



# 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. R. L. Journet

20 Selvage Lane, Mill Hill, London. NW7

Tel: 020 8906 1696

**BOMB DISPOSAL BRANCH**

**BULLETIN ISSUE No 118**

❖ **CHRISTMAS EDITION** ❖

**DECEMBER 2003.**

## *Dear Members and Friends*

Once more the season of goodwill is here and as I say every year, "where does the time go?". I'm sure you must say the same thing? What about the magnificent summer we've had this year! Too hot to sit out in the garden, too hot to do any gardening (I didn't mind that!), too hot to wash the car (I didn't mind that either!). However the cooler if not colder weather is now with us which we have to accept. Christmas is not far away now and we must be thankful that we're still around to enjoy the festive season. Our thoughts go out to members and friends who have lost their loved ones and who still think of the happy times they enjoyed in the past at this very special time of the year. To our members who have impaired vision, we do hope that you have found enormous value and advantage with the audiotape in keeping you abreast of the news. If you feel we can improve on our system, please do let me know. I am always open to new ideas. Meanwhile to everyone, enjoy the holiday and let's hope the New Year 2004 brings us a little more peace than we've had this year. I must start the news with an important announcement about next years Branch meetings which are on page 5. A full report on our Branch Annual Lunch is noted on pages 2,3 and 4.

### **OBITUARIES**

**Lt Col (Retd) Richard Irwin Maxwell.** Died peacefully at his home in Norwich on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2003. at the age of 80. He had not enjoyed good health over the past eighteen months. Richard was not a member of the Branch but he was one of us and as always, I do commit myself to honouring them in our Bulletin.

**Mr Graham J Glen:** of Dagenham Essex died on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2003. Graham suffered a severe stroke at the beginning of July and sadly he never recovered. I have no further information on Graham except he served as a Sapper with 137 Regiment AER. My thanks to Mrs Glen for informing me of her sad loss.

**Mr George William Davey** of Berrynarbor, Ilfracombe Devon died at the end of March this year. George served with No2 BD Company and No24 BD Platoon. He had a varied and interesting life having joined the RAF after leaving BD with the rank of sergeant. In the RAF he rose to the rank of Squadron Leader. Yvonne his wife informs us that into the New Millennium, the family watched with dismay as this highly intelligent man slipped into the shadows of Alzheimer's. George was 81 years old.

**Mr George Alexander Wells:** of Horsforth Leeds Yorks died on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2003. He had not been enjoying good health for some time and was admitted to Leeds General Infirmary where he died of Pneumonia. George served with No's 2 and 25 Bomb Disposal Coy's and attained the rank of Staff Sergeant. He joined the Branch in April 1997. George was 85 years old and he leaves his wife Edna and a granddaughter. He enlisted in Feb 1940 and was discharged in Feb 1946. My thanks to his granddaughter Samantha for telephoning this information to me.

**Capt (Retd) Elliot Needham King** of Sandling Maidstone Kent died peacefully in hospital after suffering a fall. Elliot joined the Branch in 1984. He served with 105 BD Section as its O/C. Elliot was 90 years of age. My thanks to his son Anthony for notifying me of this sad news.

**Cont'd >>**

**Major (Retd) Charles Coulton Stewart GM:** of Ashburton Devon died peacefully at his home aged 90 years. Charles was in the Royal Engineers Officer Emergency Reserve. In 1940 he was called up and initially assigned to Bomb Disposal at Chatham. The write up in the newspaper states that *'his innovative skills came to the fore with his development of methods of defusing unexploded bombs, including a sugar solution which would disable '17 delay' fuses or 'Y' Type fuses.* He was quickly promoted to the rank of Major and as a senior bomb disposal officer worked in London, the home counties and other important cities. He was awarded the George Medal for his dedication and heroism. Whilst clearing mines on a beach in Cornwall, both he and his sergeant stepped back onto one which detonated killing the sergeant and seriously injuring Charles. He was taken to the beachside home of Daphne du Maurier who tended to him before he was taken to hospital. The full account of Charles's military exploits can be seen in the RE Museum at Chatham. Charles was not a member of the Branch but as always, he was one of 'us' and he as with other non-members, will not be forgotten. They will all be remembered in our own official newsletter should we get to know of them.

