

Transcript of Eileen Powles Audio Clip

The hostilities were over in the North Africa. That was all over, right, and the wounded lads were coming down to South Africa for recuperation and their mail was following them down and it was stacking up in the Post Office so they said, 'Right, we'll put the ATS girls to sort the mail'. But they forgot the two little W's in the Cecil Hotel [laughs]. We never did do anything [laughs]. Anyway we were there for five weeks and then they put us on another boat from Durban up to Port Taufiq which is this end of the Suez Canal, right, and then from Port Taufiq to Cairo on the train. Coming home, I came back to the Meds. I never – I never – I'll been all round Africa except the Suez Canal [laughs]. Yes, of course, when it was over, you see, '45 the Med was open then so we – I think it was Alexandria we came back from. But, yes, I was there for two and a half years as a switchboard operator. Yes, we used to have lots of lines, what they call, 'up-the-blue' [laughs], you know. Yes, very interesting. I went up to Palestine for holiday, to Haifa, went to Haifa cos they had a YWCA there so we stayed at Haifa. Went to all the usual tourist places, you know, Jerusalem and places like that for a fortnight. That was nice. Then, of course, the war was over as you know in May '45. This was the end of '45 and we were coming home, oh, incident [laughs]. In between I married a regular soldier in Kasr-El-Nil – in a, yeah, Roman Catholic Church in Kasr-El-Nil Barracks in Cairo where we were and the reception was in the YWCA. But the trouble was at the beginning of '44 he was going home and, naturally, he wanted me to go with him. But they said, 'If she's pregnant then she can go. If she's not she's gotta stay and do some work', and as I wasn't [laughs], I had to stay.