



## Military Survey (Geographic) Branch Royal Engineers Association



### NEWSLETTER No 30 (Summer AGM 2008)

**AGM AND REUNION 2008**  
**Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2008**

#### Outline of Events

**1430 hrs – 1600 hrs AGM Registrations in the HQ Conference Room**

All Committee Members will be in attendance for general enquiries and the Webmaster will be demonstrating features of our Website. You will be able to view the photo albums and. **PLEASE BRING YOUR OLD PHOTOS AS THE WEB MASTER WILL TRY TO SCAN THEM DURING AND PRIOR TO THE AGM.**

**1500 hrs- 1600 hrs Tea (HQ Conference Room & Conservatory)**

**1530 hrs- 1830 hrs Member's Guests Visit the Mayor of Newbury**

Guests (wives and partners) have been invited to the Newbury Council Chambers where the Mayor of Newbury will give a brief talk on the history of the Mayor's position and provide light refreshments. Transport will be provided from Hermitage to Newbury and back.

**1600 hrs- 1700 hrs Mil Svy (Geo) AGM in the HQ Theatre**

The Branch President will then convene the AGM and invite the Chairman to review the past year and to conduct the official business required from the AGM. To speed up proceedings, the minutes of the 2007 AGM and the TORs will not be read (they are available on the Branch web site and there will be printed copies will be available at the AGM).

**1730 hrs – 1815 hrs An Update on Current RE (Geo) Operations and Training**

Much of the Regiment has been on operational tours for most of the last 12 months and there have been significant other organisational and trade changes during the same period. We have therefore asked the Commander and his staff to give their Annual Review and Operational brief to us.

**1815 hrs – 1830 hrs Presentation of the Branch Annual Award in the HQ Theatre**

At your request the President will then present the Branch Annual Award to the 2008 deserving Junior Rank.

**1900 hrs- late Curry Supper and Games Night – REA v WO & Sgts' Mess  
(In the WO & Sgts' Mess by kind permission of the RSM)**

*Having lost last year but all thoroughly enjoyed it, this Games Night is a must attend and must win event for the Military Survey (Geo) REA. Games will be suitable for our older members and all guests. During the evening we will also enjoy a traditional Mess Curry Supper with all the trimmings (and a vegetarian option for those not partial to curry)!!*

**A SAD FAREWELL TO TWO  
COMMITTEE MEMBER FAREWELLS  
(WITH SILVER LININGS)**

**By Chris Dorman, Chairman**

Our committee has two co-opted members, one representing the serving military (normally the RSM) and one representing the civilian staff at Feltham (often military or ex-military). Sadly, both of these individuals complete their "tour of duty" on the committee this summer.

WO1 (RSM) Rob Meakins took up his post on the committee and immediately had us all "on parade" in jacket and ties to ensure we met his high standards. Throughout his time with us he has always ensured we kept the serving soldiers in our minds coming up with novel and appropriate ways for us to support them financially, chivvying the Squadrons to produce the right candidates for our "Deserving Sapper" award and providing us with a real insight to the goings on at Hermitage and the wider military geo community.

Rod Siggs has been the Civilian Staff rep on our committee for longer than I can remember. He brought his questioning mind to our meetings, kept us briefed on the dramatic changes at Feltham but also brought his wealth of experience and knowledge as a former soldier, officer and (soon to be) former civil servant.

We will sorely miss both but they go on to greater things (the silver lining in my title).

WO1 (RSM) Meakins "retires" as RSM but is to be reborn as an officer (after the appropriate operation). Rod Siggs "retires" for the third time and assures me he now plans to relax.

We on the committee, and I am sure all of you, thank them for their hard work and wish them well in their respective futures.

**In Memoriam**

It is with great regret that we announce the deaths of the following members.

**BILL CHAPMAN**

Bill Chapman died on Tuesday the 17<sup>th</sup> of June in Windsor.

Bill joined 60B Intake at Chepstow and after training his successful career as a cartographic technician culminated in retiring as a WO1. After leaving the service he became the cartographer to the Royal Estates. The funeral was held in the Royal Chapel at Windsor on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> of June with the Branch Standard and many old friends in attendance.

**John Stevens**

John Stevens peacefully passed away at his daughter's home on Wednesday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July.

John served as an air surveyor achieving the rank of WO1 before being commissioned into the Royal Army Pay Corps.

