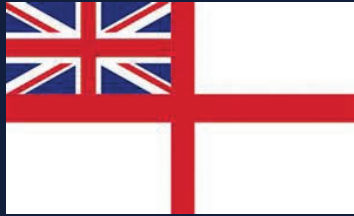


Veterans Funerals

The Armed Forces Covenant

By Rowland Brothers



Royal Navy



British Army



Royal Air Force



Employer
Recognition
Scheme

SILVER AWARD



The Armed Forces Covenant was signed in June 2016 at the start of Armed Forces week.

Front row: Steve Rowland, Colonel Ian McRobbie, Mayor of Croydon Wayne Trakas-Lawlor and Tony Rowland. Committing the Rowland Brothers Group, the only funeral director in the country, to support Veterans and serving members of our Armed Forces and Emergency services.

On November 25th 2019 the Silver Award from the Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme for our continued service to our Armed Forces.

For many years Rowland Brothers have been honouring the Veterans of Croydon in a way which demonstrates how proud we are of the men and women who have signed up and sworn allegiance to the King, in the full knowledge that they may be putting their lives on the line for the United Kingdom, anywhere in the World.

We provide The Union Flag draped over the coffin, a wreath from their parent Regiment or Royal British Legion, Standard Bearers, Last Post and Reveille played and when possible Veterans attending, showing their respect and gratitude. These additional services are carried out, normally at no extra cost to the families.

At Rowland Brothers there is a strong Esprit de Corps owing to the fact that the Rowland family and many other members of staff have served in the Armed Forces. This association with the Veterans in Croydon and within the Rowland Brothers Group makes us proud to be part of The Armed Forces Covenant.

Our Story



Tony's Great Grandfather was Admiral Reed who passed away in 1873. During his illustrious career he mapped the China Sea and was captain of the last sailing warship in the British Royal Navy. Admiral Reed's brother was Sir Edward James Reed, born 20th September 1830 passed away 30th November 1906, KCB, FRS. He was the Chief Constructor of the Royal Navy from 1863 until 1870. His term of office saw the final transition from wooden to ironclad warships. Including HMS Bellerophon HMS Monarch and HMS Devastation. He was a Liberal politician who sat in the House of Commons from 1874 to 1906.

Arthur Rowland (Mutt)

Tony Rowland's father joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1939 when war broke out. He was sent to the Middle East and saw service in El Alamein in 1942. He was demobbed in 1945.



James Rowland (Jim)

Jim joined in 1942 also into the Royal Army Medical Corps. Jim took part in the D-Day landings in 1944 and was also demobbed in 1945.



Tony Rowland Chairman of Rowland Brothers

Tony completed his national service in the Royal Army Ordinance Corps. Tony joined on 21st March 1957 and was demobbed on 19th March 1959. He was posted to Blackdown near Woking where he applied 56 times to serve abroad and ended up in Didcot! Tony was a lance corporal, camp carpenter and for 6 weeks was the regimental drill instructor.



The Veterans at Rowland Brothers

Tony Pearson **Garage Foreman and Conductor** **Royal Corps of Transport**

Tony joined up in 1984 and spent time in the UK, Germany and a tour of duty with UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. He Left in 1988 due to arthritic knees. He went on to be first Borough Military Champion in Croydon and Chair of New Addington Royal British Legion. Tony became the Mayor of Croydon in 2023.



John Rule **Chauffeur/Bearer** **Grenadier Guards**

John joined the Grenadier Guards 1977 as a Junior Guardsman completing one years training before being posted to Chelsea Barracks to provide public duties including Queen's Birthday Parades and Royal Guards. John spent three months in Kenya in 1979 was posted to Münster BAOR in Germany, subsequently spending 4 months in Londonderry and two armoured training tours in Canada.

In 1982 John returned to Chelsea Barracks. He also served 6 months in Cyprus and 6 months in Belize. In 1986, he spent 2 years on an accompanied tour to Northern Ireland. Then in 1988 he went back to Caterham for public duties, finally spending 3 months in Kenya.



