

Royal Engineers Museum Support.

This Section is divided into two parts.

1. A general overview of the Museum.
2. Memorandum of Understanding between the History Group and the Museum.

The Royal Engineers Museum and our History Group are working together towards developing a comprehensive History of the RE BD, EOD and Search activities of the Corp.

Royal Engineers Museum.

Visit Kent's largest military museum to discover the story of the Royal Engineers and how they have helped the British Army live, move and fight for over 300 years.

With highlights including 25 Victoria Crosses, Wellington's map of Waterloo, Chard's weapons from the Zulu War, an amazing collection of bridge laying tanks, Chinese silks, the world's first guided torpedo, Indian battle axes, a huge piece of the Berlin Wall, Zulu shields, a Harrier Jump Jet and a deadly V2 rocket, it is no surprise that the Museum's collection has been designated as being of historical and international importance.

The historic significance of the Collection was recognised in 1998 with the official award of Designated status, marking it as a pre-eminent collection of national and international importance.

The library (including the archive) was founded in 1812 when Major Pasley founded the School of Military Engineering. The Chatham library was such a success that in 1847 a Central Library was established in London. By 1862 libraries were also established at 16 home and 19 overseas stations. It clearly became very difficult to control such a widespread organisation and the tendency in later years was to close the overseas libraries and return the books to England or dispose of them locally. In 1951 a permanent and fitting home for the library was established in the old lecture theatre in the HQ School of Military Engineering building, Brompton Barracks.

The Museum was formally established by the Institute (later renamed "Institution") of Royal Engineers in 1875. However, the original collection was largely drawn from a 'model room' of engineer equipment started by Major Pasley at Chatham in 1812 and a collection of memorabilia begun in 1839 by Sgt Maj James Forbes at the Royal Sappers and Miners depot in Woolwich. The latter being brought to Chatham in 1856.

In 1912 the Museum was established in the North Block of Brompton Barracks in what had originally been the Chapel (now the RSME Auditorium). After two world wars and many other campaigns the collection outgrew the space available and it moved to its present location in the Ravelin Building, where it was officially opened by Her Majesty the Queen on 20 May 1987.

The Ravelin Building was designed by a Royal Engineer architect and opened in 1905 as the Electrical School of the Corps. The ground floor houses galleries illustrating the history of the Corps to the end of the Second World War and the magnificent medal collection. The courtyard, originally open, was roofed over in 1990 and now houses displays showing the post-war history.

After decades of separate management the Corps' library, archive and museum collections, were combined under the single management of the REM in the early 2000s. In 2021 this process was completed with the creation of a new Research Centre as well as archive and library store facilities that enabled the entire historic collection of the Corps of Royal Engineers to be housed within the Ravelin Building

The Collection now comprises over 1 million items and preserves the heritage of Britain's military engineers throughout the 300 years of their existence. From continental wars with France, conquest and empire, through two World Wars and to the present day, the story of personal experience, as well as the scientific and

professional development of military and civil engineering, is told in archives and by objects drawn from all corners of the World.

You may also wish to become a member of the Friends of the Royal Engineers Museum (FOREM).

[Royal Engineers Museum](#)

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This is the Memorandum of Understanding; we have agreed to.

Between the Royal Engineers Bomb Disposal/Explosive

Ordnance Disposal History Group and the Royal Engineers

Museum

1. Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) sets out the terms and understanding between the RE BD/EOD History Group and the Royal Engineers Museum ('the Parties') to collaborate on activities of mutual interest. It is not intended to be legally binding but expresses the intention of both Parties to collaborate in good faith.

2. Background

The RE BD/EOD History Group (RE BD/EOD HG) is a Sapper-led and well-established community governed by an informed and operationally experienced steering group. Its aim is to tell the story of the Corps' pioneering work across the disciplines of Bomb Disposal, EOD and Search. The community currently interacts via a Facebook group with 2600 members; its strength is the depth of its specialist knowledge and the range of its contacts. Achievements to date include providing details of service and death to families; researching and identifying those who have served; assisting in the updating of memorials to the Fallen; developing a comprehensive record of individuals' awards that is accessible to all, and creating research aids. The group regularly collaborates on research and other activities, including with regimental associations and branches, authors and research/interest communities.

