



Civil Defence Association Journal

'Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow'

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In this issue:

*ARP Wardens Posts, Plymouth
70th Anniversary of Bedenham Explosion, Gibraltar
Flooding Incident, Birmingham, 1973
The Fading Know-How of Civil Defence*

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The Editor welcomes articles, diagrams, maps and photographs on these subjects for inclusion. Materials may be submitted either handwritten or (preferably) typed in MS Word, with photos in JPEG or TIFF format. *The Editors postal address and email is listed on Page 2.*

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Copy deadline for next issue is 15 November 2021.

***Civil Defence is defined as being the preparation for, and actual response and assistance to individuals and groups or communities in need of immediate assistance as a result of natural or man-made events, whether large or small. The assistance may include, but is not limited to, Rescue, Firefighting, Search, First Aid, Shelter, Feeding, Communication, Nursing, Counselling and Befriending. It also includes the activities of organisation and support of assistance in these and similar areas.*

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Front Page Photograph: The Bedenham Memorial, Gibraltar. The wreaths were laid to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the explosion which occurred at Gun Wharf on 27 April, 1951.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the 76th edition of the Civil Defence Association Journal.

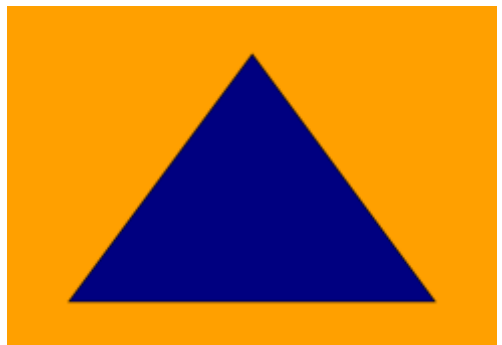
With the Covid19 pandemic regulations being scaled down in the UK, perhaps its time to look back at the response of ordinary citizens in volunteering to assist with an event unprecedented since the end of World War Two. The call was answered by hundreds of thousands of people right across the UK, proving once again (if proof were needed) that the desire to support those in need is thankfully alive and well in the 21st Century. Which poses the question—will that enthusiasm and desire to act, be utilised, or simply allowed to wither on the vine? I fear it will be the latter. UK governments over the years have shown some ambivalence towards emergency response volunteers. This contrasts sharply with the attitude taken by decision makers in the Isle of Man, Irish Republic, Australia, New Zealand and parts of the USA. Indeed the Australian Government actively publicises its continuing support and regards them as an essential part of emergency response and support.

The Rand Corporation, one of the USA's most respected think-tanks, has published a report highlighting the disturbing lack of measures of public protection with regard to the risk of nuclear war. Since the end of the Cold War nearly 30 years ago, little if anything has been done to address this matter. With the continuing proliferation of nuclear weapons in an increasingly unstable world (the latest being the catastrophe in Afghanistan) it behoves the US Government and indeed all Governments in the Western World to get their heads out of the sand and start taking the necessary action.

We can now look forward to resuming the CDA Annual Commemoration which this year will be held at the NMA, Alrewas, Staffordshire on Saturday 9 October 2021. Following the service which will be held in The Chapel, there will be the laying of wreaths. After which we will travel a short distance to the Royal British Legion Club in Alrewas. A buffet lunch will be provided, and together with other activities, will include a presentation of a plan to develop the CDA over the next three years. Members will be afforded the opportunity to discuss and debate the proposals.

Please do continue to stay safe and well.

Graham Whitehead



70TH ANNIVERSARY OF BEDENHAM EXPLOSION, GIBRALTAR

Background to the Bedenham Memorial Commemoration:

On the morning of 27 April 1951, whilst the Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship was berthed at Gun Wharf, depth charges were being unloaded into a lighter when one of them ignited. This caused a fire which spread to the Bedenham, triggering a violent explosion on the ship which subsequently sank. Thirteen people were killed in the explosion, including Chief Fire Officer Albert Alexander Indoe and Sub Officer George Campbell Henderson, of the Dockyard Fire Service, who were posthumously awarded gallantry medals for their bravery in attempting to extinguish the fire. In addition to the human casualties many of Gibraltar's buildings suffered substantial damage, including The Convent and Gibraltar's two Cathedrals.

On 27 April, 2011, (the 60th Anniversary), representatives of the CDA travelled to Gibraltar to (a) adopt Sub-Officer George Henderson as one of the Civil Defence George Cross recipients (b) dedicate and unveil a new plaque on his grave (c) hold a wreath laying ceremony at the Bedenham Memorial..



