



# The Royal Engineers Association



PATRON: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

President:

Colonel B. S. T. Archer, G.C., O.B.E., E.R.D.

“SERVICE - NOT SELF”

Secretary:

Mr. L. A. Jeacocke M.B.E.  
18 Hillside Road, Bushey, Herts. WD2 2HA  
Tel: 01923 223134

BOMB DISPOSAL BRANCH

BULLETIN ISSUE No:102



SUMMER EDITION



AUGUST 1998.

**Dear Members and Friends,**

More apologies I'm afraid from yours truly for a couple of fopars made in the previous Bulletin. First of all to our new member Alan Credland. I entered him as 'Alan Credwell' so my sincere apologies to Alan. Secondly, in the 'Can You Help' article on page 8, I awarded both to Lt Gray and Sgt Bailey a George Cross. They were George Medal men. No doubt they both should have been awarded the George Cross. However, how many of you spotted the deliberate mistake's ?? No, I must admit, the finger must be pointed at me !! However, perhaps I shall improve as time goes on. I must thank our treasurer Mr Alan Porter for drawing these matters to my attention. As I have said before, you can read text over and over again and still errors can be found. Perhaps it might make the Bulletin' more interesting by entering a deliberate mistake in each publication ?? There were another two but I will leave you to find them. Sorry, no prizes for the winners !! This year we celebrate the **50th Anniversary** of the formation of the Bomb Disposal Branch. In those days as most of us know, our Branch was titled **The Royal Engineers Bomb Disposal Old Comrades Association (R.E.B.D.O.C.A.)**. Until we became an official Branch of the REA.

## OBITUARIES:

**Mr William (Bill) Hill** of Thanington Canterbury, Kent. Bill passed away peacefully in his sleep on Friday 12th June 1998 at the age of 78. He had gone into hospital for an operation in March and suffered a set back. He was in hospital for nearly three months and never seemed to regain enough strength to fight the battle. Bill was one of the more stalwart members of our Branch and was the main supporter of our Bomb Disposal Corner. This can be seen in the Winston Churchill Britain at War Museum in Tooley Street London. He constructed a simulation 'Ticking Fuse' which created a lot of interest for the children visiting the Museum. In 1995, with his exhibits, Bill also attended a street party for the children set up alongside the Museum on the 50th Anniversary of Victory over Japan (VJ Day). He kept the children amused for some hours together with our members John Chudley and WO1 RSM 'Ollie' Allerhead (now in



civvy street). Bill was always 'on call' if any maintenance needed to be carried out at the Museum - they relied on him to come to the rescue and much of the expenses were met by himself personally - at no cost to the Branch I might add. He was a dedicated committee member and was present at most of the Branch meetings. It had to be something really serious if Bill didn't turn up ! He was a qualified engineer (with letters behind his name) and some of his inventive ideas have been lodged with the Patents Office. Bill did consider himself as an inventor always trying out new conceptions -.....

**Bill and Gerta**

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from burglar alarms to making toys for the local children especially at Christmas. He had the tools to tackle any job that was thrown at him and was never happier unless he was involved in some problem or another. Our picture shows Bill and Gerta at Lodge Hill Camp Chattenden - the home of D.E.O.D.S. The Branch was given a special invitation to visit in October 1996.. Bill gave talks on Bomb Disposal operations of World War II for which any proceeds being donated would be re-donated back into the Branch. Bill served with No77 Bomb Disposal Company and No171 BD Section from 1940 onwards and saw service in the Middle East campaign until his release in 1946. The funeral took place at Barford Crematorium on Friday 19th June. The Branch Standard flag was draped upon Bill's coffin. Representatives of the Branch were Peter Cunnington, Reg Journet, Alan Porter, Ron Harris and George Hayes. Lt Col Bob Murfin TD RE represented 101 Engr Regiment along with WO1 RSM Chris Fowkes RE. Also present were Mr 'Ollie' Allerhead BEM WO1 Mike Collarbone MBE and Mr Carl Alexandre. We returned to Bill's local community hall for refreshments. Ron Harris the Branch Vice Chairman spoke a few kind words of Bill which received applause from the mourners. As Ron said, if the Golden Gates up there go wrong, Bill will be on hand to fix'em. He will be sadly missed by all of us. We shall remember the good times that we enjoyed with Bill and his wife Gerta. Our sincere condolences go out to Gerta, daughters Pat and Evelyn and family. Our thanks to Lt Col Bob Murfin RE TD for kindly arranging the transport.

It was reported in the Daily Telegraph on Monday March 2nd this year that Colonel Ian Wilson MBE., MC., died aged 73. Colonel Wilson was awarded the Military Cross in 1944 for his involvement in clearing the beaches in preparation for the D Day Landings. The article says, 'When commanding a platoon of Royal Engineers who went ashore, each carrying 24lb of high explosives *before* the main landings on D Day; their task was to clear a path through the beach obstacles before the approaching waves of assault craft. The article goes on to say, 'Contrary to popular belief, the first troops into a defended position are not tanks or infantry but parties of Royal Engineers, who moved in to defuse hundreds of mines and other explosives while being exposed to shelling and machine gun fire. Only when they have cleared lanes through mine-fields can tanks and other troops arrive to carry the battle forward.' Working on foot on the open beach, Wilson's Sappers



Wilson: boundless energy

managed, despite casualties, to make a clear path before the first high tide covered the beach obstacles. At 20, Ian Wilson was one of the youngest Officers to take part in D Day. He was slightly wounded in the D Day operations, but managed to continue through the North West Europe Campaign until the end of the War, this included building bridges across the Seine, the Maas, the Rhine and the Elbe. He led a very active and varied life and he was awarded his MBE for his work and involvement in the Cyprus Treaty Establishment in London. (my thanks to member George Hayes for bringing this to my attention).

