



ARMED FORCES DAY 2015 GUILDFORD



This year the National Armed Forces Day celebration was held in Stoke Park, Guildford. The ROCA Stand was manned by three Heritage Team members - **Edwina Holden**, **Simon Craine** and **John Shere**. We were helped by Andrew Ramek, a valuable No 7 Group Associate Member. Not in the picture is the No. 7 Group Standard Bearer, **Mike Quincey**, who was preparing for the March.



Setting up was more difficult this year. We arrived on Friday afternoon to find that space was limited, we managed to 'bag' the last serviceable table, fortunately only a few other organisations had arrived to set up early. We were next to the Borneo and Malayan Veterans Stand, I had a chat with their organiser as I had served in the Far East with the RAF and quickly found out that he had also served with the ROC in Horsham 12 Post. We realised that we were going to need a minimal display as all of our items would have to be carried out by hand after the event. You will recall the national security threat level had been raised as this was the day of terrible events in Tunisia, France and Kuwait. No cars were allowed to be parked in the park. We had expected electrical power and this we were assured would be provided overnight. We then set off back to our Premier Inn for a welcome meal and time to discuss how to put the world to rights.

The next morning we carried the GZI, the monitor and Simon's laptop into the park to complete our setting up. There was still no electrical wiring and clearly we would not get power. It seems the generator in technical terms had 'blown up!' The monitor and laptop were therefore redundant.

Standard Bearer Mike Quincey and I were in the Parade. The forming up area was described as being at the bottom of the High Street. I went to meet up with Mike and his wife Margaret and quickly realised that not only is this the bottom of a very steep hill but the High Street surface is all cobbles. This year the parade distance was about 1 1/2 miles, most of which was up the steep hill off the High Street. The story of 'The Grand Old Duke of York' came to mind! It was also a very hot day so in particular the Standard Bearers had a challenge. Just before we set off the Red Arrows flew over the town which must have been just after the end of the Church service. We finally set off uphill and were pleased that the band gave out a good drum beat almost all the way. The crowds lining the street this year were massive and their applause and response was fantastic. Of course there was also a huge Police and security presence. We finally got into the arena and needed the bottles of water that were handed out. As we arrived the VIP's on the stage were announced. The Prime Minister, Defence Minister and wait for it - the current Duke of York. Mike did well to carry the Standard all that distance and Margaret managed to get photographs of us in the Parade.

We had plenty of visitors to our stand. Edwina spoke to a lady who had served in Horsham Group and had never heard of the ROCA - another prospective member? She also met Johnson Beharry who is the only serving Victoria Medal holder. I had a long conversation with an ex Policeman. He remembered very well speaking to Horsham Warning Keyboard Operators during WARMON exercises. We had each never met someone who had been at the other end of the line. I could show him on a photograph on the Banner where the Warning Keyboard was located in a Group Control. He later became the County Police War Duties Officer and was responsible for all the sirens and Warning Points. It seems that after 1993 the sirens started to be removed and a number of hand sirens were unofficially sold for £5. This had to stop when Police chiefs had reports of people 'testing' the sirens during parties in their gardens. The Police were to destroy them and our visitor remembers smashing many of them up with a sledge hammer. He did of course save one of these for himself.

*Report by: **John Shere***









Mike Quincey carries the ROCA National Standard



John Shere can be seen just behind the red berets

After a very busy hot day we packed up all the display and carried it back on another long walk to the cars which we had left in the hotel car park for the day. We discussed how we wished that Simon had a lightweight plastic GZI! A Heritage project for next year? We have now ordered a lightweight folding table for events so that we are independent of any problems with organisers in future. This event was a challenge but we all agreed that we had enjoyed each other's company which was reminiscent of our happy days in the Corps.

Photos taken by: [Margaret Quincey](#)

Report by: [John Shere](#)