Prior to the wreath laying ceremony, a piper plays a Lament

On 27 April, 2021, The Deputy Chief Minister of the Government of Gibraltar, Dr Joseph Garcia marked the 70th anniversary of the explosion of the RFA Bedenham by laying a wreath, together with His Worship The Mayor John Goncalvez MBE

GMD, and the heads of the Airport and Gibraltar Fire Rescue Services, Nicky Vinales and Colin Ramirez. A wreath was also laid on behalf of the Civil Defence Association (UK).

Dr Garcia said: “The explosion of the Bedenham was a before and after moment for that generation of Gibraltarians. Everyone could remember where they were and what they were doing when the ship blew up. My own grandfather worked in the ammunition stores in the dockyard at that time, and although he was not directly



The wreath laying party. L to R. Senior Officers of the Airport and Gibraltar Fire Rescue Services; Mayor of Gibraltar; Deputy Chief Minister, Government of Gibraltar accompanied by two officials

impacted by the explosion, it did have a profound effect going forward. I know that many families lost relatives and it was very fitting to see some of them represented in the short ceremony today.

“This was a tragic accident but the truth is that it could have been much worse. There is a theory that Gibraltar’s defensive structures and city walls actually helped to deflect some of the force of the blast away from the town area. Today we mark those who lost their lives and we honour those heroes who gallantly fought to contain the blaze and who selflessly assisted the injured “

Report and photographs, with kind permission of HM Government of Gibraltar. Thanks also to Colin Ramirez and Nicky Vinales, Airport Fire & Rescue Service, Gibraltar International Airport. Editor.

FLOODING INCIDENT, BALSALL HEATH, BIRMINGHAM 7 - 9 SEPTEMBER 1973

Introduction

At about 2000 hrs on Friday 7 September, 1973 a 28" water main burst in Calthorpe Park causing a wall of water to flood down Court Road and parts of the adjoining streets. Thus about 100 houses (terraced) were flooded to a depth of up to 3 feet. By morning the road had been sealed off and the Fire Brigade were pumping out the water from the foundations of the houses via the cellar of a shop at the end of the road.

Course of Events

At 0919hrs the Leader of the Council asked the Civil Defence Officer to take charge of the operations and do whatever was necessary to bring the situation under control and back to normal. He therefore, called out all his staff who were not otherwise engaged (mainly former Civil Defence Instructors) and requiring more skilled personnel called out The City of Birmingham Voluntary Civil Aid Service (VCAS). After a short time soup and tea were being provided and work had started on moving the carpets and effects from the ground floors of the houses. The Midlands Electricity Board (MEB) and West Midlands Gas Board (WMGB) were on site checking the services and the MEB had checked all the houses and restored power by 1615hrs.



*Voluntary Civil Aid Service
(VCAS) badge*

Meanwhile the CDO had contacted the Armed Services and arrangements were in hand for 9 non Toxic driers to be brought from Shawbury and Stafford; the main problems being to get transport and drivers on a Saturday. Petrol cans were supplied by the Fire Service and petrol by local garages and later the PWD Depot especially during the night. Despite setbacks caused by non-availability of a high lift crane to lift the heaters off the lorries (until one was located in the lighting section of PWD) as they weighed 1 ton, the VCAS started to bring them into service. It became clear that though they could operate and run them they would have required a great deal of training to keep them in service as they required considerable maintenance whilst in operation. Thus a fitter was sent who arrived at 2359hrs followed at 0100hrs by a Flight Sergeant and 6 trained RAF fitters from Stafford. The VCAS were then able to relieve the night shift and only maintain a back-up team and control/liaison.

At this stage time scales were able to be revised and it appeared that the PWD team would not be required to take over from the VCAS at 1600hrs Sunday as had been arranged. This was confirmed at first light and the team cancelled. The first RAF team was relieved at 1100hrs by a second from RAF Stafford, this team carried on working until 1630hrs by which time all the houses were at least sufficiently dry to be habitable and quite a large number of carpets were dry enough

to be replaced in the houses. By 1800hrs the site was clear, the heaters and men were on their way back to Stafford and the occupants of the houses were working on their houses in an effort to bring them back to pre-flood condition. This of course, will take some time and effort on the part of the occupants and the Housing Management Dept not to mention the associated problems for Social Services, Public Health and Salvage. The whole adding up to a sizeable financial problem.

Problems

It was unfortunate that the CDO was not able to start work on Friday night as he would have found the volunteers quicker than when they were out shopping/gone out for the day/weekend work on the Saturday morning. Indeed the RAF heaters would have been on site by Saturday morning rather than 15hrs later and the carpets etc. would have had two full weekend days to dry out. This underlines the importance of calling on all your forces as early as possible.

It was unfortunate the VCAS radio network was 2-3 weeks from being commissioned as it would have greatly assisted in assessment and control of the operation.

