

Patron: Lord Cobbold DL
Ivry, Lady Freyberg
Nicholas Cobbold OBE

‘AUNT PRIM ‘

Feb 2013

Fredrica Primrose Cobbold, CVWW (1901-1985) #383 on the tree, was always known affectionately in the family as Aunt Prim. It was not only amongst her nearest and dearest that she was appreciated, for her chosen line of work endeared her to hundreds of thousands.



In January 1940 she joined the YMCA in Southampton and quickly rose to be responsible for 12 mobile canteens and a staff of 50 serving the needs of HM Forces in the Southampton / Winchester area. She was there throughout much of the bombing and was dubbed a Southampton Heroine by the local paper for her devotion to what she saw as her duty to dispense tea and succour to the many who had lost everything except their lives. The YMCA kitchen was destroyed by a direct hit one night but by dawn the following morning our heroine had borrowed two boilers and her normal service was resumed. This was probably the occasion on which she went 3 days and three nights without a break.

November 1943 saw her posted to North Africa in support of the men fighting the Desert Campaign and she moved with the armies to serve in Naples and later in Rome and Perugia. Her invaluable work and outstanding organisational ability was recognised by promotion to Assistant District Secretary, WMCA and by 1946 she was stationed in Vienna. In February that year she returned home to Salthouse, some 20 miles from Norwich, for well earned leave but it was not long before she was back with the YMCA again, this time in Duisburg, Germany where she ran a club for the Black Watch in BAOR.

After two weeks home leave in 1948 she was off again to Greece where she ran the YMCA unit serving the Salonika Garrison. In a poll, 9 out of 10 voted Miss Cobbold to be the garrison's best-liked personality. This was attributed to her quiet charm, persistent good work and genuine interest in 'the boys.' The report said her title was well deserved. And so say all of us!

Anthony Cobbold