



Military Survey (Geographic) Branch Royal Engineers Association



Newsletter No 38 Autumn 2010

Chairman's Report 2010

As you all know we held our annual get together and AGM on Saturday 4th September at Hermitage. This was not one of our bigger events and whilst the turnout reflected that, those that did attend had a thoroughly good time.

The business end of the day was preceded as always by some excellent briefings from the Commander and his operations staff and then a practical demonstration of the latest technology by the RSMS Imagery Department. The latter was a fascinating insight into the latest application and use of digital data and members lingered much longer than planned and had to be literally torn away; a great thank you must go to QMSI GE Wing for this insight into the present and future applications of digital data.

There followed the AGM and the agenda took us through the normal areas that we are obliged to cover but was then enlivened by a proposal from Ron Birch, in absentia sadly, that a wreath be provided at member's funerals. After much discussion the AGM decided that our current honouring of old comrades would continue to be through the provision of the Standard where requested and available. If the Standard cannot be made available then we would offer, if time allowed and relatives wished it a wreath or garland of flowers in its stead.

This was followed by a proposal, again in absentia, from Mike Payne for a donation from our funds to the REA Central Fund again, this point was discussed at length but eventually it was rejected, unanimously, in favour of only using our funds to directly support the Geo community.



The meeting ended by bidding farewell to two long standing members of the committee, Ken Hall the Secretary and John Elder, our President.

The main business of the day followed, this was the social and barbecue in the Sergeants' Mess. My thanks go to; Mike Perry who yet again organised the event, the unit which supported us so extremely well and the staff in the mess who looked after us during the evening. I would add that about 50 of us turned up this year but what really makes these things worthwhile is having a good response. My plea for next year is don't regard this as an AGM, that's purely a necessary bit of evil, but think of it as a reunion and an opportunity to meet up with old friends and swing the lamp.

Angus Cross

President's Piece

Another AGM and get together has gone by. It was a very pleasant occasion and I want to thank again, Mick Perry for all the leg work and the Regiment at Hermitage for keeping us up to date on current operations and for their hospitality. It is easy to say, but their welcome helps us to feel a part of the Military Survey family.

We have said goodbye to some old comrades who have died this year. Of course it is sad but it is good that we remember and reminisce about them at our annual meeting as well as at other formal occasions such as Remembrance Sunday.

We have a lively, inventive Branch committee and we need people to join the committee to keep it that way. Can I make my post-AGM appeal for people to join the committee. In particular we are looking for a Treasurer to take over from Mick Gowlett and an event co-ordinator to replace Mick Perry. Do think about volunteering; it gives you a chance to keep abreast of what is going on in Geo and it is quite fun.

I have been delighted to be more closely involved in the Branch from early 2007. In the last 3+ years, your committee, endorsed by you, has moved forward in continuing to provide a lively newsletter and developing the website. Do continue to contribute to the Newsletter and make use of the website. The Geo Support Fund is much appreciated by the serving soldiers and their families. The sponsorship of unit sports is likewise valued and keeps the Branch flag flying at Hermitage. We continue to parade the Branch Standard on occasions and we are grateful to the standard bearers.

One of the pleasures of the being part of the Branch is the chance to present an annual Branch award to the junior rank of 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) who carries out his duties in a spirit of good fellowship. I have always been impressed by the quality of the recipients. We can be confident that today's young soldiers are well able to maintain the heritage and tradition of the Corps in general and Military Survey (Geographic) in particular

After nearly four years it is time for a change. Bob Avenall is taking over as President. You'll find a short biography of Bob elsewhere in the Newsletter. I will continue to cheer our serving soldiers loudly, albeit from the touchline. I hope to see many of you at next year's AGM and reunion.

John Elder
Wellington, Somerset

Branch Committee 2010/2011

President: Bob Avenall
Chairman: Angus Cross
Secretary: Rod Siggs
Treasurer: Mike Gowlett
Welfare: Noel Grimmett
Webmaster: Dave Johnson
Newsletter Editor: Alan Gordon
Event Co-ordinator: Vacant

Military Representative: WO1 (RSM) Alfie Conetta
Civilian Representative: Pete Dowell

Auditor: Chris Nash

An Afternoon At Hermitage

On a sunny Saturday the 4th of September members travelled from near and far – West Wales, Lincoln, Devon - although Rab Martin beat them all by travelling from Canada - to meet up with old friends, swap stories not only of Zyyi, Aden and the like but also of hip and knee replacements. Oh...and also to attend this year's AGM!



