
ROYAL OBSERVER CORPS



TRAINING MANUAL



Headquarters No.20 Group. YORK

1st Edition

Training Manual

Contents

Welcome to the Royal Observer Corps. This Training Manual will give you the essential information you need to ensure that you are ready to begin your role in the Corps.

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About the Royal Observer Corps

You'll find the definitions of the key words in the Glossary.

The history of the Royal Observer Corps

The Royal Observer Corps (ROC) staff York Cold War Bunker and other **bunkers** across the UK. The organisation was founded in 1925 (as the Observer Corps) to identify and report enemy planes. By the start of the Second World War in 1939, it covered most of the UK. It was granted royal status in 1941. The ROC's badge shows an Elizabethan **beacon lighter**.

In 1954, in response to the development of nuclear weapons, the ROC was given a nuclear reporting role. It was to gather data on nuclear explosions and communicate the appropriate warnings. In 1955, it was integrated with the Air Raid Warning Organisation to form the **United Kingdom Warning and Monitoring Organisation (UKWMO)**. At the same time, the UK government began to build a series of nuclear-resistant bunkers in case of war.

York Cold War Bunker was built in 1961. It is the headquarters of the ROC's No. 20 Group. There are around 180 ROC volunteers in total at York Cold War Bunker. In a time of crisis, volunteers are split into three crews (or teams) doing consecutive eight-hour shifts to provide continuous cover in the bunker during operations. In the event of a nuclear attack, the team in the bunker at that time will need to remain there for up to 30 days, monitoring nuclear fallout.

The ROC report information coming in from **monitoring posts** in their area to the main Sector Control in Lincoln. There are hundreds of monitoring posts, each around 10 miles apart. The posts that report to York Cold War Bunker stretch across Yorkshire and up to Middlesbrough.

The ROC are volunteers, giving up their time to help in the country's defence.

As an ROC volunteer, you will be expected to attend evening and weekend training and carry out two major **simulated** nuclear attack exercises a year. Some of these will be with other countries. In peacetime York Cold War Bunker is manned by a permanent staff of three, while the monitoring posts that pass on information are unmanned.

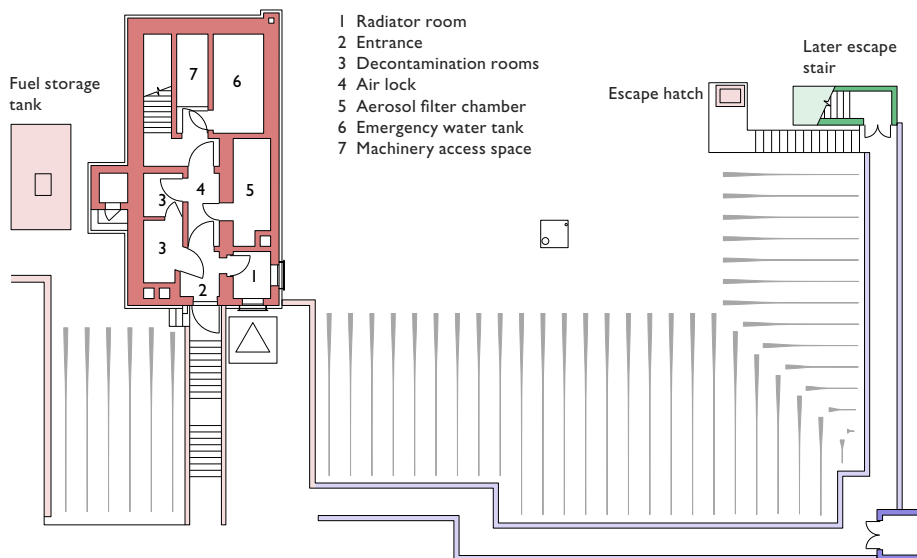


Royal Observer Corps members are volunteers who give up their time to help the country's defence.

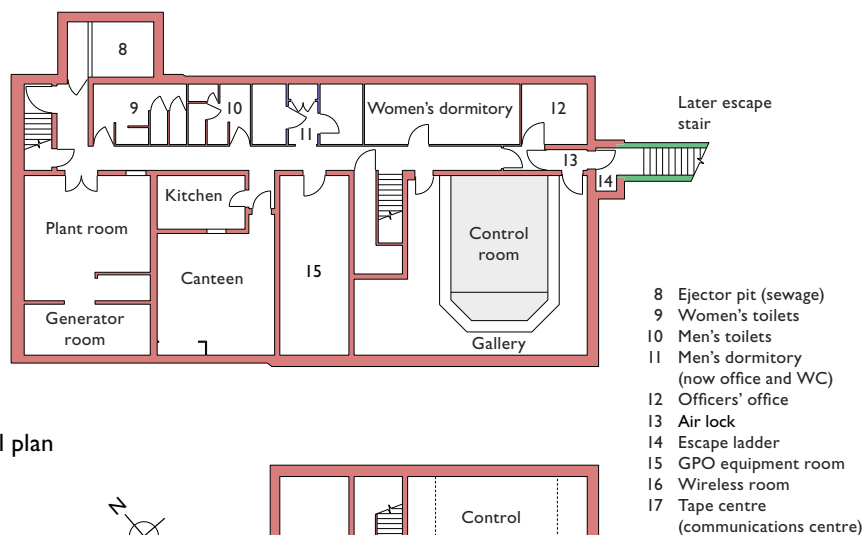
War Office official photographer, public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