It was difficult to reach all the personnel that were required as quickly as possible; especially on a Saturday morning in Summer and this requires some attention. This problem was not unique to the civilian part of the operation.

There were other problem areas which were solved as time went by which were particular to this operation and apart from the general knowledge bank of the personnel involved is of little value here.

Successes

The first success area was that the operation once in the CDO's hands was carried out and much quicker than was at first anticipated.

The Civil Defence Department and its volunteers of the VCAS were able to overcome the problem with specialist help from others.

Its skills in organisation and knowledge built up over the years of what to get from where and improvisation filled the need especially aggravated by the weekend.

The co-operation that the CDO had from the Emergency Services and the other Local Authority Departments was very good and without it the job would have taken much longer.

Recommendations

The status of the Civil Defence Department (and its successor in the Metropolitan County) needs examination to ensure that its skills are not overlooked in a disaster situation.

The Civil Defence Department evening and weekend Duty Officer Scheme should be reintroduced to ensure that at least one senior experienced Officer is available. It was fortunate that the Department's holiday period was virtually over.

The basic training of the VCAS volunteer appears to be basically correct and in the right quantity per man/woman. It would be of value to the city, however, if they were to apply resources to expand and thus have greater breadth and depth of resources always at the disposal of the city.

The VCAS need to examine, hopefully with the assistance of the city, its stores of consumables so that it cannot only provide refreshments for a short period of time, but can also provide more substantial meals for itself and the needy for a longer period of time.

Conclusions

This was a difficult problem at a difficult time but successfully carried out swiftly. Thanks are due to the volunteers who turned out to help these unfortunate people and also to those who were not contacted either because they or their contact point was away or we were unsuccessful in contacting them. We are grateful that they were there. Thanks are also due to the other people involved, in the Corporation, in the area and in the Services, they were much appreciated.

If we are unfortunate to have another disaster situation in the city we will be that much better as we shall remember what we have learned here.

T Essex-Lopresti
1st Officer
City of Birmingham Voluntary Civil Aid Service

Editor's notes: This incident report is one of the few post-CDC/AFS archives to have survived. As you will have read, it was compiled by one Tim Essex-Lopresti, 1st Officer, City of Birmingham Civil Aid Service, and it was he who passed it to me for publication/archiving. Thank you Tim!

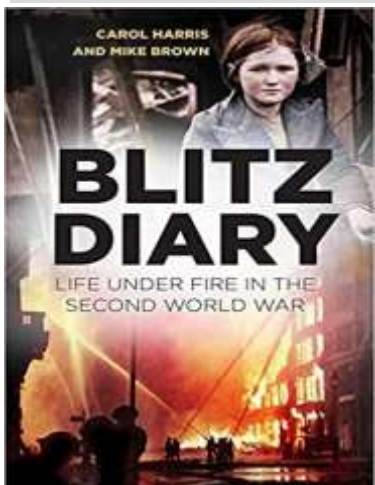
THE FADING KNOW-HOW OF CIVIL DEFENCE

“Cities have emergency preparedness plans, but they are scoped for natural disasters like hurricanes or earthquakes, or man-made ones like chemical spills... The US Departments of Defense and Homeland Security have examined the consequences of a terrorist nuclear attack, but these have focused on the ground-level explosion of a crude, improvised bomb. None are adequate to deal with an event like a nuclear attack of the kind and scale now in prospect...

The first step would be to make planners at the local, state and federal levels aware of what the effects of such an attack would likely be. While there are volumes of accumulated knowledge regarding the effects of nuclear weapons, that knowledge has largely faded from the awareness of officials even within the Department of Defense, let alone the other, largely civilian, decision makers responsible for urban disaster preparedness.”

The RAND Corporation, USA

BOOK SHELF



During the 1930s, war with Germany became increasingly likely. The British Government believed that it would start with massed ranks of enemy planes, dropping bombs and poison gas on civilians in major towns and cities, terrifying them into surrendering. When war broke out, preparations to protect the population were piecemeal and inadequate. As anticipated, people were shocked by the first raids and the response of rescue services was chaotic. But far from breaking morale, the Blitz galvanised public opinion in support of the war. Soon people became hardened by their experiences and attacks from the air became a normal, albeit terrible, part of daily life.

Blitz Diary tells the story in a remarkable series of eyewitness accounts from the war's earliest and darkest days through to the end, when the V-2 rockets brought devastation without warning. Preservation of such first-hand accounts has become increasingly important as the Blitz fades from living memory. This expanded edition includes new chapters and new accounts from key eyewitnesses.