**Mr Ralph (Con) Leonard Constable:** of Leatherhead Surrey. We have to report his untimely demise when he passed away peacefully on Sunday 21st June 1998. Ralph was with us on our Wales trip from June 12th to the 16th and was on top form. We all had a great time whilst we were there. He drove down from Hereford on the Wednesday and having arrived home safely he collapsed that afternoon and never recovered. Ralph was 68 years of age and was a dedicated Branch member who hardly ever missed any monthly meetings. Having only been in his company a few days before, it came as a great shock to those of us that were with him. He enjoyed being with us when we went away for visits. Our thoughts are with his sister Margaret and her husband Ron and family. Also his dearest friend Betty Webb who was with him in Wales. He will be sadly missed not only by Margaret and Betty, but also those of us in the Branch who got to know Ralph very well

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Also his dearest friend Betty Webb who was with him in Wales. He will be sadly missed not only by Margaret and Betty, but also those of us in the Branch who got to know Ralph very well. He was known for his kindness, generosity and thoughts for his fellow comrades. Ralph had a semi-military funeral which took place at Randalls crematorium Leatherhead Surrey. His coffin was draped with the Union Jack. Our Branch Standard was on parade and our thanks go to Tom the official Standard Bearer from Isleworth Branch. Our thanks also to Simon. Simon is a bugler from The Military School Of Music at Kneller Hall and he played The Last Post and Reveille at the end of the Chapel service. The Branch was represented by Roy Augustus and his wife Jeanne, Reg Journet and his wife Wynn, Bill Hayward and Alan Porter. The service was conducted by the Lady Reverend Juliet Hulme. Ralph was a gentleman and a very kind man who certainly lived up to our REA motto 'Service Not Self'. He had so many friends the Chapel was overflowing No more will Ralph join us on our social trips but as with Bill Hill, they will both be with us in 'spirit'. Ralph was a great lover of 'big band music' and jazz and he left our life with the music of Glenn Miller playing 'String of Pearls'. Our condolences once again to all Ralph's relations and the friends he dearly loved to be with.

**Mr James (Jimmy) Beckham** of Banbury Oxon died at the latter end of February this year. He would have been 80 years of age in April. Jimmy was a Sapper / Driver with No23 Bomb Disposal Company 49 BD Section.

**Mr Herbert Hazlehurst** of Manchester. Herbert's funeral service was held on the 9th March '98 at Cross Street Chapel *Unitarian* Manchester. He was not a member of the Bomb Disposal Branch and neither was he a member of the Manchester Branch of the REA where this information came from. It appears that he was an in-patient at the Lord Kitchener House, Sale, Manchester. Major (Retd) David Rodger MBE TD sent us this information saying that his pals in the 'House' had known that he served in BD during WW II and they asked David if he would contact us to record the details in this Bulletin. His comrades also donated £20 to which David has since passed on to the RE Benevolent Fund.

**Mr George Frederick Newell:** of Freshwater, Isle of Wight. George served with No 3 Bomb Disposal Company and BD Sections. He passed away peacefully in February this year whilst in a Residential Care Home on the Isle of Wight. George was 79 years of age.

**Capt (Retd) Dennis E Hazell:** of Henley on Thames Oxon passed away peacefully on Wednesday 8th April 1998. Dennis was with No3 Bomb Disposal Company in 1943 and was much involved in clearing up SD 2's that were dropped on Grimsby in June 1943. Due to the thousands that were dropped, the clearing up operation went on for more than a week and there were many civilian lives lost both during the raid and after. Grimsby was isolated in all of that time. In fact whilst I along with my team were working on a UXB in Marsh Chapel Lincolnshire in 1948 with No4 BD Squadron, an overflow of these SD2's were found on a farm nearby. These were duly disposed of insitu. Dennis was cremated at Reading Crematorium on Friday 17th April.

**Mr E J Hunt** of Corton, Nr Lowestoft, Suffolk passed away in March of this year. He served with No's 21 - 10 - and 4 Bomb Disposal Company's from 1940 'til 1946.

**Our thoughts are with the families and relatives in this time of their grief. Lt Col James Ray Controller of the REA also sends his condolences.**

#### **NEW MEMBERS:**

**We are pleased to welcome the following new Members into our Branch:**

**Mr David Thomas Salter Garland:** of 'Dane End', Hollywood Lane West Kingsdown, Sevenoaks, Kent. TN15 6JG. David enlisted in March 1957 and served with BD (V). He was a National Serviceman from 1959-1961 and served with the TA 1957-1959 & 1961- 1977. David was discharged in March 1977 having been awarded the 12 year long service medal and having attained the rank of Corporal.

