



CDA Journal

No. 74 February 2021

ISSN 1479-6856

'Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow'



In this Issue:

Bookshelf

**Gloucestershire's Cold War Bunker
Remembrance 2020**

The Story of Reporting Post 12 (pt 2)

Civil Defence Association

President:
Vice-President
Chaplain:

Sir Graham Meldrum CBE QFSM FIFireE
Mrs Didy Grahame OBE MVO
Rev. Richard Walsh

Chairman: Colin Harmsworth
20 Crowborough Lane
Kents Hill
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK7 6HF
01908 559177
co@jcac.org.uk

Committee Members:
Malcolm Bidder
Martin Blackburn
Sue Dexter
Terry Hissey
Andy Smith
Philip Stead
Alex Woodward

Vice-Chairman/Journal Editor:
Graham Whitehead
4 Whitehorse Close
Lower Wick
Worcester WR2 4EB
01905 429694
cdajournal@btinternet.com

CD Memorial Gardeners
East Midlands Branch

Standard Bearer:
Nick Ridsdale

Secretary: Tim Essex-Lopresti
24, Paxton Close
Matlock
Derbyshire DE4 3TD
01629 55738
aedissel@btinternet.com

Collections Officer
Alex Woodward
cdacollections@gmail.com

Treasurer: Kevin Knight
24, High Ridge
Matlock
Derbyshire DE4 3HP
01629 584142
knightowls@btopenworld.com

Web-site Editor
Colin Harmsworth
co@jcac.org.uk'

Facebook Administrator
Philip Stead
admin@outdoorsandafloat.co.uk

Bank: Lloyds, Boston
30-91-04, a/c 01208688

Press Officer
Andy Smith
wordsmithreviews@yahoo.co.uk

The Civil Defence Association Journal is published four times a year. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the CDA.

The Editor welcomes articles, photographs etc. for inclusion. Articles may be submitted either handwritten or (preferably) typed or in Microsoft Word format.

Copy deadline for next issue is 15 April 2021.

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The CDA Journal is printed and published by the Civil Defence Association
24 Paxton Close, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3TD, England.

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Front Page Photograph: The CDA Wreath prior to its being placed at the foot of the Cenotaph, in Whitehall, London for Remembrance Sunday, 2020.

A photograph of the Cenotaph following the placing of wreaths by other organisations appears on Page 6 of this issue of the CDA Journal.

It is a great pity, that due to the pandemic, the centenary of this iconic and very special national monument could only be commemorated in a way which took into account the national restrictions in place at the time.

Photo: Terry Hissey

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the 74th issue of the CDA Journal.

Well, the new year has started and we are still in the grip of the Cov-19 pandemic. Many thousands of people are working behind the scenes i.e. medical researchers, pharmaceutical companies, NHS, Armed Forces, the Care Sector, volunteers from many organisations, and local and national government. All dedicated to not only halting the spread of this dreadful virus but undertaking the process of testing and now issuance of a vaccine to hopefully protect those citizens who are particularly at risk.

I'm sure you will agree with me that we owe a particular debt of gratitude to those who are working in the 'front line' and are daily putting themselves at risk to help those patients living through this nightmare. The good news must be that testing has now been rolled out, and as I write this missive, vaccination has started, firstly aimed at those who are most vulnerable.

Against all the odds, the CDA was represented at a number of Remembrance 2020 events. I am indeed most grateful to those who managed to obtain a photographic record of their attendance. They include, Colonel Sir Neil Thorne, Amanda Harmsworth, Terry Hissey, Nick Hill and Moi Wooler.

An important event will take place this year to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the granting of the style and title of 'Royal' to the Observer Corps in 1941. His Majesty King George VI conferred it in recognition of the Corps' outstanding contribution during the Battle of Britain.

The 'Events' section has temporarily moved to Page 20. Please note that at the time of publication, all those events listed are subject to necessary pandemic restrictions. Readers are therefore strongly recommended to contact the organisers before making final plans to participate.

Please do continue to take care, stay safe, and look after one another.

Graham Whitehead



OBITUARY

Ronald William Gardner



Ronald William Gardner passed away on 25 September 2020, aged 79 years, in hospital, after contracting Covid-19.

Ronald was born in West London in 1941.

Upon leaving school, he attended Technical college until the age of nearly 17 when he left to find employment. He first started out as an Electricians mate for about 18 months, then changed employment to an electrical contractors in West Ealing. He made a further change to a Combustion Engineers in Perivale, Greenford. Due to expansion of the factory they eventually built a new assembly and plate shop, and he was given the grand task of designing and installing .