Authors: Carol Harris & Mike Brown 264 pages Published by History Press
ISBN-10 0750994878 ISBN-13 978-0750994873
Price: £10.95 (Amazon – Hardback)) £4.75 (Paperback) £4.74 (Kindle)
September 2020

The book begins with the background of why Air Raid Precautions came into being during the First World War and how an upsurge of totalitarian governments in Europe with war on their minds set Britain looking ever closer at Europe during the 1920's and 1930's. Hoping to avoid a second world war but with some parts of the British Government preparing for the worst the scene was set for the Channel Islands and other places of the British Empire to get ready with their Air Raid Precautions procedures.

It covers events in the Channel Islands but Jersey in depth. It tells how the Channel Islands developed their own systems of Air Raid Precautions alongside the British equivalent and how they became organisations in their own right. It describes what equipment was issued, the shelters both private and public, the people and what they did. There are a number of personal accounts of service in the A.R.P. and others who were bombed – one man twice, and a volunteer first aider caught up in a raid with people dying and injured all around him. The air raids on both Jersey's



Capital, St Helier, and Guernsey's equivalent, St Peter Port, are both included as this was one raid by nine German Heinkel 111 aircraft of the 8th Staffel, 1/Gruppe Kampfgescgawder 55 (1/KG 55) based at the airfield at Villacoublay to the south-west of Paris, France. These raids saw the A.R.P. tested.

The book ends with the "Cold War" of the 60's when Air Raid Precautions came to life again and a new Jersey Civil Emergency Centre was located in a former German telephone repeater station in Trinity Road, St. Helier. The picture on the front cover is taken from an English magazine called "Illustrated" (Not The London Illustrated Times) which was published on the 6th of July 1940 one week after the raid on St Helier, Jersey. The unknown artist must have known St Helier, Jersey well to draw it as the Germans occupied Jersey a week earlier on the 1st July 1940.

Author: David Dorgan 122 Pages Independently Published
ISBN-10 1720290849 ISBN-13 978-1720290841
Price: £10.99 (Amazon – Paperback) November 2018



This book documents and explains civil defence preparations for national cyber emergencies in conditions of both peace and war.

The volume analyses the escalating sense of crisis around state-sponsored cyber attacks that has emerged since 2015, when the United States first declared a national emergency in cyberspace. It documents a shift in thinking in the USA, from cooperative resilience-oriented approaches at national level to more highly regulated, state-led civil defence initiatives. Although the American response has been mirrored in other countries, the shift is far from universal.



Civil defence strategies have come into play but the global experience of that has not been consistent or even that successful. Containing contributions from well-placed scholars and practitioners, this volume reviews a selection of national experiences (from the USA, Australia, India, China, Estonia, and Finland) and a number of key thematic issues (information weapons, alliance coordination, and attack simulations). These demonstrate a disconnect between the deepening sense of vulnerability and the availability of viable solutions at the national level. Awareness of this gap may ultimately lead to more internationally oriented cooperation, but the trend for now appears to be more conflictual and rooted in a growing sense of insecurity.

This book will be of much interest to students of cyber security, homeland security, disaster management, and international relations, as well as practitioners and policymakers.

Author: Greg Austin 270 Pages Published by Routledge, 1st Edition
ISBN-13 978-0367360344
Price: £33.29 (Amazon Kindle) £68.62 (Amazon Hardback) January 2020

THE STORY OF REPORTING POST 12 (SOUTHWARK)

Background

Information can be found in the November 2020 Edition of the CDA Journal.
Continued from the June 2021 edition of the CDA Journal.....

VII. The Lull—1941-43.

Apart from midsummer, 1942, at the time of the reprisal raids on the Badaeker towns, few enemy aircraft appeared over London until the early spring of 1944. The Lull began in June, 1941, and although there were still occasional alerts, the Wardens' Service was able to divert part of its time to social activities. Training was also resumed. On July 19, the Southwark Civil Defence Sports Club held its first cricket match, and in the same month Wardens were invited to join a Dramatic Society. Two months later, the Chief Warden of Southwark, resigned, paying his last visit to the Post on September 18. October 17 saw the beginning of the Southwark Civil Defence Allotment Association. Three days later the A.R.P. Controller visited the Post. On November 7 the Post Warden was summoned to Buckingham Palace to receive the George Medal from the hands of His Majesty King George the Sixth. And so ended the year 1941.

