



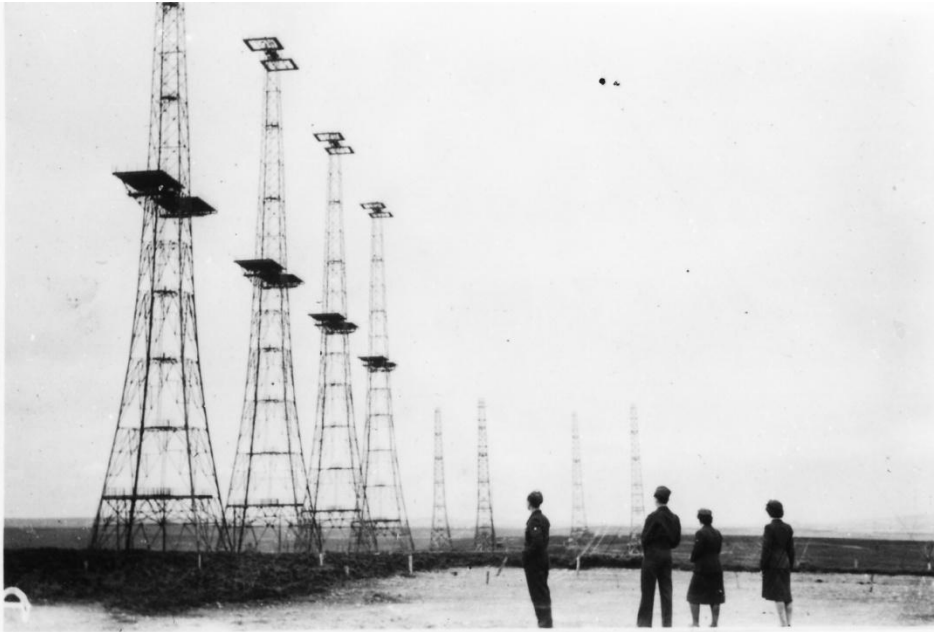
WAAF Plotters and Tellers at Fighter Command Operations Room displaying the recognised air picture over the whole of the UK

The picture was used by Air Chief Marshal Dowding and subsequent Commanders in Chief Fighter Command to exercise operational command over all the operational units of Fighter Command



One the operations watches at Ottercops Moss Chain Home Radar site between February and July 1941.

Note the predominance of WAAF personnel . There is only one Airman and he is Corporal Bernard Foster the watch NCO. The WAAF sitting on the front right of the picture is Jo Clerk who was to become a GCI controller



The magic sight as Air Chief Marshal Dowding called the radar chain which was known as Chain Home.

The four towers in a row are 350 feet high and were used to transmit a fixed beam on a pre-determined bearing. The four towers in the background formed into a square are the receiver towers

This picture is one of the first pictures to be released into the public domain and shows Danby Beacon in North Yorkshire



Section Officer Pile one of the band of many Commissioned WAAF Radar Officers pictured at Danby Beacon in 1945



The Picture shows Danby Beacon Operations Room. The WAAF on the left of the picture is the watch NCO and the Sergeant is the NCO i/c operations.

This picture is the first view of a radar operations room to be published.

