

Joseph Hayes (aged 61) is from Dover. He served in the Royal Artillery between 1967 – 1989.



"It was family tradition to join the Army. I served in 47 Regiment RA 1967 to 1986...and went from gunner rank to BSM. Then served in 45 Regiment RA 1986 1987 as RQMS. From there I joined the British army training team in Swaziland, Africa from 1987 to 1989. I have been all over the world during my Service on active service and exercise, including: Aden (1967), Northern Ireland (4 tours), Sharjah (1969), Hong Kong (1970 to 1973), Belize (1977), Okinawa (1972), Germany (1981 to 1986), Canada (1981 to 1985) and Malaysia jungle warfare (1971).

I also built a troop of drum majorettes from army families, and did displays in a few countries in Europe during my serving time in Germany. I took 4 girls from the troop to meet Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on a Royal Artillery display day.

I have many good lasting memories from being in the Army. I made lots of friends and my Battery web site helps me to keep in touch. I enjoyed the respect that I was given from my comrades, and the respect that I had for them.

The loss of friends and others in death are the lasting sad memories I take from being in the Army.

I have been a civilian since 1989 (I think !! ) but you never accept that change! I suffered a road accident in NI that left me injured and I now suffer with arthritis, hearing problems and PTSD.

I needed support from the Royal British Legion in 2008. As well as giving us good advice and support, they organised help of £300.00 food vouchers, helped pay rent on the caravan we had moved to, helped us out in bankruptcy courts, passed us over to the Legion Housing for help. Quite simply, without the Legion's help, we would not have got through these 3 years without devastating effect on our lives and marriage, thank you.

We are still living in our caravan, but it is my hope to find us a home to live in. I have a big family, with 10 grandchildren and one great grand child!

The Royal British Legion is a wonderful organisation that should be put in the hall of fame alongside the highest charity departments in the world. The staff and thousands of volunteers throughout each county, should be awarded a medal of the highest honour for the tireless time and effort extended to people in need. Thank You.

People of military background, should not need any encouragement, they should support the Legion without question. I would say to those that may not support the Legion, please look at what young lives have fallen, and are still falling in Iraq and Afghanistan, the injuries that have been permanently left with others, and will possibly need help later in their lives. Media reports have brought news, and are still bringing this to the forefront of our homes, more now than it did in other campaigns in the past."