Little of note occurred until March 7, 1942, when, in spite of food rationing difficulties, the Post held its Second Social and Supper at Manor Place Baths. The menu was, of necessity, much shorter than on the previous occasion, and comprised " Molotov Soup, Un-Woolton Meat and Trimmings, U.X.B.s, with Wardens' Sauce, and Coffee - perhaps." The guests included the Mayor and Mayoress of Southwark, the Leader of the Council, , Deputy Chief Warden, District Warden, and two C D Instructors. The chair was taken by the Post Warden, while the Deputy Post Warden made an efficient Toastmaster. The Toast to Post 12 was given by the Mayor, and responded to by the Post Warden. The Deputy Post Warden gave the Toast to the Visitors, and a suitable response given. This time proceedings were not interrupted by an alert, and only stopped when "last orders" had been taken.

Three months passed. In the late afternoon of Saturday, June 6, the people of South London were shaken by a resounding explosion which was followed by a great cloud of black smoke. An unexploded bomb lying in a partly devastated area near the Elephant and Castle for over a year, had at last exploded. Wardens from all parts of the borough ran hot foot to the scene, and rescue work began within seconds. Many houses were demolished, including part of a large block of flats. Eleven persons were killed, and there were a number of casualties. Idle sightseers congested the roads, and annoyed Wardens who endeavoured to keep them away.

At a price, another lesson had been learned. Immediate research was made into all records of bombs reported throughout the Blitz as suspected U.X.B.s but not confirmed as such. Six or seven sites were inspected on Post 12 area, including that of the U.X.B. reported on the first night of the Blitz in Crampton Street, but then officially confirmed as having exploded. The Deputy Post Warden investigating— incidentally the same one who made the original report—was again struck by the appearance of the damage (which had not been repaired) and reported once more

“Suspected U.X.B.” Enquiries at the next house produced a “ring bolt” which had been found by the occupant on September 8, 1940, but was foolishly not reported. Immediate evacuation was ordered, and on July 17, a 500lb. bomb was removed.

This season Post 12 Cricket Club won the League championship. It was about this time that the enemy commenced their infamous reprisal raids on such towns as Canterbury, Exeter, Bath and Norwich, and London again began to hear alerts. Occasionally the Nazis would pass over the Capital to attack some more poorly defended town or to make a diversionary raid; bombs were dropped, but none fell in the Post area, although the glow of fires could occasionally be seen. The most notable feature about these raids, however, was the increased efficiency of A.A. Defence, including the “secret” rocket shell. At first, these shells caused a certain amount of consternation because, for security reasons, no public announcement was made as to the nature of the new defence, and after a battery had fired off, lengthy portions of what appeared to be drain pipes sometimes fell out of the sky, with the result that at first there were far more casualties from these shells than from the bombs. In due course, when the danger was realised, people took proper precautions. Searchlights appeared to be much more efficient, and many a ‘plane was seen held in their beam and escorted out of town to the accompaniment of a terrific barrage of rockets and other A.A. fire. By the middle of August the raids ceased and alerts again became few and far between.

In September, Invasion Defence grew to be the chief centre of interest. For obvious reasons details of the scheme cannot be given, but it was mostly concentrated on the possibility of enemy “crash raiding” and counter invasion at the time when Allied Forces invaded the Continent. The amount of paper work involved was stupendous. Suffice it to say that on Post 12 area alone 2,500 questionnaires were delivered to householders, collected, and then indexed and analysed. One of the Wardens gave up much of his spare time when Civil Defence was taking a well-earned operational rest, to assist with this office work. Exercises took place in co-operation with the Home Guard and the Women’s Voluntary Service, but the Wardens’ Service were given too little to do, and interest in this particular part of the work could not be sustained.

Looking back over these days, one wonders whether these exertions did not form part of the grand rehearsals which were going on behind the scenes for the Allied Invasion nearly two years later. Very little of note now occurred in the life of the Post for some time, apart from a visit to the Post by an official of the Ministry of Home Security, on October 6. The night of January 25, 1943, broke the monotony, when a barrage balloon which had come adrift from its moorings landed in Amelia Street. The Post had already had dealings before with refractory balloons, which, if still attached to their cables, can cause a good deal of damage. This time the balloon was there complete, squatting down like some prehistoric monster immediately in front of the railway bridge, blocking the entire width of the road. Wardens were immediately posted at each end of the road to prevent traffic from entering, and steps were also taken to make the balloon secure pending its removal. Guy ropes were fastened to lamp posts and anything else which would provide a firm anchorage.

One rope was tied to the front door knob of a house whose occupant was unaware

of the fact, and was most annoyed when, wanting to go for his “supper beer” discovered that the front door would not open. Following a little heated conversation, the rope was temporarily removed to allow him to go forth. In due course, the R.A.F. Maintenance Staff arrived, and in no time had the balloon deflated, folded up and stored away into a small van which could have been driven into the balloon fabric when inflated and been difficult to find. Time passed quietly and quickly; Wardens continued their some-what spasmodic training, played ‘cricket, and dug their allotments. The Post Cricket Club became joint winners of the League challenge cup. As a sign of the change in the times, after three years and one month, instructions were received to the effect that plates could be replaced indicating the numbers of Wardens’ Posts.

