



CDA Journal

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'Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow'



Commemorating
the
Fiftieth Anniversary of the Disbandment
of the
Civil Defence Corps
and
Auxiliary Fire Service

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Front Cover Picture: *We were delighted to welcome eight members of Isle of Man Civil Defence to this year's CDA Commemoration at the National Memorial Arboretum.*

Photograph: *Joyce Kermeen*



EDITORIAL

Welcome to the August 2018 issue of the CDA Journal.

It is hard to believe that it is fifty years since the disbandment of the Civil Defence Corps and the Auxiliary Fire Service. The concept of Civil Defence did not end in 1968, indeed it is alive and well, as is evidenced for example by the attendance this year of the Isle of Man Civil Defence and the cadets of the Joint Civil Aid Corps and St. John Ambulance. The recent rescue of ten youngsters from a deep cave in Thailand by a team lead by British Cave Rescuers shows the value of trained and experienced volunteers the world over.

A unique unveiling took place in London earlier in the year with the dedication of a memorial to three Fire Guards who lost their lives in the early part of World War Two. It is heartening to learn that the sacrifice made by these men has not been forgotten. It is also another example of a community coming together to remember these local volunteers.

The story of the Joint War Organisation (JWO) of British Red Cross Society and the St. John Ambulance is told within these pages. Your Editor has a special reason to record their work during WW2 as his late father was a member of the BRC element of the JWO in Leicester. I was informed that during the Blitz on that city, he was taking casualties to hospital when a bomb exploded not far from away from the ambulance.

This year also marks the eightieth anniversary of the founding of the Institute of Civil Defence. This body, the world's first learned society dedicated to the science and practice of civil defence, was created through the determination of a number of public spirited people that Britain should never face the prospect of aerial attack as unprotected against its effects as the citizens of Spain during their Civil War. When the threat of war on a European scale arose, Spain became the test bed for those who wished to see better preparations. Although the threats have changed over the ensuing years, it is still in existence as the Institute of Civil Protection and Emergency Management.

Graham Whitehead



GDPR

The General Data Protection Regulation or GDPR, came into effect on 25th May 2018. The aim of this legislation is to protect us all from privacy and data breaches within an increasingly data-driven world.

We wish to assure you that the CDA will continue to take the utmost care of the data held.

CDA ANNUAL COMMEMORATION 2018

The weather was kind and as usual the NMA staff were most helpful but several members and guests couldn't be with us either because of their own 'Anno Domini' or illness of relatives.

However, we were delighted that 8 members from the Isle of Man, including their standard bearer, were able to be with us. We were also joined by groups of cadets from our unit in Milton Keynes and from the local St. John Ambulance Brigade.

As usual we started in The Chapel with prayers to remember the Civil Defence casualties of WWII and since, and those who serve today.

Entries were unveiled for CDA members who had died since last year namely: Ronald McDonald, Ronald Bubb, Patricia Andrews BEM, Winifred Haley and Peter Winter. We also remembered CDA Committee Member Leslie Wooler who founded Berwick Coastwatch and former Staffordshire Chief Fire Officer Alan Doig who had given us great support in our early days both of whom had died recently. Included in our prayers, led by our Chaplain, Rev Richard Walsh, were all those who have assisted in the many tragedies both here and abroad during that last year.

After reading the letter received from HM The Queen, our President presented Stewart and Joyce Kermeen with a Certificate of Appreciation for their joint 47 years service to the Isle of Man Civil Defence Corps. Also kept secret was that we were honoured to have been asked to present Johnnie Sayle with his CD Long Service medal Clasp for 27 years service. It was suggested that nobody here on the mainland could have qualified for a Long Service clasp.



l to r: Tim Essex-Lopresti, Stewart & Joyce Kermeen, Sir Graham Meldrum



*Johnnie Sayle, Isle of Man Civil Defence,
awarded the Clasp to his Civil Defence Long Service Medal*

Circumstances had delayed the arrival of Dennis Fisher, our Chairman until our March 2018 AGM, so we were most relieved that he arrived just in time to receive his Certificate of Appreciation. Several members of his family had brought him and heard how Dennis had given continuous service to the CD Corps, The Institute, Civil Aid and the International Civil Defence Organisation as well as to the CDA. At our garden he handed over to Patrick Stanton the Chairman's role of laying our wreath at the 1949-68 Memorial.