He was a keen member of the REA and was for many years treasurer of the Reading and West Berks branch.

## A PLEA FROM THE SECRETARY

A number of members have not received recent newsletters so please let the secretary know if you change either your email or postal address. Also, let him know if you go online so that you can receive the newsletter in electronic form thus saving the branch money.

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### Dates for the diary

27-29 June Aldershot/Minley Weekend

05 July Chatham Veterans Day

### 30 August Branch AGM

19-21 Sept Corps Memorial Weekend

11 October REA AGM and Annual Dinner

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## THE SEARCH FOR A NEW CHAIRMAN

Key committee posts are meant to have a three-year tenure and then a host of new volunteers fight to be elected to take their place. After four years, our current chairman has certainly now done his fair share and so the committee has been quietly canvassing likely candidates but most politely declined due to pressure of work and other commitments. However, one member has volunteered to stand and that is Angus Cross whose brief biography follows:

Angus Cross retired from the Army in September 2006 after 33 years service in the Corps. After the normal young officer's start to his career he joined Military Survey

in 1981; tours in BAOR, HQ UKLF, Feltham, Hermitage and the Balkans followed. His final few tours included three years as the Chief Instructor, a short tour in Brussels with the EU where he was able to sample many of Belgium's fine beers but clearly not enough before he was recalled to command the Group in 2002. His final tour was as Regimental Colonel for the Corps where he had responsibilities for the REA amongst many other things.

The most enjoyable and rewarding times throughout his service have undoubtedly been when serving with soldiers and on operations. The tour as Regt Col gave him an excellent insight into the value of the REA be it welfare, keeping an all informed net or indeed just having a damned good party now and again!

The election of a new chairman by you will take place at the AGM at Hermitage on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August. So far Angus is the only candidate. Other volunteers are of course welcome to offer their services.



## Treasurer's Input – June 2008

### Subscriptions

Subs income received so far in 2008 is £2224 from 278 members. £120 is still owed by 15 members who should pay but have not as yet. The Treasurer and Secretary will be contacting debtors from the end of June.

Most people pay by standing order which makes administration more straightforward. I make my perennial plea for all members to adopt this convenient means of paying!

### Accounts

Currently the bank statements stand as follows:

Current Account     £ 485.21  
Reserve Account    £6623.16  
RE GEO Support Fund £ 613.00

The accounts are in a healthy state. Members should be aware that while most income has been received, almost all expenditure takes place later in the year. Account information is available for inspection in the Military Survey website under Members' Pages. Of particular interest may be 'Audited Accounts 2007', and the latest Budget Forecast and Worth Statement.

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## INDONESIAN CONFRONTATION

Readers, particularly those who served in 84 Squadron in the 1960s, might be interested to learn that Pen and Sword have published a book on the 4-year long war with Indonesia. Entitled "*Confrontation: The War with Indonesia 1962 – 1966*" it is written by Nick van der Bijl, who was in the Intelligence Corps, and is illustrated with maps drawn by Peter Wood.

### News from the Military Front

### RSM's Column

And so, unbelievably I begin to write my final newsletter submission as the RSM of 42 Engr Regt (Geo). The past 2 years have passed so quickly but the short time has been filled with many happy memories and very few regrets. In the time I have been here I have seen 3 different Adjutants, 2 Commanders, 2 Engineers-in-Chief, the geo trades reduce from 3 to 1, both the Warrant Officers' & Sergeants' Mess and life in 13 Geo Sqn improve dramatically, and many good men promoted. It has been a fulfilling experience but over far too quickly. That said, I know that I hand over the reins to a very capable man in the shape of WO1 (RSM) Alan Beeton. I have no doubt he will build upon where we currently are and improve areas where necessary. As I leave, the study continues into the potential move of the Regiment to Wyton and the RSMS to Chicksands. There will be no decision taken until the autumn/winter of this year so don't believe everything you hear or read. Until then, "Carry on normal jogging!" Regardless, what will be, will be, and as always - we will adapt to the situation.

