
Joan Emmeline Emelia Sharpen

As Joan Emmeline Emelia Winn I was born in Millwall East End of London in 1919.

I had good Christian parents, and a comfortable growing up. A Convent Day School then business training, it was not for me really as I preferred being a shop assistant with people in life around me.

In November 1939 I went into the A.R.P. at the age of 19. I was stationed at a Leyton Depot East London. Nothing was really organised much at the time so we just had to wait and see what was going to happen. It was shift work of 8 hours.

There began some sort of training in case of Mustard Gas which they had some idea may be used.

Early 1940 I was restationed at WestHam and taught to drive, firstly officers cars and then to Ambulance cars.

The Docks, Silvertown and those areas were badly hit every night, more dangerous as it was all blackout for night driving. As the war progressed I was again stationed in Leyton. It was all challenge which we accepted and got on with it. We were now titled C.D. for Civil Defence.

One morning early I was cycling to work when a bomb dropped close by and I found myself in someone's front garden, unhurt, you pick yourself up and move on. At night shift we were moved to Cathall Bridge by the railway and just waited for a callout. From then on we had a busy time. Incendiary bombs were always with us which caused the fires all around. There was always friendship and a time to enjoy. I had leave for a week and travelled to Scotland one time.

This is a very brief outline of the years we were having. We had Churchill and the great inspiration of all people working together.

I married in December 1940 – a soldier, continued in the C.D. until 1943. We were married 48 years.



1941 Leyton Depot 2