Pete Redfern, Graham Abernethy, Albie Field, Terry Evans and Dai Marchant enjoying a lunchtime pint.

Early arrivals headed as ever to the Sergeants' Mess and spent a pleasant hour or so on the patio nursing a pint in the sunshine. Mick Perry then efficiently rounded us up (after all - he had once been an SSM) and we headed for the conference room to start the afternoon's activities – initially meeting more old friends with more 'how are you keeping?' chats but this time backed up by much browsing of photo albums containing photos of vaguely familiar young men! There were enough elderly air surveyors to put on two Multiplex shifts!

We then had a short update from the Commander, Colonel John Kedar, which highlighted the potential financial impacts of the forthcoming Strategic Defence Review and gave 2014 as the planned dates for the move of the Regiment to Wyton and the School to Chicksands. There then followed an operations briefing by WO2 Mark Keiras which stressed how Geo posts in Afghanistan had increased by 50% over the last year so that now 25% of the deployable strength of the Regiment, some 40 officers and soldiers, are in theatre with the remainder either training to go next or taking part in exercises to train those going – very busy times indeed for 42.

Next it was time for the presentation of our 'Deserving Sapper' award which this year went to Spr Noton of 13 Squadron. The winner is currently deployed on operations in Afghanistan and so the Branch President, John Elder, presented the award to the winner's mother, Mrs Jan Cording.

Then we were off to Building 6, once known to those present as the Air/Caro Wing were to RSMS instructors, SSgt Ellis and Sgt Maruta, wowed us with a display of satellite stereo imagery of the Kajaki Dam area in Afghanistan projected onto a very large wall screen and the amazing range of visualisation products that can be derived from it and other data. Imagery has come a long way since F49 Mark 2 photos were all that was available.

More tea, biscuits and reminiscences and then ...the AGM....details already given in the Chairman's report in this newsletter. The afternoon ended with a group photo and then some left for home and others again headed for the Sergeants' Mess and the evening entertainment.



An Evening At Hermitage

Another occasion to get together and reminisce that was sadly missed by so many but it was still a Reunion to remember. After the very enjoyable afternoon already described, the wonderful late summer's day continued well into the evening which was pleasingly enhanced by a subtle billowing of aromatic smoke from the barbeque stand and what a feast to contemplate it was too. But time was in hand to chew the cud and reconnect with old and even older contemporaries and the bar was soon busy serving the best priced beer in Berkshire and those memories soon started to flood back as the evening progressed.

Food was soon served with a vast range of meats and salads to be followed by an array of cakes and puddings "to die for" as the lady next to me said, "literally drooling", as she watched them arrive! And so the evening progressed and got better as the stories got bolder and eventually degenerated into that realm of fantasy that I am sure we all recognise only too well. Transport left for the local hotels at a reasonable hour leaving the hard core of the Chairman and his "acolytes" to while away their time at the bar with another drink or two! Those absent missed a great evening which a splattering of new faces described as an evening to remember and one to which they promise to return to next year.

As ever it is my duty – nay pleasure, to once again thank the RSM for the use of his Mess and for all his efforts in ensuring another successful event. But let us not forget the Mess manager and his staff, the cooks, bar staff and Mess members for their contribution to the success of the event. They all put in a lot of hard work this and their enthusiasm ensured the evening was a great success. Lastly I must thank SSgt Simon Wallace, the RSM's right hand and my left hand helper for all his efforts in the weeks leading up to the reunion and even more so for abstaining from drinking on the night so that he could act as our taxi driver for the evening! I am sure we will all want to wish him well as he settles into his new post in Afghanistan.

Mick Perry

FAREWELL TO JOHN ELDER

The AGM was the end of John Elder's tenure in the post of President, a role which he has happily filled for the past three or so years. John was a very willing volunteer and ardent supporter of our cause and has done much for the branch during his time in post.

The role of the President is mainly one of a guiding hand where sage advice and subtle nudges are more important than lots of action and John has carried this off with an extraordinary amount of panache.

I can say without doubt that both Chris Dorman, my predecessor, and I have appreciated John's presence and Presidential advice during our time as chairman. He has the flair of being able to steer the committee back on to the tracks as we meander off the subject in hand whilst also ensuring that the decisions arrived at are for the greater good of the whole of our community.

