

## James Prescott RE CGM



On the 22nd May, Jim Prescott was one of a two-man team which successfully defused an unexploded bomb on board the badly damaged HMS Argonaut. This action saved the ship which, after repairs, was declared operational again. The next day they worked aboard HMS Antelope on two more unexploded bombs, one of which was in a highly dangerous condition. It blew up while being defused, killing Jim. The ship then caught fire and was abandoned. That night she blew up and sank, just off Ajax Bay.

**MONDAY, 11th OCTOBER 1982**

The QUEEN has been graciously pleased to approve the Posthumous award of the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal to the undermentioned in recognition of gallant and distinguished service during the operations in the South Atlantic:

### **Conspicuous Gallantry Medal**

**23834301 Staff Sergeant James PRESCOTT, Corps of Royal Engineers**

On 22nd May 1982 Staff Sergeant Prescott under the command of another NCO of 49 Engineer Explosives Disposal Squadron Royal Engineers were carrying out explosive ordnance disposal duties in the Falkland Islands. They were tasked to deal with an unexploded bomb in the boiler room of HMS ARGONAUT. Another unexploded bomb lay in a flooded missile magazine nearby. Working in extraordinarily cramped conditions and in very unfamiliar surroundings Staff Sergeant Prescott and the other NCO successfully remotely rendered safe the bomb which was later removed from the ship. This action enabled the damage to the boiler room to be repaired, so that HMS ARGONAUT regained propulsion and was able to manoeuvre defensively in further air attacks.

On 23rd May 1982 Staff Sergeant Prescott and the NCO were tasked to neutralise two unexploded bombs in HMS ANTELOPE. The first bomb examined could not be

approached until extensive clearance of debris had taken place. They therefore set about rendering safe thesecond bomb which was situated near the center of the ship. The bomb had been slightly damaged and was assessed as being in a dangerous condition. They tried three times to render the bomb safe using a remote method, having to approach the bomb after each attempt to adjust the equipment, but on each occasion, the fuse could not be withdrawn. After a fourth attempt, which involved using a small charge, the bomb unexpectedly exploded. The blast was considerable.

Despite a blast route of open doors and hatches up through the ship, the fully clipped steel door at the forward end of the passageway, where the bomb disposal team was standing, was completely blow offand nearly bent double. Staff Sergeant Prescott died instantly.

THE FATEFUL MOMENT ON THE 23<sup>RD</sup> MAY 1982  
WHEN WE LOST A BRAVE MAN



HMS Antelope



SSgt James Prescott CGM RE  
Beachley Old Boy  
60C A Coy