It was in 1963 that he got married and had 4 children, boy, girl and twin girls.

It was during his time with the company, that he started to become interested in the AFS,

Ronald served in the Auxiliary Fire

Service in 1960 and in June 1966, He joined the London Fire Service.

He did his 3 months training at the Finchley training school and his first posting was to Ealing Fire Station, his old stomping ground. He took and passed his Leading Fireman's written and practical exam while stationed at Ealing. He transferred to Heston Fire Station in Hounslow in 1969, took his Turntable ladder operators course and also the Emergency Tender. Heston at that time was the only station in the LFB with 5 appliances.

In 1972 he was promoted to substantive Leading Fireman and posted to Harrow Fire Station.. While at Harrow he took and passed his Sub. Officers exams, got promoted to that rank and posted to Ruislip Fire Station.

Following 20 years service, he passed the Station Officers exam. In 1986 he was promoted to Station Officer and posted to Wembley a Divisional HQ Station. He retired in March, 1991.

The funeral was held on Friday 16 October, 2020. At the family's request, the CDA flag was draped on the coffin,

He leaves his partner, Lesley, his son, Anthony, daughters, Louise, Carolyn and Joanne, and 4 grandchildren.

His name will be recorded in the CDA Book of Remembrance.

May He Rest In Peace.

*With appreciation to his daughter,
Louise for additional information
and photograph.*

REMEMBRANCE 2020

Westminster Abbey, London



Colonel Sir Neil Thorne managed to gain access to the Westminster Abbey Field of Remembrance with the help of a man from the Poppy Factory.

The Cenotaph, Whitehall, London



Civil Defence Memorial, The National Memorial Arboretum



The wreath laying party at the Civil Defence Memorial, The National Memorial Arboretum

From left to right:

Terry Hissey, CDA.

Rui de Sousa, National Deputy CO, JCAC.

Colin Harmsworth, Chairman, CDA & CO, JCAC.

Chris Carnegie, Deputy ACO & Deputy Director, Training Development, JCAC.

Berwick on Tweed



John Naylor, Station Manager, Berwick Coastwatch was able to lay their wreath at the Cenotaph in Berwick High Street, Moi Wooler has taken a few photos.

A very different Sunday for us all it was that's for sure - it was good to see the ceremony on the BBC, we held our 2 minutes silence in Church early as we are open for individual private prayer for an hour each week and thankfully made it back home in time for 1100hrs.

*Stephen Simon,
Berwick Coastwatch*

Eden Camp, Yorks

Nick Hill, Manager, Eden Camp has sent a photo – which features his alter ego 'Dan the ARP', one of his staff members and one of their supporters. (both ex-HM Forces.)

He said "Whilst sadly we were unable to have any public remembrance day ceremonies this year as a result of being closed, we still wanted to pay tribute and remember all those that our museum represents. Therefore we laid three wreaths on the Eden camp Cenotaph:

One on behalf of members of HM forces, one on behalf of all civilian organisations and services that have worked in support of the military and one on behalf of all civilians affected by conflict and war."



THE STORY OF REPORTING POST 12 (SOUTHWARK)

Background

Information can be found in the November 2020 Edition of the CDA Journal.

IV. Preparing—1940 (continued)

the positions for the IO's post from which operations would be conducted, and for parking services and casualty loading grounds. These were usually worked out in the Post on the Area map, and woe betide the IO who did not know his ground, for he might discover on arriving at the site that the road was so narrow that after allowing for debris there was no room for one-way traffic, or that the place chosen for loading ambulances would not provide sufficient room. Having arrived, the IO would set up his post, indicated in daytime by a light blue flag, or at night-time by two blue lamps, and then Post Wardens at strategic points either to stop traffic from entering or to guide services into the scene of the occurrence. At zero hour the report would be despatched to the Post by runner, and a lookout placed for the reception of the first service to arrive. In the distance a rumbling is heard, and very quickly the Services loom out of the night.

