



AIRCRAFT WOMAN 1ST CLASS KATHLEEN MARY LEWIS

SERVICE NO. 2008266

WOMEN'S AUXILIARY AIR FORCE

DIED 15TH JUNE 1943 AGED 21

Kathleen was the daughter of Thomas and Mary Ann (nee Marlow) Stent, who lived in the Bury, Odiham in 1945. She was born in 1921. In 1941 she married Harold Lewis, who, at the time of her death, was Cpl Lewis, service no. 622258, RAF. ⁱ

The WAAF was mobilised at the start of the war, when women enlisted voluntarily. By the end of 1941 conscription for women was introduced to support and supplement the war effort by undertaking a broad spectrum of essential tasks. These might be cooking or clerical, but also aircraft repair and maintenance, accountancy and anything else that was needed. What specific role was, or was going to be, undertaken by Kathleen is unknown, but possibly it was administrative. She died in Sanderson Emergency Hospital, Gosforth, Northumberland. This hospital had been an orthopaedic hospital and school for children, but, for the war period patients were evacuated elsewhere and the focus of the hospital became air raid casualties and members of the Armed Services in need of treatment.ⁱⁱ Her cause of death was given as –

'I (a) Pulmonary infarction

(b) Pelvic thrombosis' ⁱⁱⁱ

Details on the 'Form for verification of name and other particulars' for the wording on her CWGC headstone^{iv} give her base as Stanington, which is north of Gosforth. During the war this station was the home of No2 WAAF War Course RAF School of Administration. The same form gives details of the inscription to be engraved on her CWGC headstone – 'I'll walk beside you through the passing years'. Her grave is in the CWGC section of Odiham Cemetery.



ⁱ GRO death registration certificate for Kathleen Mary Lewis, Northumberland South Registration District, Sub-District of Gosforth.

ⁱⁱ Source: Tyne and Wear Archives website - <http://www.tyneandweararchives.org.uk/>

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^{iv} Original form held by Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Maidenhead