



Sergeant Margaret Halliwell of the ATS

Margaret was born in April 1925 in Burley, Leeds. Her father worked at the Post Office and Margaret attended local Leeds schools before she too joined the Post Office starting as a girl probationer at 15 years old then, after sitting a Civil Service exam, training at 17 years old to be a telephonist. Both Margaret's brother and her sister served in the forces, her brother in the Army and her sister in the WRNS. Her sister's experiences in particular, encouraged Margaret's determination to volunteer, and she joined the ATS in 1943. After initial training at Pontefract, her first posting was to the Signals Training Centre at Putney, followed by a six week spell at London District signals and after that Margaret joined a friend at Greenford, where she worked on the switchboard.



Margaret Halliwell at
Nienburg 1946

At the age of nineteen, Margaret and her friend applied for overseas service and joined SHAEF, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, travelling to France in October 1944. While based in Paris, Margaret was billeted in an hotel, leaving to go to a barracks in Versailles just before Christmas. They stayed in Versailles for several months and the situation there was not comfortable, with only cold water and a lack of heating.

A move to the Netherlands was postponed and Margaret's next posting was to Luneberg in Germany, after having witnessed the VE Day celebrations in Paris. The barracks here were much more comfortable. The switchboard was manned with ATS personnel and some German operators. It was in Luneburg that she gained her stripes and was demobbed in the winter of 1946 as a Sergeant.

Margaret's fiancé, Guy, came out of the army during the following year and the couple were married on 1 November 1947 at Kirkstall church in Leeds. They had three sons between 1950 and 1957 and Guy continued his studies and went on to the Huddersfield Technical Teacher Training College, starting his teaching career at Pudsey College of Further Education (now Airedale and Wharfedale) in 1956. They moved to Horsforth from Bramley in 1958 and have stayed there happily ever since.

The Centre is delighted and honoured to preserve material relating to Margaret's service in the ATS as well as some fascinating German material given to Margaret by a soldier in the Army Education Corps. It seems particularly appropriate to feature this particularly "local" set of material, so soon after the Centre's move to premises in Horsforth.



The Second World War Experience Centre
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<http://www.war-experience.org/collections/land/alliedbrit/halliwell/default.asp>



Margaret Halliwell's soldier's service and pay book showing her promotions and appointments.



Programme from the Coliseum Theatre in Harrow.



Ticket to Longchamp races. "My friend and I went to the race course - our first experience of horse racing".



Programme from the Théâtre National De L'Opéra, Paris, dated 14 October 1945.



Inventory of the Donation

- Hand-knitted scarf
- Newspapers, including a SHAEF newsletter
- Pay and Service Book
- Letter of commendation
- Theatre programmes and various souvenir tickets
- Kriegsverdienstkreuz ohne schwere zweite klasse (war merit cross without swords 2nd class) and certificate
- German Army armband and badge
- Tape-recorded



Letter of commendation to
No. 5 Signals Headquarters.



German armband and badge



Kriegsverdienstkreuz ohne schwere zweite klasse (war merit cross without swords 2nd class) and certificate



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Above: Stamps to collect (for the war effort?) featuring messages of Nazi propaganda.

The three on the right read, from top to bottom: "Victory at any price", "Use all your strength! Total war - shortest war!", "He is to blame for the war!" These were given to Margaret by the same friend in the Army Education Corps who supplied the 'Iron Cross' certificate.



Newspaper announcing Victory in Europe



Newspaper announcing the end of the war with the famous photograph of U.S. marines hoisting the Stars and Stripes at Iwo Jima.