
The Military Survey (Geographic) Association



Autumn 2013 Newsletter



Issue Number

50

2013 marks a number of milestones in the history of Military Survey



Coronation Parades in the Suez Canal Zone and Cyprus



42 Survey Engineer Regiment leaves Zyyi on Cyprus

42 Survey Engineer Regiment moves to A Camp, Barton Stacey

1 ASLS RE reforms at RAF Episkopi, Cyprus

The launch of the Survey career trade courses

and this is the 50th edition of the newsletter.

42 Engineer Regiment Departure from Hermitage Weekend

Change of Dates

We have now been advised that owing to the difficulty of obtaining the Corps Band at the same time as the Armed Forces weekend in 2014 that the date notified for the celebration of the departure of the Regiment from Hermitage to Wyton has had to be changed.

The events to mark the departure from Hermitage will now take place over the weekend

20 TO 22 JUNE 2014

We apologise for any problems this may have caused any of our members.

Joint Forward by Bob Avenall & Gus Cross

As we move into autumn we are starting to think about next year, for example I have already done my seed order for 2014 and thus planned my growing season. However you are not interested in my allotment but you would probably like to know what is going on with the Association especially in relation to the departure of the Regiment from Hermitage. We are beginning to formulate plans but as we have said before it is very much dependent on the Regiment's plans and they are only now sorting that out. The Association is represented on the project team thus our interests will be looked after. Mick Perry is our representative and will keep you informed. Regardless of what transpires on the itinerary front, it will be a great opportunity for a reunion and arrangements for this will be an important part of the Association's agenda.

In the January Newsletter, I (Bob) mentioned the shift in the centre of gravity of Military Survey after the Regiment moves to Wyton. The School will remain at Hermitage for some (as yet indeterminate) time to come but other (also indeterminate) military units will fill the hole left by the Regiment and it remains to be seen whether the Association will continue to receive the unfettered hospitality we have enjoyed in the past. The only certainty at the moment is that there will be changes in the way we operate in the future.

Please don't forget our AGM, which will be held on 14th March. The attendance for the last two has been encouraging and it would be great to repeat that. The usual brief meeting will be the order of the day, followed by a general social and supper for a nominal fee.

This is the 50th edition of the newsletter and for that we have to thank the editors, previously Miles Henry and now Alan Gordon, and of course all those who have contributed articles, photos and other items of interest over the years. I would like to particularly thank Alan Gordon, the current editor, who has done a great job. Not only has he edited the newsletter since the New Year edition in 2008 (No 28) but he also started the whole thing going with the first three editions. He is now looking to hang up his pen and consequently we are looking for one of you guys to pick it up and ensure that we have a newsletter which will live up to the past.

Continuing on the theme of change, I (Bob) will be standing down from the position of President after the Regiment departs for the fens. I have thoroughly enjoyed my tenure but feel that it is time to hand over the baton (as it were).

The Committee has always worked immensely hard to ensure that the Association fulfils its role in supporting the serving soldiers and promoting good fellowship among our members. There is always room for new blood, however, and the press gang will be out looking for 'volunteers', particularly those who live in the east midlands!

Field Survey Reunion 2013

On Saturday 31st August 2013 the 'fieldie' reunion took place at the WO and Sgts' Mess at Hermitage. This event, held every couple of years, has been successful in attracting about 50 members for a few beers and of course a good curry. This year's senior citizen was John Griffin with the rest reflecting the 'younger' element in attendance. A good night of reminiscence was had by all with the inevitable "*I recognise your face but cannot put a name to it*" and vice versa. The reunion was followed up by informing everyone the virtues of keeping in touch by joining the Association as well as publicising the SMS Course Photo CD.

On a similar note if more senior, that is mature, field surveyors would like to be kept informed of future events please send your details to Mark Kieras at mark.kieras@btinternet.com.

