



Derek N James IEng AMRAeS (1924 – 2016)

Derek was born in Gloucester and was educated at Sir Thomas Rich School and then King's School, the latter with a choral scholarship as a Cathedral Chorister from 1934 until 1938.

He joined Gloster Aircraft Company as an engineering apprentice and worked on Gladiator, Henley, Hurricane and Typhoon aircraft and then on the Gloster E28/39 which was Britain's first jet aircraft. In 1944 he joined the RAF returning to Gloster Aircraft in 1948.

He worked in the Argentine, Belgium, Holland and Denmark as a service engineer on Meteors before being appointed Chief Instructor of the company's Meteor Airframe School. In 1950 he became Assistant Technical Sales Manager and then in 1958 became Public Relations Manager.

In 1961 he moved to the Society of British Aircraft Constructors (SBAC) in London as Head of the Information Department and in 1963 joined Dowty as Group Press Officer retiring in 1988.

He was the author of several aviation books and a past editor of Wingspan, a monthly enthusiast's aviation magazine and has been a regular contributor to other publications. He was well known as a commentator at a number of air displays in the Midlands, East Anglia, Kent and on the South Coast.

After membership of the Air Defence Cadet Corps and the Air Training Corps he joined the ROC on Easter Sunday 1942 in the Centre in 24 Group (Gloucester) first as a member of the Boys Crew which did duty on Sunday afternoons, then as a full member of No 1 Crew in which both his parents served. He served with the ROC Seaborne scheme for two months during March to July 1944, doing four crossings to Normandy, including the initial landings on D-Day. He was one of the Seaborne Observers who were mentioned in despatches. He rejoined the Corps after RAF service in 1948.

He was appointed a Duty Controller in February 1950 and later, after reorganisation of the Corps in 1953 became a ROC Liaison Officer working in the RAF Southern Sector Operations Room at Rudloe Manor during exercises. He was appointed Group Commandant of No 3 Group in September 1959 and retired on February 29 (getting an extra day's service) 1984 aged 60. He holds the ROC Medal with two Clasps and the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal.

Taken mainly from an article in the Zebra Club News written by Derek for the March 1992 edition.

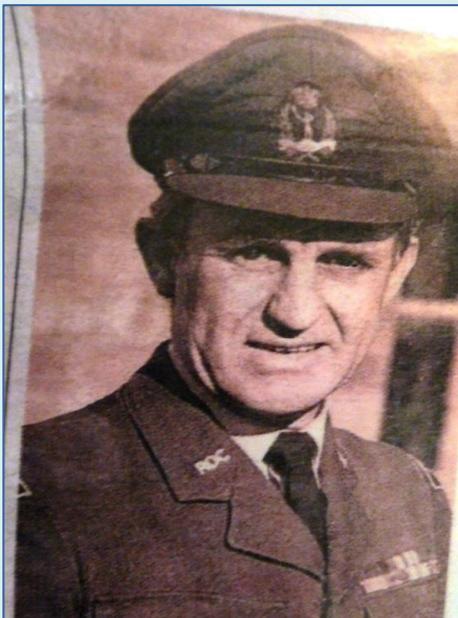
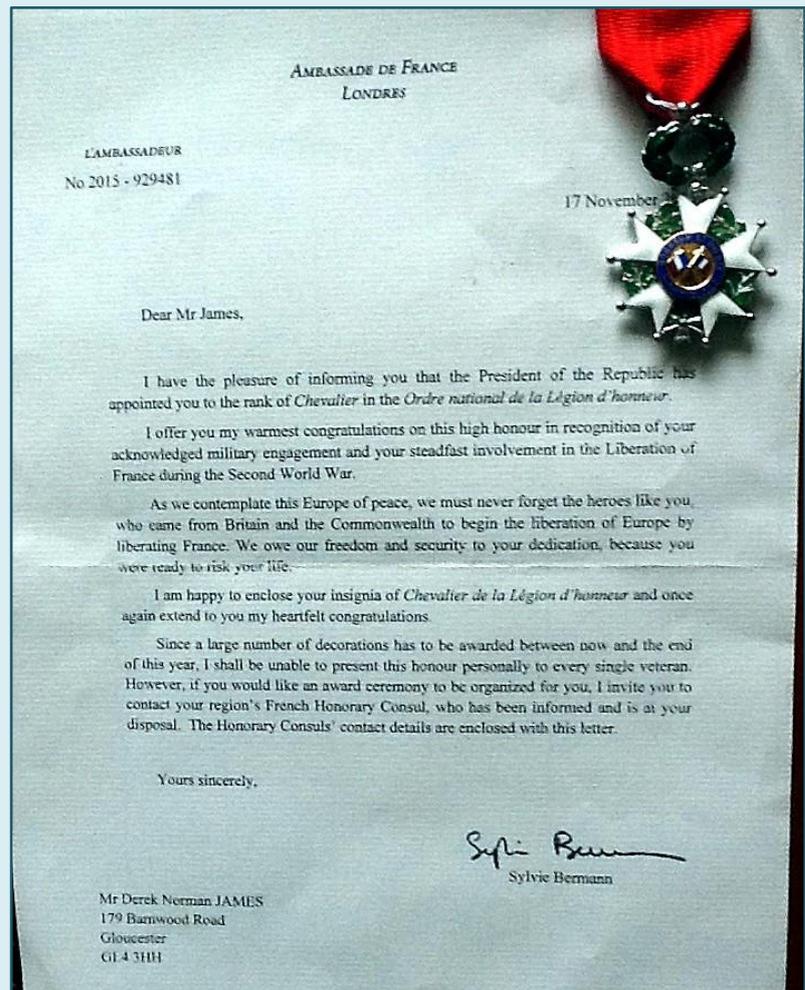


Towards the end of 2015 he was delighted to learn the news that he had been awarded the Légion d'Honneur the highest honour in France in connection with his Seaborne Service with the Royal Observer Corps.

Derek James was just 20 when he took part in the D-Day landings in 1944,

He said:

"I am quite overwhelmed by the award and it is a marvellous honour for me."



Rest in Peace Derek