

In Remembrance: **Stephen “Darby” Allan**

Stephen “Darby” Allan, a Technical Field Manager with Mines Advisory Group, died on 15 October 2010, following an explosion in which he was critically injured. The explosion took place around noon as Darby was doing mine-clearance work at a site near Kapoeta, in Southern Sudan. He died a few hours later. Darby is survived by his wife, Karen, and his children, Sarah and David.

A British national from Portsmouth, Darby Allan began his mine-action career doing underwater and shoreline mine clearance as a diver in the Royal Navy. In 2002, he began working as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Specialist and Trainer at the Defence EOD School on Horsea Island. A year later he was promoted to Chief Instructor for the Royal Navy Clearance Diving Officers, a position he held until he joined MAG in 2006.

Darby worked as a Technical Field Manager for MAG for nearly four years, moving from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Lebanon and finally to Sudan in September 2009. MAG estimates that the land Darby helped clear around Kapoeta, will benefit more than 7,000 people in the area who are now able to grow crops, build schools and raise telephone masts. The town’s market, a vital source of trade for the region, has also been built on land cleared by MAG teams.

During a celebration of Darby’s life, Lou McGrath, OBE, MAG’s Chief Executive, said, “He took pride in reducing the risks communities faced [He]



Darby Allan in a MAG vehicle with his son David during the MAG project they worked together on in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2008.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ALLAN FAMILY

did not have to be in Sudan; he chose to be. He was a true humanitarian who believed in making a difference, and the world will be a lesser place without him.”

Darby Allan’s family, friends and coworkers paid tribute to his life and work as well. Lieutenant Commander Mick Beale, who knew Darby from their time together at Horsea Island, praised him as “a hugely experienced diver” and “an inspiration and a true legend in the diving branch. He was a big man with a big heart who could always be relied on to get the job done with no fuss,” he said. Andy Glesson,

a member of MAG’s technical staff who worked closely with Darby in Lebanon, called him “a great team member with a dry humor [and] a dependable, affable technician who managed several clearance teams with skill and determination.” Finally, Darby’s wife Karen said, “He was a gritty, humorous man who commanded friendship and respect from colleagues and friends, a person who was not just larger than life but was, in fact, life. We are proud to say we were part of that life and it was a great, great adventure. Thank you for the adventure.” ♦