Phil Maye

Sixty Years Ago - 1953: Coronation Parades

In 1953 the Regiment was based in Sobraon Camp in the vast Suez Canal Zone, at that time home to over 80,000 service personnel. However, 19 Topographic Squadron had been detached to Cyprus since the previous year carrying out extensive field surveys.

In the Canal Zone two parades were arranged to mark Coronation Day, one in the north and the other in the south at RAF Kasfareet in which 42 Regiment took part.

Spr Cameron Gilbert was at the time excused boots due to a foot infection and so was driven to the parade and tasked with photographing the event. Below are two of his photographs, the first showing part of the huge march past and the second a close up of the Regiment marching down the long runway as the RAF flypast took place overhead.



Meanwhile, photo below, on Cyprus 19 Squadron also celebrated the coronation with a parade in Limassol.



Fifty Years Ago - 1963: Packing up at Zyyi

The move to the UK meant that some of the heavy equipment would have to be left in storage at the Ordnance Depot in Famagusta. This involved various print machines and also one or two pontoons.

The MOD provided the packing crates and the instructions for dismantling each machine. The unit was taught the preservation procedures required before each section was crated and several teams were given this task with a senior NCO in charge.

Each large part was craned onto a base and the team then greased and waterproof wrapped it before the sides and top of the crate were bolted around it and the 'packing note' put inside first having been signed by the senior NCO responsible for the packing team.

On one occasion we had a very heavy thunderstorm overnight and next morning the Canadian exchange officer serving with the Regiment noted that several crates did not have puddles on their lids which meant that the waterproof membrane had been pierced. So the crates had to be opened for inspection and the greasing and waterproofing done a second time. Moans all round!!

When the crates were deemed watertight they were then all craned onto low loaders and transported from the camp at Zyyi to Famagusta.

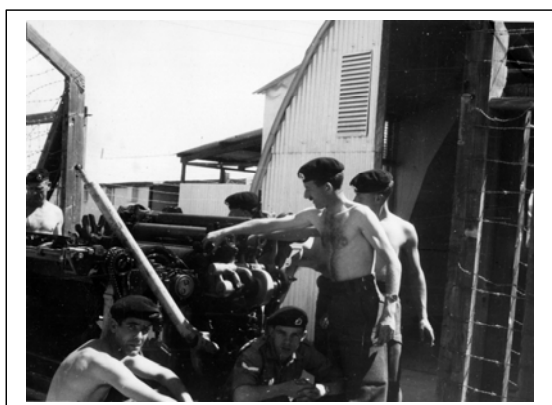
Four years later I was stationed with 14 Field Survey Squadron in Roy Barracks in Ratingen, Germany when one day I was called into the OC's office, Major Silberad, to be confronted by two military policemen. One produced a 'packing note' and pointing to it asked if the signature on it was mine. I looked and said "Yes it was". They then said that back in Cyprus staff at the Famagusta Ordnance Depot had occasion to relocate the crates into which we had packed the printing machines before leaving Zyyi. They found that of the 24 crates for each machine, one appeared to be empty but for a packing note. The packing note was then retrieved and traced back to me. I was then sternly asked "What had I done with the contents?"

I then explained that the MOD had provided crates number from 1 to 24, each stamped appropriately as 1 of 24, 2 of 24 and so on. However, we had managed to pack the complete machine into only 23 crates but rather than renumber all the crates I put a packing note saying "empty" inside the last crate and then screwed down the lid. I assured them that all the parts were there but told them that if they didn't believe me then all they had to do was to re-assemble the printing machine to check for any missing parts! They accepted my explanation, smiled, and left!

22771320 WO1 Arnold Smith (Intake 51B)

Editor's Query:

The recognisable people in Arnold's photographs are himself (carto), Roy Richardson (carto), Mick Adams (air survey) and Pete Bevis (photo). Question? Where were the printers when it came to dismantling, greasing and packing the printing machines? Answers to the next newsletter please!



Arnold Smith overseeing the preservation of presses at Zyyi in September 1963.