**The Branch Committee and the REA Control staff would like to extend their sincere condolences to the bereaved families**

### **NEW MEMBERS:**

**Lt Col Stephen Martin Squibb TA RE:** joined the Branch in August. Stephen was the CO of 101 (City of London) Engineer Regiment (EOD) (V) based at Catford in London.

**Mr Maurice James Arnold:** of Usk Monmouthshire. Maurice joined the Branch in September this year. He served with No 4 Bomb Disposal Sqdn RE. After 14 years service, Maurice was discharged from the army in 1961 having attained the rank of Sergeant.

**Mr Colin Paul Bellingham:** of Gosport Hampshire. Colin Joined the Branch in October this year. He served with 5/2 Troop 58 EOD Squadron RE. Colin was discharged from the army in September 1990 having attained the rank of L/Corporal.

**Lt Col Anthony G L Troulan RE.** We also extend a warm welcome to Tony who is the CO of 33 Engineer Regt (EOD). Tony has just accepted to become our first Honorary member of the Branch.

### **Gentlemen, welcome aboard**

### **REA FAMILIES REUNION 2004:**

To remind you that there is a REA Families Reunion at the Sand Bay Holiday Village, Weston-Super-Mare. The date set for this reunion is from Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 'til after breakfast on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2004 inclusive (4 nights). The all in cost for this reunion is £149 per person this is for half board and free coach transportation from designated points throughout England and Wales. A deposit of £20 is required by 15<sup>th</sup> March 2004. Harold Evans the National Organiser Chairman says, for us to have exclusive use of the Holiday Village he would require at least 400 bookings. Should you require further information on this reunion, please contact Harold Evans on 01905 840438.

### **BRANCH ANNUAL LUNCH:**

On Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October, there were approximately seventy members including wives friends and relations who attended our Annual Luncheon at Carver Barracks Wimbish. The Luncheon was held in the WO1 and Sergeants Mess by kind permission of the CO Lt Col Tony Troulan RE and WO1 RSM Andy Carnochan RE. Our guests of honour were Field Marshal Sir John Chapple GCB., CBE., DL and his wife Lady Annabelle.