Neil Athron
Business Development Manager
Royal Air Force Regiment

Neil joined the Royal Air Force Regiment in 1995 aged 29 and was posted to The Armament Defence Squadron and then onto 63 Field Squadron. Neil completed a tour of the Gulf in 1998/9 Kuwait and Southern Iraq as part of Operation Desert Fox. He is trained in combat infantry warfare. He is paratrooper qualified, gaining Czech and American wings. Neil won top shot in the regiment combat shooting competition then served on The Queens Colour Squadron carrying out public duties as the Buckingham Palace Guard. Neil has also performed at two Royal Tournaments, Remembrance Sunday at the Royal Albert Hall and the International Military Tattoo as part of the famous Queen's Colour Squadron Continuity Drill Team. Neil left the regiment in 2002.



Frankie McCabe
Chauffeur Bearer
Royal Irish Regiment

Frankie joined the Royal Irish Regiment in 2006. Frankie was the Infantry Section Commander completing military exercises worldwide. He completed 3 Combat tours of Afghanistan In Helmand, Sangin, Musa Qala, Nad Ali and Lashkar Gah. 2017/2012 and 2017.

He joined the Reconnaissance platoon in 2010 and completed an operational tour at 1 United Nations, Cyprus and was posted to Batus and Batuk. He conducted various close protection roles both foreign and domestic.

In 2016 Frankie was awarded The Chief of General Staff Commendation. Frankie qualified as a Team Medic, Anti-Tank Weapon Systems, All Arms Drill (instructor), Skill at Arms (instructor), Close Quarter Combat (instructor), Urban Environment Combat (instructor), Close Target Reconnaissance (instructor) and CBRN (instructor).

Frankie left the British Army in 2019 as a Platoon Sergeant.





Harry Humphreys
Chauffeur/Bearer
Royal Green Jackets
Royal Corps of Transport



Harry joined the Royal Green Jackets in 1968 as a junior soldier; he completed P Company in 1970 and gained his jump wings through the All Arms Parachute course. Harry completed two tours of Northern Ireland then rebadged to the Royal Corps of Transport and completed a tour of Cyprus and ended up in Hong Kong. When Harry left the regular forces he joined the London Ambulance Service for 35 years working his way up to Paramedic and Air Ambulance Paramedic. During 1983-1997, Harry was still a member of the Territorial Army and continues to work one day a week in the London Ambulance Service.



Veterans services we have organised and conducted providing the recognition and dignity they deserved.

Royal Navy



A funeral for a Royal Navy and Met Police Veteran. The Gun carriage used was the same one used to carry Lord Mountbatten.



The scattering of the ashes of an ex Royal Navy Wren from the starboard side of the HMS Belfast.

Royal Marine



The funeral of a WWII Royal Marine Veteran. He was sent into action in Norway at the start of the war and returned with many of his comrades dead or injured. He was then sent to Scotland to become one of the first commandos.

Royal Scots Royal Regiment



The Royal Scots Royal Regiment were sent to Burma during WWII and this is the funeral of one the heroes who survived the conflict.

Royal Artillery



A WWII Royal Artillery Veteran was 103. He survived Dunkirk and D Day finishing his service in Germany.



The funeral of a Gunner from the Royal Artillery. He served after the war but sadly passed with no friends beside him. This is never the Rowland Brothers' way for Veterans. The family is large; here the Royal British Legion Bikers escorted the hearse to the Veteran's last resting place.

WWII Special Forces Phantom



A funeral of a Special Forces hero of WWII. He was a Phantom with the Reconnaissance Regiment. He was dropped behind enemy lines three times, France prior to D Day, Arnhem and then Belgium.



Royal Signals



A funeral for a Royal Signals Veteran who was posted to Singapore at the beginning of the war. He was captured by the Japanese within weeks and spent his war working on the Burma Railway, the Bridge over the River Kwai and then was sent to a prison camp in Japan where he was eventually liberated.

Royal Air Force



A Royal Air Force Veteran of World War 2 of 255 Squadron who served in North Africa, Tunisia, Sicily and Malta as a mechanic on Beaufighters and Mosquito night fighters.

Grenadier Guards



The Royal British Legion Riders attended the service of this Grenadier Guard. Sadly, this was another funeral where the Veteran died alone. Over 20 Veteran Guards attended the service and a senior officer read the eulogy.