The Royal Engineers Museum (REM) is the museum of the Corps of Royal Engineers. Its collection, which is 'Designated' by the UK government in recognition of its national significance, spans 300 years of British military and technological development and reveals the personal experiences of serving men and women. Following a governance change in 2024, the museum is implementing a new ten-year strategy which will culminate in a transformed and modernised museum. The new strategic goals will guide activity over the next decade as the museum grows and diversifies its audiences, implements best practice collections care and interpretation, and builds its financial resilience; activity in 2026 focuses on the goal to build 'a strengthened and deepened relationship with the Corps'.

The Parties share a common interest in the history and heritage of RE BD, EOD and Search, in serving families and communities wishing to research or engage with this history, and ensuring the memory of those who have served is cherished and respected.

3. Scope of collaboration

The Parties agree to collaborate on the following areas of mutual interest and benefit.

3.1 Enquiries and knowledge sharing

REM often receives enquiries from people researching histories of Sapper relatives. When these relate to Sappers who have served in BD, EOD or Search functions, RE BD/EOD HG may hold relevant information, be able to offer guidance or research services, and/or provide access to their community.

When replying to enquiries on this topic, REM will include information and details of RE BD/EOD HG so that enquirers can follow up with the group directly.

3.2 Object/archive identification, cataloguing and research

REM holds many objects relating to BD, EOD and Search history. RE BD/EOD HG possesses technical knowledge and operational experience of these objects that can

improve knowledge of the collection, support the preservation of this heritage for future generations, and aid REM to represent this history in future gallery displays and public programmes.

To this end, REM will define targeted mini-projects that Parties can collaborate on during 2026. This will include:

- Identifying poorly-catalogued objects in object stores, either through in-person examination or photographs, so that catalogue records can be improved
- Creating reports on objects for which there is limited provenance or contextual information, that can be held in object history files and used to inform catalogue records and future display. Reports might include technical information or personal recollections of working with equipment.
- Improving listings and catalogue data of archive material

In all cases the Parties will liaise closely to ensure that cataloguing work is undertaken according to required conventions, in line with REM's obligations as an Accredited museum.

3.3 Oral histories / Sapper Stories

REM collects oral histories of serving and retired Sappers, and during 2026 will be collaborating with the Royal Engineers Association on their Sapper Stories initiative.

REM will liaise with RE BD/EOD HG to identify and connect with prospective interviewees to ensure this function is represented in the programmes.

3.4 Social media

REM and RE BD/EOD HG will co-develop a strand of social media content to be shared via REM's social media channels during 2026. This will showcase histories of BD/EOD and Search personnel, and raise awareness of RE BD/EOD HG amongst REM's audience.

Parties will liaise on content, and REM will be responsible for the production (filming, photography, editing etc) of posts.

3.5 Online presence

RE BD/EOD HG is working to transform its online presence through a website and searchable Roll of Honour. REM is collaborating with RE charities on a new 'Sapper App' that will be the first point of connection for serving and retired Sappers. REM will ensure RE BD/EOD HG is included and visible in the new app, such as by linking to the new website. Where REM possesses relevant expertise or knowledge, they will support RE BD/EOD HG's progress towards a new website, e.g. by providing informal advice where appropriate.

3.6 Other

Beyond the activities outlined above, the Parties may collaborate on other areas that relate to their shared interests. The Parties agree to mutually endorse each other within their respective networks.

4. Communication

Designated contact persons for communication will be:

- Pete Markham, RE BD EOD History Group lead
- Alex Rose, REM Head Curator

Parties will meet every six months to review progress, in addition to communications relating to specific areas of collaboration.

5. Duration

This MoU commences March 2026 and remains in effect for two years, at which point it will be reviewed so Parties can agree whether to extend the collaboration, and if so, whether and how to amend the MoU. The Parties understand their collaboration may evolve during the two years, and by mutual agreement the MoU may be amended during this period.