**Cont'd >>**



Our other guests of honour were Lt Col Peter Shields QGM RE and wife Frances, WO1 RSM Andy Carnochan RE and wife Loraine, Capt Tony Ballans RE and wife Lorraine, Lt Col (Retd) Neil Jordan Deputy Controller RE Association his wife Pamela and WO1 RSM Barry Davis RE. Having mingled with our friends and guests everybody sat down to enjoy an excellent lunch. Grace was spoken by our member Mr Ivor Smith which was immediately followed by a short silence remembering those of our comrades both past and present who were no longer with us. After the meal, Ron Harris (Branch Chairman) introduced our President Col B S T Archer GC., OBE., ERD. Archie addressed the assembly by reading a message from HM Queen Elizabeth (Our Patron) who wished us an enjoyable day. Archie then requested everyone to join him in the loyal toast to Her Majesty. He continued by welcoming our guests and all in attendance thanking them for their support at the lunch which only takes place once a year. Archie thanked the Branch Committee for their tireless efforts in the jobs they do for without them, our Branch would not exist. Archie then handed the proceedings over to our guest speaker Field Marshal Sir John Chapple. Sir John began his speech by informing us that his father Major Charles Chapple GM was the CO of No 4 BD Company which was initiated circa October 1940 and he remained CO of that Company until the end of World War II. He also informed us that his father was wounded whilst serving as an officer in the First World War. Major Charles was aged 55 when he rejoined the Army! Sir John went on to tell us many more reminiscences of his fathers experiences during his time in Bomb Disposal and kept us all intently interested for the next twenty minutes. Finally Sir John thanked the Branch for the kind invitation to himself and Lady Annabel. He said he was honoured to be in the company of such gallant gentlemen and was proud to be associated with us. Our Chairman Ron Harris then addressed the assembly thanking them for their support of our Branch. He went on to say how appreciative he was to the various people that had contributed prizes and gifts to be raffled and auctioned at this Annual Lunch. Lt Colonel Peter Shields QGM RE then spoke to the assembly. Peter amongst other acknowledgements, apologised for the absence of the CO Lt Colonel Tony Troulan RE who was otherwise engaged on mountain exercises in Scotland. Peter went on to give an update on the regiments movements. He concluded his speech by thanking the Branch for inviting both his wife Fran and himself to our Annual Lunch. Our member Mr Geoff Baldock then requested a toast to the ladies. The reply was made by Mrs Pat Johnson. Pat's father Bill Hill was one of our members who passed away in June 1998. Bill initiated our BD Corner at the Winston Churchill Britain at War Experience Museum in Tooley Street London which includes a collection box. All donations from the collection box go to support the Children's Club in Carver Barracks. Pat spoke proudly of her father's involvement with Bomb Disposal during World War II. She went on to say how she along with her mother Gerta Hill and the other ladies looked forward to these annual luncheons. She concluded her reply by saying that she had looked up the word 'Association' in the dictionary to find its meaning. It meant 'A group of people having a common purpose or interest' and Pat said, that is what these gatherings were all about. She hoped that our Annual lunches would continue long into the future and that the Branch would go from strength to strength. Mrs Gerta Hill then presented a cheque to WO1 RSM Andy Carnochan RE for the sum of £151:34p. This was the donations collected from the BD Corner at the museum. It was agreed that this time, the cheque would go towards the Trust Fund for the Sappers families that had lost their lives in Iraq (I have included a letter of appreciation below from Mrs Cullingworth the wife of Captain Simon Cullingworth RE who lost his life in Iraq). This ended all the official speeches and they were all met with great applause. Ron Harris (Chairman) then announced it was time for the auction of football accessories etc and of course our ever popular raffle. Before that however, Ron presented WO1 RSM Andy Carnochan RE with a bottle of wine to thank him personally for his interest in our Branch affairs and the assistance he has afforded the Branch since he took over as RSM of the Regiment. There were many items auctioned including signed football shirts from well-known football clubs, a signed football and David Beckham's recent book autographed by the man himself. The auction was followed by our ever-popular raffle which sported many attractive prizes.

Cont'd >>

The festivities were concluded by the presentations to our guests and their ladies by Mrs Doreen Murphy, Mrs Gladys Crisp, Mrs Stella Stevens and Mrs Jill Charnick. The catering manager Kim was presented with a gift of appreciation for the very efficient way both she and her staff looked after the guests. Our appreciation to Captain Tony Ballans RE for supplying the transport from the Union Jack Club to Wimbish for members who found it difficult to travel there. To summarise and as we always guarantee, our day was a great success. Early reports indicate that our guests were most praiseworthy of the occasion and they had an excellent day. The meal was first class and the weather was good. We met many friends whom we only see once a year and we even made new friends. What more could one wish for!!

### **MRS CULLINGWORTH**

At our Branch Lunch, WO1 (RSM) Andy Carnochan RE received a letter of thanks and appreciation (printed below) from Mrs Alison Cullingworth which Andy read to the assembly

### **To all at the Royal Engineers Bomb Disposal Branch**

*"I would like to say a very big thank you to you all for your help and support through the last seven most difficult months. Your gifts of kindness to my two sons Matthew and Jack have been most appreciated and brought a smile to their little faces. We are still obviously very distraught and shocked at the loss of my husband and father Simon, but we seem to be getting a little stronger as time goes on. It is a great comfort to us to know that we have been in your thoughts and we would very much like to meet you all in person one day. Once again thank you for all your kindness it will never be forgotten"*

*Yours sincerely, Alison Cullingworth (21/10/2003).*

### **R.U.K.B.A:**

**Royal United Kingdom Beneficent Association.** This Association has been in being for 140 years. The object is to help those individuals who have been of service to their Country whether in the Armed Forces or civilian. This help comes in the form of a small income annuity which is granted to the individual for life. Certain criteria have to be met first. Basically, if you are single (to include widow/er), you must not have more than £12,000 pounds in savings and your income must not exceed £140 per week (inc pensions). If you are a married couple, your savings must not exceed £17,000. You must be over 65 or over 40 if you are unable to work permanently. RUKBA can provide many forms of assistance such as a small income for life, financial help in times of crisis, power bath seats wheelchairs and stair lifts, nursing residential care and help with fees, clothing and household linen and also the friendship and support of their volunteer visitors to those that are in need. It must be remembered that priority is given to those that have helped others. For further information about this remarkable organisation telephone **The Care Officer on 020 7605 4200 or 020 7592 9327** and ask for their very informative book **60-WISE**. They give assistance in many ways especially for the elderly. If you wish me to make the contact for you please let me know.