The leader of each party reports to the IO and is given a brief resume of the incident; vehicles are parked in prearranged positions, and further Services are sent for as required. Sometimes a Warden posted at a vital point will wander off "to have a quick one" and, to the horror of the IO, Services are seen heading along roads which are "blocked" for the purpose of the exercise, either by imaginary craters or unexploded bombs. It is probable, at this moment, that the Chief Warden and other officials arrive, and hasty explanations are concocted in the hope that they will be accepted. However, the Chief Warden expresses his satisfaction with the layout, and eventually all Services are dismissed. Often the Post would be asked to send Wardens to act as casualties in large scale exercises, in which the injured would be lowered from second and third storey buildings securely trussed to a stretcher. Another time they would be loaded on to barges. The cross-talk between rescuers and rescued had to be heard to be believed. This particular duty soon became unpopular, as Wardens objected to lying in broken down houses for long periods waiting to be dealt with, and it eventually fell almost entirely upon the paid staff, who were not able to state their views so emphatically as the volunteers. The Post also conducted its own exercises in Iliffe Yard, when small huts were set on fire, much to the annoyance of the occupants of the adjoining flats. Time was not devoted entirely to exercises. Most Wardens went through their incendiary bomb training, and to supplement this the Post held stirrup-pump competitions in co-operation with local Fire Guard parties, whom they nearly always managed to defeat.

The social side was not neglected, and under the guidance of Warden F. C. Blainey, secretary, a Social Committee catered for darts, billiards and snooker, at most of which the Post managed to hold its own. Dances and social evenings, shared with Wardens from other Posts, helped to pass away many a pleasant hour. In addition, the magazine ("The ARP ") which was a feature of Group G.4, continued to be issued in monthly parts. Unfortunately, after the seventh publication in June, 1940, it

was discontinued, owing to increasing duties, a slackening in support, and to the shortage of materials. It had, however, reached a circulation of about 70 copies (including the Imperial War Museum), and its contributors included the Chief Warden, the Mayor, and the M.P. for Southwark Central. Much is owed to Warden H. Hollingdale, who performed the difficult task of Editor.

As the year 1940 lengthened into early summer, the "phoney war" flared up, and Germany began to move. Holland and Belgium were invaded, and on May 10 the Government announced the official cancellation of the Whitsuntide holiday. Evacuation of school children and teachers increased, and refugees from the Low Countries began to pour into the country. On May 12, the following message was circulated to all Posts: "Members of C D Services who see parachutists should immediately report to the police." Anthony Eden issued an appeal for the formation of the Local Defence Volunteer Corps, later known as the Home Guard. In three days the Wardens' Service of Southwark issued and fitted 75,000 context filters for civilian respirators.

At the beginning of June, cards were issued to each householder giving details of local Wardens' Posts, First Aid Centres and Fire Brigades, together with instructions for use in air raids. Of these, over 3,000 were completed by and distributed from Post 12. Early in the same month, instructions were given that stirrup pumps should be widely distributed over the Post area, and that all signs and notices indicating the positions of Wardens' Posts were to be removed at once. On June 7, the first preliminary air raid message came through at 23.40 hours, and was followed by two others at 01.50 and 02.40. The first air raid warning in Southwark since the first week of the war was sounded at 01.00 on the morning of June 24, 1940. Full-time paid Wardens who had hitherto been performing a daily eight hours' duty, followed by a four hours' stand-by, were now instructed to work a full 12 (men) and 8 (women) hour day. Wardens were asked to report conspicuous stationary lights and the unauthorised use of rockets and flares during air raid alerts.

Numerous reports of this nature flooded the Post, and with perhaps one or two exceptions much time was spent in fruitless investigation. On August 8, the Battle of Britain commenced, with heavy enemy air attacks on ports and coastal districts, followed by attacks on first line fighter and bomber airdromes. The enemy had lost 697 aircraft in the ten days ending August 18, when the second phase of the attack began on aircraft stations nearer to London. This concluded on Friday, September 6. During this period, August 8 to September 6, fifty-one air raid warnings were recorded in the Post Log Book. Apart from these daylight attacks, enemy aircraft had been over the outlying parts of the capital at night, but no bombs had been dropped. The first general attack on London was on the night of August 24, and was followed by other armed reconnaissance raids on August 30 and September 5 and 6.

The first bomb dropped in Southwark fell on the night of September 5, causing a large fire in the vicinity of Falmouth Road, near the Elephant and Castle. The third phase of the attack, the assault on London proper, commenced on Saturday, September 7.

