

Foreword to Archival Report - Silent Key Chris Hammett/G3AWR (ROA Nr.134).

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Chris/G3AWR was a keystone member of the ROARS CW nets. My computer log shows that our first ROA QSO was on 16th. January 1997 and the last was 16th. October 2006, which totalled 627. His death is recorded as 11th. November 2006 - Armistice Day.

During one of our operating sessions he told me that he wished to donate his wartime medals to the ROA and as the Association's 'link-man' (with Brian Cotton's blessing) I made the arrangements with Dr. Geoff Bowles, Keeper of the Chelmsford Science and Industry Museum for them to be included in the ROA Exhibition which is part of the Museum's Marconi Collection (see website <http://www.g0mwt.org.uk>).

Before the medals could be sent to me Chris became a silent key. I immediately sent an e-mail with 'snailmail' copy, to the Executors of his estate advising them (whomsoever they might be) of Chris's wishes. I was delighted to be contacted by the husband of his cousin to say that the medals had been found and, together with some most interesting documentation, they were forwarded to me.

In parallel with my request to the Executors, my son-in law Brian Oldham who is a Military Historian and has a desk at the National Records Office at Kew, offered to identify the medals and circumstances surrounding them. The detailed archive report (not written in magazine publication format) - "Christopher Dennison Hammett" - which follows on from this foreword, is the outcome of that research which has been warmly received by the Museum. Certain colleagues of Brian's at Kew became very enthused as the story unfolded and I understand that several expert opinions contributed.

The sentence contained in the document "Thus four out of Chris' first five ships were sunk during the war. His next ship would join that list.....", no doubt would vindicate those traditionally superstitious Members among us from not following Chris around in those days.

Chris's five campaign medals - together with their 1946 Authenticity Certificate from the now MCA in Cardiff; three Certificate of Discharge books covering his service from 1940 - 1973; Seaman's Identity Card; a letter from MIMCo advising his father of his survival from being torpedoed; Certificate of Proficiency (Second Class); four photographs of Chris Hammett in Service; Certificate of Registration for War Service; two Port Identity Cards; background e-mail tributes; a comprehensive album containing photos of radio amateurs (period 1950/1970); the accompanying Archival Report and Foreword - were exhibited at the Marconi Day at the aforementioned Museum on April 21st 2007 and are now on permanent display. The items are in the custody of the Museum. If any reader has further information about Chris Hammett would they please get in touch with me or our ROA Archivist 'Willie' Williamson .

Chris Hammett did his training in 1939 at the London Radio College and subsequently joined MIMCo in 1940. After continuous service at sea he left to look after his ailing mother in 1973. He never married.

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