John has a very busy and prominent place in his local neighbourhood as well as at Wellington School and he felt that his burgeoning roll there was detracting from his Presidential activities and that he could no longer give to our branch the time or the justice he felt it deserved. Thus, sadly, with a willing replacement available he was able to stand down with a clear conscience and hand the branch on to Bob Avenall at the end of the AGM.

I wish both John and Jess well for the future and look forward to seeing them both at future events.

Angus Cross

Branch Award 2010: Sapper Noton

The Branch award is for the 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) junior rank that, in the opinion of the Commanding Officer, has best carried out their duties in the spirit of good fellowship.

Spr Noton has been continually relied upon to perform above his rank, with no financial reward, on various exercises and in barracks and has never failed to demonstrate enthusiasm and determination and to provide leadership, despite personal adversity and commitments and has never failed to enthuse others whilst giving his best.

Providing leadership to your peers is difficult. Due to manning shortages, 13 Geographic Squadron fielded Sections, which included only 1 JNCO, into the Regimental Section Competition. Spr Noton, due to his maturity, enthusiasm and determination, was appointed 2IC of one of the Sections. As the Section Commander was not available prior to the competition, he effectively prepared the Section prior to deployment. At the start of the competition, the Section Commander was evacuated due to medical reasons and Spr Noton was nominated to take his place. His drive and sense of duty ensured a close-knit team and enabled the Section of Sappers to finish a commendable 5th position out of 8 sections. He was also assigned to mentor newly assigned Sappers on the Regimental technical exercise due to his maturity and potential. He immediately took responsibility and capably and enthusiastically guided the new arrivals through their first exercise.

The shortage of JNCOs also affects 'in-barracks' activities as well as exercises. Hence, Spr Noton was assigned as the Troop G1098 Storeman, an appointment normally undertaken by a JNCO. He undertook his duties conscientiously, identifying various issues and addressing each honestly and with confidence.

Detached to the Joint Service Signals Unit for four months, he quickly familiarized himself with his responsibilities and contributed significantly. Described as *"very much a team player who impressed the various desk supervisors"*, he thought nothing of working outside his core hours to ensure that front-line assets received the best geographic support available. Despite his relatively junior status, he was able to confidently brief senior military and civilian visitors, conveying the importance of the technical support his position delivered.

Spr Noton's contribution has extended to the sports pitches. He has represented the Regiment at rugby and captained the victorious Squadron football team in the Regimental sports competition. Indeed, there is no better example of his ability to enthuse and inspire his peers than this; with minimal 'Regimental' footballers, 13 Squadron relied on a team ethic, which was in no small way engendered by Spr Noton.

His achievement must be put in context. Over the past year Spr Noton had difficult personal circumstances to contend with as well as his wife giving birth to their first child. In March 2010 he was warned for deployment on operations and is currently serving in Afghanistan. None of this has affected his dedication and professionalism.

Spr Noton's enthusiasm, determination and conscientiousness have contributed significantly to 13 Geographic Squadron being able to cope with a severe lack of JNCOs. He has set the example and proven an inspiration to his peers with his unswerving dedication in extremely testing circumstances.

John Elder presents the award to Mrs Jan Cording, the award winner's mother, as he is currently on operations in Afghanistan.



New President – Bob Avenell



I share a common military background with Mick Perry and Chris Cleeton, having joined the Army Apprentice College at Chepstow in September 1961, training with Mick and six other hopefuls to be a Field Survey Technician Class 3. I left Chepstow in 1964 and after combat engineer training at Cove, was posted to 1 Troop, 19 Topo Squadron at Barton Stacey. This tour of duty was enlivened by the Troop's secondment to 13 Field Survey Squadron in Aden for six months during which, among other activities, we toured South Arabia trying to locate a non-existent error in the fundamental survey control.

A Tech 2 course at the School resulted in my being awarded an A2 consolation prize and (also prized) a posting to 84 Survey Squadron in Singapore – absolute heaven – where I was joined by my wife of nine months, Chris. After ten months, I was transferred to 2 Troop in Sabah under the command of another great servant of the Branch and my immediate predecessor as President, John Elder. Sabah was a fabulous experience, both technically and socially; which could be considered a real high point in anybody's lifetime. An A1 course at the School and a final posting to the AAC Chepstow as an instructor, training a class of eight Field Survey Technicians completed my regular service.