York Cold War Bunker Site plan

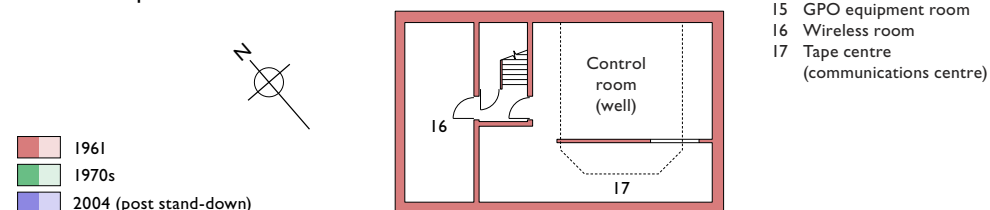
Upper level plan



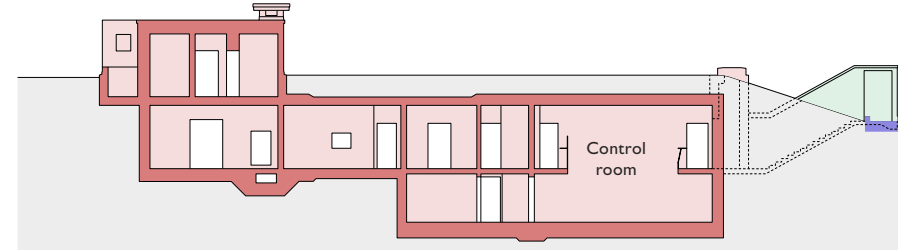
Mid-level plan



Lower level plan



Section



About the bunker

Discover the story of York Cold War Bunker

You'll find the definitions of the key words in the Glossary.

Why does York Cold War Bunker exist?

The United States changed the course of military history by detonating the world's first atomic bombs in Japan (on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 and on Nagasaki three days later). The Japanese government surrendered on 16 August 1945, bringing about the end of the Second World War.

In a famous '**iron curtain**' speech at Fulton, Missouri, USA on 4 March 1946, Winston Churchill, the prime minister of the UK, acknowledged fears that the peace following the end of the Second World War would not last. On 29 August 1949, the Soviet Union detonated a nuclear device at Semipalatinsk. This encouraged Britain to keep developing its own nuclear weapons programme and to consider how best to prepare the nation to survive a nuclear attack.

The effects of a nuclear explosion could be minimised with enough warning of its approach and subsequent monitoring of radioactivity levels. Hundreds of nuclear monitoring bunkers were set up, staffed by volunteers. York Cold War Bunker was a key part of this nuclear monitoring and reporting plan.

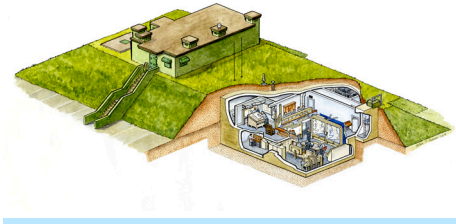
York Cold War Bunker was officially opened by the Earl of Scarborough on 16 December 1961.



York Cold War Bunker played a key role in nuclear monitoring during the Cold War.

How do you build a bunker?

York Cold War Bunker's location was chosen because the government already owned the land. When it was first built it sat in the middle of an orchard behind a Victorian villa – most of the housing that surrounds it now was built later. Its location in a **residential** area quite near to York city centre meant ROC members could get to it quickly in the event of a nuclear attack.



The bunker was built by digging a pit, constructing the structure then filling the pit in.

The bunker is a rectangular three-storey structure, but the only exposed parts are the entrance block (which was originally painted white) and the emergency escape hatch. Both of these were built to withstand the effects of a nuclear blast.

The 'cut and cover' method was used to build the bunker. A pit was dug into the natural slope of the land; the structure was built in the pit and the underground parts waterproofed. The finished structure was covered with earth almost one metre deep, to increase protection against blast and heat and lessen the effects of radiation.

Have other countries got bunkers?

Britain wasn't the only country preparing for nuclear war. Countries across the world put plans in place.

'Alert America' trailer trucks toured the USA, distributing products and information to help **civilians** prepare for nuclear war. Libraries showed educational films, offered first aid courses, and provided information on survival strategies. Schoolchildren practised 'duck and cover' exercises. There were some **communal** bunkers within existing public buildings, and the American government encouraged its population to build individual fallout shelters (however, not many people did).

The Soviet Union created civil defence headquarters in every settlement. They gave lectures on **civil defence** and organised compulsory practical training, including first aid training, for every person from the age of eight. Protective clothing was provided, evacuation plans were drawn up for **urban** areas and large underground shelters were built for communal use.

Which preparations do you think would be most effective?



Image from a 1962 USA Office of Civil Defence booklet titled Family Shelter Designs.

Missouri Historical Society via Wikimedia Commons

What survival features does York Cold War Bunker have?

In the event of a nuclear attack, whichever crew is inside the bunker will remain there for at least the next two weeks, monitoring nuclear fallout.

On this page and the next page are some of the features of the bunker to help you survive during this time. Use the site plan on page 03 to make sure you know where they are in the bunker.



The canteen is the only space the crews have for relaxation.