Our theme this year was the 50th Anniversary of the Stand-Down of the CD Corps and Auxiliary Fire Service so members had been invited to send in, or present in person, their memories of service.

Our President had been with the London Fire Service prior to 1968 and recounted just how close they had been to their AFS colleagues. They had trained together and been called out together – both red appliances and Green Goddesses together. Their support was missed when they were stood down.

On behalf of Graham Whitehead his memories of service in the early 1960s in Worcester were outlined as were several of those in Birmingham by Tim Essex-Lopresti. Simon Hill recounted his experiences of Eric Alley who had arranged for Simon to instruct at courses when Eric was at both the ICDO in Geneva and the Home Office here in the UK. These were, of course, much later than 1968 but



Dennis Fisher pictured after receiving the CDA's Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of his lifetime commitment to Civil Defence

highlighted Eric's continuing dedication to Civil Defence having a peacetime role as well as wartime.

Ken Dexter was persuaded to read his wife, Sue's, memories of her service in Birmingham. The memory of 2 other Birmingham CD ladies of acting as casualties at a train crash exercise when one of them took along her 10 month old daughter was also reported. That girl now has nearly grown-up children of her own!

The first wreath at our WWII memorial was again laid by our President and at the Animal stone by Anthony Stanton and Holly Meldrum-Jones.

Others laid wreathes there not least by Mike Pell of the PDSA who have supported us since the beginning. As mentioned earlier, Dennis Fisher and Patrick Stanton laid our wreath at the 1949-68 Memorial.

The last wreath on our plot was laid by Jack Bamford GC, supported by Lady Meldrum, at our GC Tree. We were delighted that Jack wished to be with us again this year.

As always, wreaths were laid at the Fire Service Memorial in the adjacent plot.

Photo Credits: Keith Gregory, Stewart & Joyce Kermeen & Eva Deligianni-Stanton



Sir Graham Meldrum lays the CDA wreath at the WW2 Memorial



Anthony Stanton & Holly Meldrum-Jones leave the Animal Memorial after laying their wreath



Mike Pell representing the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) at the Animal Memorial



Jack Bamford GC supported by Lady Meldrum lays a wreath at the George Cross Memorial

Leslie Wooler - RIP

As mentioned on page 5, CDA Committee Member, Leslie, died recently. He was the inspiration behind Coastwatch Berwick and it's Leader. We send his wife, Moi, and his family & friends our very best wishes as they come to terms with this tragic loss. Hopefully a full tribute will be available for the next issue.





Standard Bearers from participating organisations approach the Memorials



Patrick Stanton lays the CDA wreath at the Fire Service Memorial



*Civil Defenders of the future.
Standard Bearers from the Joint Civil Aid Corps, Milton Keynes*

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I was very interested in Professor Chinn's article, in May 2018 Journal, concerning those brave souls , the Volunteer Wardens of Birmingham, who went, without a moment's hesitation, into areas where there were undoubted horrors and personal danger to rescue and save those in mortal danger.

Whenever I give talks on either the Home Guard or St Pauls Cathedral during WW2, whether it be to school children or to a coffee morning one thing I explain to them is that the home defences were a giant pyramid. The government at the top and then layer upon layer of those teams of people of whom a lot were trained to deal with specific tasks during, say, an air raid. Whether it be the ARP Wardens, the Royal Observer Corps, the AFS or indeed the Home Guard there were times when members carried tasks outside of their allotted training or purpose without a moment's hesitation as Professor Chinn described with examples such as Amelia Johnston who without having any of the right equipment let alone the training did her best to try and get to and rescue those eight people!

One man whose efforts were only partially successful paid the ultimate sacrifice when he lost his life trying to rescue others. He was Section Commander G.W. Inwood, 10th Birmingham Batt. Warwickshire Home Guard.

On the night of the 15/16th October 1940, he was asked by the Police to assist in trying to rescue some people from a cellar. Taking charge of 6 volunteers, he found that there were a number of people trapped in a gas-filled cellar. Upon making a hole Section Commander Inwood was lowered on a rope into the cellar whereupon he managed to get two unconscious men out but going into the cellar a third time he was overcome and even with the assistance of a Doctor and nurse he didn't recover and died the next day.