Having decided not to continue in the army presented the challenge of finding gainful employment, offers of which, I am pleased to say, were forthcoming in abundance. By virtue of the prompt arrival of a work permit, I joined the Department of Surveys & Lands, Botswana, under the auspices of British Overseas Aid. It was like a real home-from-home with John 'Jazz' Gould and Jim McCullough being in post already. A D.O.S. party was also operating in the country and at various times such worthies as Paul 'Lob' Sharman, John Laughton and Keith 'Geordie' Carr arrived on secondment.

The work I was given to undertake was both interesting and technically challenging but towards the end of my first contract, the inevitable reality check was made and I took additional unpaid leave and returned to school – The North-East London Polytechnic to be precise – attending the last two terms of the RICS Land Surveying Course, preparatory to sitting, successfully, I'm relieved to say, the RICS final exams. After submitting the required thesis and practical task, I was admitted as an Associate in 1976. This facilitated my joining the professional cadre of the Botswana Government Service and subsequently being 'kicked upstairs' to be a Regional Surveyor. I was based Selebi-Phikwe, central eastern Botswana and eventually oversaw land surveying activities, including State Land Allocations throughout Northern Botswana. During this period, I passed the necessary law exams to become a Registered Surveyor, licensed to practice in Botswana and advancement to FRICS.

Alas, all good things come to an end and in 1989; I achieved one of the stated objectives of my job description by completing the training of a Botswana citizen successor. After my final overseas aid contract, I joined a company, whose name is self-explanatory – Geological & Geodetic Services Botswana – as a Director. After five years in the private sector and a very steep learning curve – those of you who have joined it from government service will appreciate the difference – I formed my own company, Survey Services Botswana that I successfully ran until our departure from Botswana in 2007.

During the last 18 months of my stay in Botswana, I had been corresponding via email with another ex RE surveyor, David Powell, who was Managing Director of the very successful David J Powell Surveys and at that time Ken Hall's immediate successor as Chairman of the

Geomatics (Land Survey to us lesser mortals) Division of the RICS. He offered me work as a consultant for his company, which by that time was specialising mainly in the resolution of boundary disputes. This fell in very well with my main line of business in Botswana, which was principally concerned with boundaries and I was very happy to accept the offer.

Now, 3½ years on I am still visiting Neighbours at War, carrying out measured surveys, inspecting Deeds Plans and other documents and writing lengthy reports, offering an opinion as to the precise, rather than the general position of disputed boundaries. If all else fails, I am required to give evidence in Court as an expert witness.

Now that I am fully re-settled back in the UK, I hope to make myself useful as Branch President by promoting its aims and objectives with particular reference to expanding our **active** membership. I thank the Committee for inviting me to join the team and look forward to working productively with them and the Branch membership as a whole.

New Secretary – Rod Siggs



Born and educated at Chichester, Sussex, I joined the Army Apprentice School (later College) Chepstow in 1964 - the start of 27 years uniformed military service. I completed my apprenticeship as a Lithographic Printer and was then lucky enough to spend three tours at 14 Sqn, (every time it seemed to change its title) and one with HQ BAOR. These were all interspersed with the inevitable home postings with 22 Litho Sqn, the SMS, 13 Indep Fd Svy Sqn, RHQ 42 Svy Engr Regt and RSMS.

I was commissioned in 1986 and became AI Litho and was posted in 1989 as a Troop Officer to 14 Sqn from where Nick Rigby generously took me, and a few others, on a trip with him to Saudi Arabia. It felt at last that I had returned the benefits of some of the training heaped upon me

throughout the years. However, I felt sufficiently in credit that when the chance came along to hand in my spurs I took it and replaced John Rylatt as Head of Establishment at Survey Production Centre RE. There followed 8 years of the most rewarding of my Mil Svy career.

Following the closure in 1999, (part of the “Peace Dividend” from the ending of the Cold War) I was posted back to 8 Map & Air Chart Depot to relocate it to Feltham. My final post was as the Collection and Control Officer, United Kingdom and Ireland, at the Defence Geographic Centre, Feltham.

I have always enjoyed sport, watching or partaking and played rugby more regularly than was sensible for my health for the Sqns, Regt, Corps, BAOR and the Army. Weekends, during the season, I also played for my home towns of Chichester, Newbury and Swindon.

