

Bygone Days

Lt. Gordon Martin Jensen RE 3BD Company. G.M.
(Jenny and the progeny of Devil's Eggs) *

Paul writes: - My interest in Gordon Jensen's war activities stems from childhood. I was born and grew up in a Greenwich street which had been extensively bombed. Our playgrounds were the derelict remains of all sorts of dangerous structures. We had a great deal of freedom and I recall climbing over the locked gates of Greenwich Park late in the evening to get home. I had better not mention railway lines!



I joined the industry in 1967 as a student apprentice and spent the years at a variety of Power Stations. I worked with Scientific Services during the commissioning of Kingsnorth, helped with non-destructive testing at West Thurrock and was at Dungeness B when the construction difficulties were first encountered.



I was then sent to Belvedere to learn generator efficiency testing and Deptford to learn fuel analysis. At Battersea I recall helping with the re-assembly of their very unusual cross compound turbine.

My transmission training began at Hurst 275Kv substation on the day the Reyrolle OHBR circuit breaker had blown to bits depositing huge chunks of insulator strings across the entire site!

After appointments as a junior engineer at Croydon and Bradwell Power Stations, I joined System Operation at Wealden House, East Grinstead. Jack Hansford the Control Manager, a real engineer's engineer had thoroughly tested both what I knew and what I did not know.

He was awarded the George Medal for his work in Grimsby and Cleethorpes in June 1943. On the 14th June the Luftwaffe had dropped **anti-personnel 'Butterfly Bombs'** which were released **from containers they called 'Devil's Eggs'**. In the next seven days Gordon dealt with 60 of these nasty little beasts. They were an early form of what is now called **cluster bombs** whose use is now prohibited by the international agreement of many countries. Some countries however are notable by the absence of their signed agreement.

Many of the bombs Gordon dealt with were likely to have been equipped with a fuse specifically designed to trigger detonation if disturbed. Gordon was awarded his G.M. for the creative ways he devised for dealing with the bombs without loss to lives or damage to valuable machinery and infrastructure.



Here are three examples of his actions in the week following 14 June whilst working from dawn until dusk:

On the 15th June a Butterfly Bomb was found resting near what is described as a piece of valuable Belgian Machinery in a timber yard. It was fitted with an anti-handling fuse so to remove it he attached a cord assuming that if pulled hard enough the bomb would travel far enough from the machinery before it exploded thus saving the machinery. This proved successful.

The following day he constructed a sandbag tunnel in the projection room of a cinema before attaching a cord to an unexploded Butterfly Bomb and pulling it from the room before it exploded. The damage was limited to five broken windows.

On the 20th June he was found on hands and knees extracting another Butterfly Bomb from a seven-junction domestic sewer. Using a chimney constructed of straw bales to protect the drain he then lowered and attached an electro magnet to the bomb before lifting it and manipulating the straw bales behind to protect the drain from damage and only then exploding it.

Not surprisingly Gordon was not one to get excited at incidents on the National Grid Network but would remain calm and composed, usually passing a casual remark about the luncheon menu.

Post Script



After many happy years on shift in the Area, the Weald and the South Metropolitan control rooms I joined National Control at Park Street in London.

Park Street was previously called Maiden Lane, was notorious and merited a name change a Museum of London lecturer informed me during a walking tour last year.

Returning to the subject! The first time I upgraded to National Control Engineer at Park Street the Chairman decided to pop in unannounced with the Energy Secretary just as we experienced

the trip of both links to France: a 2000 Megawatt incredible loss supposedly. Why me I asked myself!

When National Control moved to Wokingham I led the project to centralise control of generation at Wokingham and remained attached to projects until my appointment as Power System Manager in 1999. I always felt operations was my natural working home and only retirement prized me from the National Power System.



Researched and written by Paul Garden. Power System Engineer.

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*The Luftwaffe called the containment devices for these butterfly bombs (early cluster bombs) the DEVILS EGGS. The Butterfly Bombs were therefore the off springs of the devil