The New Look Bulletin

It is with great pleasure that in the branch’s 60th year, we have launched the new look branch bulletin, now called BD News!

One of the first things that we would ask for is for you to let us know your views, whether you like it, or you prefer we left it alone and leave it as it was. Whatever you opinion let us know as it is your News letter. And it is with this in mind that we appeal to you to be contributors. Do you have a story to tell us of your time in BD? Do you have photographs to go with this story that can be sent to us to scan (or emailed) and added to your story or article? Are you trying to trace a name from a photo or an old comrade? If so let us know. Use the BD News – after all it’s yours!

BRANCH AGM

As you may remember the Branch AGM has been moved from March to April of each year. This years meeting will be held at the Houses of Parliament on Friday the 18th of April. Members are asked to assemble outside St Stephen’s entrance by 11:20 hours so as to get through any security and be escorted to the meeting room by our host and Chairman, Jeff Baldock. Those attending should give their details to the Branch Secretary, Gary Woodman-Simmons either via telephone on 020 8994 1172 or by email at BombDisposal@talktalk.net

We would love to have as much input from branch members as is possible so please try and attend.

DEODS to Relocate

The Ministry of Defence planned move of the Defence Explosives Ordnance Disposal School from Chattenden in Kent to St Georges Barracks in Armcott near Bicester. The current school at Lodge Hill in Kent trains about 500 people a year to deal with explosives. Cherwell

The MOD said all training will be done with simulators

DIARY NOTE

Bomb Disposal Branch Annual Lunch Saturday 18th of October

In advance we would like to notify you that the Branch Annual Lunch will be held at Carver Barracks on Saturday 18th October 2008. Further details of this will be published in the Summer Bulletin.
Corps Circular

Birthdays

The Branch Committee would like to extend their most hearty congratulations to Mr Ron Harris the recently retired Branch Chairman, *pictured next to his wife Joan*, on the occasion of his 80th birthday on the 18th of March 2008.

Also congratulations are sent to the recently retired Branch Secretary Reg Journet who will also be celebrating his 80th birthday on April 18th.

It is with sadness *(for him and not for us)* that we announce the 50th birthday on May the 6th of the Branch Treasurer, Mick Collarbone MBE. So if you see Mick at this years Army v Navy rugby match do offer him your help especially if you see him struggling to find his seat in the stands, it will be due to his age and nothing else. And talking of nothing else, you might want to buy him a pint of it – to help him celebrate!

Our congratulations also go to branch member Brian Edwards of Sevenoaks, Kent, who celebrated his 70th birthday on 10th of March, many happy returns of the day to Brian.

And congratulations to our member Harry Glover of Ireland Woods, Leeds, who celebrated his 90th birthday on the 27th of February of this year

MBE

33 Engr Regt (EOD) has received recognition for its work with the award, in the New Years Honours list, of the MBE to Corporal Simon Peter Daniels. We would like to send Simon our warmest congratulations on this honour.

Friend of the Branch

In recognition of all the valued help and dedicated support given to the branch over many years it was unanimously agreed at the branch meeting held on the 18th of January 2008, to honour Mrs Pat Johnson of Maidstone, whose late father was branch member and stalwart, Bill Hill. Also Mrs Kim Halls the manager of the WOs and Sgts Mess at 33 Engr Regt (EOD) by making them both a *Friend of the Branch*. Congratulations to two very worthy recipients.

National Veterans Day 2008

Blackpool has been named host of Britain's Veterans Day 2008. The June 27th day of national celebration and commemoration will see events ranging from a spectacular aerial Grand Prix to a ceremony at the newly-restored cenotaph, as part of a nine-day Veterans Week. The dates are 21 - 29 of June 2008.

The week, thought to be costing at least £100,000, will be part funded by cash from a £3.5m North West Development Agency grant and £25,000 from the Ministry of Defence.

