

# OBITUARY FOR OBS/LT KEN ALGAR

The former Team Officer of the Plymouth NRC, Obs/Lt Ken Algar, aged 93 years, died on 29 January 2020 in Butterfly Lodge Care Home at St Budeaux, Plymouth. He had been suffering from dementia for several years. The Funeral Service took place on Monday 24 February 2020 at St Budeaux Methodist Church, Plymouth.

Some 45 people attended the service including about 20 ROCA and former NRC members. After the Service there was a short Cremation Service at Weston Mill Cemetery and Crematorium, Plymouth which only family members attended. The funeral service was conducted by the Rev Alison Richardson. After the Welcome, hymn and prayers, the Rev Alison read out the Eulogy, and Lawrence Holmes Chairman of 10 Group ROCA gave a 'Tribute to Ken' address. Afterwards there were light refreshments in the Church Hall adjoining which allowed many people to circulate and chat.



Kenneth Robert Algar was born on 4th July 1926 to Edith and Stanley Algar. He had an older brother Roy and a twin brother Francis, who sadly died when he was a baby. Aged 14 years, Ken left school and entered the Naval Dockyard as a yard boy. He went to Heaths, a local electrical firm, and started his apprenticeship which lasted for 7 years. This involved working in Plymouth docks to repair the war damage. In 1948, he re-entered the Dockyard as an electrical fitter eventually becoming an instructor in the training centre. As a boy he joined the ATC marching on The Hoe and playing his drum.

He joined the youth and badminton clubs and met Joyce as a teenager and marriage followed in 1950 which lasted for 69 years. In 1955 daughter Jeanette was born. Ken was involved in pantomimes, Leisure Clubs and became a keen archer. He arranged dances and social trips. Jeanette married Paul in 1978 and in 1986 grandson Andrew was born. Ken took the decision to take early retirement in 1987 and joined the Civil Service Motoring Association becoming a committee member, organising walks and pub lunches with fellow members. From 2015 Ken suffered increasingly from dementia and in 2019 entered a Care Home where he died after a long and fully occupied life.

## **Royal Observer Corps**

At an early age Ken Algar developed a keen interest in aircraft. He joined the National Association of Spotters' Clubs when he was 16 years old and became a 'Spotter' in the Plymouth Spotters Club in May 1942 where he gained a Third Class Certificate for correctly identifying no less than 80% of 65 types of aircraft in the Spotting tests. He left the NASC when it closed at the end of WW2. Ken joined the ROC on 5 November 1962 as an observer on the Q1 Plympton Post in 10 Group. In 1965 he was promoted to L/Obs but the Plympton Post closed in the October 1968 Reorganisation. In 1970 Ken was appointed Officer in Charge (Obs/Off) of the newly formed Special Duties Team (later to become the NRC) at Mount Wise, Plymouth.

Ken served as Team Officer for 16 years plotting bombs and plumes with his team of 16 observers. He gained his ROC Long Service Medal in 1974 and was promoted to Obs/Lt in 1980. Also in 1980 he was awarded the Lord Lieutenant of Devon's Certificate of Merit. Ken with wife Joyce attended a Buckingham Palace Garden Party and he was an Usher at the Westminster Abbey B of B Service on 18 September 1983. Ken was awarded his Clasp to ROC Medal in 1986. In that same year in July he reached the age of 60 years and had to retire as Officer at the Plymouth NRC.

Just before he retired he was awarded the AOC Strike Command Certificate of Merit in the Queen's Birthday Honours List June 1986. On 9 June 1987 Ken was awarded Imperial Service Medal as a Civil Servant and for services in Devonport Dockyard over 25 years. But the ROC was still in Ken's blood. He reverted to observer and served in that capacity on the Plymouth NRC until 1991 when he retired from the Corps having served 29 years. The Plymouth NRC finally closed in 1995.

In yet another strand to Ken's ROC life, he joined the Royal Observer Corps Association in 1986 and was a keen member right up to the date of his death. He was first a member of the Plymouth Branch and when that closed he joined the Tamar Branch. He served on the 10 Group ROCA committee and was Vice Chairman for many years. On 28 October 2017, on his retirement as Vice Chairman, Ken was appointed Honorary Vice President of 10 Group ROCA.

Ken was the original 'Friendly Mr Nice Guy', and everyone liked him. He would seldom have harsh words, he would praise and compliment. He was generous and was 1000% ROC, proud of his team, his branch and proud of his friends. Our thoughts are with wife Joyce, daughter Jeanette, son in law Paul and grandson Andrew. Rest peacefully Ken, in that 'Ops Room in the Sky'.

*(Obituary by Lawrence Holmes)*