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**WOII Kevin John Grantham:** of 13 Pinkneys Close, Wimbish, Saffron Waldon, Essex. CB10 2YH. Kevin is still a serving NCO with 33 Engineer Regiment at Carver Barracks Wimbish.

**Mr Cyril John James:** of 17 Prospect Close, Wollaston, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN29 7SP. Cyril served with No 20 Bomb Disposal Company from 1945 'til 1948. He was discharged in April 1948 having attained the rank of Lieutenant.

**Mr James Nield:** of 21 Tarling Close, Sidcup, Kent DA14 4HR. James served with No's 7 & 9 Bomb Disposal Company's 'til 1949. He was discharged in 1952 having attained the rank of Corporal.

**Mr David Ian Small Hinton:** of The Old Brewery Chichester Road, Midhurst, West Sussex GU29 9PZ. Ian served with No 2 Bomb Disposal Squadron. He was discharged in January 1950 having attained the rank of 2nd Lieutenant.

**Mr Arthur Leslie Stokes:** of 6 Maes Ffynnon, Llanddulas, Nr Abergele, Conway, North Wales LL22 8JB. Arthur enlisted in July 1940 and was discharged in June 1959 having attained the rank of Corporal. He served with No15 Bomb Disposal Company / 156 BD Section.

**Mr John F A Chetwynd:** of 81 Cheadle Old Road, Edgeley, Stockport, Cheshire. SK9 3RH. John served with 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD). He was discharged September 1992 having attained the rank of Sergeant. He served in Northern Ireland, Falklands and the Gulf. Decorations are GSM for Northern Ireland Falklands and Gulf Clasp.

**Mr Peter C Wood:** of 34 Wentworth Drive, Cliffe Woods, Rochester, Kent. ME3 8UL. Peter served with 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD). Peter was discharged from the army having attained the rank of WOII.

**Mr Philip John Monks:** of 5 Glebe Rise, Kings Sutton, Banbury, Oxon. OX17 3PH. Philip served with 49 BD Squadron, Ops Bombs Penang, 33 EOD Sqdn RE. He was discharged from the army having attained the rank of Sergeant. Decorations are GSM Northern Ireland.

**Kenneth G P Murdoch:** of 'Beechwood' 3 Kendal Close, Woodford Green, Essex. IG8 ORX. Ken served with No43 BD Section at Peterborough in 1940 and with No18 Bomb Disposal Company in Egypt and was demobbed in 1946.

**Mr Thomas McGinn:** of 69 Barbeth Way, Cumbernauld, Glasgow Scotland G67 4HU. Thomas served as a Sapper with No 4 Bomb Disposal Sqdn 'til 1950 and was re-called to No 2 BD at Horsham until his discharge in 1951.

**Mr Thomas Hall GM:** of 73 High Street, Glenrothes, Fife, Scotland KY6 3DQ. Thomas served with No22 Bomb Disposal Company 'til 1943. He was discharged July 1946 having attained the rank of Sergeant.

**Mr David Malcom Gwynn:** of 24 Mead Close, North Grays, Essex RM16 2TR. David served with No49 Squadron 33 Engineer regiment (EOD). He was discharged from service in April 1976 with the rank of Corporal.

**Mr R H Milner:** of 15 Alistair drive, Bromborough, Wirral, Merseyside L63 OLG. No service details at present.

**Mr Brian Derek Butcher:** of 263 Greenwrythe Lane, Carshalton, Surrey SH5 2SU. Brian served with No1 and No2 BD Troop from 1952 'til 1957. He was discharged in 1962 having attained the rank of Sergeant.

**Mr Cyril Boyle:** of 39 Manx Road, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 6AJ. Cyril served with No 10 Bomb Disposal Company in 1940. He was discharged in July 1952 having attained the rank of WO1.

**We on the Committee extend a very warm welcome to you all**

**33 ENGR. REGT (E.O.D.) R.E. - OPEN DAY 27th JUNE 1998:**

The Branch was represented by the Secretary and Associate Member Mr Steven Venus. Visitors attending the Open Day numbered approximately 860 and enjoyed the many side shows that were available. The RE Band provided the music which the crowd warmly applauded.

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Also his dearest friend Betty Webb who was with him in Wales. He will be sadly missed not only by Margaret and Betty, but also those of us in the Branch who got to know Ralph very well. He was known for his kindness, generosity and thoughts for his fellow comrades. Ralph had a semi-military funeral which took place at Randalls crematorium Leatherhead Surrey. His coffin was draped with the Union Jack. Our Branch Standard was on parade and our thanks go to Tom the official Standard Bearer from Isleworth Branch. Our thanks also to Simon. Simon is a bugler from The Military School Of Music at Kneller Hall and he played The Last Post and Reveille at the end of the Chapel service. The Branch was represented by Roy Augustus and his wife Jeanne, Reg Journet and his wife Wynn, Bill Hayward and Alan Porter. The service was conducted by the Lady Reverend Juliet Hulme. Ralph was a gentleman and a very kind man who certainly lived up to our REA motto 'Service Not Self'. He had so many friends the Chapel was overflowing No more will Ralph join us on our social trips but as with Bill Hill, they will both be with us in spirit'. Ralph was a great lover of 'big band music' and jazz and he left our life with the music of Glenn Miller playing 'String of Pearls'. Our condolences once again to all Ralph's relations and the friends he dearly loved to be with.