### Operations and Training

The Regiment/Station continues to support the normal theatres of operation with approximately 26 personnel deployed. The main focus continues to be centred on Afghanistan. I am sure many readers will clearly remember working in formation headquarters in the past, either at 1 (BR) Corps or a Div HQ. However, today things are slightly different in that Defence has finally started to understand the capabilities and advantages of geo support and, as a consequence, our soldiers are now being routinely utilised within Battlegroup

headquarters. This is an area where I personally feel support has been lacking in the past and it is refreshing to see the progression. Certainly the young soldiers enjoy the experience of working at the tactical level and they return to Hermitage with extremely valuable experience. As ever though, the Regiment continues to have teams stood by ready to deploy at short notice in support of counter-terrorism and other contingencies worldwide.

### 13 Geographic Squadron

After weeks of preparation, 13 Geo Sqn has deployed to St. Helier in Jersey for a three-week technical training exercise. The men have been made extremely welcome and were met by some excitable islanders with numerous offers of assistance. Having not long returned from visiting the Sqn, I can report that morale is very high and the men are producing some fine products. The technical tasks include a new geodetic survey of the island, a survey of the reef some 10 miles out to sea (with the invaluable assistance of 17 Port and Maritime) and a survey of the WW2 tunnels (including the German hospital). Additionally they are participating in the island's 48-mile charity walk where they will be raising money for the ABF and Help for Heroes. The pace of life does not slow down when they return as the Sqn soon deploys to Dartmoor to conduct a live firing package in order to hone their soldiering skills. All in all, a busy time in 13.

### 14 Geographic Squadron

Once again, 14 Geo Sqn have planned and delivered a fine Staff Ride (Battlefield Tour). This year the study was in to Op MARKET GARDEN (both the airborne phase and the armoured advance) and also Op PLUNDER

specifically looking at Rhine crossings around the town of Rees. The exercise culminated with a wreath laying ceremony at the Reichswald Cemetery and the Regiment paying its respects to all those who lay there. Other highlights included an 8 mile bicycle ride from the Wolfheze DZ all the way to the bridge at Arnhem, a tour around the Hartenstein Hotel (used by both the Germans and the British as a headquarters) and also an excellent talk by the Oosterbeek vicar in his church next door to Kate Ter Horst's house who is also a personal friend of the family. The whole exercise was rounded off with an inter-squadron sports event and a few beers before returning to barracks. However, it was clear to see that everyone had enjoyed the exercise and, more importantly, everyone had been involved in the study from sapper to CO.

### 16 Geographic Support Squadron

16 Geo Sp Sqn have been instrumental in the delivery of the Regiment's three-week Command and Leadership course (although the content was lovingly put together by me). The aim of the course was to qualify Sprs for promotion to LCpl in the current promotion year as the Corps' past policy was that JNCO Cadre courses were desirable but not mandatory. This has literally just changed and now JNCO Cadres are mandatory for substantive promotion. The course started with 39 students and finished with 35, so thankfully only a few men dropped out. The course combined the traditional military skills required in a Sect 2IC with a testing expedition week in Snowdonia. Whilst at the time nobody would admit to enjoying the course, all (including the DS) were relieved to see the end which culminated in a Course Dinner in the newly formed Cpls' Mess.



## 135 (Indep) Geographic Squadron RE (V)

135 (Indep) Geo Sqn have been as busy as ever providing manpower for operations and conducting mandatory annual training tests. Additionally MHE training has continued in earnest and they entered the Corps Operational Shooting Competition (CORPSOSC which was formerly known as CORPSAAM) where the Sqn team enjoyed varying degrees of success.

## Royal School of Military Survey

Following the restructure of the RSMS, work has continued to produce first-rate geographic engineers for the field army. Currently, the RSMS instructors are taking a well-earned break from the students with a weeklong adventurous training exercise in Cornwall. The students meanwhile are taking a well-earned break from the instructors with a week's leave!

## Sporting Activities

A very quiet sporting period although the football team has gained promotion to the First Division after an outstanding season. Cpl Griffiths and Spr Culley represented the (regular) Regt at CORPSOSC where Cpl Griffiths was crowned Champion Rifle and Champion Pistol and was placed 1<sup>st</sup> overall in the Corps, and Spr Culley gained Champion Rifle B Class (less than 5 years service) and was placed 3<sup>rd</sup> overall in the Corps, also gaining his Corps Colours. The Regt also participated at the RE Games in Chatham where it finished 8<sup>th</sup> out of 18 units and was the highest placed Minor Unit, with a first place in Orienteering and a second in Rugby League.