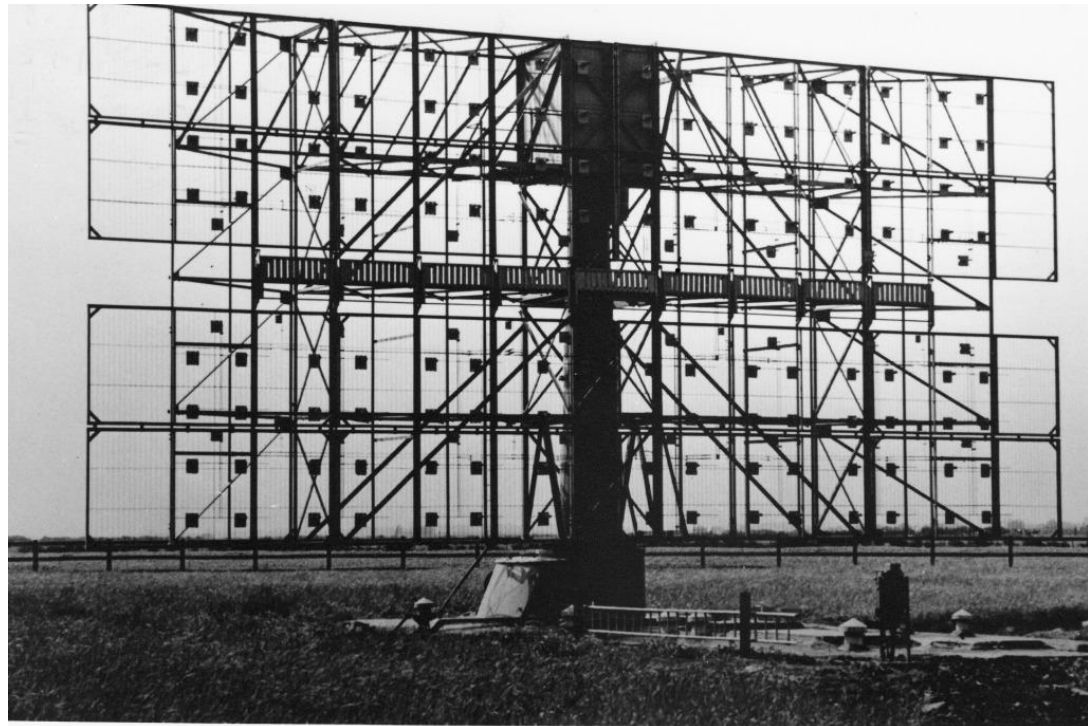


Section Officer Jo Clerk. She was commissioned in 1942 after serving for Ottercops Moss Chain Home Station and Hampston Hill Ground Control interception units. She trained as a controller and went on to serve at Durrington, Treleaver and Sopley GCI units. In July 1943 all the controllers at Treleaver were WAAF officers.



Group Captain Joan Hopkins photographed in 1982 upon her appointment as Sector Commander for the Southern part of the United Kingdom Air Defence Region and Station Commander Royal Air Force Neatishead. The first woman to command an RAF Station and the first female Sector Commander.

The development of a radar that could scan through 360 degrees and the invention of the plan position indicator allowed for the precise control of fighters from the ground by both day and night. The Type 7 radar shown here was the main type of radar used by GCI units.





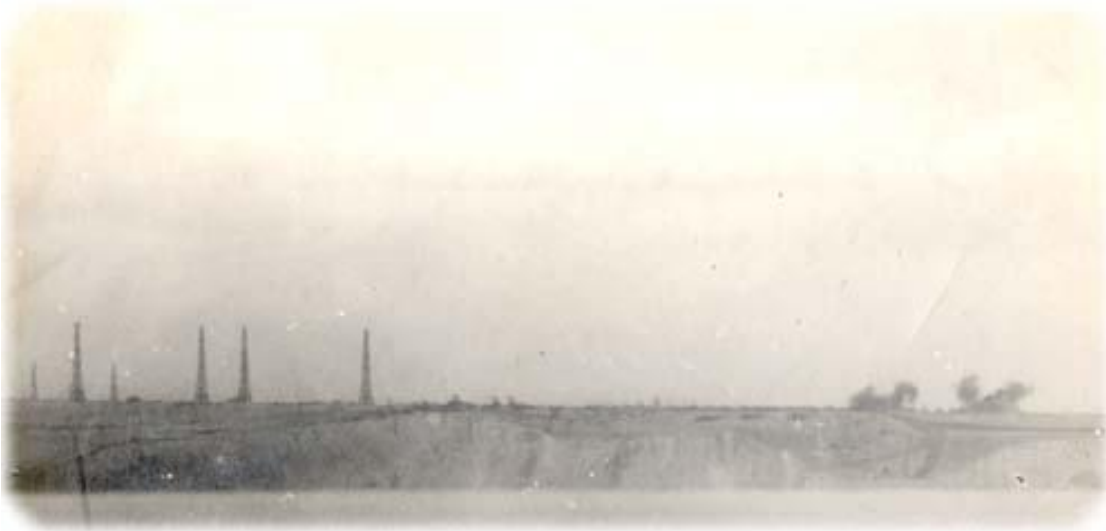
The Filter Room was the pivotal part of the Dowding System and this is where all the information from radar sites, other commands on friendly air movements, was brought together and analysed to create a recognised air picture. This picture was then sent to the Fighter Command Operations room and to Group and Sector operations rooms. This meant that commanders at all levels were working from a common picture.