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The CO Lt Col Graham Gibbs and RSM George Lamonby gamely suffered the 'ducking tank' and all aspects of the Regiment were on show. Our tent was labelled ' The History of Bomb Disposal' and consisted of a TV screen showing what action was taken when a UXB is located and finally removed. Steve Venus explained to the many visitors the working of a range of German and Japanese fuses plus a couple of 'Butterfly' bombs and various other items. The parachute jump was to be the final showpiece but a tremendous thunderstorm cause the event to be cancelled !

**L A Jeacocke MBE**  
(Secretary)

### **AGM REPORT:**

On Saturday 21st March 1998, the Branch held its 49th AGM at the Union Jack Club Sandell Street Waterloo London SE1 8UJ. There were 13 of us in attendance. You will already have noted that enclosed with this Bulletin you have the financial report/audit for 1997. There has been one change whereby the Election of Officers is concerned. We have appointed a new temporary Chairman who is Mr Roy Augustus. Ron Harris who was the Branch Chairman, had to stand down at this AGM due to domestic situations at home. He has now been appointed Vice Chairman and will work closely with Roy. All other Officers and Committee members were re-elected and remain the same as for 1997. The names remain the same as noted in your 1997 Summer Edition of the Bulletin (page 4 / 5). It was a successful meeting and our friends and members Ernie Rylance and Ron Griffiths travelled all the way from Prescott in Lancashire to be with us also John Murray who travelled up from Southampton. We were somewhat disappointed that more members did not attend. We altered the day to a Saturday instead of Friday in the hope that it would be more convenient and cheaper for our members to travel. It does appear that much interest is being lost in our distinguished Branch, apart from those of us who attend regularly. We are pleased to say that we have possibly the most members of any REA Branch but, we would like to think of you not just as a name and address in a book and paying subscriptions, but also as an active person within the Branch. It is now getting to the stage where it is most important that some of our younger members become involved in our Branch affairs. It is just the same people who attend the meetings most of the time and we have to make decisions that affect all Branch members. It would be rather nice to have some new ideas, views and suggestions brought in. We few have kept the Branch active for some years now and one day, as we are finding out already to our disappointment, when an Officer stands down for whatever reason, it is becoming more and more difficult to replace him. I do hope that all members out there, if they are interested in keeping our Branch alive, give this matter some considerable thought. We feel this is getting to be a very serious situation now and if more interest is not taken in Branch affairs by its members, then it is possible that it will collapse !! Fortunately, and hopefully, there is still enough 'go' in us at the moment to keep it 'ticking' over but, we do have to look towards the future.

### **CONGRATULATIONS:**

To our good friend **Harry Beckingham** of Southport Lancs. Harry is with the REA Southport Branch and was presented with the Group Directors Award at their Christmas Dinner / Dance by Colonel Tim Greathead.

To - **Ray Pinwill** our member who lives at Chagford in Devon. Ray has just recently been appointed as Hon Secretary of the Royal British Legion Chagford Branch.

To - **Clifford Hulcoop** of Plymouth Devon. Clifford has just been awarded the Badge Of Merit for his contribution in promoting his Branch and the REA. Clifford is the Chairman of the REA Plymouth Branch and he will be presented with his Badge at their Branch Annual Dinner which takes place on November 28th this year. I must also congratulate **myself** as a proud recipient of the Badge of Merit awarded and presented to me by Col Archer (Archie) at our Branch Annual Lunch held at Carver Barracks Wimbish on the 30th May.

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I would like to personally thank everyone involved in recommending me for this prestigious award. I feel very honoured that my President Archie, Secretary and others have thought that I should be recognised and be recommended for the Badge. I shall be most proud to wear it at future official functions and will continue to uphold and promote the Branch to the best of my ability.

**Congratulations** to our member Harry Brown of Pagham, Bognor Regis West Sussex who celebrated his 80th birthday last August (1997). Harry belongs to all sorts of Associations to keep himself active and still continues doing gardening and looking after his own allotment. Our best wishes and good luck Harry.

**Congratulations** also to our member Ernest Oakland and his wife. They will have been married for 60 years on July 16th this year (Diamond). Ernest does not mention his wife's name nevertheless, we wish them all good luck and hope they had a most happy occasion on the day.

We also congratulate WO1 RSM Chris Fowke RE who is the RSM at 101 (London) Engineer Regiment (EOD) (V) which is based at Catford in London. Chris has just succeeded in obtaining his promotion to Captain.. His commission will be confirmed around October / November time. Once again, congratulations to all of you.