Canteen

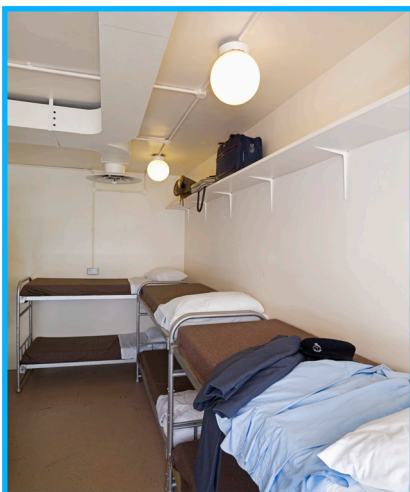
This is the social space of the bunker, used for training and eating meals. Tables and chairs are stacked to the side of the room and brought out as necessary.

Kitchen

The kitchen is linked to the canteen by a glazed serving hatch. Facilities include a large catering oven, hot plate, electric cooker, toaster and water heaters. Each crew has its own cupboard to keep supplies in, so please be sure to use only your crew's resources.



Each crew has their own cupboard for food supplies.



Dormitories (Women's and Room 11)

The two dormitories have two-tier bunkbeds. There are more crew members than the 20 beds available, so there is a 'hotbed' system. When it is your turn to rest, you will use whichever bed is available at the time. Storage is limited so you are asked to only bring a small bag or suitcase which will fit on the shelves above the bunks.

The dormitories are very basic, with two-tier bunks and a shelf for personal belongings.

What survival features does York Cold War Bunker have? *Continued*

Plant room

This contains an essential air conditioning unit to clean and circulate air. In the event of a nuclear incident, the air temperature outside will be high. The bunker will be sealed up, and the air inside recirculated for as long as possible. When fresh air becomes essential a 'gulp' of fresh air will be drawn in through a filter, to remove radioactive particles. The foul air will be expelled and recirculation will begin again. There is a back-up generator to be used in the event of system failure.



The plant room is essential for maintaining air quality.

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Pressure is used to remove waste from the bunker.

Ejector unit room (Room 8)

The bunker is lower than the sewage system and has two sets of toilets with sinks and a shower. Sewage and wastewater are stored in containers with a float – when the float rises high enough it will trigger a blast of compressed air from a cylinder to expel the contents. Duplicates of the equipment are kept in the bunker, in case of failures.

Decontamination rooms (Room 3)

Anyone exposed to nuclear fall-out outside the bunker will enter the first decontamination room, strip, place their clothing into a 'hot box' (a waist-high brick 'bin') and wash in the sink provided. They then enter the next room, wash again and check themselves for any remaining radioactivity, using a docimeter. After this, they will dress in clean clothing.



The dressing room was attached to the decontamination room.

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Timeline

Events related to
York Cold War Bunker

Key dates during the Cold War

- **1925** The Observer Corps is founded, initially to observe enemy aircraft.
- **1945** The first atomic bomb is dropped by the USA on Japan.
- **1945** The **Potsdam Conference** takes place to decide how Germany will be divided after the end of the Second World War.
- **1949** The Soviet Union explode their first atomic device.
- **1952** The first **hydrogen bomb** is exploded by the USA.
- **1954** The Royal Observer Corps is given a nuclear monitoring role. It becomes part of **UKWMO (UK Warning and Monitoring Organisation)** in 1955.
- **1955** The **Ministry of Works** begins work on designs for nuclear-resistant bunkers in the UK.
- **1958** The first march to the **Atomic Weapons Research Establishment** at Aldermaston happens. This was in opposition to the development of nuclear weapons.
- **1958 Paris East/West Summit.**
- **1961** York Cold War Bunker is constructed. It opens on 16 December. It becomes ROC No. 20 Group headquarters.
- **1962** The Soviet Union establishes missile bases on Cuba, leading to the **Cuban Missile Crisis.**
- 1965** The **Vietnam War** begins.
- **1968** ROC No. 18 Group in Leeds is closed. No. 20 Group at York Cold War Bunker takes over reporting of their monitoring posts.

