

National Heritage Report – January 2023

The reports for Paddy in Northern Ireland and Cheryl in Scotland will be received separately, it will be seen they are both very involved with restoration and bringing the history of the Corps to the public.

Some time ago I sent various first day covers from the day of the Stand-down Parade to Cheryl and Paddy to do as they wished with them, we had so many and they were not being purchased at Reunions etc. Paddy recently requested more because he had the good idea of sending a copy to each of his members which had been well received.

With Lawrence's on-going research into all things Corps he came across a reference to Exercise Windmill in 1966 which was not a national exercise. Paul Wakefield was able to report that this was an ADOC Exercise, the forerunner to the Nuclear Reporting Cell at Bentley Priory.

Browsing through Jim Mackie's wonderful folders of ROC members killed in the war, but not on duty, I came across photograph of the stone for Sidney Fenwick Bostock buried in the family grave in the City of London Cemetery Newham, killed on 15th July 1944 age 39 years. Sidney is commemorated on the Civilian War Dead Roll of Honour at Westminster Abbey and also the CWGC Roll of Honour for the Civilian War Dead. Jim's research believes he died as the result of a V1 Rocket attack. Knowing Lawrence has researched stones I sent him the details in case he didn't have them.

Martin and Di Benson were in England for the Westminster Abbey service in September, cancelled due to Her Majesty's funeral the following day. I had agreed to meet them at Bentley Priory on the Saturday for coffee and a chat. One of the volunteers very kindly took us into the Dowding Office which is only seen by the public behind a screen. Beside the Post Instrument in the corner I noticed the freestanding German Binoculars which were sent by President Eisenhower from Normandy to No 18 Group ROC Colchester to prove they had 'taken' the beach. On the Binoculars was a small display saying they had been sent to Bentley Priory. I have asked Chloe to see the label on the wooden box which gives the Colchester address. This she will do.

Neville, Cheryl and I have had much correspondence about the photograph of a lady in uniform and a notebook which uses similar terminology to the Corps in wartime, the documents showed she had a Foreign Office Pass. It has finally been decided that these belonged to a lady who was involved with the radar beacons. The donors have expressed the wish that we have these items for the Archive, supplying the family with pdf copies for posterity, Keith has equipment to do this. These pdfs will be offered to Cheryl for her contact on the subject in Scotland.

I was excited to hear from a member of the Normandy Beacon Lighting Commemorations in 2024 thinking this will be an opportunity for the Association to publicise our Seaborne

history. No doubt National Committee will take this forward so that we can have successful events around the country as for Her Majesty's Jubilee Celebrations.

Most will be aware that Her Majesty was presented with a solid silver Beacon Lighter on an oak base in 1977 to mark the occasion of her Silver Jubilee. This is presumably now in the Buckingham Palace Archive. However a further 6 copies were made in bronze as table decoration for HQ ROC and five for the Area Commandants. We cannot trace the location of the HQ ROC or the CAL Area statuettes. We do not wish to hold these but it would be helpful to know where they reside, please let us know if you can help.

A request came to the website from a member of the public in the area of Hucknall Post in Nottinghamshire asking for support for a campaign to stop a housing development, the area included the site of the Wartime ROC Post and the Underground Post which is still under a mound of earth. I have written 'To whom it may concern' setting out the history of the ROC. This is not an unusual occurrence, always greatly appreciated.

In the last few days a volunteer in the Education Department of the Shuttleworth Collection has asked for details of the 'block' used on wartime tables. I sent this to Andy Bowles at the Bury War Room who has made authentic replicas of everything for the wartime plotting table. He has immediately responded with a photograph and details. It is so very helpful when contacts respond quickly, if not it causes me valuable time to chase up – we also like to give a professional service in responding promptly.

It is our intention to take the National Display to the Cosford event following the success of last year. This year it will be on 11th June.

This is but a small selection of the communications with which we have been involved since the last report. Our thanks go again to Lawrence, Neville, Jim Mackie, Paul Wakefield and Andy Bowles for their continued support. Jim is continuing to painstakingly record any mention of the Corps on the National Newspaper website – the results are quite amazing.

Again I thank the Team, Paddy and Cheryl who do so much in their 'countries'. Jenny who is our liaison with National Committee. To Simon, John, Andrew and Keith who give me their unstinting support. My thanks would not be complete without thanking Diana who makes sense of my accounts and is often bearer of very good advice.

Edwina Holden.
20th January 2023.