Fifty Years Ago - 1963: The Dogs of Zyyi

Regarding the upcoming article on 42's return from Cyprus to Barton Stalag, I wonder if anybody recalls and has photos of the unofficial Regimental mascot whilst at Zyyi, L/Cpl Feet, a large Lab dog with even bigger feet - hence the name. I should recall whether he was on ration strength [as I believe] as I was the ration NCO for a while but the memory cells have packed up on this one. He did ok for fodder anyway wandering anywhere he wished, usually at the "char wallah's takeaway" and doing the Hoovering.

Other dogs on camp were the MEBS [Middle East Broadcasting Station] guard dogs. I remember "Bengi" the Boxer as he was the best or worst of them depending on how you looked at it and "Dagger" the dark Alsatian; the local Auxiliary Police did not like Dagger, or was it his handler. Hard to believe the following but true, Dagger's handler was Ken Crocker of the Devon and Dorsetshire Regiment [known as the Devon and Donkeys] who wore black wings on his battledress blouse, obviously an SAS tourist, always known by me anyway as "Ken Crocker of the Devon and Donkeys and his dog Dagger". Ken used to go missing from time to time, AWOL or still active I don't know.

I wonder what happened to the dogs! "Feet" would have survived as he was an accomplished scrounger and I am hoping the guard dogs carried on their guarding as, if what one of the Military Police told me is true, they would not have been allowed back into UK being official "War Office Dogs" and not guard dogs.

Guard duties could get pretty onerous at this time, I recall one ten day period were I completed three camp pickets [12hr] and two MEBS[24hr] guards as the weekday and weekend roster collided, all on top of normal duties.

Other snippets somebody may be able to answer, who were "The Bowmen of Zyyi"? What became of the US Flag that we nicked off the crew of the *USS Forrestal* in the "Trocadero Cabaret Bar", Limassol?

I enjoyed my years with 42 Survey Regiment but not a half as much as I enjoyed my time with 84 Survey Squadron in the Lion City. All the best to everyone from New Zealand.

Regards "Tot" Hodgson

(My real name is Rodney, my Mum called me Rob but you lot gave me another name)

Fifty Issues of the Newsletter: Time for a new Editor

The first newsletter was a Nash/Gordon production of just six pages in April 2000 and had all the excitement and style of 19 Squadron's Part 1 orders! Miles Henry took over in December 2001 with issue number 4 and then proceeded to produce far more professional and interesting editions until autumn 2007 when he signed off as editor with issue 27. The then secretary Peter Wood (who I talked into taking over that post) asked if I would become editor again and I replied "no, but if you can't find anyone else I might think about" – silly answer - and I have been editor for the last 22 issues!

But now it's time for a change and for a breath of fresh air to blow through the newsletter. So we need a new editor.

The editor's job isn't onerous and you can personally write as much or as little as you like. All you need is an interest in the Association, a computer and Microsoft Word. You can change the style, format and the type of content as you think fit. All you really have to do is to chase up input, cast an eye over spelling and chuck in a few commas and apostrophes and then put it all together and send it to Dave Johnson who will convert it to a pdf and arrange for the distribution. Simple – as they say! Why not give it a go? Contact me by phone or email for more information or to register your interest.

Alan Gordon

50 Years Ago – SMS: The Class of '63

In early 1963 a new 'A' trade training regime for Military Survey commenced with a full range of primary trade courses for adult entry soldiers at the School.

Throughout the Forties and Fifties the School was principally involved in providing basic training, class 3 level, to large numbers of conscripts. Upgrading courses at class 2 mainly occurred 'on the job' in units and only the relatively few regular soldiers returned to Hermitage for advanced training at class 1.

Two events in 1960 changed radically the way in which the School was to provide trade training for those in Military Survey; the ending of National Service and the introduction of technician trades.

The new 'all regular army' needed to offer an attractive career for all who joined and so the courses were redesigned to provide comprehensive training at three levels; primary, intermediate and advanced to encourage the volunteer soldiers to commit to a full 22 year career. At the same time technician training at primary level for four new trades was introduced at the Army Apprentice College at Chepstow. These technicians would not go to Hermitage until their intermediate course.