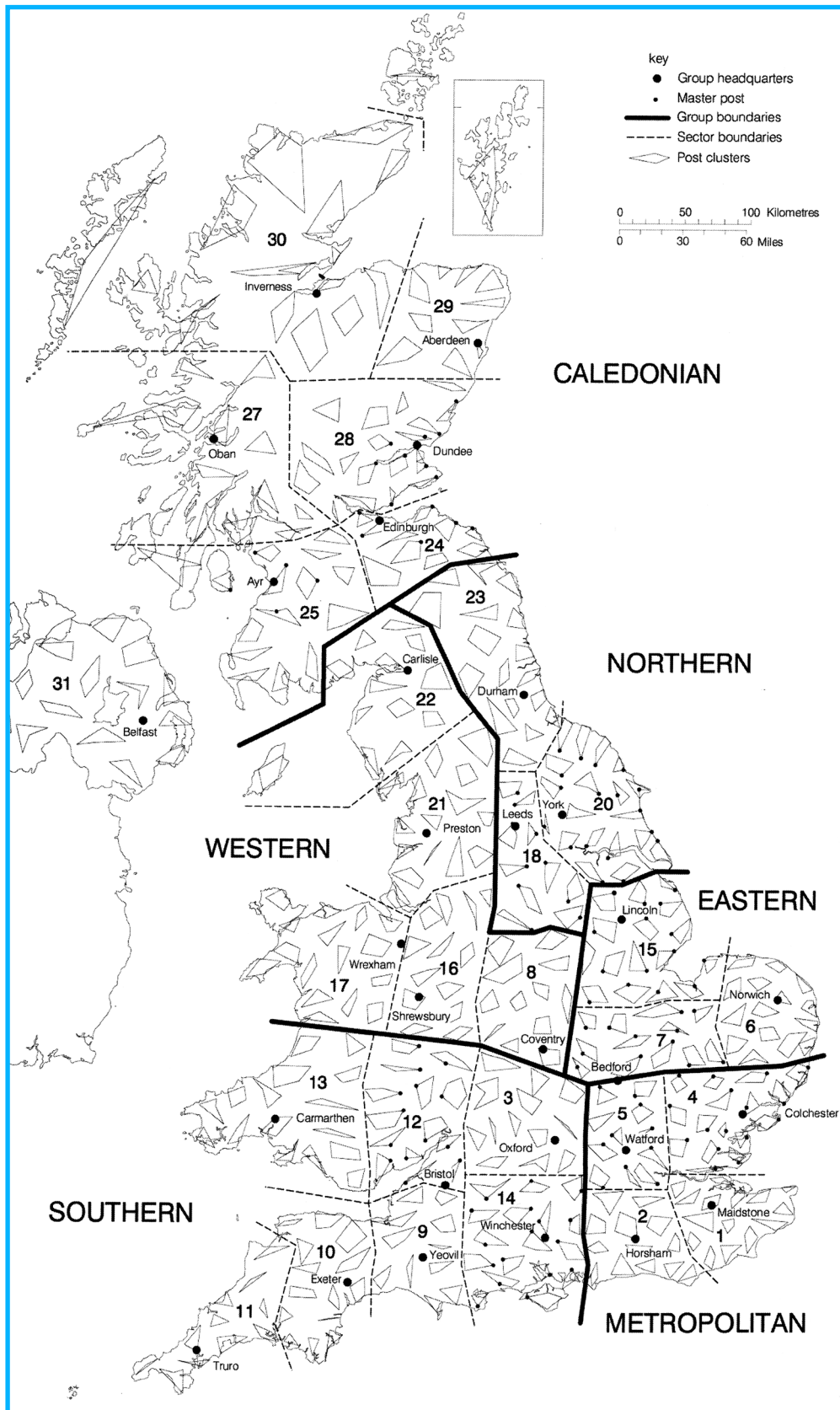
Timeline continued

Events related to
York Cold War Bunker

Key dates during the Cold War

- **1975** The 50th anniversary of the ROC. Members organise dinner-dances, a medieval banquet and other social events.
- **1979** The Soviet Union invades Afghanistan.
- **1981** A peace camp is formed at Greenham Common, to protest against nuclear weapons.
- **1982** Ann Metcalfe becomes the first female ROC group officer, in charge of four monitoring posts in Yorkshire.
- **1989** The **Berlin Wall** falls on 9 November.
- **1989** The **Malta Summit**, seen as the beginning of the end of the Cold War.
- **1991** The ROC is officially stood down on 30 September.
- **1991** Russia formally recognises the end of the Soviet Union.
- **1992** York Cold War Bunker closes on 31 March. A small team worked there until this date, to oversee the closing of the monitoring posts.
- **2000** English Heritage takes over the care of York Cold War Bunker.
- **2007** York Cold War Bunker opens as a tourist attraction.

Map of ROC monitoring posts



Did you know? ?

York Cold War Bunker is in the Northern sector and is a group headquarters. Use the key to help you find it.

York's sector control is Lincoln – find this on the map as well.

The shapes show the area outlines for clusters of monitoring posts. How many clusters are there in Group 20?

A map showing the extent of monitoring posts during the mid-1960s.

ROC Operations Exercise

If a nuclear attack happens, information about the position and strength of bombs is essential. As an ROC member, you will work alongside scientists from the UKWMO to pass information to the UK government as quickly as possible. Practice is essential. There are two major exercises a year, often involving international participants.

Imagine: The UK receives a warning of imminent attack. You report as quickly as possible to the bunker. A new bomb is announced with the code word 'TOCSIN'. Test your knowledge of what needs to happen next by putting these steps into the correct order.

A

The post plotters log the details on small docket of paper and pass them on to a runner who takes each docket to the triangulation table.



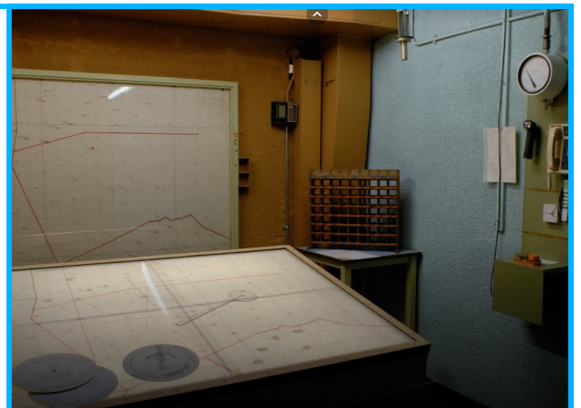
B

Bomb details are also recorded on a wooden slat, using a chinagraph pencil. This is displayed (in a frame) to the team on the bottom floor of the operations room. Up to 20 bombs can be displayed at a time.



C

The triangulation table has a map with holes in the location of each monitoring post. Plotters place a protractor and a ruler in the slot for the post shown on the docket and use the ruler to mark the trajectory of the bomb. By cross-referencing between different monitoring posts, they calculate an accurate bomb position.



D

A network of three-man monitoring posts across the area receives details of the position and altitude of a nuclear explosion, its power and the resulting radiation levels.

