

Review of Book 'The Royal Observer Corps Medal' by Richard Sirley

Published by The Orders and Medals Research Society 2015. ISBN 978-0-9568266-4-0. Price £25 plus P & P £4.99. Only obtainable from the OMRS.

This large 600 page book describes the institution of the ROC Medal, its design and subsequent introduction. The book lists some 14,000 recipients of the ROC Medal and clasps, ranks held and other awards where known. The book describes the role of the Corps and evolution of Groups and also describes a selection of awards to a variety of people.

The book firstly explains the formation of the Corps in 1925 when it was run by the War Office and observers were Special Constables and early members were eligible for the Special Constabulary Faithful Service Medal. In 1929 the Air Ministry took over the Corps from the War Office (Home Office) and eligibility for a medal ceased. This situation continued until 1950 when the ROC Medal was introduced. The design of medal and ribbon, eligibility, clasps, miniatures and order of wear are all dealt with. Richard Sirley also tells of the method of research using the medal record cards kept by 14 Group ROCA and many other sources of information.

Pages 17 to 545 list all recipients alphabetically giving name, rank, Group, medal date, first clasp, second clasp and other awards. Browsing through these extensive pages is quite fascinating and reveals almost long forgotten names and details. After the listing comes an analysis of medals issued by varying categories. The book then covers various statistics about the ROC, the role of the Corps and Seaborne. There is also a useful analysis of the evolution of every Group in the Corps from formation to stand down. A list of historical Corps dates and a list of Corps Commandants follows.

At the end of the book is a series of excellent photographs of the medal, ribbon, clasp and other badges and insignia of the Corps. The book ends with a description of eight 'clusters' of medals and their recipients including a short account of the service life of each recipient which is informative and interesting. Of note are those of Jack Snell and Bill Rusby. Richard Sirley the author was a member of the ROC serving on Mevagissey Post and on the Truro NRC. He is also a member of Truro Branch ROCA and has helped on many occasions at Veryan Bunker. It is thus nice to see photos of the former No 11 Group HQ at Truro and of the preserved Veryan Post right at the beginning of his book.

All Groups should seek to list their members awards including national awards, CROCs Certificate, AOC Strike Certificate, Lord Lieutenants Certificates and ROC Long Service Medals and clasps. This book, being reference in nature, is a book you will dip into again and again, and is a very worthy addition to the ROC library.