#### **LT COL R W MURFIN TD RE:**

Our good friend and member Lt Col Bob R W Murfin TD RE (Bob) is retiring as Chairman of London Group. He is also the C/O of 101 (London) Engineer Regiment (EOD) (V) based at Hudson House Catford in London. We are most sorry to see his departure which is sometime in August as we have known him for several years now. However Bob is hopefully going on to better things. He has been a good friend to our Branch as well as other Branches in London Group. At the London Group meeting held on Wednesday 24th June, our Chairman Roy Augustus presented Bob with the framed picture which we were given as a gift when we visited Swansea. He has kindly accepted it for our safe keeping to be hung in the Mess in Hudson house. Bob is being replaced by Lt Col John Gunns whom we warmly welcome into the Group and also as the new C/O of 101. I do hope we don't create too many problems for him at the meetings!!

**The next London Group Meeting** is scheduled for **Wednesday 25th November 1998**. This will take place at Hudson House, Bromley Road, London SE6 2RH. The Derby Draw after expenses paid realised £967:34 profit. This will be put into a fund to assist any member who needs help within reason. Each case will be dealt with on merit and will have to be submitted through their Branch Secretaries. Lt Col Bob Murfin thanks everybody for their support in the Draw and hopefully the profit margin will be a little more next year. We do thank you our own members for the response we received and I'm only sorry we did not have any winners. However, there's always next year !! As the Lottery saying goes, '*It could be you*'!

#### **REA AUTUMN REUNION**

Would you kindly note that the REA are holding their Families and Friends Re-Union once again at Pontin's Barton Hall, Torquay, Devon **from Monday 28th September to Friday 2nd October '98 both dates inclusive**. There is free coach travel from selected departure points throughout England and Wales. There is plenty of entertainment to be had in the way of cabaret, sports and leisure etc. Accommodation comprises of - comfortable twin / double rooms with private bath with tea and coffee making facilities. If you are interested in this five day break, you should **contact Mr Joe Gaunt, National Organiser, 1 Mill Meece, Eccleshall, Staffs ST1 6QT for a booking form** which should be completed and sent direct to Pontin's Barton Hall, Kingskerswell Road, Torquay, South Devon TQ2 8JY Tele: 0870 6010480.

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You may telephone Joe direct on 01782 791399. should you so wish. The cost per person for this five day break is £122 which includes free coach travel and VAT. This resort has proved to be very popular in the past and so early booking is advisable.

### **THE NOT FORGOTTEN ASSOCIATION:**

Sadly we have to inform you that Mrs Peggy Giles the Events Secretary of the NFA is retiring after having served 12 years with the Association. Peggy joined the NFA in 1986 and she attained the position of Assistant Director. Our Vice Chairman Ron Harris made contact with Peggy in August 1996 (he was then Chairman of the Branch), and each year since that date, she has arranged for four of our members to attend various events and functions. This included the Garden Parties at Buckingham Palace, Christmas high tea at St James Palace, Wimbledon Tennis Championships and even extended to a five day holiday break based at the Victory Services Club in Marble Arch London. These came with all expenses paid. Our members attending these events couldn't speak highly enough of the hospitality shown by the NFA on these occasions. As the Assistant Director, Peggy had the honour and privilege of meeting most if not all members of the Royal Family. We cannot thank Peggy enough for the kindness both she and the NFA has shown to the Branch and we wish her a most happy retirement. Peggy resides in Windsor Castle with her husband Ray. Ray is a Military Knight of Windsor he having served 36 years with the Blues and Royals. Both Peggy and Ray are taking a well deserved holiday and upon their return, Peggy hopes to continue in her most important role - working for the charities. Ron visited Peggy in her London office on Monday 27th April this year and conveyed the best wishes of the Branch by presenting her with a signed card and a box of chocolates to show our appreciation for her kindness. Ron also met Peggy's successor Ms Rosie Stewart to whom we extend a warm welcome. Rosie as the new Events Organiser will be keeping in touch with the Branch regarding any forthcoming events. Ron presented Rosie with a Branch lapel badge and we all hope for a long and happy friendship with her. At this stage, I would like to remind you that if you wish to participate in any of these forthcoming events, you may submit your name to our Secretary Jea or Ron our Vice Chairman.

### **WHERE ARE THEY NOW ??**

We received a letter last March from our member William Stevenson of South Wirral. William says, we don't seem to mention much about No 19 Bomb Disposal Section. I suppose that's because nobody has ever requested news of any of its members. However, William is the first and he wishes to know as to whether there are any of his wartime pals out there who remember him in those early days? Having completed a course on BD at York Barracks Chelsea in London, Bill joined No 19 upon their return from the Middle East in October 1943. His last accommodation was in a convent at Roehampton in Surrey from there, he went to a transit camp in East Ham London en-route for Normandy. In Normandy, Bill was engaged on dealing with mines and booby traps in the enemies administration offices. Bill is now 74 years of age and is asking are there any survivors still out there??. If you may have known him, he would be delighted to hear from you and you can either write to him at 21 Ullswater Road, Whitby, Ellesmere Port South Wirral L65 9BS or you may telephone him on 0151 356 3266 We wish you luck Bill and hopefully someone will remember you.

Our recently joined member Ken Murdoch is asking if there are any survivors out there that may have served with him in No43 BD Section?? if there are, Ken would be delighted to hear from you. His address is 'Beechwold' 3 Kendal close, Woodford Green, Essex. IG8 ORX.