33 EOD REUNION

9-11 May 2008

The 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD) Reunion will take place at Carver Barracks, Wimbish, Essex. The weekend is open to all who are serving or used to serve in 33 Engr Regt (EOD) and 101 (City of London)
Engr Regt (EOD) (V) or pre 33 EOD, BD Units. The weekend will be based around a social event with displays by the Regiment; Veterans v Regimental rugby and football matches, a bar for all those who just want to socialise with old friends. Accommodation is available. Ticket prices vary so check the admin order. There is a curry on the Friday night and the BBQ on Saturday lunch time.

An admin instruction and application form is enclosed.

Ripon and District Branch

The Ripon Weekend is due to be held on the same weekend as the BD/EOD Reunion. Those branch members requiring further information should contact the branch secretary (Gary) 020 8994 1172, or email BombDisposal@talktalk.net

Gary will give you all the necessary information and at your request will send you any necessary registration / booking forms. Alternatively you can contact Janet Sanderson of Ripon Branch on 01667 245428 or email morag.sanderson@btinternet.com

ARMY v NAVY
Twickenham Saturday the 3rd of May

Once again it is nearing the time when the good and the great of the Corps both past and present come together for the annual pilgrimage to Twickenham. By now those intending to go will have placed their orders for tickets and wristbands. We look forward to seeing as many of our members in the marquee as is possible, and hopefully this year someone will be sober enough to remember the score and write an article. So any volunteers!

Amendment to…..
Aldershot/Minley Weekend

We have received an amendment from HQ REA in respect of the dates given for the Aldershot/Minley Weekend. The date should be 27-29 June 2008.
(For further information call the secretary 020 8994 1172)

National Standard Bearers Competition

The National Standard Bearers competition was held at Chatham on the 15th of September 2007. The competition was a very high standard and all those who took part should be congratulated. The overall winner was Sgt F Farnell of the Medway Branch.

Back in the fold
Lost members FOUND!

Our “lost” member, Martin Heyman has made contact and his details have now been updated, our thanks to Pete Markham for passing this information on to us. So you can all stop looking for Martin as he’s back in the fold.

Also back in the fold is Douglas G Ritchie who now lives in Devon. He had been missing a while. Our thanks to Tina Plant at HQ REA for informing us of the new address for Douglas.

And lastly Derek Holt has been tracked down via the internet, in Cyprus!

New Members

The branch would like to welcome into the fold.

David Atkins of Whitstable Kent. David served with 590 (EOD) Sqn (V) from 1963 to 1975. David recently attended the branch annual lunch as a guest of branch member Steve Hambrook, and has now joined the branch, as of the 5th of December 2007.

Also WO1 Steffan Wright of Minley. Steffan is currently posted to the BEW at Gibraltar Barracks and has served with both 33 Engr Regt (EOD), 101 (City of London) Engr Regt (EOD) (V) with the EOD Section of the RE Sales Team and DEODS.

Memorial Plaque unveiled at Hook

News reached us that six men who were killed whilst working on a bomb near Hook during the Second World War have been remembered with a memorial plaque. The young sappers lost their lives on August 18, 1940, as they attempted to disarm an unexploded bomb next to the railway line, at the old brickyard in Hook.

Mike Authers, (pictured over as a Captain (is with the 25th Company, Bomb Disposal of the Royal Engineers Re-enactment Group)), arranged and led the plaque-unveiling ceremony. Mike said to those who gathered for the event: "We come together in memory of the six men who so gallantly gave their lives in the service of their country, here, on the outskirts of Hook, for the people of the area of Hook. They thought not of their own safety, but that of others."
Councillor Sean Haffey, chairman of Hart District Council, unveiled the plaque, situated opposite the ticket office at Hook railway station. All six men - Arthur Hill, 20, Ralph Moxon, 21, Fred Gavid, 22, Arthur White, 23, Douglas Vince, 23, and Fred Warner, 23 - were from 48 Section of 6 BD Company, Royal Engineers, and their Lance Sergeant, who was severely wounded, later received the George Cross. Mike Authers is hoping to raise funds for a brass plaque to be laid on the bridge near where the young men lost their lives.