They undoubtedly didn't have the right tools to get to these poor souls and certainly couldn't wait for the right team to attend the scene as they were dealing with hundreds of similar cases throughout Birmingham that night but yet again they made the immediate decision to assist as time was against them.

Section Leader G.W. Inwood was awarded the George Cross, posthumously, which is on show at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

Time and again men and women of the Home Defences showed during WW2 that they were prepared to go over and above their own duties for the common good and that was saving lives. They should be proud of what they did and we should be ever thankful that they were there and prepared to do what they did.

David G.P. Morse

MEMORIAL TO FIREGUARDS WALTHAMSTOW, LONDON

On a beautiful day on 19th April around 300 people gathered in probably the most picturesque turning in Walthamstow to view the unveiling of an unusual memorial. This memorial is to 3 Fireguards who were tragically killed by a German parachute mine in World War 2.



The unveiling of the Memorial to 3 Fireguards who gave their lives during WW2

What was ironic about this incident was that the 3 volunteer heroes were immediate neighbours living at 30, 31 and 32 Beacontree Avenue. They were William Shadbolt, aged 34, Sidney John Lee, aged 50 and Edward Manning aged 57.

There were many displays and vehicles from that era and a WW2 turntable ladder fire engine was at its full working height. Along with the London Bomb Disposal team complete with a replica German parachute mine and a demonstration on defusing a German bomb which had dropped on Streatham during WW2 and which gladly turned out to be a dud.

There was also the earliest WW2 restored ambulance, Civil Defence & Royal Engineers Re-enactors who were happily milling amongst the enthralled public. Along with the fire engine were the Fire Service Preservation Team, dressed in complete uniform from that period.

At 12:30 we were roused by 2 pipers from the Stow Caledonian Pipe Band who played "The Green hills of Tyrell" and "Amazing Grace".

Neil Pearce, who organised the event welcomed everyone and explained that the unveiling would be performed by Rosemary Reuter, William Shadbolt's daughter who was born 10 weeks after her Father died.

We then had 4 buglers from the 17th PALS Battalion Band who started with "Firecall" and Reverend Paul Trathen, from St Peter's in the Forest, gave a lovely speech about how these men had set an example on what neighbours should be.

Rosemary read a beautiful statement on how surprised she was that her dear Father was being remembered after all this time, along with grateful thanks to Neil and Sally Pearce for all their endeavours and hard work.

Rosemary then unveiled the memorial whilst the buglers played "The Last Post", this being allowed as the elder 2 of the Fireguards were WW1 Veterans. The Standards (Flags) of The Fire Brigade Retired Members Association & Walthamstow Royal British Legion were lowered.

The proceedings then came to end but the fun and interest continued for several more hours.

How did we know about this event that occurred 77 years ago to the day?

William Howard, aged 93, told the story to Neil Pearce about how his father William Howard Snr, had been part of this Fireguard team. He had just changed shift and had returned home, when he heard a loud explosion. He rushed back to where he had left his colleagues to discover that 3 of them had been killed.

Another neighbour and fireguard, Walter Wickens, from 29 Beacontree, suffered a shrapnel wound to his hand along with Edward Church from 36 Beacontree had his arm amputated following injuries sustained in the explosion.



The Fireguard Memorial

Neil suggested to Bill Howard that maybe they should put some sort of memorial or plaque to commemorate this tragic event. This was particularly close to Neil's heart as he himself was a retired London Firefighter with 29 years' service.



A WW2 Turntable ladder fire engine on display

With a generous contribution from neighbours, Neil and Sally Pearce set about obtaining permission to place the memorial on the exact spot where the explosion occurred. This took over 18 months and with the help of Chris Robbins, who was Leader of Waltham Forest Council at the time, and the tremendous encouragement and assistance from Ron Presswell from the Planning department; the plan finally came to fruition on this glorious sunny day.

This event was broadcast on ITV London lunchtime and evening news and also BBC London.

Neil Pearce

Photo credits: Neil Pearce



FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL TRUST THANKSGIVING SERVICE 2018



The annual Act of Thanksgiving and a celebration for the work of the Fire & Rescue Services was held on Sunday 13 May 2018 at the National Memorial Arboretum. The CDA was represented at this important event. Wreaths were laid at our 1949-68 Memorial by the Fire Services.