### **DONATIONS:**

We extend our grateful thanks and appreciation to those of our members and Friends of the Branch who have been kind enough to send donations to us. Your donations are more than welcome as they do assist toward the administration of our Branch affairs.

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Our Bulletins are the largest expense we have to meet and naturally enough, we must keep them going whatever the cost. We are not idle ourselves when it comes to raising funds for the Branch, as some of us attend various Associations and functions giving talks on bomb disposal operations. Obviously we don't do this for a fee, but they do give us a small donation for our trouble. Once again many thanks for your kindness

**OUR THOUGHTS ARE WITH YOU:**

Les Haysom, Sid Halsey. Les is still in a care residence in Hayle in Cornwall. Sid is also in a Resident care home but I am told that his wife Bea does manage to have him home a couple of times during the week. However, we send our best wishes to them both, also to those of our members who are unwell and may be suffering at this particular time. Get well soon !

**DERBY DRAW:**

At the Derby Draw held on Wednesday 27th May 1998 at 101 (London) Engr Regt (EOD) (V) Hudson House Catford London, six of our members drew horses but as previously stated, there were no actual winners. However, don't let that deter you from buying next years tickets when they become available sometime around February / March '99. We do thank you for your support and as previously stated, all profits go to charities and so your monies are being used for good causes. Thank you once again.

**THEY'RE STILL FINDIN' 'EM !!**

This time on the airfield at West Malling in Kent. It was a German 500 Kg World War II bomb. It was blown up 'insitu'. As with the Chippenham incident, 1,000 of the local's were evacuated.

**SRI LANKA VISIT (Archie) :**

Earlier this year, our President Archie was invited by the Government of Sri Lanka to visit their country. This is a yearly event in which Sri Lanka honour the people who have been recognised for their bravery and gallantry. Archie was invited to talk to an audience on World War II Bomb Disposal. As Archie said, *"this was such a long time ago, I had to do a refresher course at 33 EOD before going"!!* We didn't believe him but, it was perfectly true !

A rather amusing but a very true composition sent to me by our member **Ray Pinwill** of Chagford Devon and it goes like this:

**WE REMEMBER VE - DAY WE ARE SURVIVORS**

(for the attention of those born before the war (1939).

We were born before television, before penicillin, before frozen foods, xerox, plastic, Frisbees, and the pill. We were before radar, credit, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ball point pens ; before dishwashers (unless grandma lived with you) tumble driers, electric blankets, air conditioning, drip dry clothes . . . and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together ( how quaint !! ) We thought 'Fast food' was what you eat in Lent; a "Big Mac" was an oversized raincoat; "knocking off" usually meant the end of a working day. "Crumpet" was what we had for tea. We existed before house husbands, computer dating, dual careers, and when a "meaningful relationship" meant getting along with the in-laws. And when "sheltered accommodation" was where you waited for a bus.

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We were born before day centres, group homes and disposable nappies. We had never heard of double glazing, FM radio, tape decks, compact discs, electric typewriters, word processors, yoghurt or young men wearing earrings and tattooed girls. For us "time sharing" meant togetherness; a "chip" was a piece of wood or a fried potato; "hardware" meant nuts and bolts and "software" wasn't a word. Before 1940 "made in Japan" meant junk; the term "making out" referred to how well you did in your exams; a "stud" was something that fastened a collar to a shirt, and "going all the way" meant staying on the double decker bus all the way to the terminus.

Pizzas, McDonalds and instant coffee were unheard of. In our day cigarette smoking was fashionable, "grass was mown"; "coke" was kept in the coalhouse, a "joint" was the piece of meat you had for Sunday lunch and "pot" was something you cooked in. The sun was good for you, a suntan was envied. "Rock music" was grandmother's lullaby". A "gay" person was the life and soul of the party and nothing more, and "Aids" just meant beauty treatment or for the elderly gents a . . . truss. And to top it all, referring to a lass, a "Spice Girl" meant she was "hot stuff".

We who were born before the war must be a hardy bunch when you think of the ways in which the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make. No wonder we are so confused and there is a generation gap today . . . .

**BUT BY THE GRACE OF GOD WE HAVE SURVIVED . . . . . WHAT'S NEXT ?**

**THANKS:**

Our thanks to our octogenarian member **Mr Bert Woolhouse**. Bert is on the Committee of the Branch and has recently participated in a TV programme produced by Blakeway Productions Ltd titled '**Battle for the Mind**'. This is scheduled to be shown on Channel 4 later in the year as a three part series. Blakeway Productions have at Bert's request kindly donated the sum of £50 to the UXB Club (Youth Club) at Carver Barracks Wimbish. The Branch has also donated £50 to the Club and £16 was also donated by the members attending the February meeting. A total of £116 was handed over by Archie to Lt Col Graham Gibbs at our Annual Branch Luncheon in May.