### **NEW CO**

The Branch extends a warm welcome to Lt Colonel Richard Elvidge RE (V) TD who became the replacement CO of 101 (City of London) Engineer Regiment (EOD) (V). Our best wishes to the outgoing CO Lt Colonel Steve Squibb RE TD.

### **LONDON GROUP:**

The RSM of 101 (City of London) Engineer Regiment (EOD) (V) WO1 Barry Davis RE has informed me that the next London Group Meeting takes place at the Union Jack Club Sandell Street,

**Cont'd >>**



Waterloo, London SE1 8UJ on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2004. Those who can attend should assemble there at 11:00 hrs. Barry also says in his letter that the Royal Engineers have provided 14% of the total Army commitment in the Gulf.

As Barry says, the Corps, regular and the TA continue to do great work in the Gulf. We all wish them a safe return home.

## **IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT**

**AT OUR MONTHLY BRANCH MEETING IN OCTOBER, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY AGREED TO AMEND NEXT YEARS MEETINGS (2004) UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. ALL MEETINGS WILL NOW BE HELD AT 33 ENGINEER REGIMENT, CARVER BARRACKS, WIMBISH, NEAR SAFFRON WALDEN ESSEX. THEY WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE WO1'S & SERGEANTS MESS. WOULD YOU PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PREVIOUS 2004 BRANCH MEETING ARRANGEMENTS PUBLISHED IN THE PREVIOUS BULLETIN (117) HAVE NOW BEEN CANCELLED OUT.** Please remember that our meeting to be held in March (**Friday 19 / 3 / 04**), does also include the Branch Annual General Meeting. The AGM is held first, followed by the monthly meeting after lunch. All Branch meetings are held on the third Friday of each month except August and December. We do not hold meetings on these two months. We assemble at around 11:30 hrs for 12:00 hrs meeting. We break for lunch at approximately 13:00 hrs and resume the meeting after lunch (14:00 hrs). Our meetings normally finish at around 15:00 hrs. **Members wishing to attend these meetings at Wimbish please note that by kind permission of the RSM of 101 Engineer Regiment, transport will be laid on from the Union Jack Club Sandell Street Waterloo SE1 8UJ (Tele:020 7928 6401).** It must be realised that should an emergency arise at 101 Engineer Regt which could involve service duties taking priority, this transport privilege could be cancelled. Should this be the case, you will be notified by telephone. It may be that several members would want to take advantage of these transport arrangements in which case, please let myself or Ron Harris (Chairman) know as soon as possible in the month of that meeting in order that the RSM can supply the correct type of transport. Assuming that there are no problems, members wishing to use the transport should be at the Union Jack Club no later than 10:00 hrs on the day. My telephone number is 020 8906 1696 and Ron Harris's number is 020 8366 6977.

### **LYME BAY SEATON:**

On Monday 6<sup>th</sup> October, four members, three wives an Associate member, a friend of the branch and two other friends attended the RE Association Families Reunion event held at the Lyme Bay Holiday Village in Seaton Devon. The Guest of Honour was Brigadier General Stephen Gilbert. After an excellent meal on the Gala evening, Stephen who is the Chairman of the REA Benevolent Committee gave those present an update on benevolence. He assured the assembly that even with the financial losses experienced since the September 11<sup>th</sup> 01 incident in America, the benevolent fund had more than adequately dealt with our needy members and widows. He also gave us an update on the movement of Royal Engineers throughout the world. Stephen said that we still had the RE's in Afghanistan and even in the Congo! He went on to say that our TA volunteers were also playing an important part in dealing with the overseas problems especially in Iraq. Stephen finally assured the assembly that 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD) still had 160 personnel standing by to deal with any problems in the UK. We all had a most enjoyable four days break at the Holiday Village. The accommodation was good, the food was excellent and the entertainment and music was first class. There were the usual coach trips to various places, which included a 'mystery trip'. Our member Bill Hayward dryly asked where was it going! Our thanks must go to the Events Organiser and Chairman Harold Evans and his team of Stewards. The Stewards made sure that all were looked after. The camp staff were more than efficient in the restaurant. The tables were served most promptly. On our last evening, Harold thanked all his Stewards and the Manager of the Holiday Village to include his staff and the catering staff for making sure we all had an enjoyable four days.