Married to Sheila, for what is now by far the greater part of my life, we have two sons, Nigel married for seven years and Clive married for over ten years and we have three lovely granddaughters.

Whilst at Feltham, I was the Civilian Representative for our Branch for six years and I am now honoured to be nominated as your Secretary, I look forward to a busy but rewarding spell of duty.

New RSM - WO1 (RSM) A Conetta Bsc (Hons) RE



Mr Conetta enlisted into the Royal Engineers in July 1989. After completing his basic training at the Junior Leader Regiment in Dover he was selected to attend the Army Apprentices College at Chepstow to train for two years as an Air Survey Technician. In August 1991 after completion of his trade training he was posted to 42 Engineer Regiment(Geo) and was employed on map revision tasks of Northern Ireland and Belize, and deployed on various exercises in the UK, France, Germany and Norway.

In 1993 Mr Conetta completed his JNCO Cadre and was promoted to Lance Corporal then in 1994 was posted to the Royal School of Military Survey (now DISC-RSMS) to complete a further 6 months class 2 technical training, followed by an internal posting to the Specialist Support Team, where he worked on classified tasking.

August 1996 saw the completion of Mr Conetta's technical training, with another 6 months at School, culminating in the awarding of a Higher National Diploma in Cartography. In 1997, newly qualified, he took a short break from his trade and was promoted to Corporal then posted as a Section Commander to the Army Training Regiment, Bassingbourn.

In November 1999, after an enjoyable tour of the ATR, Mr Conetta was posted back to 42 Engr Regt (Geo) where he was immediately sent on his first operational tour to the SFOR HQ in Sarajevo, as a Tactical Systems Commander within Combined J2 Cell. On return from Bosnia in March 2000 he was promoted to Sergeant and posted as the Geographic Sergeant within the Intelligence Section of the Headquarters of 16 Air Assault Brigade.

After a 6 week exercise in Malaysia, Mr Conetta then began to gather operational experience beginning with a 2 month deployment in 2001 to Macedonia on Task Force Harvest; a 5 month deployment in 2002 to Afghanistan as part of ISAF1; and a 5 month deployment to Iraq during the 2003 Gulf War.

In January 2004 Mr Conetta was promoted to Staff Sergeant and posted as an instructor in the Geospatial Imagery Department of the Royal School of Military Survey. During this post, in 2004, Mr Conetta was selected to attend a Degree program at Greenwich University, where he gained a Bachelor of Science honours Degree in Geography and Geographical Information Systems.

The hard work continued in June 2006 when Mr Conetta was promoted to Warrant Officer Class two and posted to the Geographic Cell in the NATO Rapid Deployable Corp, near Milan in Northern Italy. In November 2007, and after an interesting year, Mr Conetta was selected for a Sergeant Majors appointment and posted back to ATR Bassingbourn as the Company Sergeant Major of Templer Company, and later, due to a name change, as the Squadron Sergeant Major of Churchill Squadron.

A short stay in the Doctrine and Plans office of the headquarters Joint Aeronautical and Geospatial Organisation saw Mr Conetta selected for promotion to WO1 and consequently RSM of 42 Engr Regt (Geo).

WO1 Conetta enjoys reading, running and has received Hockey colours from the Royal Engineers, Army (U23) and Combined Services (U23), and is currently Capt of the Corp Masters Side.

News from the Military Front

Due to 'technology' problems the Summer Newsletter was published without the RSM's Column even though he had produced it on time despite the pressure of being new in post. With many apologies to RSM Alfie Conetta – here is the missing Column.

RSM's Column

As the new RSM I would like to start by saying what an honour it is to finally get to the spot in the ivory tower where I may be able to start making small changes to the way things operate, well those within my power. When I first wrote this, Hermitage station was fast approaching the main event of the year, that's right, Summer Leave. After two hectic weeks in the job my ideas about the extent of my responsibilities went out of the window, with every issue on camp suddenly coming under my bubble, or so it seemed.

Operations

The tempo of operations in Afghanistan continues to be both challenging and fast-paced at all levels of command, particularly at the forefront of operations at the numerous Combined Force locations throughout Helmand province. The geospatial support to operations by 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) and HQ JAGO personnel also continues to be as equally as challenging with the increase of personnel deployed throughout Helmand province and an additional commitment to a joint UK/US 2 star Headquarters in southern Afghanistan.