By the end of the year some 80 new A tradesmen and early 20 new storemen survey had been trained at Hermitage and posted to units, the vast majority to the Regiment at Barton Stacey, a very large number of new soldiers when you consider that the Regiment's establishment was only 217 non-commissioned personnel. There were also around 20 new technicians from Chepstow that year making 1963 almost certainly, excepting the years of conscription, Military Survey's largest intake year ever.



No. 1 Primary Topo
Back: Sprs Lovett, Dewhurst, Quinnell, Gadsden, Garvey, Sellwood, Hawkins, Humphries
Front: Sprs Jeffries, Robinson, Cpl Callow, S Sgt Jones, L cpl Parsons, Spr Blewett (Instructors)

The first of two primary surveyor topo courses held in 1963 – two of the members of this course have written articles for this issue of the newsletter, Len Sellwood and Mac 'Harry' Hawkins.



No. 1 Primary Trig
Back: Sprs Aimes, Jobling, Forster, Shockley, Craven, Thorpe, Beard
Centre: Sprs Fulford, Catterall, Brown, Branson, Brindle, Ringwood, L cpl Davidson
Front: Sprs Roberts, Thompson, Sgt Hollinshend, S Sgt Pooley, Sprs Pollard, Campbell (Instructors)

A comprehensive collection of SMS/RSMS course photos from 1963 up to 1993 is available on cd from Rod Siggs, the secretary, for only a fiver.

The first primary surveyor trig course. The exceptionally large number of students was necessary due to the shortfall of soldiers following the ending of national service. Battledress was still the order of the day except for the instructors and for field work it was the new shiny green combat dress as worn by the topo course above.

Fifty Years Ago – 1963: Barton Stacey

At the outbreak of the Second World War four army camps were built straggling along the hilltop four miles east of Andover. Three, imaginatively named A, B and C, were on the northern side of the A303 and D on the southern side. Each was self-contained and comprised a mix of brick and wooden single storey huts and an enormous, bleak parade square. Between B and C Camps there was a hatted post office and a large corrugated iron SKC cinema. In early 1963 A and B Camps were empty, C Camp housed a light air defence regiment and D Camp a REME unit but by the end of the year 42 Regiment was ensconced in A Camp, 32 Medium Regiment RA in B Camp and the REME had left D Camp which had been converted into substandard married quarters.

On arrival in the UK the Regiment reorganised so that it comprised 19 Topographic Squadron, albeit its main party remained in Aden until the end of the year, 22 Lithographic Squadron with two troops, one static and the other mobile equipped with the then new Mobile Train, 47 Cartographic Squadron also with two troops, Air Survey and Carto, and an RHQ Troop. The advance party under Major John Henshaw arrived in late May and the main party left Cyprus between the 28th and 30th of June and then went on disembark leave. Most of the remainder of 1963 was spent in setting up the Regiment in its new home.

The unit had been understrength for some time due to the ending of national service and the gapping of posts latterly in Cyprus due to the imminent move to UK. Hence, as each of the new trade courses at Hermitage ended the majority of the newly trained soldiers boarded one of the School's green minibuses and headed 20 miles south to Barton Stacey. Upon arrival they were told not to make themselves too comfortable as the Regiment's stay there was only temporary until somewhere was found!

