

Heritage Report 31Goup ROCA June 2023.

ROC Heritage in 31Group had little to report during Lockdown and Covid-19.

However, thankfully things have now returned to normal and **31Group Reunions resumed again.**

By popular demand, 2023 Reunion was held on the Sat 27th of May at 1400 hours in the Heritage Site of the Ulster Aviation Socy, Long Kesh Airfield, near Lisburn City. Almost seventy wished to attend but some did not make it because of holidays, and illness.

The Chairman Ray Burrows MBE and volunteers of the UAS made us extremely welcome, making a room available while also laying out tables and chairs in advance. In addition they provided teas/coffees etc while our Members brought plenty of paper cups, plates and refreshments, sandwiches etc.

The UAS were couldn't have done more for us on this occasion.

Being in a more central location than previous Reunions in Portrush, and being in an Aviation Museum, attracted a great number of Members from across N.I. some coming from as far as Enniskillen, Ardglass and L'Derry.

Meanwhile, our **Hugh McGrattan BEM**, who has, over some years finally completed an excellent digital copy of "**History of 31Group Royal ObserverCorps**" one copy of which he printed and passed to us in Folder form. This, Hugh requested that our John Grace, who has known Hugh for very many years, through ROC service, present to the Chairman of **UAS Ray Burrows MBE on his behalf.**

John asked our 31Group ROCA Chairman Malcolm Napier MBE to proceed with this presentation.

Ray was delighted to receive and it will be kept safely in the UAS Library until our New ROC Displays have a place for it in due course.

Also, **John Grace** also purchased a fine Book – “**Men of the Battle of Britain**” being Bibliography of all the **Battle of Britain Aircrew**.

John also, wished to present this to the **Chairman of the UAS Ray Burrows MBE on behalf of 31Group ROC Asscn.**

He again asked that our Chairman of 31Group ROC Asscn **Malcolm Napier MBE** make this **Special Presentation** too, which really delighted Ray Burrows.

Our most sincere thanks to John Grace.

Our **31Group ROC Displays** at **Ulster Aviation Heritage Site** are once again attracting great interest. Also, the restored former **ROC Post Portadown by Alistair McCann**.

Over the past twelve months, **Ulster Aviation Society Volunteers**, having sought our agreement, moved all of our ROC Displays from the original three rooms to another much larger room. This room they had to repaint and re-carpet which was a very big task. Then, they moved all of our heavy display cabinets, Main Plotting Table, Long Range Board, Triangulation Table, Display Cabinets, Air Raid Siren, Colour Clock, Carrier Control Unit etc. In addition, they reconstructed a Replica Underground Post at one end of the Room but screened off from the Main displays. This was a great idea and very successful.

There is a **large Corridor** outside this Room which has again been cleaned, repainted, carpeted and now well laid out with ROC mannequins, Posters, Wall Displays and a fine **large ROC Crest** originally provided by Alistair McCann of Portadown restored Post, attached to the outside of the Large Room door. Excellent.

A very well done job which attracts great attention once you approach the corridor. There is also, a fine **Royal Observer Corps Sign** pointing to the Displays from the **Number One Hangar**.

They have done very well indeed. **The Chairman of UAS Ray Burrows MBE** has requested that our Alistair McCann call and re-wire the **Carrier Control Unit to the Post Carrier Receiver Unit**. This will be

attended to quite soon, whenever Alistair has time. We will also check the displays in more detail.

The Chairman of UAS wrote in a recent **UAS Monthly Magazine** called **Ulster AirMail**, that the new **ROC Displays** will be one of the very best in the UK and one of which we can all be proud. Excellent.

Then about 25 miles West of Lisburn, Alistair has been opening his restored and fully equipped **Portadown Post** as often as he has time assisted by Colin Woods who actually served on the Post prior to standown. The Post is second to none of restored former ROC Posts in the UK and operates a website nibunker.co.uk and facebook.

Liaison with other restored former ROC Posts in Britain is regular with excellent exchanges of information as well as keeping in touch.

He dedicated this restoration to a family Member who served during WW11 on an ROC Post near Edinburgh during WW 11.

He still works fulltime which is a huge credit to him.

Paddy Malone

Heritage Team member for Northern Ireland.