V. The Blitz—— 1940

“Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.” Winston Churchill

Except for preliminary air raid warning messages at 02.55 and 11.32 hours, Saturday, September 7, opened like any other autumnal day on which the sun shone with the heat of summer. In the late afternoon, Londoners glanced skyward, where small specks gyrated, moving the while in an easterly direction. At 16.58 hours the bombing of London had begun, and with it the third phase of the enemy's attack. Three hundred and seventy-five bombers and fighters set out from Western Europe to attack and subdue London that hot afternoon; of these, approximately 200 reached the capital in waves of twenty to forty bombers at twenty-minute intervals. Diversionary attacks were also made on coastal regions and shipping. Action stations at Post 12 were manned, but gradually the invaders passed out of sight, pursued by small groups of our fighters. At 19.39 hours the all clear sounded, and Wardens returned to their homes. It was then that they noticed a large black cloud rising slowly in the east. It grew and its base was tinged with red. Rapidly it passed from one to another—“The Docks!”

We knew then that at last London's ordeal had begun. A late tea was taken with few words; in everybody's mind was the question will they come back? The question was answered at 20.33 hours when once again the warning wailed. In less than fifteen minutes, a messenger ran panting into the Post—“Fire at the Baths!” Almost immediately six other reports followed, and Wardens went promptly into action. With the exception of the Baths, where two incendiaries had lodged high up in the roof, all fires had been dealt with in fifteen minutes. With the arrival of the AFS, the fire at the Baths was also disposed of. Meantime, the glow in the east grew with intensity as the shadows of night began to fall; by dusk the sky was a bright orange glare. At 23.05, further reports came in; fires had been discovered in Crampton Street, Steedman Street and Amelia Street. In seven minutes all had been dealt with. Returning from one of these fires, the attention of two Wardens was drawn to yet a further fire burning unobserved in the roof of a block of shops with two storey flats above them at the Newington Butts end of Crampton Street. Investigation showed that the top floor was well alight, and that the fire was spreading to the staircase. A request was sent through for Fire Brigade assistance, and in the meantime a search was made for occupants, but the place was empty.

By 23.15 the fire was getting a strong hold, and the adjoining houses were therefore evacuated. Large numbers of idle sightseers made the work of the Wardens difficult. Soon after, the AFS arrived, but despite their efforts, the fire grew, and with a roar and a crackle of defiance, spread to the adjoining property. Additional pumps were sent for and arrived, volunteers helping to run out the hose. By this time Police had cleared the road, and as the heat was getting intense, further houses were evacuated. Premises at the rear, containing furniture and stocks of bedding, became involved, and further pumps were requested. Surroundings streets were lit with a lurid glow and the dock fires in the east paled into insignificance. At midnight, fifteen pumps were in action but the Brigade had the fire under control. Such Wardens as could then be spared returned in relays to the Post for much-needed

cups of tea. About 01.00 hours, two of these Wardens, one a Deputy, were standing outside the Post exchanging experiences, when suddenly they heard the approach of a bomb. They immediately dived into the Post, and had no sooner done so than a thunderous explosion rent the air. Lights went out, ceilings fell, and glass crashed. Wardens preparing tea were blown from one room into another. Bricks and timber fell in showers into the road. A thick fog hid everything, and brick dust settled in eyes, hair and mouth.

From the debris came cries of "Warden!" and "Help!". With difficulty the Post door was forced open and promptly fell off its hinges. The scene in Amelia Street was indescribable. Less than eight yards from the Post gaped a crater gradually filling with water. Large holes had been torn in the walls of the flats on each side of the road, which was littered from end to end with bricks, rubble and window frames and glass. The Post telephone was dead and so a runner was sent immediately to the Report Centre with a message to the effect that the Post was out of action, and that there were approximately one hundred casualties and an additional fifty trapped. Fortunately this estimate was found later to be quite incorrect, but it will be remembered that this was the first experience of high explosive, and appearances at the time were certainly such as led to the belief that the number of casualties was greater. The Post Warden relinquished duty as IO at the fire in Crampton Street and speedily returned to the scene of the latest occurrence. Order was restored out of chaos, and Services began to appear. The proprietor of the "Giraffe" public house immediately offered accommodation for use as a dressing station and rest centre, and provided food and drink at his own expense for those who stayed there the rest of the night. Together with Wardens, Rescue Parties searched the flats, and thirty casualties were removed to safety and attention. Two persons who were killed were reverently concealed from the public gaze until such time as they, too, could be removed.