Using fixed telephone lines, they relay this information to the eight post plotters at York Cold War Bunker.

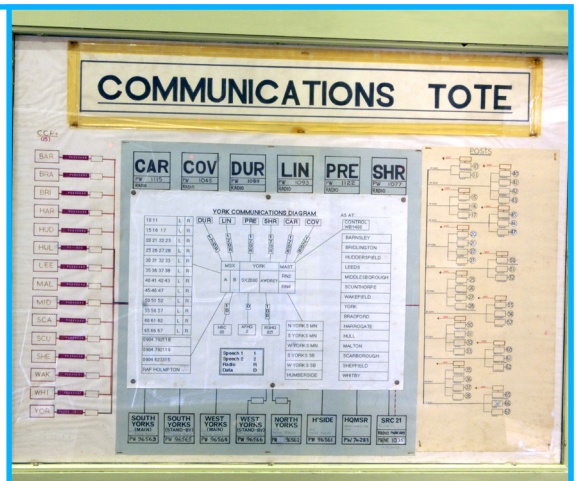
**E**

The Nuclear Burst Tote is filled in by another team. This records grid references, altitude, power and time of detonation for each bomb.

**F**

Bomb data is also typed into a computer terminal. This communicates the information to ROC sector control in Lincoln. From there it is passed on to military and civilian organisations.

ROC members in the communications hub receive information about all the bombs across the country. They will check that any bombs their group has communicated are received back to them.

**G**

Downstairs in the control room, another team log the position of all bombs on a Perspex map. They write backwards so it can be read on the other side. Ground bursts are shown in green, air bursts in orange. Over the next two weeks, this team maps the fallout from the bombs.



ROC Operations Exercise

Practising to be a display plotter



A transparent map in the control room where display plotters communicated information about nuclear bursts.

Display plotters record information about all nuclear bombs reported across the country. They do this by writing on the reverse of a see-through map, so that everyone in the control room can see it. They need to be skilled at writing backwards. Practise your display plotter skills below.

Place name forwards	Place name backwards
London	London
Hull	
Bristol	
Manchester	
Birmingham	

Top tip:

Use a mirror to see what the word looks like backwards.

York Cold War Bunker

Objects from the bunker

These objects are either found inside the Cold War Bunker, or they relate to its history.

1. Water heater

This heater stayed in the kitchen and was used to heat water for cups of tea and coffee. ROC observers joked that if the power failed and the generator kicked in, the water heater would be one of the essential items needing power.

What does the fact that the water heater was considered 'essential' tell you about life in the bunker?



2. Uniform

The ROC's uniform was based on the uniform for the Royal Air Force. Volunteers were given a free uniform when they joined. A lot of people reported that the wool it was made from was quite scratchy and uncomfortable to wear.

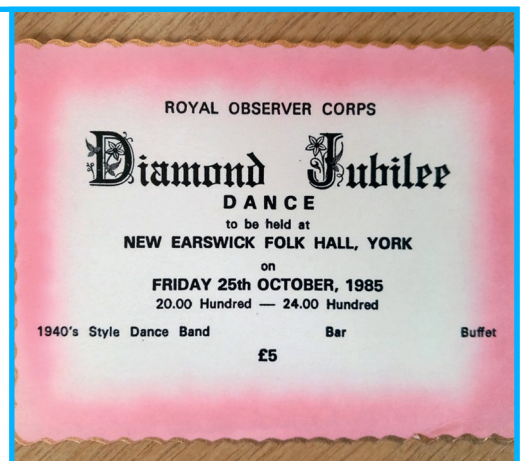
What does the ROC having its own uniform tell you about the importance of its role?



3. Ticket to ROC dance

This ticket allowed entry to a dance held in New Earswick, York in 1985. As well as taking part in nuclear attack test operations, the members of the ROC held regular social events. Many of them have kept in contact.

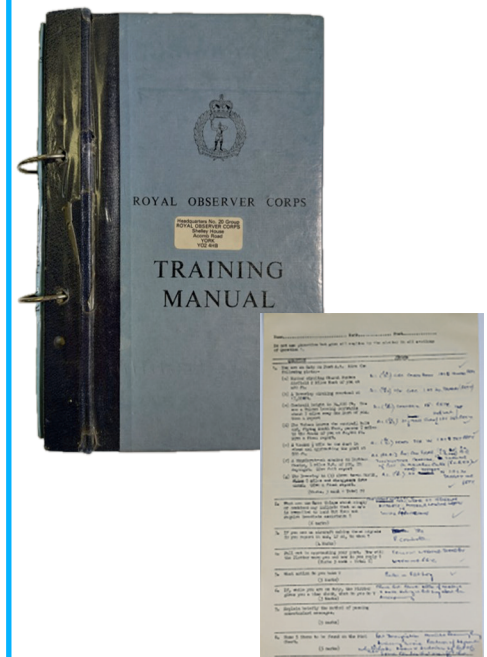
Why might social events have been important to the ROC?



4. Training Manual and master test exam sheet

Observers were given extensive training. They learnt how to operate equipment and about the effects of nuclear conflict. The Training Manual was updated regularly, with annual week-long summer camps providing extra instruction. Observers had to pass a master test every year to be able to continue in their role.

Why might it have been important to regularly update the manual? Hint: Consider developments in technology throughout the Cold War.