**Cont'd >>**



We departed on a happy note on the Friday morning having met many friends and having said our goodbyes.

### **NORFOLK LANDMINE CLEARANCE MEMORIAL:**

On Friday the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2003, three members attended as observers at the meeting of the recently formed official Committee of the above Memorial Group. The meeting was held at the North Norfolk Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer in Norfolk. The object of this meeting was to analyse from the Committee how the memorial was progressing. The Committee was made up of County Councillors, a local radio producer, our own RSM of 33 Regiment WO1 RSM Andy Carnochan RE and others that have been much involved with this project. Councillor Wyndham Northam (Chairman) welcomed everyone present and thanked those who had travelled long distances to attend. Mr Noel Cashford MBE who has been very much involved with this Memorial Trust from its outset is now the Hon Secretary of the Trust and he introduced all the personnel present and gave a progress report. Mr Tony Knowles (NNDC's Public Relations Manager) reported on the now confirmed memorial site at Mundesley. This is now awaiting confirmation from the N N D C's Planning Dept for its erection. WO1 RSM Andy Carnochan RE reported to the Committee on the progress of the 500kg German wartime bomb casing that is to be erected on the Mundesley site. Andy said that the bomb was now in its final stages of paintwork etc and should be available for siting very soon. Unfortunately the Sappers cannot be involved in the construction of the memorial due to technical reasons. However there is a Construction Company in Norwich who have kindly offered to carry out this work at no charge. Noel also informed the Committee and observers that the stainless steel plaque was also being made by a Company also free of charge. There were 26 BD lads that lost their lives on this Norfolk coastline clearing mines between 1943 – 1953 and each one will have his name engraved on the plaque. Mr Peter Coote (Hon Trust Treasurer) gave a financial report on the Trust Funds. After his report, the Committee agreed that the Memorial Trust still needed funds to meet up with other expenses involved with the project such as maintaining the memorial etc. It was thought that raising the necessary funds would not prove to be too difficult. Any of our members who might care to send a donation, you may send your cheque to **Mr Peter Coote, Hon Treasurer, 2 Mundesley Road, Paston, Nth Walsham, Norfolk NR28 9AD. Please make your cheque payable to the 'Norfolk Landmine Memorial Trust Fund'**. Your contribution to this memorial for these 26 lads killed in the line of duty will be much appreciated by the Trust. Vandalism of the memorial was also discussed and we were informed that a local policewoman at Mundesley will be keeping an ever watchful eye on it!! We were also informed that this kind lady is an ex-prison wardress! She was thanked in her absence for taking on this task. There are many distinguished persons that have given their valuable time and have worked hard to make this project a success. Some have not known about bomb disposal operations but said they were honoured to be in the company of such brave men. As we say, we were only doing our job. Ron Harris, Lawrie Murphy and myself were the ones who attended and we do thank those on behalf of the Branch, who are very much involved with the Memorial Trust. We are hopeful that the planning permission will soon be granted and when the memorial is finally erected, we look forward to attending the opening ceremony. Our good friend and member Maj (Retd) Arthur Hogben QGM has supplied a list of the Sappers names and ranks that lost their lives on that part of the Norfolk coastline along with their army numbers. He also supplied the location, where they were killed and the date. Arthur has included his own script which reads: *From early 1944 to May 1953, 26 brave Royal Engineer Bomb Disposal personnel were killed whilst clearing British land mines from Norfolk cliffs and beaches so that the foreshore could be used in safety. This is a tribute to all who served in land mine clearance.*

