

**The Overton Post, Observer Corp
26 Group Wrexham Centre, 02 Post**



From left

Back row: E Fowles, H G Bradley, C Roberts, J E Burgess, G Jones, C O Barratt, G V Barratt.

Middle row: L Mumford, J Hughes (Deputy CO) J E Williams (Head Observer) C Hughes, T W Gabriel, J F Woolley.

Front row: W E Moody, S Wright, J T Hughes, W H Davies, J Woodfine.

A site was chosen for the Overton post in July 1938, in the 'Gate and Stile Field' along the Ellesmere Road, belonging to Mr Thompson, tenant of the Brynypys estate. Once a hut was erected in March 1939 the estate was paid £1 a year ground rent. In the pre-war months equipment was portable and when not in use was kept at the Overton Police Station or in the Brynypys estate office in the High Street. A peg driven flush with the ground marked the exact site for the tripod. When the post was manned a telephone wire was run out to a junction box on the nearest GPO pole.

The Chief Constable of Flintshire was asked to swear in observers as Special Constables, initially 6 men and Head Special, later Head Observer. Head Special Observer was J Eric Williams, agent for the Brynypys estate, and he was to remain so until 1945.

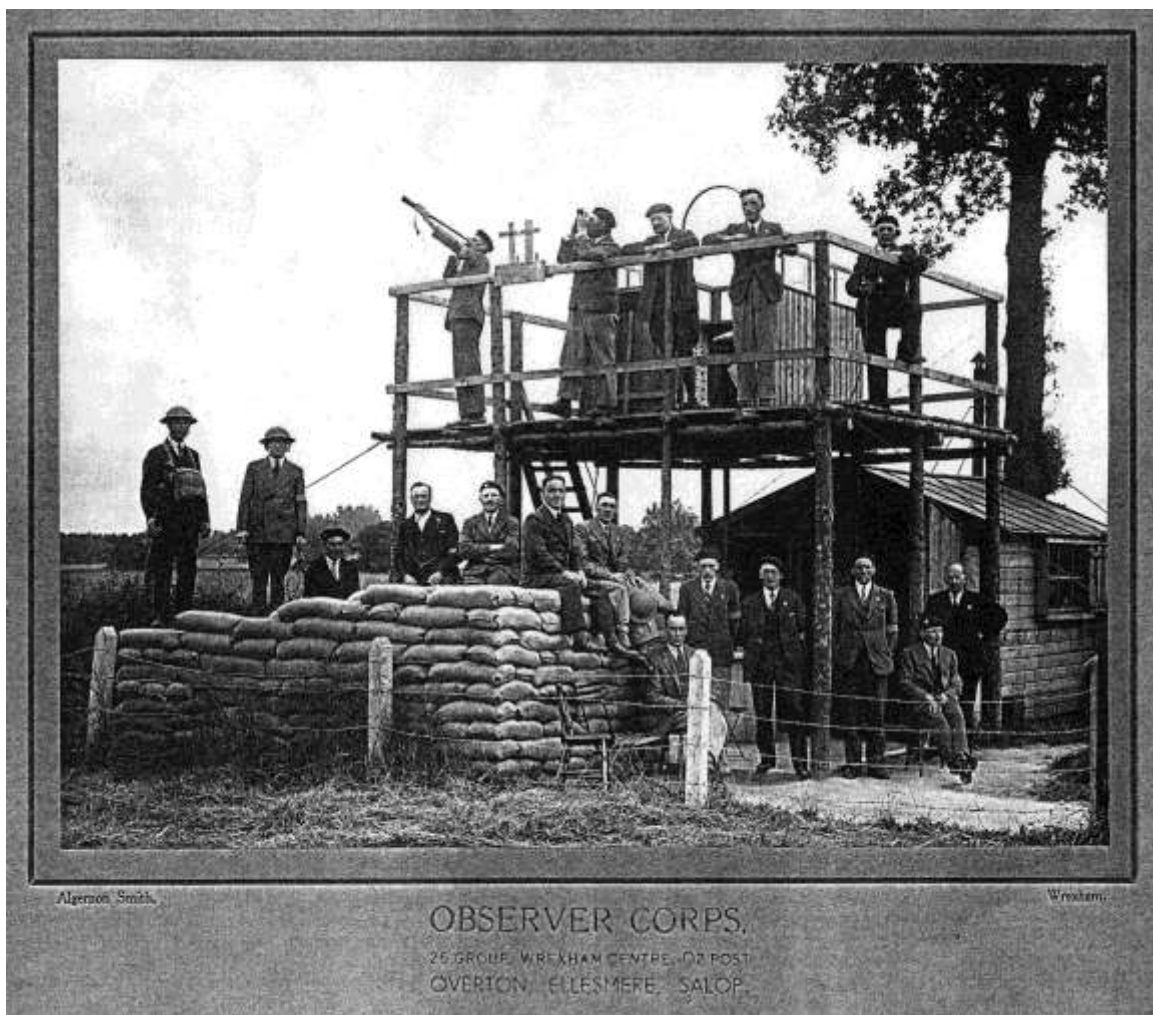
The original 6 enrolled were

John Hughes (Deputy H.O.), Charles Hughes of Overton Smithy, Ernest Shapland insurance agent from School Lane, Percy Reeves Butcher in Salop Road, W H Davies newsagent from Bangor Road and Fred Freeman, village school master, but who had to resign.

Others were soon enrolled and by January 1940 the number was up to 21 and the post was upgraded to a 'Front Area Post'.

Training sessions were held in the Cocoa Rooms and a new plotting instrument of 'improved type' was delivered plus 1,000 sand bags to protect the post.

From 3 September 1939, observation posts and control centres all over the country would be manned continuously until 12 May 1945.



Examples from the 02 Post log book

June 9th 1940 1020hrs

A Miles Master entering the sector from the NW, circling overhead and leaving NE, obviously in trouble as "crashed at Hollybush".

July 26 1941 "Enemy aircraft destroyed. Observer Posts T2 (Llanrhaeadr YM), T3 (Llanfyllin), 04 (Llanymynyech) 03 (Oswestry) 02 Overton & P2 (Welshpool) are to be congratulated on reporting".

May 23 1944. Whilst plotting a Liberator circling, Overton observers reported flares at 5-8 miles. Later Wrexham centre informed them that a Wellington had landed at a nearby airfield in difficulties owing to instrument failure.

October 28 1944 at 1800hrs An Avro Anson circling overhead at 300ft. Visibility 2 miles, crashed at Penylan near Ruabon.

December 24 1944

"Plane heard to SE 0634hrs. No angles. Explosion. No further sound. All clear sounded 0645hrs"

Rural eyes and ears may have been more finely tuned to observing. The Head Observer at Overton was frequently heard to state that 'Pheasants in woods nearby often give us warning of enemy planes approaching before the human ear can identify the sound'