5. Bomb Power Indicator

Metal plates were mounted to the bunker roof and connected by an air-tight pipe to a gauge in the space below. The pressure wave of a nuclear explosion squeezed the plates which triggered a dial to move on the gauge. This recorded the air pressure to indicate the power of the bomb.

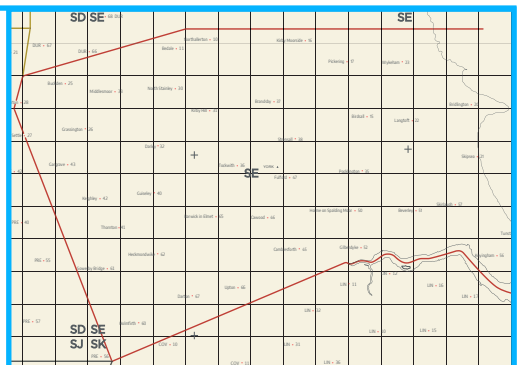
Why might it have been important to know how powerful a bomb was?



6. York group map

Maps were very important to observers. They used them to work out the location of nuclear bombs and to map potential fallout. This one shows the area covered by Group 20 in York, including the monitoring posts. Each number represents a post.

What does the number of monitoring posts tell you about Cold War fears?



7. Telephone and internal telephone directory

The observers and UKWMO scientists in the bunker relied on the telephone network for voice and data communication. They received information from monitoring posts via telephone and relayed information to Sector Control in Lincoln and other group headquarters. Even when computers became more widespread, information was still communicated via the telephone network.

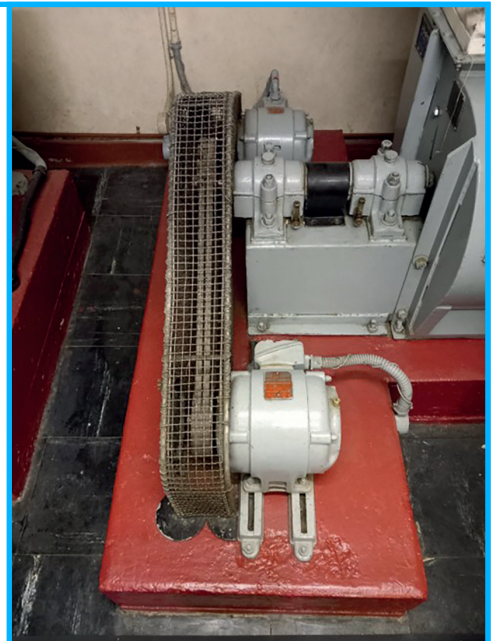
What kind of information might be passed through this telephone? Look at the Operations Exercise on p.11-12 to help you answer this.



8. Fan

When the door to the bunker was closed, the air inside was trapped. This fan circulated air around the bunker to maintain air quality. As with all the important equipment in the bunker, there was a second fan which would be used if the first one failed. In the event of a nuclear attack, air would have been kept circulating for as long as possible, before the system took a small 'gulp' of outside air which would go through filters to remove contamination.

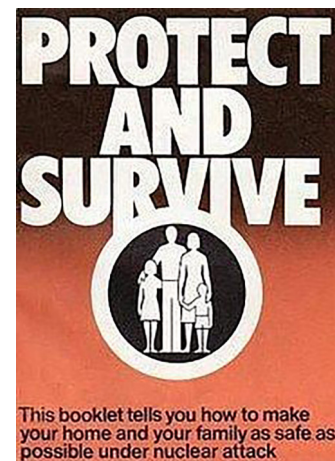
Why was it important to have a system like this in a bunker?



9. Protect and Survive booklet

The government published this booklet in 1980, and it was sent to all households in the UK. It contained information about how the public could protect themselves against nuclear attacks. As well as the booklet, there were newspaper advertisements, radio broadcasts, and public information films.

How might a member of the public have reacted when this booklet dropped through their letterbox?








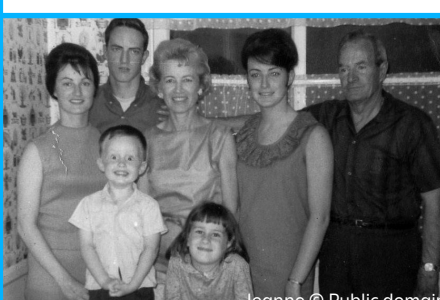
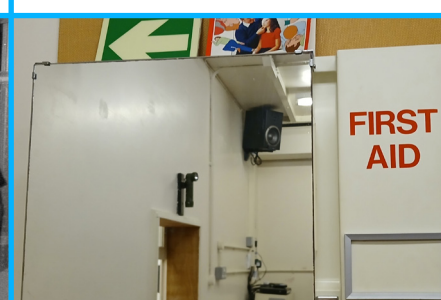


York Cold War Bunker

Preparing for a stay in the bunker

You are preparing to enter the bunker for a training exercise. If an attack happens during the exercise you will need to remain in the bunker for at least two weeks.

Look at the items below. Decide which will be the most important for you to take with you. Create a list of most important to least important. Be prepared to give your reasons.

radio  KQVDP © Public domain	water  KVDP © Public domain	vitamins  CC0: photo by form PxHere
tinned food  Salvation Army via Flickr (CC BY 2.0)	batteries  Malcolm Koo (CC BY 4.0)	dosimeter 
games  Adamt © Public domain	family photographs  Jeanne © Public domain	first aid kit 

York Cold War Bunker

What previous ROC members say

We have a large collection of oral histories from members of the ROC, telling us what it was like to be part of the organisation. Oral histories are recordings of people telling their stories. They capture people's personal feelings and can give historians a different perspective on events, although people's memories change over time so they can also be inaccurate or subjective. These oral histories were collected in 2020.