Shortly after you cross the River Test on the A303 heading towards London there is a small hill at the top of which there is a road off to the left running along the hill and then down to Longparish. A Camp straddled this small road with 47 Squadron occupying two long brick buildings immediately on the left running parallel to the A303 and 19 Squadron the wooden huts on the right hand side. Farther along on the left were a number of brick buildings which were the single soldiers' accommodation other than 19 which 'enjoyed' the wooden huts adjacent to their HQ. Next along the road on the left was the misnamed Coal Yard, for it contained little coal but mountains of coke, and then an old cookhouse then the home of 22 Squadron's Static Troop opposite which was the Regiment's cookhouse and soldiers' dining hall. There was then a crossroads with a brick and flint cottage on the left which was occupied by the camp gamekeeper who bred pheasants on the camp and looked after the Army's stretch of the nearby famous trout filled River Test. Over the crossroads on the left was the Officers' Mess whilst on the right was the guardroom and facing it across the road was RHQ's wooden hut. Turning right at the guardroom a road ran down through to B Camp with the QM's empire on the left and then the vast parade square. On the right hand side was a large gymnasium and row of MT garages. Alongside the western edge of the square were the NAAFI and Sergeants' Mess, across the top ran a long row of MT garages and down the eastern edge were two huge drill sheds. This relic of the Second World War was to be home to 42 Regiment for the next 22 years – a soldier's full career!



RHQ and the security barrier which was, like the guardroom, oddly situated in the middle of the camp rather than at the perimeter.

(Photo: Nick Collins)

Serving at Barton Stacey in 1963 bore no resemblance to the life of a soldier today. In those early months there were almost no civilian staff and so virtually all of the menial administration jobs necessary to run the camp were carried out by soldiers. Every sapper and most junior NCOs spent quite some time on 'Regimental duties'. The 'plum' jobs were Mess barmen and waiters, RHQ runners and the QM's 'lifters and humpers' were considered not too bad but definitely bottom of the heap were working in the Cookhouse 'tin bash' tasked with cleaning the endless stream of greasy pots and pans and the Coal Yard gang filling tin tubs with coke and delivering them to every building in the camp.

At that time, each day started on the road next to the parade square when squadron right markers marched onto the square and then the rest 'fell in'. After a brief inspection each squadron was then marched off through the camp to their squadron lines.

The days were filled with setting up equipment and there was no real technical work until after the New Year. At morning break time a van appeared from Barton Stacey village selling newspapers and chocolate bars which tended to be favoured over the trip up to the NAAFI. Every Wednesday morning was allocated to military training often starting with a drill parade but always ending with Pay Parade for this was long before the days of the cheque book soldier. The afternoon was, of course, sports afternoon.

Guard duty and fire piquet came around with amazing regularity and then, for some months, the Regiment was tasked with also providing a guard each night on the new RAF CDA building within Thatcham Depot. As autumn drew colder so life for the 'livers in' seemed to centre on getting the coke stove in the room alight each evening. It is very difficult to get coke to light especially when there was always a shortage of kindling. Soldiers could be found all over the camp scavenging for timber but if none could be found then a large blob of the orange floor polish would do the trick! Then each morning the stove had to be emptied of ashes and left clean, floors 'bumped', beds made and nothing left out on show before going off for morning parade.

Few had any form of transport so off duty life centred around the nearby local village pubs which after a while tended to be squadron based - 47 The George, 19 The Plough (recently voted as the top gastro pub in the South) and 22 The Cricketers. The NAAFI was used only if very short of funds or if snooker was your thing. The cinema in B Camp was popular albeit the films tended not to be the latest but as the last bus from Andover back to camp left before the town's cinemas finished their show it had a captive audience.

In retrospect life at Barton 'Stalag', as it was universally known, reflected the standards of the Fifties rather than the well-advertised 'Soldier of the Sixties' recruiting campaign but although uniforms, camp routines and even discipline changed, the accommodation slowly deteriorated as little improvement was made as the Regiment was always pending a move to a better location – something that finally happened in 1985 – 22 years after the 'temporary' move into the camp!



19 Squadron HQ in the 1980s as Field Troop prepare to leave for a task and the same view today showing some of the thousands of broad leaved trees that have been planted across A and B Camp sites. Left hand photo: Mike Nolan and right hand Alan Gordon.

Fifty Years Ago – 1963: Barton Stacey – The Advance Party

Alan Gordon reminded me it was fifty years ago that 42 Survey moved to Barton Stacey from Cyprus and asked me whether I could recall what life was like as one of the Advance Party. Quite honestly, it was such a long time ago and the memory bank has failed me to a large degree - and I was very young in 1963, so nothing much of significance stuck in my mind!

