

This Incident was at Bedlington 1949.

1949 No1 Bomb Disposal Unit Royal Engineers.

Number one bomb disposal unit make safe a 3,000 lb bomb, discovered by Britain's largest excavator, at Ewart Hill open cast coal site Bedlington Northumberland.

In 1949, the unit located at the former RAF Hutton Cranswick (which is near Driffield, Yorkshire) was officially designated as No. 1 School of Technical Training (No. 1 SoTT).

While this RAF station had various units attached to it during and after the war, by October 1st, 1949, No. 1 SoTT became the main commanding unit. The primary responsibility for land-based bomb disposal in the UK during that period rested with the Royal Engineers of the British Army.



It calls for bravery as well as skill to do this kind of job. Sergt J. Kidd loosens the high explosive of the 1,000-kilo German bomb with a stick, while Lieut. F. C. Smith and two "sappers" of No. 1 Bomb Disposal Unit, Royal Engineers, keep a watchful eye on the proceedings.

"Looked like an old milk can"

GIANT GRAB DIGS UP 3,000 lb BOMB

ERNEST Gosling, of Denton Burn, Newcastle, driver of Britain's largest excavator, now operating at the Ewart Hill open cast coal site, Bedlington, handled his most dangerous cargo on Thursday morning, when he unearthed a 3,000 lb. bomb.

A detachment of No. 1 Bomb Disposal Unit, Royal Engineers, immediately set to work to render the huge missile safe after a hurried journey from their camp at Carnswick, near Driffield, Yorks.

It took three men, straining on an extracting tool, to get the impact-type fuse free.

The fuse, about four inches long, was slightly damaged, and this probably accounted for its failure to function when the bomb was dropped from a German plane.

Used a stick

From an early hour on Friday morning, when work was resumed the squad continued with the difficult task. Sergt. J. Kidd slackened the yellowish T.N.T. in the casing with a walking stick and it was carried away in buckets.

The bomb was first noticed by Mr Bill Hutton, who was also in the driver's cabin, and he immediately called the driver's attention to it.

"When Bill said it was a bomb," Mr Gosling told a News Post reporter, "I didn't believe him. I thought he was joking. It looked to me like an old milk can and it was the same colour as the earth."

He went down to examine it, however, and then, while the other men moved to a safe distance, he calmly lifted the bomb with the grab and placed it as far as possible from the excavator. After that he went on working.

Work continues

Work went on in the area for about 30 minutes after the missile was found; then the police informed the agent, Mr T. McCarthy, that it would be better to have the machine moved away.

The agent had instructed the crew, "Never stop unless there is a breakdown," and they stuck to these instructions until told to move.

The bomb was 6ft 6ins long and 2ft in diameter, and was found embedded 20 feet below the level of the ground.

The excavator was stopped later in the afternoon, but not because of the bomb. Thursday marked the end of a three-months "running-in" period. Adjustments had to be made so that the grab could work at a higher speed.