**THE BRANCH ANNUAL LUNCH:**

On Saturday 30th May (98), 63 members, wives and friends attended our Branch annual Luncheon which was held at Carver Barracks the home of 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD). This was by the kind invitation of Lt Col Graham Gibbs the C/O of the Regiment. We also have to thank RSM George Lamonby for permitting us to use the WO1's and Sergeants Mess for this special occasion. The guests were welcomed in reception with either a glass of sherry or orange juice. At 13:15 hrs, we assembled at our tables where our Vice Chairman Ron Harris opened the proceedings by saying 'grace'. Ron then requested that the assemblage remained standing to observe a few moments silence to remember those of our comrades who had made the supreme sacrifice whilst serving with Bomb Disposal. Also for those comrades who could not be with us today through ill health or otherwise. We all sat down to an excellent meal which consisted of Soup, Mussels in white wine, Sorbet, and the main course of Roast beef, Roast potatoes and the usual vegetables. This was followed by profiteroles coffee, mints and a decanter of fine port. After the meal, Ron introduced our President Colonel B S T Archer GC., OBE., ERD (Archie) who requested the assembly to stand and raise their glasses for the loyal toast to our Patron Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Archie then spoke of his Committee of whom he said without them we wouldn't have a Branch. He thanked the C/O of the Regiment Lt Col Graham Gibbs for permitting us to use Carver Barracks. He thanked the RSM George Lamonby for allowing us to use his Mess for this special occasion. Lt Col Gibbs RE replied by thanking the Branch for inviting him and his wife Sheila to our luncheon.

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He gave the assembly an update on the Regiments movements, saying that where there were going to be major cuts in the armed services, it was thought that the EOD Squadrons of the Royal Engineers were to be expanded. There is no doubt, the Engineers are still the backbone of the armed forces. After the C/O's reply, Archie then thanked the staff for the meal and the efficient way in which they had served the tables. He asked the assembly for a round of applause to show their appreciation. Ron Harris the Vice Chairman then proposed a toast to the ladies to which our member Mrs Pat Haysom made the reply. Pat thanked Ron saying, how proud the ladies were to be associated with the Bomb Disposal Branch. It was then time for the presentations. Firstly, Archie handed over a cheque for £116. This was a donation to the UXB Club for the children of families resident in Carver Barracks. We thank our member Bert Woolhouse who having participated in a forthcoming TV programme on Channel 4, donated his fee of £50, a further £50 was donated by our Branch and £16 was collected by the members at our April meeting. After this, Archie presented the Assistant Secretary Reg Journet with the REA Badge Of Merit congratulating him on his work for the Branch and of course for the Bulletin of which he is the editor. Our raffle proved once again to be a great success having raised £245. The first and second prizes of £20 each were won by Mrs Sheila Gibbs (wife of the C/O) and our member Mr Alan Luton. Both of these nice people also kindly donated their prizes to the children's UXB Club. There was also a box of Havana cigars (100) which were auctioned off. Steve Hambrooke was the highest bidder for these which cost him £31 !! He then gave the cigars to our Chelsea In-Patient Pensioner member Len Pearson. Our thanks to Steve for this kind gesture. Finally, just to say what an excellent day it was meeting old friends once again. Our grateful thanks to those on the Committee who worked very hard (as usual) in organising the event especially to Jea who even at his age never seems to tire!! To the ladies who organised the raffle. To Peter Cunnington who also assisted with the raffle and the auction of the cigars. Peter seems to have the gift for extracting yet more cash from our guests ! However, it's all for a good cause. Again, our thanks to Lt Col Graham Gibbs, and George Lamonby for overseeing the table arrangements in the Mess. Our thanks again to George for 'laying' on the transport for a few of our members and for taking care of the finer details.

### **CAN YOU HELP ?**

We have received a letter from **Mr Alan Clark of 21 Lammas Mead, Park Farm, Binfield, Bracknell, Berkshire RG42 4NW**. Alan is anxious to know more about his grandfathers service with the Royal Engineers. His grandfathers name was **Harry Clark**. Harry was a Sapper and his army number was **14634980**. Alan has traced some of his history inasmuch as he served in and around London during 1943 / 1944 and later was posted to Norway where he saw service. He received a citation from King Olav of Norway in appreciation of his services. Harry then joined the European Theatre of War on 4th June 1944. Alan inquires that as the D-Day Landings were the 6th June, what was he doing there two days early ? It appears that Harry was with No25 Bomb Disposal Company at that time and Alan asks, that although it was known that Royal Engineers were landed early to clear the beaches for the main landings, was No25 BD Company involved with any such activity. (**We do know, that the RE divers were involved in dealing with the German explosives that were strapped to their underwater anti-tank and landing craft devices which were known as Tetrahedra 1 and Tetrahedra II** ). No 12 BD Company divers were involved in this operation - could No 25 have also been involved? Our member Len Smith who lives in Bristol worked along with teams who were dealing with these devices during the early hours of 6th June 1944. However, Alan informs us that his grandfather Harry's service was brought to an end by army medical requirements due to the loss of some fingers. These injuries were thought to have been brought about by an explosion - as Alan puts it - 'of some sort'. It also left Harry with a loss of nervous control after this. As I said earlier, Alan is most anxious to trace and obtain any information on the different units that his grandfather Harry served in. You may remember serving with Harry Clark ?

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You may have been involved in the incident where Harry had his hands injured ? If you can help, Alan would be most grateful to hear from you and you may contact him by writing to him at his address shown at the top of this appeal.