With the coming of winter, 1943, there were several alerts. Fire Guards again came into prominence with the conscription of women for duty. Steps were taken to reorganise the service, and much was mooted about a “Fire Guard Plan” Numerous instructions were issued and cancelled, and Fire Guards began to receive more attention than the Wardens, except that the former were not issued with uniforms. It was not until early spring, 1944, however, that work commenced on training under the new plan, following a series of short but sharp enemy raids.

VIII. The Blitz returns—1944.

March, 1944, brought back once more the spirit of the Blitz, although the raids were only of short duration and far less intense. After a break of two years and two months, Post 12 again heard the war cry of “Incendiaries, boys!” On Tuesday, March 14, the alert sounded at 22.36 hours, and was followed shortly afterwards by the familiar popping of incendiaries which, by their incandescent glare, were seen to have fallen in the area bounded by Steedman Street, Walworth Road, Newington Butts and Crampton Street. Many fires were started, both in houses and business premises. The top floor of a garage, workshops, stables and a furniture store were burnt out, and a railway bridge was also involved. A roof top view from the centre of the conflagration revealed a complete circle of fire which, despite the efforts of Fire Guards and Wardens, continued to spread until the NFS had been reinforced. The work of the C D Services was not altogether in vain, for only two houses were rendered uninhabitable. One volunteer was injured on the railway bridge, and there was also one other casualty.

Unnoticed, the all clear sounded at 23.44 hours, and large numbers of sightseers crowded the roads, hindering services. Following these early spring raids, in which other Post areas in the borough were also affected, training for the new Fire Guard Plan was pressed forward. Meetings were held nearly every evening, and gradually the new organisation began to take shape. Training culminated in a large-scale exercise held on April 20, when Fire Guards in many boroughs operated under the plan for the first time. Fire Guards worked enthusiastically, and so far as the Post area was concerned, emerged with flying colours. Eventually, the Fire Guard Plan came into official operation, but in Southwark it has never yet been put to the test.

IX. Long Range Attack—1944.

Earlier in the year, reports appeared in the Press that in Italy, the Nazis had been experimenting with remote-controlled gliders, the noses of which were fitted with an

explosive charge. Reports emanating from Stockholm, always the source of indirect Nazi propaganda, stated that mysterious objects released from Peenemunde, on the Baltic, had landed in Sweden. Civil Defence Services were warned of the possibility of attacks of this nature, but when D-Day came on June 6, and no counter-attack followed on London, it was generally hoped that London's battle days might be over. It was not to be. Following two short alerts on Tuesday, June 13, a rumour began to circulate that a "pilotless aircraft" had fallen in North-east London, but nothing occurred the next night, and London settled down again. On Thursday, June 15, there was an alert at 23.29 hours; shortly afterwards the first flying bomb passed over Southwark. The night was dark, with low cloud, and from the south was heard an intermittent buzzing not unlike that of a two-stroke motor-cycle engine. As the sound increased, a brilliant light appeared from out of the clouds, swooping lower and lower, until almost at roof-top height, it suddenly disappeared; at the same moment the noise ceased. There was a few seconds pause and then a flash, followed by a resounding explosion.

Such was South-east London's first experience of a flying bomb, an experience which was to become only too commonplace for four weary months until the Nazis were driven out of their bases in France, and then to continue again, but with gradually increasing intervals, up to the present time. The all clear did not sound until 09.25 the following morning, after the longest period of alert since 1941. Another alert followed soon after, and so it continued for many a day. Explosions were heard one after another as the foul blind monstrosities thudded remorselessly to earth. In what they loudly proclaimed to be an effort to demolish Allied Invasion Headquarters, but which was, in fact, only the continuation of their previous policy of indiscriminate bombing, the Nazis launched up to 250 of these missiles a day against London. Unceasing work was carried out both to improve and to devise new methods of defence, and with considerable success, but in the meantime many people were killed and injured, and thousands of homes destroyed and damaged.

Notwithstanding, not one vital item of supply for the invading forces was prevented from reaching the Allies, now making definite progress on the Continent. On June 18, all leave was cancelled in the C D Service, paid personnel were in some cases reinforced, and instructions were issued that all public shelters were to be left unlocked. For nearly a fortnight the Post area escaped damage, apart from that caused by blast when a flying bomb fell in an adjoining Post area. Shelters were again in frequent use, and many familiar faces were seen once more. Friendly greetings were exchanged, and shelter inspection began. The evening of Tuesday, June 27, was bright, and the sky of that clearest blue not often seen in England. There had been the usual series of alerts throughout the day, but a lull came after 22.00 hours.

