go through any firearms training at all?"* No, never any mention of it. *"So what was your training or your opinion of what you would have done had the Germans come? What would have been your role?"* I don't think we thought about it. I think the whole thing was very amateurish. No, it never occurred to us that - *"Not like the rest of the Army, you didn't have written directions about what to do under certain circumstances?"* No. All we were told that we'd go to ground and the main thing was to keep the messages flowing and to hell with everything with everything else. *"So you'd have felt obligated, as long as the messages were coming, to keep on watch, then?"* Yes I think then we felt perfectly safe in our dugouts but, you know, with hindsight one realised this whole thing was ridiculous because the so-called sort of 'camouflage' over the hut floor - I think some of them were in - the steps down to the dugout, or the entrance to the dugout, was actually in the floor of the hut, wasn't it? *"In some cases, I think so. They tended to be 'custom built' as far as we're aware, depending upon the location they were in and what options were available. Yours was some way away, Priscilla, wasn't it? Your bunker was some way away."* (Yes) *"So you agree with me, it could have been nasty?"* Indeed, it could have been, because, you know, one wondered somehow how we were going to tumble down there, the three of us quickly, you know, with all our bits and pieces in a real emergency but we quickly forgot that and got on with it. *"Was Salisbury your last Station?"* No, it wasn't, no. I think I went to Halstead. I went up actually, on what was supposedly a really big exercise - a major exercise - of all the Stations - and I went up in a hell of a hurry. I was, and I think I might have told you this. *"Were you saying that you were running out of time?"* No, we're - I was supposed to go - it was - we were coming up to New Year's Eve and I was supposed to go to Scotland to a wonderful Hogmanay party in a place called Touron Castle, in fact I think it was owned by someone who was in the Auxiliary Units but they were the boys who'd been training with - what's name, up there in Scotland? *"Stirling?"* Stirling and the other one - *"The Lovat Scouts?"* The Lovat Scouts, yeah - and it was his Castle, called Touron Castle where I was supposed to be going but, in fact, I was whisked off to Halstead and on my way I stopped off in London with all my luggage, including a trunk and my sleeping roll, what is it? - my bedroll, on top of my taxi outside the Berkeley to see if anyone had arrived and were going up to Scotland and to say that, unfortunately, I wasn't going to go be there and while I was in there, I told them I couldn't go and I came out and the taxi had driven off with all my luggage - absolutely everything. I was just in my ordinary - I was in my - I'd lost my battledress, I think. I was in full dress uniform. I went up to Halstead and I was met by a driver - this was New Year's Eve - who said 'Ma'am, every hotel is full because its New Year's Eve but we have got a requisitioned house I'm taking you to' - which was unfurnished, unheated and I just left there, and I found a HUGE pile of newspapers, stuck in a corner and I had to spread out on the floor and sleep there and at midnight, this is the cruel thing - the telephone rang and the mates in Scotland had somehow

managed – because they were all connected - I suppose I was being a bit naughty because I knew quite a lot of the other side - they had telephoned Coleshill, or where-ever and discovered where I was - and telephoned and wished me a happy New Year and I could hear the Haggis being piped down the *Keeper's*? steps. You can imagine anything more bitter than that. So that was first experience – a short experience of Halstead. *"What year was that, do you remember?"* It was all within two years, wasn't it, I mean if I joined in 1942? Someone called Rosemary Thurlow, also in the ATS whom we were both stationed with. *"When you stood down, that is the term they usually use now, was it as late as November 1944, when the rest of the Auxiliary Units stood down, were you still going on after that?"* I think with me it was a bit earlier than that. I think I went to - I went to Southern Command near Guildford for a bit and it was fading out then, everything, and I tell you what we did do, at that time, because we had a certain amount of time on our hands, didn't we then because - I and one other, went into the Ops Room, which is a very secret, very special place, I mean, you had to go several different sort of doors, where they were plotting all the movements on the other side of the Channel and all the information which was coming through from all sorts of extraordinary sources, like brothels and every way, you know, and fishermen, all this was coming through, in several languages into this office room. I was ...? English but could manage French but one had to do a certain amount of translation as such, we were just doing that for something to do because things were sort of quietening down in Auxiliary Units. *"That was after D-Day, presumably?"* Yes. *"I see. And when you all –"* I suppose it was just before they disbanded us all, you know we were a bit of an lose end and they didn't know what to do with us. *"The Patrols, nearly all had Stand-Down photographs taken. Now I think from what you are telling me – the Aux Units Signals didn't have any stand-down photographs taken. You didn't have any collective meetings at all. Nothing, absolutely nothing. Not at all and you were not called upon afterwards for Comrades' Associations, or"* – No - *"or work for the Government in any form afterwards."* NO. Absolutely nothing. *"So you came from nowhere and disappeared entirely?"* Yes - shadowy creatures. *"but were you still regarding yourselves bound to the Official Secrets Act?"* Yes, oh absolutely. Yes, definitely. The last words I ever heard were 'you never, never, never, will never reveal what you did in the War and within two or three years I was at home and I opened a newspaper, the "Daily Mail" and I opened this page and looked at these pictures. I couldn't believe it. I said to John, this is Aux Units but who put it in. We were never supposed to talk about it. It was all over....? *"But only that once. It then disappeared again."* Oh really, I don't know, I never followed it. *"Yes, it disappeared again then. What happened was that there was definitely a leak to the newspapers then, because not everybody felt as committed as you did. Some of the Senior Officers felt that this was a subject that could be talked about but, if you remember rightly it was that the article that you are talking about did discuss the German Gestapo Head who was going to come over here and take over control of England. His name was Dr Six = S I X, I don't know how you pronounce in German - probably but that was part of the article. There were then some follow-up articles in the 'Evening Standard' and then the subject disappeared again until 1968, when "THE LAST DITCH was printed by, written and printed by David Lampe. There was virtually nothing between '45*