The intermittent buzz of the raiders passing to and fro and the constant fall of bombs continued the whole night through, but were heard as a distant orchestra playing an accompaniment to the work in hand. Of the thirty casualties, two were Wardens, both of whom were seriously injured. Sometime before dawn, Wardens were called to further damage in Crampton Street. Investigation revealed the suspected presence of an unexploded bomb (U.X.B.), and confirmation was requested. The site was inspected by an official, who said that the bomb had exploded. The occupants, who had been evacuated pending this decision, were accordingly allowed to return home. By 05.00 hours the Amelia Street incident was closed, and twenty minutes later London breathed a sigh of relief as the all clear sounded.

On this first night of the Blitz, 430 Londoners were killed and 1,600 seriously injured. This was, however, but the beginning, and for fifty-seven nights without a break enemy aircraft were over the capital. Post 12 was temporarily put out of action, and a second-line Post had to be established. A fishmonger on the other side of the road who happened to have the telephone, kindly offered a small room as alternative accommodation. The Post was set up under a table which offered the only protection, and thus continued to function for three nights until the old Post was set in order. Gas and electric light in the old Post were cut off, and the Manager of the Rescue Service canteen at the Baths was persuaded to provide tea and cake at stated

times for such of the Wardens as were able to call there for it. When the Post was restored, the cancellation of this concession was overlooked, and for some time the Baths became a haven of rest for a short interval during the night-long raids.

Experiences and jokes were swapped across the long table to the sound of crickets chirruping under the boilers, and there were many groans when the time came to make room for another shift.

The first night has been described in some detail, and it may be taken as typical in general of the other seventeen nights during 1940-41 on which the Post area was to receive damage in one form or another. In addition, it suffered damage in two of the waning daylight raids of September and October. To avoid repetition, only those nights on which heavy or special damage was suffered will be further described, but brief details of the remaining incidents will be found in Appendix II. For the first four nights London's reply to the raiders had been weak and seemingly ineffective. To the ordinary citizen it appeared that, except for spasmodic gunfire, the attackers had been allowed to do as they pleased, coming and going without let or hindrance. On the fifth night, Wednesday, September 11, however, there was a remarkable improvement. The raiders flew into a barrage the like of which London had never heard before. Morale in the shelters soared to astronomical heights, and many people had their first sound sleep that night; but there was no rest for the Wardens of Post 12, who dealt with 29 fires in fourteen different streets.

The same night, or rather, early the next morning, an oil bomb fell at the junction of St. Gabriel's Road and Newington Butts, just outside the Post area boundary. A messenger was despatched to ascertain whether the Post area was likely to be affected, and soon after he left, a high explosive bomb was heard to drop, near enough to be in the locality. Some thirty minutes elapsed, and the messenger returned, full of the damage which had been done by the oil bomb. He settled down to give a lurid account of flames and fire. In the middle of the discourse he was interrupted and asked whether he had seen anything of the High Explosive bomb (H.E.) which had been heard shortly after his departure. A puzzled frown appeared across his weary face, and then, with a faint grin, he admitted that he believed he had seen some houses down in Draper Street. With a yell, the Wardens in the Post leapt to their feet and made hasty tracks to the street in question. Two shops were found wrecked, but fortunately, there were no casualties.

Daylight raids were now on a diminishing scale, but at lunchtime on September 13, three incendiary bombs dropped mysteriously from the sky, two causing slight fires (dealt with by Wardens) and one failing to function. It is not out of place here to mention the excellent work which was done by Post messengers in fighting incendiary bombs. Too young to be Wardens, but old enough to have the urge to "do something," these boys knew no fear, either of fire or explosive. With a zest amounting almost to recklessness they fought the largest fires, and were ready for more, and they dived into wreckage releasing casualties almost within seconds of the fall of bombs; they had a fund of gruesome stories which would turn the hair of the oldest soldier, and delighted in recounting them at meal and other inappropriate times. Notwithstanding, one hesitates to think what the Post would have been like, and done, without them.

Unfortunately, their recklessness sometimes led them astray, and after some weeks of long suffering, during which the cake ration disappeared so quickly that it almost had to be doubled, the Manager of the Rescue canteen came to the conclusion that the Post was now able to prepare its own "red" rations, and admittance to the Baths for this purpose was no longer permitted. On three nights between September 14 to 20 the Post area suffered further damage, with a lull for a further four nights, although the raids on London were, of course, continuous. September 25 brought the next incident of some magnitude when, at 02.05 hours, a large bomb fell at the junction of Danson and Marsland Roads, completely demolishing two houses of four storeys, and damaging others for fifty yards around. The debris formed a mound so high that it was only with difficulty that it could be surmounted. Notwithstanding, twenty persons were released alive from the wreckage with only minor injuries. After patiently digging for over two hours, the Rescue Leader was satisfied that there was no one alive under the ruins, and other Services were dismissed. The Rescue Party continued digging in shifts, and at 10.00 hours that morning the first body was recovered. It was not until 12.58 hours on September 30 that the last was removed, making seven in all.