At theatre level command, a Major from HQ JAGO deployed in late May as the Geospatial Officer for the 3 star ISAF Joint Command (IJC) in Kabul. In addition, a LCpl (13 Geo Sqn), also in Kabul, continues to provide strategic level Geospatial Intelligence (GeoInt) to the Theatre Operational Intelligence Support Group (T-OISG).

November 2010 will see a significant shift in the geospatial support to Operations at the regional command level. With the re-allocation of battlespace and resources from Regional Command South (RC S) based at Kandahar Airfield to a newly established USMC led Regional Command South-West headquarters in Camp Leatherneck (Bastion). To fully enable the set up and running of the new joint headquarters, the level of geospatial support has also increased from three (1 x Geo WO and 2 x Geo JNCO currently supporting HQ RC S) to six (to include an additional SO2 and FM DP crew).

At present, the only remaining support at Kandahar Airfield post November 2010 is envisaged to be the Theatre Map Depot SNCO position, currently filled by personnel from 135 Independent Geographic Squadron (V).

Helmand province continues to be the focus of attention for the planning and execution of operations and the geospatial support on Operations. In April 2010, 4 Brigade took over the ever expanding responsibilities from 11 Light Brigade for the Combined Force Helmand Area of Operations. As a consequence, the intensity of geospatial support also increased resulting in the deployment of a number of additional posts. Of significance is the deployment of the DATAMAN system to both Lashkar Gah and Camp Bastion and the establishment of a Section Commander position to provide supervision for the remote Combined Force JNCO's.

To support the connection of DATAMAN to the in-theatre system, a data management team has been established to configure and maintain the system and promote situational awareness via web service applications to the headquarters staff. The 'roving' Section Commander role will provide the much required technical supervision and mentoring of the relatively junior and inexperienced JNCO's currently deployed at the Combined Force locations in Helmand province.

The commitment to these austere locations remains; there has been a draw-down of the UK commitment to Combined Force Musa Qa'leh with the USMC taking responsibility for that particular AO. However, the traditional CF (BG) support remains with technicians deployed at the forefront of operations within the Sangin, Gereshk, Shawqat and Babaji AO's.

March 2010 saw the surge deployment of 10 personnel from 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) as part of the NATO Airfield Survey Task. Despite initial difficulties the team were able to successfully geodetically survey both Bastion and Kandahar Airfields and also reconnoitred the runway at Herat in Regional Command West (RC W). This survey was complimented by an additional surge in June 2010 to complete the survey of Herat and also to conduct a survey of the runway at Jalalabad in Regional Command East (RC E).

In summary, the past four years has seen a significant increase in personnel deployed from the geospatial community on operations in Afghanistan. In 2006 the support to Operations was a mere sixteen personnel deployed; we currently have over thirty personnel permanently established in theatre. Coupled with the surge of ten with the NATO Airfield Survey Task and the deployment of geospatial personnel to HQ RC SW will see our deployed figures rise to over forty. The continuing challenge will be to maintain and sustain these numbers and to increase these numbers in conjunction with the aspirations of Commander JAGO.

Training

EX DHOWES CALEDONIA

The exercise program continues to challenge, with 13 Geo Sqn deploying on Exercise Dhowes Caledonia to the Highland Wildlife Park (HWP) in Aviemore, Scotland. The exercise itself was broken down into three phases. The first, a challenging and current technical exercise designed to improve the skill set of Sappers within the Sqn. Secondly, a Military Aid to the Civil Community (MACC) task, a rare occasion for soldiers to practise their Basic Combat Engineer skills, whilst providing a useable asset for the HWP. And lastly Adventure training in the form of hill walking, mountain biking and canyoning.

Whilst the three phases provided a diverse range of training to the troops it was felt that we as a squadron should attempt some kind of arduous challenge, with the intent to raise money for the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF). After much deliberation, some careful planning and essentially seeing what was available, the Achnacarry March was the result.

EX STEELY ENDEAVOUR

The deployment of 16 Geo Sp Sqn to Halton Camp in the Lake District gave them the ideal opportunity to relax in the luxurious surroundings of Halton camp..... Wrong, after falling foul to the priority system 16 Geo Sp Sqn quickly found themselves setting up camp, complete with rations, fire point and a few slightly dodgy looking 9 x 9s. Not to be dispirited the activities carried on as planned, with hill walking, mountain biking, rock climbing and an interesting via ferata (rock climbing by guided wire). A great time was had by all including the new RSM and CO who visited for a day on their rounds of the Regiment.