**“Those who survived will never forget  
Those who did not will never be forgotten” (author unknown)**

**One does not mourn brave men  
One salutes them.”  
(Dereham District Coroner Mr A H Alwood 1953)**

**Cont'd >>**

As a footnote, we are looking for the relations or even friends of these lads who died and that hopefully they will be able to attend the opening ceremony of the monument which will be at Mundesley in Norfolk. The expected date of the opening ceremony will hopefully be in May 2004. It is also expected that there will be several dignitaries in attendance. There are 26 in all that died on that Norfolk coast and they served with No 4 Bomb Disposal Coy RE (later to become No 4 BD Squadron RE (POW). The details of these lads are as follows: **L/Cpl V R Goddard (2196874) age 24 killed at Happisburgh 11/12/1944, --Spr W Palin (1941239) age 32 killed at Happisburgh 11/12/1944, --L/Sgt T O'Donoghue (209044) age 32 killed at Weybourne 18/1/1945, Cpl W Vaughan BEM (1903909) age 29 killed at Waxham 5/2/1945,-- L/Sgt L G Holbrook (2057819) age 32 killed at Waxham 5/2/1945, --L/Cpl G W Sweetman (1895867) age 31 killed at Waxham 5/2/1945, --Cpl F A Violet BEM (14625456) age 39 Killed at Horsey 26/2/1945, --Cpl T Campbell (2128803) age 34 killed at Horsey 23/4/1945,-- L/Cpl A H Harrison (2118257) age 35 killed at Horsey 23/4/1945, --Cpl S Dougherty (7018180) age 45 killed at Horsey 22/5/1945, --Cpl G Jones (97000916) age 28 killed at Horsey 22/5/1945,-- Spr S J Sullivan (14037169) age 19 killed at Horsey 31/7/1946,-- Spr W K Gilbert (14697715) age 23 killed at Horsey 31/7/1946, --Spr E Laud (14261723/1879024) age 20 killed at Gt Yarmouth 5/1/1944,-- L/Sgt J Richards (1879024) age 33 killed at Gt Yarmouth 5/1/1944,-- Lt K Perry (248668) age 35 killed at Gt Yarmouth 5/1/1944,-- Sgt R J O'Doherty and Cpl K Braddock (no army number or ages for these two gentlemen) both killed at Trimmingham 6/5/1953, --Cpl A F Rackett (14786454) age 22 killed at Horsey 31/7/1946, Lt C L Shrimpton (312216) age 25 killed at Caister 17/9/1945,-- Cpl E J Griffiths (206808) age 30 killed at Caister 17/9/1945, --Spr A W Howsham (14904618) age 22 killed at Winterton 3/6/1946, Spr R J Bennet (1944481) age 23 killed at Weybourne 24/4/1944, --Spr F McMeechan (14634736) age 31 killed at Weybourne 29/8/1944,-- Cpl A Henshall (1877723) age 28 killed at Holkham 5/12/1944, --Spr J W Potter (18792217) age 26 killed at Holkham 17/12/1944**

#### **F.E.P.O.W. Ex-Gratia Payment Scheme:**

The Veterans Agency have published a reminder noting the Governments scheme to make a single ex-gratia payment of £10,000 to the surviving members of the British groups who were held prisoner by the Japanese during the Second World War. Surviving widows/widowers of a person who would otherwise have been entitled to claim, providing they were still married at the time of death, are also included under this scheme. If you have not already claimed or have any doubts as to whether or not you might be entitled, please contact the Veterans Agency free help line for advice. Their free telephone number is 0800 169 2277 – Website [www.veteransagency.mod.uk](http://www.veteransagency.mod.uk) or if you wish to write, it's the Customer Services Manager, Veterans Agency, Norcross, Blackpool Lancashire, FY5 3WP.