The Home Guard co-operated in keeping all-night watches to prevent looting. Amongst the Log of the reports of this incident, the following stern message was received from the Report Centre: "Please notify your Wardens that fire alarms need pulling once only." The Nazis then gave Post 12 a respite for some few nights, but on October 8, there was damage from two H.E.s. The following night at 20.10 hours an oil bomb fell at the crossways of Stopford Road and Marsland Road, and with a dull explosion, scattered its flaming contents up the faces of the houses at each corner, also covering the road with a slippery mixture of crude oil and rubber. Apart from oil burning in the shallow crater made by the bomb, the heat was not intense, and Wardens, with the aid of many volunteers, soon had the fire under control. In fact, by the time the AFS arrived, there was little for them to do but damp down. There were no casualties apart from a volunteer who managed to appear at a basement window at the precise moment that a bucket of water was thrown in!

The second daylight raid, previously referred to, in which Post 12 area was again affected, was on October 25, when an H.E. fell in the Council Depot at 10.00. A group of men had been talking shortly before the incident occurred on the exact spot on which the bomb fell, but had dispersed, except for two who were injured. Cobble paving stones were thrown hundreds of yards by the explosion, and some landed on the roofs of four-storey flats in Amelia Street. Four U.X.B.s fell on the night of November 7, in two groups of two. The groups were so far apart, however, that it was two hours before three of the bombs had been discovered, and the fourth was not found until early the next morning. A Warden found one by putting his foot into the crater, which fortunately was not large. Sunday, December 7th, was another bad night for the Post, although not officially so for the London Region. There was little doing for an hour after the alert; and it was thought perhaps that the night would be quiet, but it was not. At 18.30 hours, Wardens were again in action; this time in Peacock Street, where an H.E. had partially demolished some six houses and damaged fifteen more. No sooner were the Wardens at work than another report came through of an unexploded bomb in Kennington Park Road.

Apart from minor casualties, four people in Peacock Street were removed to hospital and two killed—one was almost unidentifiable. In the meantime, an argument was in progress over the U.X.B. An IO had reported the bomb as exploded, but the contrary view was held by the Post IO, and this, strangely enough, was corroborated by the Police. A further investigation was called for, and the Post was found to be correct. Owing to the fact that experience had first to be gained, unexploded bomb reconnaissance in this, and probably other Boroughs as well, was a very weak link in what was otherwise a very efficient service. In comparison with the number discovered and verified, the number of errors was small, but it seems to have been a branch of A.R.P. which, in the earlier parts of the Blitz, at least, did not receive sufficient attention. Five hours after the fall of the Peacock Street bomb, Wardens were again at work. This time it was incendiaries. Thirty-eight fires were dealt with eight requiring AFS assistance, and it was not until 05.00 hours the next morning that it was possible to report "Area clear."

Whether it was due to the approach of Christmas, no one will ever know, but although there were still a number of alerts, the nights became a little quieter. The main topic now was Shelter Welfare. Urgent instructions were received asking for details of the entertainments provided or wanted. Shelters were visited by Welfare officials and their occupants questioned. So far as the shelters on Post 12 Area were concerned, however, hopes were raised for nothing, and shelterers were forced to make their own arrangements for festivities. In the larger shelters this was well and truly done. Decorations were flung across bare concrete walls and collections were made for "spreads," and in many cases for parcels for the kiddies. In one shelter a piano was even smuggled down to provide music for singing and dancing. The Post was able to show a short programme of films on Christmas Day, but these proved more popular in the smaller than the larger shelters, no doubt owing to the absence of "sound."

On Christmas Day cordial messages were passed from Post to Post, and each was visited by the Mayor, the Town Clerk and A.R.P. Controller, and the Chief Warden. Reliefs were arranged to enable full-time Wardens to get home for the usual Christmas dinner, and even the Huns co-operated, as there was no warning for three nights. The holiday passed. There was a short alert on December 27, but nothing the next night. On Sunday, December 29, the enemy returned in force. The tide in the Thames was at its lowest ebb, the wind was strong, and the night was cold and clear. The enemy chose the City of London for their target. For five hours incendiaries and high explosive bombs were rained into the most famous "Square Mile" in the world. Tall buildings and narrow streets provided the fuel, and the wind provided the bellows. The clang of fire bells was continuous, as pump after pump flew Citywards. St. Paul's stood out, an island in a sea of smoke and flames. Fragments of smouldering papers were driven far south of the river. Higher and higher grew the flames which spurted as the high explosive dropped where they burned brightest. Then, as suddenly as it had begun, the raid ceased. With the largest target that the Luftwaffe could ever have had lying a gigantic beacon below them, the enemy vanished, attacking no more for three nights. One day, perhaps, we shall know why the carrion did not return to complete their task so evilly begun.