Sporting Activities

Despite Operational/Exercise commitments sport continues to be an integral part of life here at the Regiment, with all the major sporting teams continuing to punch above their weight.

Football. The football team played in the minor unit cup final at the Aldershot Garrison Military Stadium on 5 May 2010. Unfortunately in a closely contested match they went on to lost 3 – 2 against 4MI.

Swimming. The 42 Engr Regt Swimming team won the 4 Div Inter-Unit Swimming championships on 11 May 2010 earning a place in the Army Inter-Unit Finals on 23 Jun

2010. The team produced some excellent result, particularly the 4 x 50m freestyle race where SSgt Mike Shaw, Sgt Rob Johnson, Sprs Davey and Page won the race in 2.01 mins; also beating all major unit teams. The Regt, however, could not gather together a team on the date of the final and had to forfeit the place in the final.

Cross Country. The 2010 RE 10K champs were hosted by 42 Engr Regt on Wed 26 May 2010 - 120 competitors from across the Corps, braved the heat to take part. 42 Engr Regt Won the Minor Units cup with SSgt Watkins taken first individual closely followed by Sgt Dicken who was 80th and SSgt Lanwarne 86th. A very well done must also go to Spr Welburn for coming 18th and Capt Gilbert who come in at 20th position.

Rugby. The Rugby team, Hermitage Hawks played in the Sapper Cup Final on Wed 21st April against 25 Engr Regt. 25 Engr Regt are the current Army Champions and were hot favourites to trounce the Hawks, however the rugby team disrupted all 25 Engr Regt's plans and set about them in emphatic style. The game ended 20 – 7 to the Army Champions but the Hawks put in a great display of team spirit and courage.

Promotions

In recent times the promotions boards have struggled to keep up with the number of keen thrusting young soldiers pushing for recognition. The recent promotions board however should provide some hope as we begin to see a change in the tide, Cpl – Sgt proved to be good news with ten members of the Geo fraternity receiving the well deserved news, four being from within Hermitage station.

I will sign off here and I look forward to seeing you all here at Hermitage at the AGM.

'Once a Sapper, always a Sapper'!



WO1 (RSM) Conetta RE
Hermitage Station

“MAPS & SURVEYS 2011”
The Defence Surveyors' Association Seminar
Royal School of Military Survey
Saturday 11 June 2011

The Defence Surveyors' Association will run the fourth in its series of annual seminars at Denison Barracks, Hermitage, on Saturday the 11th of June 2011.

As for previous seminars, the 6 or 7 presentations will cover a variety of subjects presented in generally chronological order, hopefully ending with something on geospatial support to current operations.

New speakers and fresh subjects are always welcome. Informal shorter presentations based on experiences in the defence surveying sphere or on equipments or techniques employed would be welcomed. Anyone feeling that they might offer a subject, or having any enquiries, should contact Mike Nolan at maptnolan@googlemail.com or call 01635 253167.

It is too early to give details of likely presentations but once these have been decided in the autumn full details of the programme will be advertised on the DSA website, in appropriate journals and by email to previous attendees whose email addresses are known.

News from the Civilian Front

Staffing: Currently DGC has an allowed establishment of 506 (including 13 military staff) for FY 10/11 this compares to an establishment of 576 at the start of FY 09/10. DGC is currently implementing savings measures imposed in the previous Financial Year. The most significant of these is to reduce the total number of civilian posts within DGC to 458 by April 2012. Work is in hand to achieve this in annual stages through natural wastage, i.e. retirements, transfers out of DGC and resignations. Rebalancing of the available manpower is currently under consideration but the current organisation will be maintained until the outcome of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) is known.

Pride Update: Programme to Rationalise and Integrate the DIS Estate (Pride) is continuing to schedule. Work on the new building is progressing at a rapid pace and the building is now beginning to represent the final shape and layout both internally and externally. The building will be declared waterproof this autumn and work will then focus on the internal fit-out of infrastructure and facilities.

Also, following a Defence Estates (DE) report it was concluded that Chicksands presented the best option for the future home for the Royal School of Military Survey (RSMS) and the Defence School of Languages (DSL) work on obtaining formal approval is ongoing.