Utilising our support of the reserve and cadet forces we invited Cadets of 97 Squadron Air Training Corps (Croydon) to provide the guard of honour for a WWII Veteran of the Royal Air Force who served at RAF Kenley and RAF Biggin Hill. They were only too pleased to assist.

The remains of a polish Spitfire pilot which were exhumed and repatriated back to Poland to "be laid to rest under a free Polish sky" this was his last request. This is the ceremonial handover of the pilot's remains to the Queens Colour Squadron of the Royal Air Force Regiment at RAF Northolt who guarded them before being handed over to, and transported by the Polish Air Force under polish ceremonial guard.





A Veteran of The Korean War. Who also served in Japan and in the Suez Crisis. He finished his military career with 16 years' service and the army boxing champion title. His medals were displayed alongside his boxing medals at the head of his coffin.



A young ex-Grenadier Guard. He recently left the Armed Forces and passed away from cancer leaving a wife and children. The serving and ex Guardsmen who attended along with the vast family and friends left no standing room at the chapel.

The late H Division Commander and Deputy Chief of the London Fire Service. The flag at Croydon Fire Station was flown at half-mast; there was a Guard of Honour at the Fire Station where the cortege stopped for respect. Two Fire Brigade Standard Bearers and another Guard of Honour with a Fire Appliance at the chapel all paid their respect.



A hero of the Special Air Service with 35 years' service in 22 SAS. He was initially called up for National Service in 1948 in the Royal Signals. He was sent to the Suez Crisis zone for 18 months. He came out of the Army and worked for his father's company for a short while. He then re-joined the Army against his father's wishes, completed selection and joined 22 SAS. He served in Malaysia, Malay Peninsula, Borneo, Libya, East and West

Germany and Hong Kong. When he retired he spent 15 years as a case worker for SSAFA earning the British Empire Medal to sit alongside his campaign medals. We were honoured to carry out his final journey.





A Veteran of the Royal Artillery, who sadly passed away with not many friends or family. Many turned up to show their respect for this soldier. Veterans, standard bearers and the last post sent him on his way to the final RVP.

A serving Sergeant in the Royal Air Force Reserves. She died in an accident abroad. The Gunners of The Queens Colour Squadron the Ceremonial unit of the Royal Air Force Regiment carried the coffin in full military style.





This soldier was 3 months short of reaching 101 years old when he passed away. He was in the army before the outbreak of WWII and he was in India in the Wiltshire Regiment. Upon the outbreak of war, he was sent to Belgium and was part of the British Expeditionary Force, tasked with stopping the Germans. As we all know this went wrong and he was one of the 350,000 soldiers evacuated from the beaches at Dunkirk. His next action as far as we know was on D-Day in France. D-Day plus a few days he found himself in a two-man trench with his comrade and they had liberated a couple of bottles of beer from a farm house. They drank them and fell asleep. They were woken up with boots running over their trench and a short while later running back. It was a German attack which was stopped and driven back by the British. He ended up in Africa and was separated with his fighting buddy for days. They were out of water and out of food. In military terms, "on their chin straps". They agreed they would hand themselves in to the first patrol that came across them, German or British they didn't care, they were on their last legs. A truck came into view, instincts took over and they dived into a ditch. When the truck came closer it had written on the front. "Next stop Croydon". And out of the cab, a man shouted his name, he was a friend from Croydon before the war. This man had also saved a soldier from another country in the Allied forces and carried him on his back to an aid station. This soldier, later in life, when he was in his 90's tracked him down to say thank you. He was also captured by the Germans, but he managed to escape. He was bayoneted twice, once in the side and once in his arm. He had shrapnel in his body and eventually lost eye at the end of the war in combat. His grandson asked, "how many Germans had he killed?" he replied. "They were pretty good with their bayonets, so I had to use mine and my rifle, so quite a few." As a pensioner he was approached by a youth who tried to rob him. This youth picked on the wrong person. He got a right hook and got away with nothing. His coffin was carried by the next generation of the Armed Forces, Learners from The Military Preparation College of Training.



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