Source 1 – Joining the ROC

[A] 'I met a lot of people, similar, similar, age to myself who had maybe just joined and then a lot of older people, ex-RAF, ex-army, ex-personnel from the war years, had joined as well, so they were, they were like the instructors, [...] and some were just ordinary oiks like the rest of us.' – Noreen

[B] 'UKWMO was important to me as I felt that there was a role for the organisation [...] I wanted to be part of something that could help the rest of the population without a lot of song and dance.' – Ron

[C] 'When I was at school, during school holidays I used to go to work with [my father at Leeds Group Control] in the school holidays. So that's how I started, I started to be interested. When he went out to the post to see if they were equipped or not, I used to go out in the car with him.' – David

[D] 'I joined it because I just left school and I just started working. And you miss all your friends, because you go from an environment where you know a lot of people to the bottom of the heap in the working environment, and I was looking around for some kind of big youth club that I could join just to meet other people [...] And somebody I worked with said 'why don't you come to the Royal Observer Corps with me?' Well, your first reaction is 'what' and then she explained what it was about, and I went there. And you get hooked. You find a lot of people stay a long time. It was interesting.' – Ann

[E] 'Oh well, as a 16-year-old I had no other motivation, other than a nice Royal Air Force blue uniform' – Noreen



Source 2 – Exercises the ROC took part in



[F] 'We used to provide that information to local authorities. There was a lot of forms, awful lot of form filling in. No computers. Which was, you know quite strange these days, I suppose at the time obviously the computing wasn't as good, but also [because] it's the effect that a nuclear war would have had on computers, might not have worked because, you know ...electric.' – David

[G] 'I was lucky in that I found a job, I really, really liked very early on. And that was being part of the triangulation team, and it just appealed to my nature ...the post would give us a report of the bearing from that post from which an instrument noted there was a nuclear explosion ...if enough posts saw that flash ...and if we knew where the posts were ...we had a [triangulation] table with those posts' locations on and we drew a line along the bearing from each post to [where] they said that the flash had occurred. Where those lines intersected, that must be the bomb ...And I loved the triangulation, I got so good, I mean eventually, and I'm talking years, you could actually stand me in front of the map with the pressures and I'd tell you where the bomb was and I'd give you an estimate, well certainty, as to whether it was ground bursts or airbursts and a rough idea of its pressure.' – Ralph

[H] 'I became the first female group officer, which meant you had posts. It had always been the men who did that, but they promoted me, and I had a group, a cluster of four or five posts. During exercises I used to go out and visit each one in turn ...And you [...] met other people from all walks of life and I've got friends that I met all those years ago that I'm still in touch with.' – Ann

[I] 'We had a rota going, in fact I can remember there were some people from crew three ...only about two or three who cooked, or you took your own sandwiches in, or on an exercise we had a fish and chip night.

We had orders for fish and chips, and somebody would pay them money, and somebody would go out and order 39 times and then come back with fish and chips. They'd be put into the gas oven to be kept warm and when you came off your shift then you ate your fish and chips. Or if it was a very nice day, and it was a day shift, we used to have picnics on the embankment there.' – Noreen

These extracts are from oral history interviews with members of the Royal Observer Corps, which detail some of their thoughts about their role at York Cold War Bunker.

Source 3 – Thoughts about nuclear conflict



[J] 'I think I was of the mentality that we can't, we can't magic away this threat, there is a threat, and if there's a threat, then, what can we do about that, in the hope that within that broader kind of concept of deterrence that the deterrence would mean it wouldn't happen.' – Tim

[K] 'Because it wasn't the real thing, because we weren't really at war with the Russians at the time it was all good fun, but it could have been quite disastrous in the real world.' – Ralph

[L] 'We as a family, we were prepared.' – Eileen

[M] 'It was serious if it'd ever happened, we'd have been in terrible trouble. And there'd be no going back, it's not like dropping a normal bomb.' – Ann

[N] '...it was a case of doing a job and doing it to your best ability and then leaving again, I suppose, in the sense that maybe you didn't want to think about it too deeply.' – Noreen

[O] 'I think you just put it to the back of your mind you know, I think you always thought it could do, but it was always in the back of your mind thinking it shouldn't happen and the more you prepare for it the less likely it was to happen, because that was the nuclear deterrent. I wasn't frightened of it, I wasn't thinking whether it's going to happen next week or anything like that. In fact, I've always thought the better prepared we were the less likely it was to happen.' – David

These extracts are from oral history interviews with members of the Royal Observer Corps, which detail some of their thoughts about nuclear conflict and their role at York Cold War Bunker.

Nuclear bunkers and the peace movement

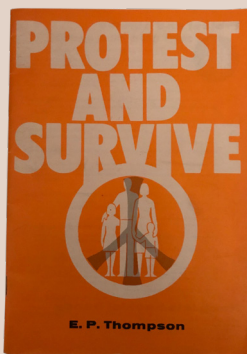
In 1956, the UK government announced that Britain was going to reduce its **armed forces** and instead would switch to a policy of nuclear **deterrence**. Not everybody agrees with this, or with the work being done by the ROC.