End of Part Two—to be continued in the next issue of the CDA Journal

GLOUCESTERSHIRE'S COLD WAR BUNKER



Entrance to the Bunker

The sleepy Cotswold village of Ullenwood is the site of a once secret civil defence bunker constructed during the Cold War. The bunker, three and a half miles from Cheltenham town centre, was intended to house the South-West Regional Seat of Government in the event of a nuclear attack on this country.

It was built in the 1950s in response to escalating tensions between the USA and Soviet Russia during the Cold War. It was feared that Britain would be a priority target for Soviet missiles in the event of an outbreak of hostilities between the two rival superpowers.

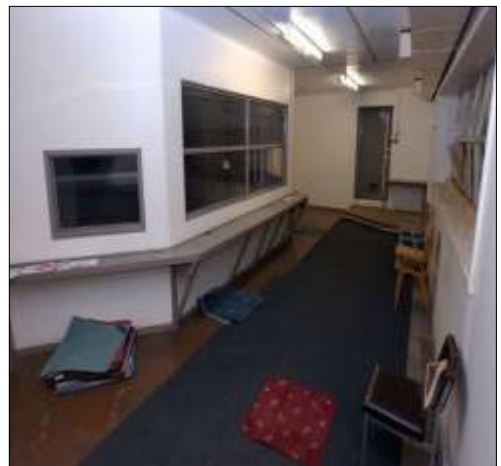
There were 19 of these clandestine structures hidden around the country from which Britain's emergency government would operate. Today, all this may sound like something from a Len Deighton novel set in the days of the Cold War, but there's nothing fictional about the Ullenwood bunker. It's still there today.

Originally utilised as an Anti-Aircraft Operations Room (AAOR), it is built on two storeys, with rumours of a third sealed-off basement level, the subterranean complex covers an area of some 1300 square metres and is encased in reinforced concrete walls, two feet thick.

Situated at its heart is the map room with an observation balcony from which the dreaded in-coming Russian bombers would have been logged and anti-aircraft defences co-ordinated.

Following the demise of Anti-Aircraft Command it passed to the Home Office who utilised it as a Regional Seat of Government.

Designed to be self-sufficient in the event of an attack, the bunker could be hermetically sealed to prevent ingress of radioactive fallout and had its own water supply, generator, more than three dozen phone lines and ample storage space for provisions.



Some of the fittings appear to date from when the Bunker was first used

The bunker eventually became Gloucestershire County Council's main operational civil defence control centre.

Following the end of the Cold War it found itself without a role. Various uses were mooted for the bunker, one of which suggested that it could be used to house the county's archives.

But the council decided it wasn't financially feasible and put the bunker and its 2.2 hectare site up for auction in 2002.

The following year the property was bought by a local businessman who has since built a detached house in the grounds, leaving undisturbed the retired bunker.



The Map Room. A focal point for the conduct of life saving operations

The now not-so-secret bunker can be found in Greenway Lane, which leads from the B4070 Cheltenham to Birdlip Road and runs down the hill to join the A46 at Shurdington.



The generator room.

The equipment was designed to provide emergency power to the Bunker, should mains electricity be lost.

With acknowledgements to GloucestershireLive

Editor.

BOOKSHELF



The book is the result of a study by the Thames Discovery Programme (TDP) with financial help from The Heritage Lottery Fund and practical assistance from many others.

Londoners knew the value of the River Thames and some realised the dangers it presented to the City in the event of war. The broad ribbon of water led directly to the heart of the country's largest population and its vital commerce.

Consideration was given to the possibilities of enemy action after WW1 and the fleeting raids of Zeppelins and Gothas during that period. A key danger was that bombing could damage water-front defences with consequential flooding of parts of

low-lying properties. Flooding had occurred in London over hundreds of years, with the most recent in 1928. Had the Germans realised that a combination of spring tides and storm surges, with help from breached locks, weirs and embankments from bombing, they could have concentrated their efforts on that destruction.

