



Annie Corrin came from Port St Mary in the Isle of Man and began working at Gretna in 1917, aged 19. She first worked in the Cordite Section separating large trays of cordite into individual strands. This was done by taking a small handful of the cordite and smashing the end to separate out the strands. These were then put into boxes and weighed before lids were nailed on.

After six months, she was transferred to work outside in the Loading Sheds. She was provided with an oilskin coat and sou'wester hat to add to her uniform of tunic and trousers. Her supervisor, a man called 'Geordie', instructed her and her co-workers on the best methods of lifting and loading the boxes of cordite sticks onto the trucks. The girls then pushed the trucks along rail tracks for around a mile, until they reached another shed. The secret nature of the factory meant she never knew what

happened in these sheds, but she always remembered that there were usually girls lounging outside this shed, seemingly drunk, because of the exposure to cordite.



Maud Bruce, O.B.E was 22 when she came to work at Gretna. She became a forewoman and was in charge of a Women's Fire Brigade unit in the factory. Six months after she arrived, on 22nd May 1917, a fire broke out in the gun cotton drying house where she was employed. This was always a hazardous place, as there were large quantities of loose dry cotton lying around.

At 8pm smoke began appearing out of one of the cotton drying machines, and within a few minutes the room was full of it. Flames began spreading rapidly to the layers of cotton within the machinery, which would catch quickly. Maud climbed the ladder beside the machine, which was around 20ft high, and cut away the burning cotton to prevent the further spread of the fire. The other girls, encouraged by her calm actions, operated the steam and water sprinklers to extinguish the fire.

Her actions halted the spread of the fire and ensured that the rest of the girls carried out their firefighting duty. She was awarded the O.B.E. by the Duke of Buccleuch at Gretna on June 21st 1918, when she was 23.