## Postings and Promotions

Promotions boards have continued to roll out with the Cpl-Sgt result. Those selected were:

Cpls **Ashcroft, Ball, Fife, Lea, Maruta, Moseley, Routledge, Sidwell, Tinckham, Valley** (QM's Dept), **Ward** and **White** (Sigs Wing).

As always, many congratulations to them all and I wish them every success in their move to the Warrant Officers' & Sergeants' Mess wherever they may serve.

Finally to close, it probably is also somewhat appropriate that as I move on, the CO is also handing over; Lt Col Rupert Dash is literally conducting his handover to Lt Col Graham Livesey as I type. They are swapping jobs which will see Lt Col Dash moving to Main Building in Whitehall and Lt Col Livesey escaping the City to take up post as CO with effect 20 June 2008. I wish them both well in their new appointments. With that I draw to a close. It has been an absolute privilege to have served as the RSM in the same Regiment in which my career first started over 20 years ago. I have greatly enjoyed my liaison with the REA (especially the AGM and associated activities!) and my absolute best wishes to you all for the future.

**'Once a Sapper, always a Sapper'!**

*Rob Meakins*

WO1 (RSM) RE, Hermitage

## News from the Civilian Front

### Green Initiative(s) continue –

As previously reported, in May 2007 the Defence Geographic Centre (DGC) launched Phase 2 of the Green Initiative, the Energy Campaign. The aim was to significantly reduce energy consumption and to minimise the carbon footprint. A previous newsletter announced that the overall electrical consumption across the site fell by 6% in 2007, compared to the previous year. But now as a result of a number of energy saving initiatives, electricity consumption has dropped by a very impressive **45%** in the first 4 months of 2008, compared to the same period last year.

The major contribution to this saving has been the installation of power factor correction equipment in Hotine Building. This improves electrical efficiency by reducing electricity consumption without compromising equipment performance. We have also embarked on a programme to fit light sensors in communal areas and additional heating controls and timers on hot water boilers.

The Carbon Trust has completed a study into the feasibility of installing a Combined Cooling, Heating and Power (CCHP) plant at Feltham. This system will generate electricity on site and the generated heat from this process can then be used for heating and cooling other rooms/buildings. This has great potential for further reducing the energy used, in particular, by Hotine Building. As a first step the Defence Estates have been tasked with examining the feasibility of installing a

micro CCHP in Jervis Building. These energy saving measures mentioned above have been initiated by Estate Management as part of the Minor New Works programme. But DGC continues to stress the importance that all individuals contribute to further savings by following the basic rules of conservation: "If it is not need turn it off."

### New Commander for ICG –

It has just been announced that Brig David Potts MBE (Late RA) Commander Intelligence Collection Group (of which JAGO, DGC and JARIC comprise the business units) will depart his office during October 2008, to take up the new post of Deputy Director C2 HQ Multi-National Force Iraq.

### Sports Relief Mile –

Staff at DGC were coerced into taking part or supporting the efforts of a number of staff that undertook the Sports Relief Mile around the sports pitches and as a consequence raised a creditable sum of £726.00 for the charity.

### MOD MACD's Top Sportsman –

Cpl Daryl Ball, currently on the staff of the MOD Map & Air Chart Depot, scored a very good try which contributed towards the Army overcoming the Navy 22 -11, in the annual fixture to decide the Service Rugby Champions. The match was played at the home of English rugby –Twickenham, in May. Daryl also won the Babcock Trophy for the man of the match award.

Daryl also represents the Combined Services at lock, maintaining a fine tradition of Military (Geo) Surveyors representing the Services at sport.

## FGSSA Retired Staff Reunion –

Fun started at 12 noon on Fri 13 Jun 08, when the Feltham Garrison Sports & Social Association (FGSSA) held the annual ‘old boys’ reunion. A total of 148 retired staff and their partners attended the event which was blessed with fine weather. The now almost customary current staff “Picnic in the Park” allows the whole afternoon to get off to a really good start, enabling those still serving and their old work colleagues to catch up in a very relaxed, enjoyable atmosphere.

This year the FGSSA had organised an inflatable bungee run and an adult bouncy castle, various stalls, displays and sports, in addition to the buffet for all retired staff and a BBQ for those still hungry or who didn’t participate in the picnic.