About 22.30 hours, in the quiet of the evening, a distant buzz was heard, and high up in the sky a flying bomb could be seen rapidly approaching. Within seconds the bomb began to dive, ending its fall on some small houses at the junction of Crampton Street and Manor Place. Following a flash of red and yellow flame, like a highly-coloured picture in a child's book of warfare, dense clouds of dust and rubble ascended in pillars to the sky. Immediately the Post went into action.

End of Part Four - To be continued in the next issue of the CDA Journal

'CIVIL DEFENCE - THE FOURTH ARM'

Background

Following the disbandment of the Civil Defence volunteer organisations in 1968, a considerable quantity of reports and articles relating to exercises and 'peacetime' incidents were either lost or simply thrown away. The monthly magazine 'Civil Defence—The Fourth Arm' was one such important source of material. Reports etc. from all over the UK were sent to their editorial office and provide a valuable insight into the role of volunteers during that period of the 'Cold War'.

Thankfully, not all copies have been lost and I now have the years 1959—1967 in my possession. Using a system called optical scanning, I've started to record reports etc for publication in the CDA Journal. This an on going project. Editor.

CALL-OUT EXERCISE

A practice "Call Out" for all sections of Heston and Isleworth Sub-Division took place on Wednesday, 18 November. 1959. The purpose of the test was to try out the arrangements for a Call Out outside working hours. When the first calls were put out it was raining heavily and the prospects did not look good. Nevertheless the response was excellent. Of 60 members on the Call Out roll, 40 of them arrived at the pre-arranged rendezvous, the CD HQ The Rescue vehicle and the Ambulance were collected according to plan, Rescue and other equipment issued and the whole party was ready to move off just one hour and five minutes after the first call was put out. Tea and biscuits were provided and a discussion took place to see if anything had gone wrong and if any improvement could be made in the Call Out arrangements. It was agreed that the arrangements worked well but there were a few suggestions which will be considered. On this occasion members were warned that a call out would take place during that week on the evening of the Wednesday or Friday. It was suggested that, next time it might be a snap call out without any previous warning.

January 1960

AFS EXERCISE, MAIDSTONE AND HEADCORN

During the night of Saturday/Sunday, 24/25th October 1959, eight AFS men from Maidstone and Headcorn under the command of Aux. Sub-O. Taylor of Maidstone, took a heavy pump, a pipe carrier and a land rover down to Hastings. The purpose of the exercise was to keep a Territorial Battalion at work throughout the night on jobs such as they might find themselves faced with in helping C D and Fire Service during an emergency. Part of East Sussex Brigade and Eastbourne Brigade also took part on their own ground. Under the guidance of the Kent section, piping was laid, made up and laid again elsewhere, dams inflated, bridges built and water delivered through the pipeline. The section returned to Stations on Sunday morning, tired but satisfied with an interesting experience. They spoke with praise of the hospitality of the Hastings Brigade.

January 1960

SOUTHEND CRASH EXERCISE

A very realistic and interesting exercise was held at Southend-on-Sea during the night of the 14th/15th November, 1959, when personnel of the Southend-on-Sea Division of the C D Corps undertook their secondary role in the form of providing assistance at a peacetime emergency. The exercise, which was planned by the C.D. Officer, Mr. E. A. Harris, M.B.E., took the form of a train disaster occurring between an express and a goods train. The incident occurred at 2110hrs and within 10 minutes the Southend-on-Sea Constabulary had moved a Mobile Police Station into position and a Senior Police Officer took over control. It was assumed that the regular peacetime services had dealt with a number of casualties before C D personnel arrived. At 2200hrs two Rescue Parties and two Ambulance and Casualty Collecting Parties arrived at the scene of the disaster and commenced operations on the second, third and fourth carriages of the train where there were 90 casualties, many of whom were trapped.

Rescue personnel fitted up emergency lighting. The casualties, all of whom were soldiers of the East Anglian Regiment, carried out their part most realistically and the area was rent with the screams of the injured. Under the glare of the floodlights trapped casualties were released, many of whom were freed by the employment of acetylene cutting. These and the lesser injured were given first aid and taken to an improvised First Aid Post which was staffed by three local Medical Practitioners, assisted by C D personnel. On several occasions the doctors crawled under the train to give morphine to the more seriously trapped.