ROYAL OBSERVER CORPS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL COMMEMORATION 2018

In response to the invitation from the Royal Air Forces Association to participate in their Centenary Service, celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Formation of the Royal Air Force, the annual gathering of ROCA this year was held on Sunday 13 May 2018 at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Wreaths were laid at the RAFA Grove and the proceedings came to a close with a splendid multi-pass display by a Spitfire of the RAF Memorial Flight.



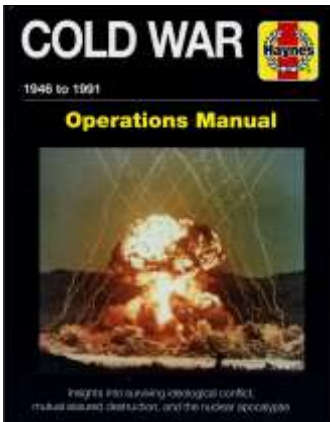
The usual gathering of ROCA members followed, after lunch, when the National and Group Standards marched down the ROCA Grove between the Hawthorn trees. National Chairman John Sharpe and National Secretary Jenny Morris led the

short Service of Remembrance with members assembled round the ROCA Memorial Headstone.

With thanks to Jenny Morris



BOOK SHELF



Cold War: 1946-91 (Operations Manual)

The Cold War emerged after the Second World War as a nuclear stand-off between the superpowers of the USA and its NATO allies, and the Soviet Union and its east European Warsaw Pact allies.

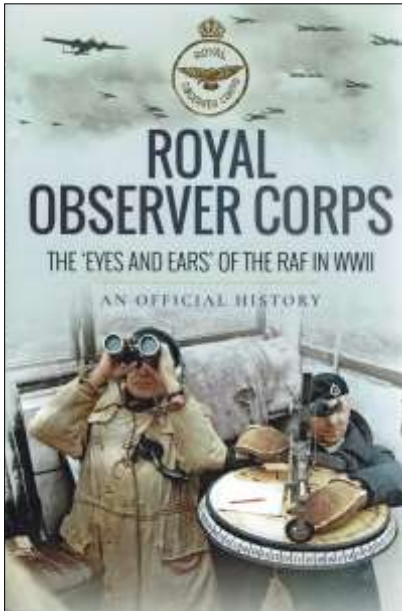
The accepted dates for the Cold War are 1947 to 1991, the year in which the Communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe collapsed and the world witnessed the formal dissolution of the USSR, leaving the USA as the world's only superpower. In those intervening years the world had come dangerously close to nuclear Armageddon on several occasions.

Comprehensively illustrated and includes details of Civil Defence preparations.

Author: Pat Ware Published by Haynes 160 pages Hardback
ISBN-10: 178521053X ISBN-13: 978-1785210532
Price (Amazon):: £21.34

Royal Observer Corps *The 'Eyes and Ears' of the RAF in WW2*

This Official History is a 'must read' for those who are even slightly interested in the Royal Observer Corps. For those who are definitely interested it is an essential read.



The 'Royal' prefix was approved in 1941 and the Observer Corps provided a vital link in counting the numbers and types of German aircraft

The book outlines the history of the organisation to the end of WWII in eleven chapters and there are ten Comprehensive Appendices to help the reader. (ROC Headquarters at Bentley Priory eventually stood down on 31st March 1996)

It tells the story from origins in 1914-15 until 12th May 1945. By this time the strength of the Royal Observer Corps was over 32,000 and some 1400 Posts kept all the sky in Great Britain under observation.

Members of the Corps were highly skilled and of particular interest they were successfully installed for Operation Overlord on merchant ships. They identified aircraft with the idea of anti aircraft firing solely on German aircraft, not our

own.

The importance and relevance of the Royal Observer Corps becomes evident on reading the book and it will grace any bookshelf.

Hardcover: 232 pages

Publisher: Frontline Books (26 Feb. 2018)

ISBN-10: 152672488X

ISBN-13: 978-1526724885

Price: £19.99

With thanks to Frank Dickens

WHITE HELMETS—Syria



Just as this issue was going to press there were reports in the press and on TV that some of the White Helmet members and their families had been rescued from Southern Syria into Jordan via Israel. It was reported that they will be migrating to settle in the UK, Canada and Germany. An article about this group and their founder, James Le Mesurier, is planned for later in the year.