## Jane’s Defence Weekly –

Many of you will be aware that Jane’s produces many types of specialist magazines, one of the first ever produced was Jane’s book of aircraft (please excuse me if that title is not precise). Jane’s also produce the Defence Weekly which like many of the other Jane’s titles is world renown for its accuracy of fact and portrayal of Defence situation awareness and information. But it is only one of 11 different Jane’s titles that DGC takes which form a very small part of approximately

150 different magazines and periodicals which are all circulated around DGC staff. This process takes many months to complete and therefore something of real value can be easily depreciated through a lack of timeliness.

Now DGC has access to the Jane’s website and more than 170 different staff have accounts allowing direct access with the ability to set up “alerts” so that the instant any new information is put on the website, it lands at their desk. This is proving an invaluable tool as it brings together 10 Jane’s products covering defence and security news and analysis, providing a comprehensive picture of the current global situation in one place.

## Farewell...

This is my last offering to the Newsletter as I am taking retirement at the ripe old age of 60, so I just wish to say, “Cheerio and good health and good luck to you all.” No doubt I shall still catch up with many of you at the AGM.

As I write my replacement has not been firmed up although I understand there is a name in the frame so like you I await with interest to see who my successor will be.

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## Museum of Mapping

Branch member David Stevenson is currently studying for an MSC and has to do his dissertation of the idea of a Museum of Mapping. He gave a short presentation at the recent seminar on historic military mapping at Hermitage, pointing out that many countries have such an institution but we have not. He asked attendees to fill in a questionnaire to provide input to his studies. Please contact the editor if you would like to help David by completing the questionnaire.



**NEWSLETTER DATES**

We will aim to produce four issues each year based roughly on the seasons as follows:

<b>Edition</b>	<b>Dates for Input</b>	<b>Published</b>
New Year	By 1 <sup>st</sup> January	Mid to end January
Spring	By 1 <sup>st</sup> April	Mid to end April
Summer	By 15 June	Early July
Autumn	By 1 <sup>st</sup> October	Mid to end October

Input from members is vital to ensure that the Newsletter is kept vibrant and interesting hence – please let the editor have any snippets that you think might be of interest; anecdotes, information, ‘where are they now’, etc. If you are not in position to provide word-processed documents – no problem, just post your hand written into to the editor who is happy to type it.

**Summary of Web Site Contacts**

**REA**

<http://www.reahq.org.uk>

**RE Forum**

<http://www.royalengineersforums.co.uk>

**Geo-Branch Website**

<http://survey-branch-rea.co.uk>

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**MIL SVY (GEO) REA**  
**REUNION, AGM, GAMES NIGHT & CURRY SUPPER**  
**SATURDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2008**

(Printed copies are a double sided A4 Yellow Sheets - Electronic copies are 2 xA4 Sheets)

**Please reply before 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2008 (See also Page 2 or Overleaf)**

**Please send returns to:** E-Mail (REGRETS ONLY): [chrisdorman@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:chrisdorman@hotmail.co.uk)

OR by post (with cheque): Chris Dorman  
3 Town Well End  
Fritwell, OXON  
OX27 7QD

From: Surname: ..... Forename: .....  
(Tick one) Member: ..... New Applicant: .....  
Tel No: ..... Address: .....  
E Mail: .....

Car Type & Make: ..... Car Registration No: .....

I **will / will not** (please delete one) attend the AGM.

My partner **will / will not** (please delete one) visit the Mayor of Newbury

I **will / will not** (please delete one) attend the Games Night & Curry Supper.

(Note that there will be an alternative veggie option for those who would like it)

I will bring the following guests:- (please list) **Mayor Visit** **Curry Games**

Surname .....	Forename .....	Y / N	Y / N
Surname .....	Forename .....	Y / N	Y / N
Surname .....	Forename .....	Y / N	Y / N

Attending the AGM .....	persons @ £2 per person	£.....
Attending the Curry Supper .....	persons @ £8 per person	£.....
PLUS unpaid subscriptions for old or new members (£8 per year)		£.....
PLUS a voluntary donation to the JAGO Support Fund		£.....
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£.....</b>

I enclose a cheque for £..... (Payable to: - **Military Survey Branch, REA**)

Please indicate if you are content for any excess monies to be donated to our 'Geographic Engineer Group Support Fund'. **Yes I am content .....** (please tick).

If you have any questions please ring Chris Dorman on 01869-345355 (noting that unfortunately he will be away much of the time until 16th August).