and '68. People were keeping very quiet about it but then David Lampe got hold of the ??? [we're on record aren't we because it may generate something, Ron] but in the meantime, you never heard any Old Comrade's Associations and you still regarded yourselves as banned. What do you think, who do you think was the most senior man in the Aux Units that you ever encountered, heard about or met?" Well I can't remember any of their names except - what was he called? - double-barrelled - what - "You were too late for Gubbins who started it all off - Major Major was after him - Bill Beyts was after him." Major Major I knew personally after the war but that has nothing to do with it - I mean I met him, and Gubbins I was, familiar with too - "but during the war and afterwards, I mean I am trying to test the security of it really because the less people you knew, the better, obviously. The IO and yourself were an essential relationship which couldn't be done without. You couldn't have training, communications, anything else without your IO but that was a very valuable link. I'm just wondering how vulnerable it was to penetration had the Germans come - had - could you have given anybody else away? Mary Alexander, you knew about and say half-a-dozen people, but are we talking about as few as half-a-dozen people that you could have given away if you'd have been compromised by the enemy? Anyone higher?" You mean our own ATS team? "Yeah" - and the IOs - and the IOs and the maintenance chaps and so on. I suppose yes, we could have done, yes. I suppose. "We're talking about - I don't know, less than 10 maybe anyway, less than 10. The Patrols worked similarly but as far as we're aware although they all came under the Aux Units title, the Patrols, that's the men who were in the OBs that we were talking about with the fighting units, who were very heavily equipped as you know, always remained separate from the Signals and Special Duties Section, even the IOs were kept separate. Now it's quite interesting, I think, Anthony Quayle must have moved from one area to the other and in that respect he was quite unusual but it does mean that if the Patrols were working in one arm and the Special Duties and Signals in another arm they must have ...? level at some level."

What are the Special Duties - these are the - Special Duties are who? "Well, Special Duties Section are the people that were providing the information for you in the Signals Section to send." Oh yes, that's right - "they were the agents on the ground" -but who were the actual military section, what title are you giving the military section? "Patrols we call them. We call them Patrols. They were Patrols of civilians who were armed and trained to go underground in bunkers on the one hand" - That's right. Yes. I'm sorry. "On the other hand there was your organisation communicating the information that came from the Special Duties Section who were agents who were to be left behind overground in the event of invasion and they consisted of two groups of people, one were people who would normally be expected to be in residence in a village or a town - nothing in a big town, by the way, none of these operations took place in a big town but in small towns and the countryside - they could have been the vicar, the baker, the candlestick maker - they would have been - some of those enrolled to provide intelligence information for your network - and there was also another group of people who were deliberately trained to collaborate with the Nazis - to deliberately collaborate with the Nazis and they were also trained to collect intelligence information - that was insignia, details of transport, (whereabouts of) depots, field depots

etc. so it was a very cleverly coordinated Unit and provided there wasn't too much contact it was also very secure and it sounds to me from what you're saying that had your Unit been overwhelmed, there wasn't a lot you could have given away. That makes it pretty secure - you were the vulnerable people. OK, we'll call it a day. Thank you very much, Dorothy and Priscilla, for your cooperation. It's been most enlightening to listen to what you've got to say.

Dear Mr. Gabbitas

Thank you for your most interesting letter and, following our telephone conversation, I am now enclosing such information as I have, taken from an old logbook. I have been searching my memory for anything relating to your worthwhile project, although much of this you appear to have already. In answer to your question, I was married to John Monck-Mason in 1941, who I recall, had been working with two brothers named Hacker (Finns) in the field of radio technology, and which, I think, lead him to working somewhere within the Watson Watt team. At some stage after this I think he joined the Royal Corps of Signals and the operation within Auxiliary Units setting up Outstations in Southern Command. Towards the end of 1941, my work with the W.V.S. in a sort of 'Flying Squad', setting up canteens and rest centres in needy areas (particularly the City of London) was coming to an end as the bombing of that area was abating. It must have been John Monck-Mason who put forward my name to Beatrice Temple's operation - but everything was so clothed in secrecy. My memory of that meeting with Beatrice Temple is very clear - she in mufti and with a red rose in her buttonhole and the somewhat devious and conspiratorial conversation we had amidst ladies taking afternoon tea! Soon after that I was instructed to go to Edinburgh, reporting to the O.C.T.U. at Craigavon. We were a motley little bunch in our slightly shabby civvies as 'direct entries' amongst a vast number sprucely turned out N.C.O's up for promotion. My first posting was to Alnwick, where Captain Victor Goss was the IO. We were billeted in Lord Runciman's home, Doxford Hall and stationed close by. My next station was Blandford, billeted at Tarrant Keyneston (I think) and the Outstation in Blandford Woods. Many years later I was passing through but could not find any trace of the Hut nor the Dugout. Captain Owen Hall-Hall was our IO and I was there with Bettine Holmes, daughter of the Quarter Master General - I do not see her name mentioned on your list, and I cannot remember the third member of the trio. After this came Southern Command, with Wilton Castle as our attachment and Anthony Quayle as our IO. The only time I worked in Eastern Command was for a sudden full scale exercise (I think) and this was it. It was all a fascinating experience, full of highs and lows, afraid I haven't been of very much help to you. Anno Domini plays havoc with the memory bank - but you never know, it might suddenly throw up something relevant.

BUNGAY Suffolk
20th January 1998