### **BRANCH VISIT TO S. WALES:**

On Saturday 13th June 1998, the Branch once again visited the Swansea Branch of the REA. This was by kind invitation of their Chairman Bill Glover. You may remember we visited them last year on that very special occasion, when we dedicated and presented a plaque to Christchurch which is the Garrison Church. This was to commemorate and remember the eight lads that lost their lives when the UXB they were attempting to render safe exploded - killing them all. There were six of us there to represent the Branch. They were Ralph Constable (now deceased), Roy Augustus, Reg Journet, Bill Hayward, Ron Harris and dear old Harry Valance who travelled all the way from Northampton.

Harry is now in excess of eighty years and still looks great. These young Sappers that were killed were part of Harry's team. We all travelled up to the Hilton Hotel Swansea on the Friday as we intended to make this more than a long weekend !! On the Saturday we hired a mini-bus to transport us to The John Chard VC House Glamorgan Street, where we were welcomed by the members of the Swansea Branch to include Bill, Tony Banks the Secretary and Col Martin Coulson OBE. We congratulated Martin on his promotion to full Colonel. On our visit last year, Martin's rank was that of Lt Colonel. To continue, and once again, it was another special occasion for the Branch as it came as a complete surprise when we were presented with a large framed picture of the City of Swansea Victory Anti-Aircraft Gun. This was kindly presented to us by Richard Grey who is the Chairman of the Swansea Branch Royal Artillery Association. We thank them very much for this kind gesture. The picture is titled 'The Monument To The Air Defence Of Swansea - 1939 - 1945'. Presented by Swansea Branch REA. On the rear of the picture, there is +++a label which reads, Presented to the National Bomb Disposal Branch - Royal Engineers Association by The Members Of The Swansea Branch Royal Artillery Association 13th June 1998. Richard said some very kind words in praise of the bomb disposaleers also saying how pleased he and his members were to have us in their presence. The picture was accepted on behalf of the Branch by our Chairman Roy Augustus, who replied to Richard and his members thanking them for their kind thoughts and their very special presentation of the picture, which would be much valued by the Branch. We are sending the R.A.A. in Swansea one of our Branch shields in recognition of their kindness. As we do not have a permanent base, we will be asking the CO of 101 (London) Engineer Regiment (EOD) (V) in Catford London if he would kindly accept the picture for safe keeping in their Mess where it will be available for all to see. Those in attendance besides us were the Royal Regiment of Wales, Royal Artillery and the Normandy Veterans Association. There was also veterans present from Field Company's - 555, 282, 246, 244 and 285 and of course I mustn't forget our ladies who also joined us on the visit ! Another presentation was that of a large framed photograph of Tom Durrant VC. Tom was Sergeant of 555 Squadron RE and lost his life in the St Nazaire raid in March 1942. His bravery is listed in Vol 3 on page 931 of Purnells History of The Second World War. He was in command of one of the motor launches engaged in the raid and even though he was dying of horrendous injuries to his whole body, he continued the battle eventually succumbing to his wounds. The write up continues saying, "*Sergeant Durrant became the first soldier to win the Victoria Cross in a naval action and possibly the first man to receive so high a decoration as the direct result of a recommendation from the enemy he had fought against*". This very fine picture was presented to the President of the Swansea Branch Col Martin Coulson OBE TD by Captain Travers Cosgrove MC who was the wartime OC of 244 Field Company RE. The picture will be hung in pride of place in the John Chard VC House. We all had a very nice evening which was complemented with an enjoyable buffet. The rest of our stay was also most pleasant. On Sunday, we attended the service at Christchurch Garrison Church to commemorate the Anniversary of the Normandy Veterans Association and also the plaque that our Branch presented last June in memory of the eight Sappers that lost their lives.

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The service was conducted by our good friend the Reverend Lionel Hopkins. Lionel dedicated and blessed the plaque last year. He said that the children attending Sunday school and other children attending the church are shown the plaque and are told of the bravery of the Royal Engineer bomb disposaleers. We would also like to thank Jack Harris who is well known in Swansea and is now well known to us. Jack gave us a four hour tour of the Welsh coastline which was most interesting. The hotel was first class as was their cuisine. Our evenings were taken up in the hotel lounge chatting and putting the world to rights over a 'Jar'. We all departed on the Tuesday after breakfast having had a marvellous visit with our friends in Wales. Our thanks to Bill Glover and Capt Brian Lawes who arranged the whole evening and we look forward to visiting them all in the not too distant future. We thank them for the hospitality shown to us. Our ladies also enjoyed the occasion - we had many laughs together and brought a few memories home with us. Referring to the picture that was presented to the Branch by Richard, a letter recently received by Roy Augustus from Richard says, "*If any names deserve to be on that monument, it is the names of those who perished whilst endeavouring to defuse that bomb during the blitz on Swansea*". Our thanks to Richard for those kind words which applies to all of our comrades who paid the supreme sacrifice during World War II and indeed to those who have given their lives since.

**ENCLOSED IS YOUR COPY OF THE BRANCH ANNUAL AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR  
1997. FROM 1ST JANUARY TO 31ST DECEMBER 1997.**

\*\*\*\*\* *THE END* \*\*\*\*\*