In 1930 Thomas Peirson Frank was appointed to the post of Chief Engineer for London County Council. This post involved sewage, drainage and river defences, some of which were privately owned.

In 1938 a massive programme of work commenced and included the construction of floodgates and other means of protecting passages under the Thames. Along the length of the river four T-F (Thames Flood) depots were formed with stocks of materials and manpower to carry out emergency repairs to walls. A datum above river level was established to high-light weak points in the flood defences to enable work to be carried out before damage occurred.

The book is generous in the number of contemporary photographs it contains with matching descriptions and even some of remaining, more permanent repairs. It was fortunate that a photographic survey of the Thames embankments was recorded in 1937 giving us an idea of damage and repairs. Some of the plates are rather dark and lack detail either because of the original conditions at the time or the rather grainy reproduction.

A short section details the part played by the London Fire Service and its boats in fighting the many fires in the

LETTER FROM AMERICA

Creativity in a time of isolation

*There are incalculable resources in the human spirit once it has been set free -
Hubert Humphrey*

I'm thinking about creativity this morning. Who would suspect that creativity can flourish in a time of isolation.

Maybe this time of isolation is a time for us to look inward; not in a negative or rejecting way but a chance to think about the gifts, talents and skills we bring to everyday life.

Sometimes in the rush we may forget about what we bring to the table.

I would submit that possibly, this is a time to take an assessment of our gifts and in a certain way rejoice in what we have and our ability to share them, even in these difficult situations and in that sharing, we can recognize the gifts and skills of others and rejoice in that.

The trick will be to continue to remember and further develop those gifts when things return to a "new normal".

With appreciation to Eugene M. Giudice, MBA, MLIS (CDA Member, Chicago, USA) Editor.

NOTE:

There will be changes after the AGM due to Officer & Committee retirements. Full details will be published on page 2 of the next issue.

extensive warehousing along the river. After reports were received from police and ARP, action from fire-fighters would often be needed before T-F could carry out repairs. Auxiliary pumping stations were established along the Thames to allow water to be obtained at all states of the tide.

Bomb damage to bridges over the Thames was repaired as soon as possible but, in addition, three temporary bridges were constructed over the river to maintain cross-river traffic should any of the permanent ones be disabled. This did not happen.

Few records remain of the thousands of labourers who kept London moving and flood-free but Thomas Peirson Frank was knighted for his wartime work.

The book contains lists of many ships and small boats lost to enemy action in the Thames and its Estuary. Mention is also made of London-based vessels contributing to the Dunkirk evacuation and the 1944 invasion of Europe.

A repeated error in the text is to call the V-1 a rocket. It was a pulse-jet powered early guided missile. The larger V-2 was truly a rocket, against which there was no defence once in flight.

This book will be of greatest interest to Londoners who may easily see the places mentioned but will be a valuable National record of those grim times.

The Thames at War
Hardback : ISBN 978-1-52676-802-5
Published by Pen & Sword History,
2020. 208pp
Price £19.99

With thanks to Keith Gardner for reviewing this book. *Editor.*

EVENTS

2021

Saturday 27 March
CDA Annual General Meeting
Virtual or Stonebridge, Birmingham

Sat/Sun 3 - 4 April
1940s Living History Weekend
Eden Camp, Yorks

Saturday 15 May
**ROCA Parade & Seaborne
Memorial Stone Unveiled**
ROC Grove, The NMA

Saturday 12 June
CDA Annual Commemoration
The NMA

Sunday 4 July
Battle of Britain
National Parade & Service
Capel Le Ferne, Kent
(CDA & ROCA participation)

Sat/Sun 28 - 29 August
1940s Living History Weekend
Eden Camp, Yorks

Saturday 6 November
Wreath Laying
CD Memorial, The NMA

Thursday 11 November
Field of Remembrance
Westminster Abbey

Sunday 14 November
Remembrance Sunday

Events are subject to cancellation due to Covid-19 restrictions. Please contact the organiser before attending.

Birmingham Air Raids Remembrance Association

Meetings held January to November on the Third Thursday of the month at 12 noon.

Updates on Association projects Meal and a chat.

Venue: Brasshouse, 44 Broad Street, Birmingham, B1 2HP.

All welcome.

Contact Anita Ward, Tel 07792 300 261

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.

The CDA Journal is printed and published by the Civil Defence Association
24 Paxton Close, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3TD, England.