Initially there was only one Filter Room at Bentley Priory but as the system grew it could not cope and Filter Rooms were set up at Group Headquarters

The Filter Room shown in this picture is the one at Bentley Priory which became the Filter Room for HQ 11 Group

The Filter Table displayed a mix of raw and processed information. The process became known as 'mad ludo' after the ludo board game. The picture of the table shows both raw radar data in the form of circles squares and triangles and processed track data





The radar stations were attacked frequently and these pictures show actual attacks taking place on Dover Chain Home Station - the WAAF were in the front line serving on units that were directly targeted by the Luftwaffe

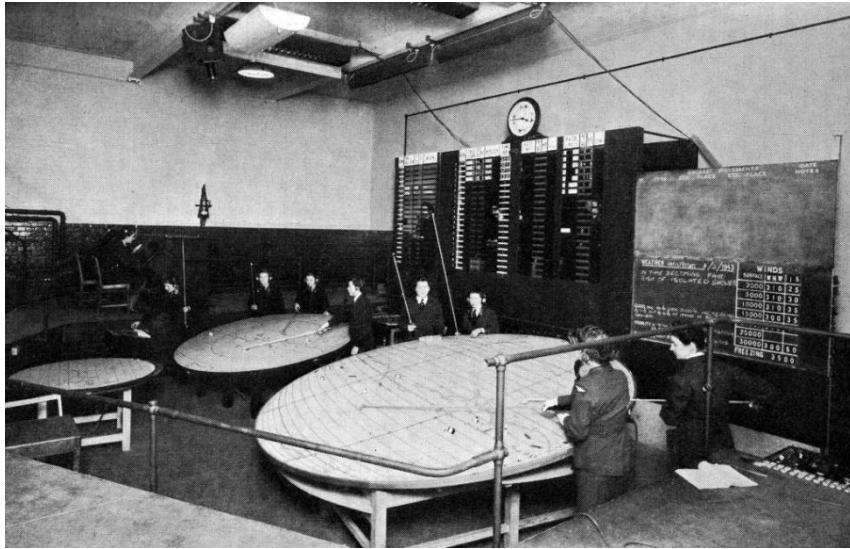


Hazel Gregory joined the WAAF in 1940 and was drafted as a Clerk Special Duties. After training as a plotter at Leighton Buzzard she was posted to the operations staff at HQ 11 Group, Uxbridge just before the Battle of Britain. She was on duty on the 15th September 1940 – now known as Battle of Britain day and plotted all the raids that attacked Britain that day.

Churchill spoke to all the girls before they went off watch that day.

Hazel Gregory during the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the Battle of Britain discusses the finer points of plotting with a guide at the Air Defence Radar Museum.



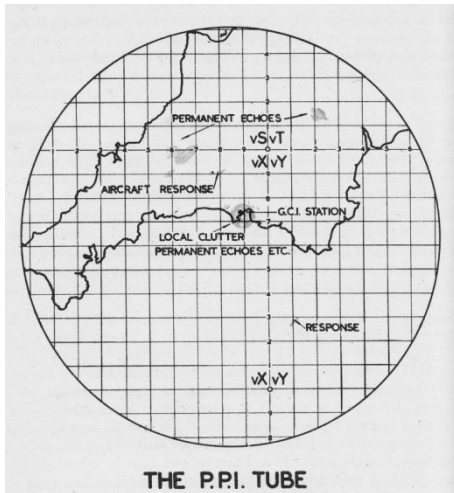


By November 1941 there were some 34 existing or planned GCI units.

The picture shows the main operations area in a GCI centre and it will be seen that the operations room is staffed by WAAF personnel.

The big table is the general tactical picture display common to all command and control units and the small display is the locally generated picture. The two consoles in the background, once again, 'manned' by women are the height display consoles

The control was conducted in cabins and required a team of a controller and four operators. Here again women usually fill the operator roles and increasingly were employed as controllers from 1941 onwards



The Plan Position Indicator allowed fighters to be controlled onto enemy aircraft. The PPI shown is from the GCI unit at Salcombe.