#### **CAN YOU HELP?**

I have received a letter from a **Mr Barrie Jones**. Barrie is most anxious to trace his fathers history whilst serving with the Royal Engineers during World War II. His father was **Corporal W Jones GM** and he served with No 5 Bomb Disposal Coy. His Army No was 2128323. Barrie has a certain amount of information listed in his fathers service book but it does leave some empty gaps. Notes recorded are on the 16/7/42 Experience DM? On 26/8/44 to 23/10/44 mine field and booby trap clearance. On 6/11/44 to 30/11/44 engaged on Bomb Disposal. From the 31/11/44 there was some unsubstantial information referring to Colonel Saunders Expedition (Enemy Secret Weapon Sites) ? There is no date for when his father finished on this expedition except he did stay on in Germany until 4<sup>th</sup> January 1946 when he was discharged from the Army in Kirkbecke Germany (he was called up on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1940). Barrie also mentions his fathers medal and it appears that three of them have no clasps on. I have written to Barrie myself on the medal queries as these particular three possibly don't have clasps?. It seems strange that the three medals in question that is 1939 –45 medal and ribbon – this has no clasp or Oak Leaf? France and Germany Star- no clasp? The other medal was the Defence Medal – this I am sure never had a clasp added for any reason. However, Barrie wants to replace these if applicable and I have given him the name of the Company that specialises in this field.

Cont'd >>

That to one side, his fathers George Medal is intact with the ribbon and Clasp. Our member Eric Wakeling has supplied Barrie with the citation which accompanied his fathers George Medal. Barrie says, he would dearly like to fill the gaps and pass on as much information if possible to his grandchildren. If you can help Barrie in his search for his father's service details he would be delighted to hear from you. You may write to him Barrie Jones at 9 Tenter Drive, Standish, Wigan, Lancs WN6 OBN or you may telephone him on 01257 426009. You can fax him on 0257423200 or his e-mail address is [barrie@barriejones.evesham.net](mailto:barrie@barriejones.evesham.net)

**Mrs Portess:** of Burton-on-Stather Lincolnshire has written. Her husband John served with No22 BD Company / 212 BD Section. Sadly John died in November 2001. However, Mrs Portess also sent me a



photograph of which you can see eight lads standing behind a 'Fritz' (1400 kg). We do know that the lad standing on the extreme right of the photo is Gerry Fielding aged 18 years but can any member/s recognise any of the others? On the rear of this photo Gerry has written 'No 22 BDS Harlow Essex 1945'. If you do recognise any of the lads, I would appreciate your getting in touch with me and I will forward your information on. I feel sure that John

Portess is on the photo? My address and phone number is at the top right hand of Page1. Perhaps Gerry who is one of our members, will no doubt recognise his own photograph and be able to tell us more?

I have received a letter from our member **Len Curran** of Orpington Kent. Len served with no9 BD Company. He said in his letter that after he returned from Dunkirk in 1940, he was engaged on building machine gun posts on Mount Snowdon in Wales. He has since visited Snowdon and as a matter of interest, and has tried to find these MG posts but to no avail. Have any of our colleagues in Wales noticed these when visiting Snowdon? Perhaps they are still hidden in undergrowth or more than likely they have long since been demolished?. If you can help, **Len's telephone number is 020 8300 2860.**

A request from **Mr Gary Hardyman**. Gary is trying to trace his grandfathers wartime service history. His grandfathers name was **Charles Brogden** and he joined No 2 BD Company in July 1940 his Army No was 1989978 and he eventually attained the rank of Corporal. Gary seems to remember that his grandfather was involved in the recovery of a UXB in Mitcham Surrey. It also appears that he finished his service in Lagos in 1945. It is possible that he was posted from BD into a Field or Quarry Company? Gary's grandfather died sometime during 2001. If any member or members can remember Charles Brogden, Gary would appreciate hearing from you. You can either write to him (name as above) at **173 London Road, Grays, Essex RM17 5YP** or you may telephone him on **01375 392951.**

#### **GET WELL SOON:**

To **Eva Cogan** wife of our member Dennis. Eva attended our Branch Lunch in October with Dennis and looked pretty good. She has not been too well for some time now and has been receiving treatment. The committee and members send their best wishes to you Eva.

To **Sid Leader** our committee member who hasn't been feeling too well lately, we all send our good wishes Sid and get well soon.