The planned move of displaced staff from London to Feltham is currently on hold due to the very difficult financial position that MOD is in this year.

Feltham Estate. The funding for the project to refurbish the interior of the ailing sports pavilion at Feltham has been cut.

DGC Modernisation: As reported previously DGC's Production Division has undergone a major modernisation programme in terms of new equipment, hardware and software. This programme is nearing completion with staff currently testing and developing the commercial GIS software applications available in order to provide a more flexible production capability in terms of tasking and production of the range of geospatial products that DGC can deliver. DGC is adopting the generation of Foundation Data; it will migrate from product centric output to attributed data capture and manipulation for the generation of Foundation Data. The DGC will exploit more fully its existing technology and sources which already support a move to the capture once, use many concept.

DGC continues to be heavily involved in supporting Op Herrick, this includes close co-operation with geo staff in theatre.

Old Boys Reunion (Picnic in the Park): This years event took place on Friday 11th June 2010 and saw hundreds of DGC staff leave their desks to partake in the various activities laid on by the Feltham Garrison Sports & Social Association (FGSSA). Numbers were swollen by 137 retired staff returning for their annual reunion and to catch up with friends.

This year's event was the last to be coordinated by Graeme Pitt as he will himself become a retiree in May of 2011. He has passed on the mantle of FGSSA Reunion Coordinator to Tony Ruff who will undoubtedly continue the excellent standard set by Graeme.

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Next years event will take place on Friday 10 June 2011, those previous members of the Garrison, military as well as civilian who wish to attend should send their name, contact details directly to:

Tony Ruff – FGSSA Reunion Coordinator Production Division,
Room 019, Hotine Building,
Defence Geographic Centre,
Elmwood Avenue,
Feltham,
Middlesex. TW13 7AH Tel: 0208 818 2702

Sporting Activities: MOD Sports day took place 2nd July 2010 at Bath with Feltham Garrison winning the Inter-Establishment Jubilee Shield. There was also individual success in swimming for Colin Agar (retired DGC member) winning the The 'Victor Ludorum'. Also the Volleyball competition was won Feltham Garrison.

Notable Retirees: Sept 2010 – Gill Abbott

In Memoriam: It is with great regret that I report the death of Bob Taylor on 1st September 2010. Many will remember Bob as Head of Production in Technical Services Group (Richmond Building) prior to his retirement.

Pete Dowell

Bill Dear

Bill died on the 23rd of August. He had served as a Clerk RE initially with the Survey Battalion at the Ordnance Survey in Southampton and then in 1941 at the Survey Training Centre (STC), Ruabon. After a short while he moved to the OS Apprentice Tradesmen Boys Unit at nearby Bryn Howell where he stayed until taking his final post with Military Survey, again at the STC which by now was at Longleat. He left the service in 1946, proud of his years with Survey.

Contact Details

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Treasurers Statement

Bank	<i>(The amounts shown are from Bank Statements, not the AB397)</i>		
	Savings A/C	£	8,011.92
	Current A/C	£	1,035.72
	Cheques to pay in	£	-
		£	9,047.64
	Cheques to clear	£	-
			£ 9,047.64
Combined Bank Accounts			£ 9,047.64
RE (Geo) Fund	(For the benefit of serving pers)	£ 1,307.33	(Ring fenced)
			£ 10,354.97
Commitments			
	Actual & anticipated	£	1,810.00
Total Commitments			£ 1,810.00
RE (Geo) Fund	(For the benefit of serving pers)	£ 1,307.33	(Ring fenced)
			£ 3,117.33
	Working Capital		£ 7,237.64
	Stock of Ties	£	245.18
Potential Income for 2010			
	Debtors (as at 31 Dec 08)	Written off	£ - £ 24.00
	Outstanding Subs for 2009		£ 16.00
	Subs collected in 2010		£ 2,136.00
	Outstanding subs for 2010		£ 64.00
	Total		£ 2,216.00
	Commitments		£ 1,810.00
	Estimated excess of income		£ 406.00

Donations made in 2010

£500 from Branch accounts to sponsor sporting activities at Hermitage
 £358 from the RE (Geo) Fund for AV equipment for soldiers serving in Afghanistan

Donation agreed for 2010 but not yet made

Approximately £365 from the RE (Geo) Fund for AV equipment soldiers serving in Afghanistan

Mike Gowlett
Treasurer