CIVIL DEFENCE AND THE JOINT WAR ORGANISATION

Before the Second World War, the government set up a Civil Defence service to cope with the effects of enemy bombing. 90,000 St. John Ambulance and British Red Cross members joined, and the Joint War Organisation helped in a number of ways. The original term for Civil Defence was ARP (Air Raid Precautions). It changed in September 1941.



Mobile Unit clearing casualties following an air raid

It was important that the rescue, care and treatment of people was organised at a local level, so it was Local Authorities that took on the task. They organised a system where, when a bomb dropped, it was reported to a local centre, casualties were searched for, ambulance transport arranged, and injured people were taken to a first aid post.

Civil Defence covered lots of other types of work. There were wardens, firemen, rescuers, who searched through rubble for survivors, telephone operators, messengers, and policemen.

Joint War Organisation members drove ambulances, were stretcher-bearers, ran mobile units, and made up first aid parties. They manned casualty stations and first aid posts, such as those in London Underground stations being used as air raid shelters.

The Joint War Organisation also sent medical supplies, blankets and pillows to shelters, and set up rest houses for people who had been bombed out of their homes. The Central Hospital Supplies Service sent things like pyjamas and bandages to civilian hospitals.



An emergency flying column

Members who joined the Civil Nursing Reserve also dealt mainly with the victims of air raids.

The Joint War Organisation also ran Emergency Flying Columns throughout the Blitz. These were air raid emergency services that had a first aid car, one or two ambulances, a mobile canteen, a supply van, a staff car and a motorcycle.

By the time the Blitz ended there were about 1,500,000 members of the Civil Defence services. The work of these



Emergency sleeping accommodation



Casualty Reception. D Zinkeisen 1942

men and women was essential in helping the public cope with air raids, keeping up morale and protecting essential services as far as was possible.

With acknowledgements to British Red Cross Society and St. John Ambulance



EVENTS—2018

Saturday 25 August WW2 Living History Weekend

Eden Camp, Yorks

Sunday 9 September Firefighters International Service of Remembrance

St. Sepulchre-without-Newgate,
London

Sunday 9 September All Services Parade

Eden Camp, Yorks

Sunday 16 September Battle of Britain Service

Westminster Abbey, London
(ROCA participation)

Saturday 20 October Palestine Veterans Association Reunion

Eden Camp, Yorks

Saturday 3 November Wreath Laying

11.30am, CD Memorial, The NMA

Thursday 8 November Field of Remembrance

Westminster Abbey

Sunday 11 November Remembrance Sunday

Saturday 17 November WW2 Living History Weekend

Eden Camp, Yorks

Saturday 24 November WW2 Living History Weekend

Eden Camp, Yorks

CDA East Midlands Branch

The East Midlands Branch hold meetings in and around Lincoln. All CDA members and supporters are cordially invited to attend.

For more information contact:

Patrick Stanton, Co-ordinator

Tel: 01205 280144

E-mail: pstanton280@btinternet.com

Birmingham Air Raids Remembrance Association

Meetings are held every third Thursday of the month at 12 noon. Updates on Association projects, tea and a chat. Venue: Cophthorne Hotel, Queensway, Birmingham. All welcome.

Contact:

Barbara Johnson 0121-749-2009

It may be of some comfort and reassurance for next of kin of deceased CDA members to know that arrangements can be made for a Civil Defence coffin flag to be despatched, often at quite short notice, to be used at the funeral. Please be assured that such a request will be handled with sensitivity and discretion.

In such instances, the Secretary should be contacted on:

01629 55738.

Members and Families may also like to know that Deceased Members of the CDA have been added to the roll of the Perpetual Mass Association at the Benedictine Monastery of the Holy Cross in Chicago. Thus they will share in the spiritual benefits of the monthly mass and the daily office of the monks.

ST GEORGES DAY, WEST MALLING KENT

On Monday 23 April 2018, members of the Civil Defence Association joined forces with the Royal Society of St George for a series of events in West & East Malling, Kent, to mark St George's Day.

Photo credits: Andy Smith



Pictured left to right: Stuart Millson, Andy Smith, Patrick Tootal.



Pictured left to right: David Bonshor, Andy Smith

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