He continued, "Mitigation means we are working to reduce the effects of the controlled explosion by packing sand around the device. This works to absorb the blast and reduce the fragmentation." He added that the team dealt with a handful of these devices each year. "Each one presents its own difficulties and challenges, which is what we as explosive ordnance disposal specialists are trained to deal with," he said. It's thought the bomb may be linked to a plane that crashed shortly after take-off from nearby Spalding Moor in March 1944. The bomb was eventually made safe with a controlled explosion and removed.

Unexploded bomb unearthed in East Yorkshire

Just before the New Year a Second World War bomb was unearthed in a field at Balkholme near Goole close to the B1230, by a metal detector enthusiast. Emergency services were called and the area cordoned off. A Bomb Disposal Team from 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD), based in Wimbish, Essex were on the scene for a week as the bomb was deeply buried.

The unit's commander Captain Tim Ives said they had identified the device as a Second World War RAF 500lb bomb. He said: "Since we arrived we have been in the process of building mitigation around it".

Unexploded bomb unearthed in East Yorkshire

More than 14,000 people, including 98 hospital patients, were evacuated on Sunday 31st of December 2007, from a one km square area in Hanover as munitions experts defused an unexploded World War Two bomb dropped by an American warplane. The 1,000-pound bomb, seven metres below a supermarket parking lot in southwest Hanover, was discovered in early December by local authorities studying war-time aerial photos. "The planning for this evacuation was complicated by the hospital and intensive care patients who had to be transported," said fire brigade spokesman Alfred Falkenberg. "We waited for this week when there were fewer patients." Last year, 22,000 people were evacuated in another part of Hanover, 300 km west of Berlin, while three unexploded British World War Two bombs were defused.

A Sad Farewell

It has been announced by HQ REA that two branches of the REA have now had to close they are Liverpool Docks and Plymouth; however it is not all bad news as a new branch has been formed in Suffolk and is the Lowestoft Branch of the REA.
The past year has obviously been a very busy one for the regiment with not only having to fulfil their commitments to both Op TELIC (Iraq) and Op HERRICK (Afghanistan) but also continue with their military training and various exercises requirements, so the term busy really does not begin to describe the regiments status. Thankfully some fun days were added with some of the Regiment getting away on Adventure Training and of course there was the regiments Families Day, which the branch used to attend and where we had the opportunity to enrol new members and sell our wares to help raise funds for the branch. Perhaps in the future an invitation will once again be made. 33 Engr Regt (EOD) also held its Junior NCOs Cadre and the winner of the shield for Best Student, presented to the Regiment by the BD Branch, was Sapper (now Lance Corporal) Grosvenor. Our congratulations to him. Hopefully we will be able to report on 33 Engr Regt (EOD) a bit more in depth, once the regiment knows that we are interested, they may even put a man, or a woman, on to the task as our reporter on the inside.

Well done to Cpl B Bushell (no fist names given) and his team mates on completing a cycle ride from John O Groats to Lands End in aid of the British Limbless Ex-Service Men’s Association (BLESMA). The branch made a donation to this good cause and so far the guys have raised nearly £7,000, however not all the monies have been collected and the team are confident that the figure will reach the £10,000 mark.

And from

101 (City of London) Engr Regt (EOD) (V)

101 Regiment have also had a busy year in 2007, and it looks as though it will continue throughout this year into the next. Apart from the operational support to 33 Engr Regt (EOD), the regiment, like 33, has had to pack in their Annual Camp in Guernsey (Ex Island Cat), EOD exercises in Rochester and of course the obligatory R and R with trips to Gallipoli for ANZAC day and adventure training, and along the way some Land Rover dragging for charity fund raising in aid of the Hospice of the Weald. Again the Regiment has one very busy year down and a busy year yet to fulfil.
The events organiser has been running since she was in her 20s and has already clocked up the Great North Run this year and the London Marathon. Rosie, 50, has already raised a marathon £38,000 for the Not Forgotten Association, and is aiming to raise another £12,000 through this event.