**Cont'd >>**



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

This time it's shells. On Tuesday August 19<sup>th</sup>, three wartime shells were washed up on the beach at **Cleethorpes Lincolnshire** (that does remind me of the Bob Newhart joke about the 'Sea Shell'). Never mind. A man who was walking his dog that afternoon discovered them. He contacted the Humber Coastguard who immediately alerted the Royal Logistic Corps BD team based in Nottingham. They are believed to have been lying in the Humber for over fifty years. They are also believed to have come from the Humber Forts. However they were dealt with by controlled explosion. Our member Reg Saunders who lives in Immingham Grimsby sent this information to me via a newsclip from the Grimsby Telegraph. Reg and myself worked on that coastline in 1948 when we were serving with No 4 BD Squadron RE. The only difference was, our teams were dealing with B-Type-C anti-tank mines and not shells!

On the 29<sup>th</sup> August, a 1000kg German Second World War bomb was discovered in a clay quarry in the West Country. This was one of many that were dropped in the **Plymouth area** in the 1940's. The location of this one was at **Steer Point Brixton in Devon**. It appears that the bomb rolled out of a deposit of clay as the men worked in the quarry. B D experts were called in to deal with the situation. My thanks to our member Ray Pinwill of Chagford Devon for this information. There has been no further news as to how they finally dealt with the situation?

**Exmouth Docks:** two divers discovered a suspicious looking object at a depth of 10 metres whilst diving near the wall of the docks. They contacted the police who in turn called out the Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit from Plymouth. They retrieved it from the water and transported it over to Dawlish Warren by dinghy where it was detonated by controlled explosion.

**Bristol Area:** Police were called to the Kingsoak South West housing development when a digger driver unearthed a World War II bomb (Early part of November). The newspaper clip states that it was 2ft long? However they cordoned off the nearby Highbridge Railway Station while the bomb disposal experts carried out a controlled explosion. My thanks to our member John Notman of Calne Wiltshire for sending me the newspaper clip on this incident.

**GONE AWAY ??**

Two of our members have gone missing. I have had their Bulletins returned to me as 'Not at that address'. The first gentleman is **Timothy Allan Van der Krann** -last known address was 19 Pheonix Road, Lordswood, Chatham, Kent ME5 8SU. The second gentleman is **Christopher John Easy** - last known address 20 River Drive, Strood, Kent ME2 3JT. If any of our members know of their whereabouts, I would be most grateful if they would contact me.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:**

**We respectfully remind members and Associate members that your subs are due in January 2004. I am pleased to say that the fee still remains at £5.** I regret to say that due to the non-payment of some members, we have had to delete them from membership. We have suffered an increase in postal charges earlier this year and although we've managed to meet up with that commitment, the Branch cannot afford to support non-paying members. The Branch does take care of its blind members and of course those of our elderly members who find it difficult to pay. The Branch also subsidises the member's meals at the Annual Branch Luncheon's it is only on the prompt payment of subscriptions that we can meet up with these commitments. Every little helps -as the saying goes!

**DONATIONS:**

The Committee would like to thank members and friends who have kindly sent donations to the Branch. We have even received a generous donation from the Duke and Duchess of Bedford (this is thanks to our chairman Ron Harris). We do thank you all for your generosity.

**Cont'd >>**

This does help immensely towards the cost of supporting our Bulletin and other Branch expenses. Our sincere thanks once again.

**REMINDER!!**

Once again to remind you that all the Branch meetings for the year 2004 will be held in the WO1's and Sergeants Mess @ 33 Engineer Regt (EOD), Carver Barracks, Wimbish, Nr Saffron Walden Essex CB10 2YA. Tel: 01223 203627. This is by kind permission of the CO and the RSM. Transport will be laid on from the Union Jack Club Sandell Street Waterloo London SE1 8UJ. Tel: 020 7928 6401. This is by kind permission of the CO and WO1 RSM Barry Davis RE of 101 (City of London) Engr Regt (EOD) (V). (For times etc see page 5).

Finally on behalf of the Branch Officers and Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to wish our members, Associate members and friends of the Branch and especially to our lads overseas,

**A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND ALL THAT  
YOU WISH YOURSELVES IN THE COMING YEAR.**



**THE END**

Editor/ Hon Secretary  
Reg Journet  
20, Selvage Lane  
Mill Hill  
LONDON NW7 3SP.

☎ 020 8906 1696.

---