Opposition groups such as the Committee of 100 and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) have been set up. They believe in peace and want to encourage all countries to get rid of nuclear weapons. They take part in protest marches to the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston.

Direct action protests have become more common. Protestors **blockade** and invade military bases and interfere with nuclear weapon **convoys**. In 1981, a women's **peace camp** was set up at RAF Greenham Common. It has become known internationally, with more than 70,000 women attending it. Other peace camps are sited at RAF Molesworth and Menwith Hill.

So far, York Cold War Bunker has not been a target for protestors, but some of the ROC's monitoring posts have been **picketed**. If the post is manned at the time, ROC members should use the code word 'orange' when calling the police for help.

The CND continues to play a significant role in peace activism.



Peace protestors created their own version of the government's 'Protect and Survive' booklet, called 'Protest and Survive'.

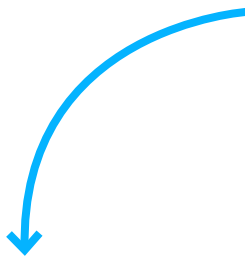
ROC members were aware of anti-nuclear protestors. One ROC member, Noreen, felt:

'They didn't understand that this thing could happen and, if it did happen, without us there would be no form of defence, or survival, or possible survival. So you had to have something to counteract it, or at least try, for the rest of the world or people in the country were looking for a bit of hope.'

ROC members held a range of views about nuclear war and the peace movement.

Glossary

Tricky terms and what they mean



armed forces – the Army, Navy and Air Force, whose job it is to protect the UK

Atomic Weapons Research Establishment – a UK Ministry of Defence site, responsible for the design, manufacture and support of nuclear weapons

beacon lighter – during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603) a network of beacons was set up across England, to warn of invasion by sea. A beacon lighter's job was to monitor the sea for enemy boats and sound a warning if any were seen, by lighting the beacon.



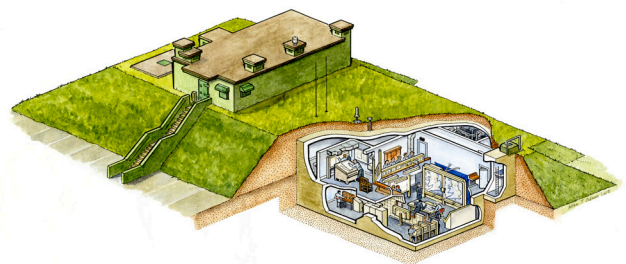
A beacon lighter was part of the defence force during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

Below is a list of words you might come across while exploring the history of York Cold War Bunker. Use this Glossary to find out what they mean.

Berlin Wall – a high wall built by the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) in 1961, to stop people going into West Germany. The border between East and West Germany was reopened on 9 November, 1989.

blockade – a blockade is used to stop an enemy getting things that are important to them

bunker – a reinforced underground shelter



Bunkers were built underground.

civil defence – an attempt to protect citizens of a country from war, human-made or natural disasters

civilian – a person who is not serving in the armed forces or police

communal – belonging to members of a community

convoy – a group of vehicles that travel together, often to protect something

crew – a group of people who work together to man the bunker

Cuban Missile Crisis (October 1962)

– the ‘hot point’ in the Cold War. In 1961, the USA unsuccessfully attempted to overthrow Fidel Castro’s new, USSR-supported, communist government in Cuba. In 1962, the USA discovered that the USSR had missile launch sites in Cuba. After a tense 13 days of negotiations, the USSR agreed to remove all missiles from Cuba.

hydrogen bomb – a powerful explosive device that uses nuclear fusion to release an immense amount of energy

iron curtain – a hypothetical (not real or true) border, between the Soviet Union and Western countries

Malta Summit – President George H.W. Bush (USA) and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev met. The summit marked the beginning of the end of the Cold War, with both sides discussing a reduction in troops and weapons.

Ministry of Works – a government department responsible for building projects

monitoring post – a small, underground bunker reached by a ladder. Three people worked in these posts, reporting any nuclear incidents to their group control.

morale – the confidence, enthusiasm, and discipline of a person or group at a particular time

nuclear deterrence – deterrence is a military doctrine (belief). It relies on the threat of retaliation deterring an enemy from attacking.

Paris East/West Summit – a meeting between the USA and USSR to discuss nuclear testing, Berlin and Cuba. In May 1960, a US U2 spy plane was shot down over the USSR. This led to the end of the talks.

peace camp – an informal encampment set up as a protest against a military policy



A peace camp was set up at Greenham Common
ceridwen/Greenham Common women’s protest 1982,
gathering around the base via Wikimedia Commons

picket – a group of people who stand outside a workplace or other venue to stop other people going in

Potsdam Conference – a meeting in July 1945 between Prime Minister Clement Attlee (Britain), President Harry S. Truman (USA) and Premier Joseph Stalin (USSR) to finalise the post-Second World War agreement made in Yalta about the division of Germany.

propaganda – information that is spread to influence people’s beliefs or feelings. It can be biased or misleading

residential – an area where people live

simulated – a practice run or pretend version of something real

UKWMO (UK Warning and Monitoring Organisation) – a civilian organisation that provided military and civilian organisations with data on nuclear explosions and fallout

urban – towns or cities

Vietnam War (1954–1975) – a war between North Vietnam (supported by China) and South Vietnam (supported by the USA). The USA were concerned that if South Vietnam became communist, nearby countries would too.



A UKWMO scientist was part of the team at York Cold War Bunker, working in the control room.