Two million spectators and 100 bands along the route made for a fantastic atmosphere. "I did my personal best time for a marathon of 4 hours 18 minutes."

The NFA helps service personnel who have been injured or are suffering other health difficulties as a result of their engagements from the Second World War to today. Among the events Rosie has organised and taken part in this year was a canoeing challenge along the River Spey with 14 young servicemen. They included three double amputees, four single-amputees and nine suffering from post-traumatic stress. She said: "It was good fun and really challenged them." The Not Forgotten Association provides a programme of days out, holidays and events for ex-servicemen and women of all ages who have a war pension or who are suffering from some form of ill health.

Anyone wishing to support Rosie and the association's work can call 020 7730 2440
Can you help?

I am writing in the hope that some of your readers may be able to help me with regard to the bombing, during World War II, of a factory on the borders of Islington and Hackney. The bomb fell in the yard of Champion Druce, who manufactured white lead for paint. My father was the under-manager and often spoke of the time when a bomb landed in the timber stack in the yard and how it was defused and taken away on a lorry. At one time he had a photograph of the bomb, covered with a blanket, on the lorry as it was driven away. Later in the war, in January 1945, a V2 fell in almost the same spot and completely destroyed the factory. My father's boss and a driver were killed in the incident, my father survived. If any of your members were part of the BD team that defused and removed the bomb I would love to hear from them as I would like to add this part of the story to an article I wrote for the Hackney Archives.

Sincerely Norman Huxford, 12 Valley Close, HERTFORD. SG13 8BD

Branch member Albert Whiston of Tockholes Lancashire has written in to ask if there are any of his old buddies from 21 BD Coy out there as he would love to hear from them. Albert also served with 94 Field Coy and the Army Airborne Transport Development Coy RE. Albert’s rank while serving was Sergeant and he served from October 1940 to June 1946. Anyone who remembers Albert can write to him at West View, Pickop Brow, Tockholes Road, Tockholes, Nr Darweh, Lancashire. BB3 0LR.

Our member Douglas Wilson of Bedford has contacted the branch by email to enquire whether any of his old friends from No 9 BD Section from the period 1947-1949 were still members and if so could they give him a call on 01525 713 442 as he would very much like to hear from anyone who knew him from this time.

A Pilgrimage to Branscombe

By branch member, Albert Homes

I have just recently returned from a pilgrimage that has been on my mind for some time, and being widowed, I had the time to spare. During my time with 7 BD Company in 1943, and being away from HQ Bristol for weeks at a time, my squad of four sappers and a driver spent some time in a village called Branscombe. Our time there was spent digging up UXBs, finding the Smugglers Den and mine laying. Throughout this time, my lodgings were at Frank Salts Farm; there was a housekeeper at the farm called Dora Somers. Our Work at the farm was hard and messy, but every day I and my colleagues left the farm for work with our uniforms devoid of mud and such like and our boots shining; of her own accord Dora had took it on herself to look after our kit.

When in 2006 I enquired where she was, I was told that Dora passed away and was buried at St Winifred’s Church, Branscombe, in a grave with no name or marker. I decided, for all the sappers who were looked after like their mother’s would have done, to let everyone know where this kind lady was resting, I would place a cross where a headstone should be.

The words on the cross

“Dora Somers, God Bless You, Albert, 7 Coy BD”

The words on the card:

“For Dora Somers and all the other landladies, who were just like our mothers, Love, Albert”.

Roll of Honour

The Roll of Honour project was started and is managed by the branch webmaster Pete Markham, who has had some great results with many of our members helping out by going to their local cemeteries to photograph the headstones and memorial plaques to the members of BD who were killed in the line of duty. There has been plenty of work already completed but there are still a number of gaps and so we are asking you all once again to try and help us. If you live nearby or know some one who lives nearby any of the listed cemeteries please could you contact Pete Markham so that he can give you the exact details of the graves we need photographing.