From the First Aid Post the injured were transported by ambulance to the C D Training Centre which assumed the role of a hospital for exercise purposes. The route to the scene of the disaster to the Training Centre was specially chosen so as to conform to the actual distance to the Southend General Hospital. C D Public Health and SJAB ambulances were used in transporting the casualties. The exercise, in addition to providing valuable training for C D personnel, afforded an opportunity to the Police to test their emergency communications, and although the hospital was not used during the exercise, the Management Committee tested their emergency call out procedure. Whilst all this was in process, the Welfare Section of the Corps held their own separate exercise, the results of which was to provide a very enjoyable and much appreciated meal to the personnel who had taken part in "Exercise Crash".

February 1960

RESCUE SECTION IN REAL LIFE "EXERCISE"

The value of C D training in peace time was illustrated on Wednesday, 18 May, 1960 when Rescue volunteers, arriving at Bullcroft Colliery, Nr. Doncaster, for their weekly session of rescue training, found a readymade "Exercise" awaiting them—only this was no Exercise. This was grim reality. At 1900hrs that evening a wagon carrying 2,000 gallons of highly inflammable oil, crashed into a Diesel locomotive in the Colliery sidings. The Colliery Safety and Fire Officer, Mr. J. P. Huby who is also the C D Rescue Instructor was already on the premises. He quickly appraised the situation and issued a 'No Smoking' order. Fortunately, the wind was carrying the dense volume of fumes away from the Intake shaft of the pit

but, dangerously near to the scene of the crash was the electricity transformer house and the colliery weigh bridge. Speedily mobilised by Mr. Huby, the Rescue volunteers built a bank of sand and earth to stem the flow of oil, working in conditions of great discomfort due to the effects of oil fumes. Meanwhile, other volunteers connected fire hoses to two hydrants and played water onto the stream of oil, to dilute it. The Colliery Engineer and the local Fire Brigade joined the Rescue volunteers and together they brought the situation under control after two hours of gruelling and dangerous work.

August 1960



Journal Readers who are planning to attend Remembrance 2021 events are requested to send reports and photographs direct to me as soon as possible following the Commemoration.

My address and E-mail are given on Page 2.

Thank you.

Graham Whitehead
Vice-Chairman and Journal Editor
Civil Defence Association

LETTER FROM AMERICA

The Vigour of the mind

Iron rusts from disuse; water loses its purity from stagnation... even so does inaction sap the vigour of the mind. - Leonardo da Vinci

Teddy Roosevelt was always a proponent of what he called “the strenuous life”. T.R. was referring to a strenuous and active physical life but I am also sure that he would have advocated for a vigorous and strenuous life of the mind.

Now, more than ever do we need to stay mentally sharp. I recall watching a documentary on the life in wartime Britain and one of the highest rated radio shows was called The Brains Trust, a weekly intellectual panel discussion. This same documentary also talked about people’s desire for good music, and good art. This phenomenon was found not only in wartime Britain but Russia with the popularity of the wartime poets like Konstantin Simonov.

Take time this day or this week to do something to renew the vigour of your mind, be it a book or some music or some writing. I will do the same.

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

EVENTS

2021

Saturday 9 October CDA Annual Commemoration

CDA Memorial, The NMA

26—31 October Halloween Fun

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

At the time of compiling the list of events, some Covid-19 guidelines were still being applied in the UK.

It is therefore recommended that enquirers check with the organisers before booking and attending an event.

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

The BARRA notice has been updated, so please make a note of the changes.

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:
0737 772 1768

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.

ARP WARDENS POSTS - PLYMOUTH



The writer lives in close proximity to one of the purpose built World War Two ARP Posts in Plymouth. He decided that he may as well have a look around to see how many are left standing, and whilst out walking his dog, he located four—which surprised him, after all, Plymouth's not renowned for it's preservation of WW2 stuff! So far, he's only managed to find one of these buildings which hasn't been modernised, the bonus also being that it's also virtually stood the test of time - apart from the door being removed, and a bit of rubbish. A rare thing these days for an empty building in a public thoroughfare.

When the Government realised the increasing possibility of another war, Air Raid Precautions were planned and started being put in place during the late 1930s. Local Authorities were invited to make plans to protect people in the event of war. An Air Raid Wardens Service was created in each locality and throughout the Second World War around 1.5 million people served as Wardens carrying out a wide range of duties from sounding air raid sirens, checking of gas masks, orderly control of public air raid shelters, evacuating areas of UXB's and informing their Control Centre to send out rescue services.



*ARP Wardens Post
Albermarle, Plymouth*



*The entrance to ARP
Wardens Post,
Albermarle, Plymouth*

Needless to say they would have been a hive of activity during bombing raids. They served a vital role throughout World War Two, and the majority of citizens who manned them could never have predicted the devastation that was to follow during that war.

With acknowledgements to derelictplaces.co.uk

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