MARKHAMFossil@aol.com or 01634 408 364
List of Cemeteries

**Berkshire** – Earley Churchyard, Sunningdale.

**Cheshire** - Cheadle and Gateley, Heswall, Wallasey.

**Derbyshire** - Clay Cross.  **Devon** - Tiverton.

**Durham** - Bishop Aukland, Easington.

**Gloucestershire** – Bristol.  **Ireland** - Newry.


**Norfolk** – Norwich, Hingham.  **Nottinghamshire** - Kingsway, **Northumberland** - Newcastle upon Tyne.

**Scotland** – Blackford, Cruden, Aberdeen.

**Somerset** – Frome, Haycombe Bath, Glastonbury, Taunton, Weston Super Mare.  **Surrey** - Thames Ditton.


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**Help for Heroes**

Charity **Help for Heroes** has so far raised just over £3.08m towards a target of £5m for a swimming pool complex at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre, Headley Court. The charity is selling a special £2 charity wristband for its growing legion of supporters. It can be ordered online from www.helpforheroes.org.uk

Members of 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD) are running from Brighton to Portsmouth to raise cash for **Help For Heroes**.

Richard Cook has also informed us via HQ REA of a sponsored cycle ride across France also in aid of **HELP FOR HEROES**

Please check out Richard’s website and online sponsorship [here](http://www.justgiving.com/richardcook1)

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**SERVICE - NOT - SELF**

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**HMS Antelope**

Divers from HMS Liverpool dived on the wreck of HMS Antelope to raise a White Ensign over her, thereby maintaining the tradition of keeping an ensign flying over as many of the Navy’s war graves as possible. A Royal Engineers cap badge was attached to the ensign, in memory SSgt Jim Prescott, from 33 Engr Regt (EOD) who was killed whilst attempting to make safe a bomb which lodged inside HMS Antelope during the Falklands conflict in 1982.

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**Queen visits the Corps**

The Queen, Colonel-in-Chief of the Corps of Royal Engineers, was greeted by crowds and soldiers when she arrived in Kent on the 25th of October for an official visit to Brompton Barracks. She presented on arrival with posies by a group of five young girls, one of whose father had been killed in action.

Accompanied by the Chief Royal Engineer, General Sir Kevin O’Donoghue, the Queen met groups of Sappers both past and present along with trainees and families. The Branch Standard was on parade, as was all the Corps Branch Standards and many members of the branch were also able to attend, including committee member Hugh Marshall, pictured above in beret and beard, having just spoken with the Queen.
Awarded to….

The female oil rig worker who, on Sunday the 10\textsuperscript{th} of February, caused a major bomb scare and evacuation of an oil rig installation in the North Sea after having a dream! The evacuation involved 10 helicopters along with police, army, coastguard, and RAF teams. The cost of the operation is estimated at over £1,000,000. An investigation later found nothing suspicious.

(dream catcher anyone?)

Or should it be to...........

The would-be bomb maker from Afghanistan’s Helmand province, ‘Mullah’ Abdul Wasay, who on Saturday the 9\textsuperscript{th} of February, whilst tinkering in his kitchen with the explosives from a home made bomb, blew himself up along with two of his sons.

(not only did he score an own goal but a hat-trick!)

**EMIALS**

Don’t forget that you can get your copy of BD News anywhere around the world when you register your email address. Also as often happens we get information of events too late to add to the bulletin and the info would have become redundant before the next issue is printed. It would be impractical to try and contact all members by phone, but so that you do not miss out again on any important events you can register your email address which will be added to our distribution list called “Rapid Response”, then as we find out news and information it can be immediately disseminated online. To register for either the Bulletin (BD News) or Rapid Response please email the branch at BombDisposal@talktalk.net On the subject line type the list you wish to be added to:

**BD News, Rapid Response or Both.**

**STOP PRESS**

Ronald Jones is trying to trace any of our members who can help him fill-in the story of his uncle, Cpl John Jelley GM. Did you work with John during WW2? Do you know anything regarding the award of his George Medal? If so please write to Ronald Jones at:

9 Bury Hall Lane
Gosport,
Hants. PO12 2PL
Tel: 02392-584306.
In Remembrance

Professor John Pilkington Hudson GM

Who died on the 6th of December 2007, aged 97. During his wartime career John was one of Britain's foremost experts in bomb disposal and won two George Medals. John’s military career started in the TA, and on the outbreak of war volunteered in the Corps of Royal Engineers. He travelled with the British Expeditionary Force to Normandy and was among those evacuated from Dunkirk in the summer of 1940.

After his return he was assigned to the bomb disposal unit, running a group in Sheffield during the Blitz.

He tackled his first bomb, a 500-pounder, at the bottom of a crater in West Yorkshire without too much worry. "They told us what would happen if a bomb did go off and how we wouldn’t know anything about it," he remembered. "In one sense that was quite comforting but there were many occasions when we were all quite uptight." Having spent a few hours, one afternoon, jotting down his thoughts on the techniques then in use and, after they had been passed to headquarters, he was immediately called to London to work as a scientific officer and promoted to captain (and soon to acting major). He liaised with his opposite numbers in the Navy and RAF and, on America's entry into the war in 1942, spent several months in the United States dealing with bomb experts there. The following year he received a military MBE.

On the night of January 17/18 1943 the Germans dropped on London the first bombs containing a new type of anti-handling fuze, designed to go off when the device was moved. One was retrieved, but, as John's citation explained, "it was not possible to carry out the customary exhaustive tests before introducing a new disposal process. It fell to Major Hudson to continue the experiments in which he had actively participated in the laboratory, by attempting to dispose of a live bomb which had been assigned a high priority."

On January 24 John, using improvised tools, most of which he had devised himself, began to work on a 500kg unexploded bomb which was obstructing access to the Albert Bridge Road and nearby flour works. John spent the best part of two hours attempting to make the fuze safe for extraction by remote control, but it then proved impossible to remove the device. With the light failing, John decided to remove it himself. It was decided that 20 minutes was the outside margin of safety for him to work; 23 minutes later John, having constantly telephoned information about what he was doing, in case he should fail, disarmed the bomb. He was awarded the George Medal.
John Hudson believed that "we were lucky because we managed to get hold of one of the first Y-fuzes that was used. When we saw it was battery-operated we devised a way of disabling it from outside the bomb by pouring liquid oxygen on to the fuze cap, thereby cooling the batteries until they went dead."

In June 1944 John Hudson received a Bar to his GM after defusing the first complete warhead of a Flying Bomb to have landed intact, close to Haywards Heath. The bomb had three fuzes, the third of which was an unknown type which John was ordered to retrieve at all costs. The citation noted that the "technical excellence of his work" and his "clear observations" under nerve-shredding conditions were of the highest order and had "contributed in no small degree to a knowledge of the fusing system". By the end of the war John Hudson's extensive work with the chemicals in unexploded bombs had led to breathing difficulties and he was demobilised shortly before the surrender of Japan. John went on to have a very successful career in Horticulture where he was a professor of Horticultural Science at the University of Bristol. John is survived by his younger son Dick, emeritus professor of Linguistics at University College, London. John was a long standing member of this branch.

**Major General Christopher Noel Thompson CB**

Who died on the 9th of December 2007, aged 74. The son of a brigadier who served in the 5th Gurkha Rifles, was born at Abbatabad, Pakistan, (formerly India), on Christmas Day 1932. Educated at Wellington, he attended RMA Sandhurst and then went up to Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, where he read Mechanical Sciences. Commissioned into the Royal Engineers, he was posted to 25 Field Squadron in Germany before serving with a Royal Engineers Bomb Disposal Unit.

From 1959 to 1962 Chris worked on bomb disposal duties in the south of England, much of it on the coast. On one occasion, at Hastings, a trawler came into the harbour with an unexploded bomb (UXB) entangled in its net. Thompson, then a captain, identified it as a wartime German 250 kg bomb. Every available policeman was mobilised to patrol the area and control the crowd that gathered. On the eastern seafront of the town all premises, including public houses, whelk and winkle stalls, beach cafés and a bingo hall, were closed. Thompson mustered a party of sappers from the bomb disposal unit at Horsham and the device was made safe.

On another occasion he was responsible for a peace march at Aldermaston being re-routed while he defused a UXB at the roadside. Legend has it that he took his time over the job. Chris Thompson went on to command 42 Survey Engineer Regiment before moving to the Ordnance Survey as deputy director. In 1984 he was appointed Director of Military Survey. It was his last appointment and after retiring from the Army in 1987 he was appointed CB. He is survived by his wife Margaret, a son and two daughters. Chris had been a member of the branch since October 1990.

**The Branch Committee and the R E Association staff convey their sincere condolences to the bereaved families**

**Memorial Blessing**

Sunday the 24th of February members of the branch attended the memorial service and headstone blessing at Bushey Jewish Cemetery in memory of our late member Gerald Feldman, who died on the 28th of February 2007. Frank Whitlock, who is a Friend of the Branch, attended and carried out the duties of Standard Bearer for the branch. Mrs Patricia Feldman said that she was grateful that Gerald had been remembered by his BD Comrades and thanked the branch members for attending.

Lastly the article below which, was originally written in 2001. Due to difficulties it was not possible to put the article in the branch bulletin at that time. This year will be the 10th anniversary of Chris’s remains being returned to the England for burial. And so we belatedly print the article in Remembrance of a fallen comrade.

**Chris Howes**

On Tuesday the 13th of February 2001, at a special ceremony at Buckingham Palace the parents of mine clearance expert, Christopher Howes received the Queens Gallantry Medal from Her Majesty the Queen, which had been posthumously awarded to their son Chris. Chris served with the Corps of Royal Engineers and joined
49 (EOD) Sqn RE. While with bomb disposal Chris made two tours of the Falkland Islands, the first during hostilities in 1982 and then a second tour from July 1983 to the October. After returning to the regiment after his second tour, Chris decided to leave the army and to put his ordnance disposal skills to use in civilian mine clearance company. In 1996 while working for the British charity, Mines Advisory Group, Chris went to Cambodia to help that country clear up the masses of mines that had been laid by the terrorist group, the Khmer Rouge, who, during the latter months of their last insurgency laid in excess of 300 mines per day. These mines were killing or maiming up to six people each month. Whilst helping clear the mines, Chris also became an instructor in mine clearance for the Cambodian Mine Action Centre, who were training and employing local Cambodian people to help clear their homeland.

On the 26th of March 1996, while working to clear mines at a leading local tourist attraction, the temple at Angkor Wat in Sean Reap province, Chris, along with his team of 28 Cambodian mine clearance workers was kidnapped by armed Khmer Rouge terrorists. Chris had refused an offer that he would be released if he pleaded for ransom money, and instead chose to stay in exchange for the release of his co-workers. His parents endured over two long years of agony while waiting on news of their son and despite Foreign Office attempts to gain news on Chris, and attempts by two Scotland Yard detectives to negotiate his release the news that Chris had been shot in the head after just three days was not revealed until 1998. To-date, only one person has been sentenced for his involvement in the kidnapping of Chris Howes. Cheap Vichit, a member of the Khmer Rouge, who confessed to kidnapping Chris, was sentenced to five years imprisonment. No further prosecutions have yet taken place in this case. Chris’s remains were handed over to Cambodian officials on the 24th of May 1998, and to-day his ashes lay buried in the grounds of St Andrew’s Church, in Backwell, where Chris grew up. In Cambodia a school and a road have been named after Chris Howes in memory of Chris’s bravery, and in recognition of his humanitarian work in the field of mine clearance.