Having left the School at the end of May in 1963 as newly-qualified A3 Topo Surveyor, I was posted to Barton Stacey straight from Hermitage. As I recall, there were about a couple of dozen of us that made up the Advance Party and it was (supposedly) our job to unpack items that had been sent over from Cyprus in preparation for the Regiment's move back to the UK. Life on the camp was fairly relaxed with limited discipline, save a morning parade, when we answered a roll call. Denims were the standard work dress of the day.

The camp seemed relatively empty and spacious, with nothing much going on and there was little to do. One thing that I do recall vividly was the vicious game of 'Frisbee' we developed from cardboard discs used at the end of tubes, probably to hold rollers from printing machines, which were stored in half of the MT sheds at the north end of the square. The discs were about a foot in diameter and fairly solid. Half a dozen of us were put to 'work' (to use the term lightly) to unpack these tubes. Someone started to demonstrate the Frisbee-like properties of these end discs, until one accidentally hit another person. Then the war started: I can remember the hide-and-seek that went on between the stacked tubes, as one tip-toed about the shed looking for a target. It was a major triumph if you sneaked up on a mate and dinged him on the back of the head with one of these missiles. I know only too well how it felt, because they hurt like hell if one was struck! I can't remember who all the 'players' were, but one was John Quinnell, who got struck by a well-aimed missile. It annoyed him so much that he went ballistic and discs were flying in every direction! Fortunately a well-timed NAAFI break drew these proceedings to a close.

I remember that a nearby range was being cleared of explosive devices by a team of Ukrainians. Their prodigious drinking in the NAAFI in the evenings left us looking like schoolboys. It was pints-and-chasers all the way to oblivion. One of these fellows had a primer explode in his hand and he went to the Medical Orderly Room to have it dressed. I can remember his hand was all swollen and his fingers in tatters, but he was back at work the next day suitably fortified! I had gone to the MOR to have my foot treated because I had tipped a cauldron of boiling water onto it. Wearing plimsolls on cookhouse fatigues was a no-no, but that's what I did - stupidly. Since it was a Sunday and no doctor was on duty - or because the camp didn't have one then - I was advised to go to hospital to have it treated. No transport was available and I recall that my Triumph Speed Twin was kept in the open drill shed at the east side of the square, along with another machine, so I hobbled the several hundred yards to the shed to reach it and rode the bike into Andover, having to change gear with my right hand, rather than by foot; it was an interesting journey to say the least!

Another memory was of fishing in the River Test, which ran close by the camp. Since it was 'the' river for trout, it presented an obvious challenge for some of us without being done for poaching from private land. A No.10 hook, a 25-yard cast and a lump of bread pinched from the cookhouse were the only requirements needed to fish from the public road bridge, where we would feed the cast from the up-stream side of it to float underneath to the fish on the other. I can only say that we enjoyed eating fresh trout not more than an hour out of the river, which had been cooked in butter and accompanied by crisps bought from the NAAFI. Fish and chips with a difference! I also remember one of the pubs in the village of Longparish had a pet bear, which was kept in a shed at the rear!

Anyway, much water has passed under the bridge since then and my memory of those days fifty years ago spent at Barton Stacey 'A' Camp are a little faded, save for these few incidents I have recalled here.

Mac Hawkins Spr, 23870337

50 Years Ago – 1 ASLS RE Reformed



Colonel Brian Irwin with OC Peter Andrews inspecting 1 ASLS in 1963. L to R: Chief Clerk, Frank Litterick, Peter Lee, Gordon Anderson, Pete Smith, Bert Farrell, Geoff Sonnex.

On the 1st of April 1963 47 GHQ Survey Squadron was reformed as 1 Air Survey Liaison Section RE and the squadron number passed to 42 Regiment to be allocated to a cartographic squadron to be formed when the unit set up at Barton Stacey.

The unit's first OC was Peter Andrews with Frank Litterick as his SSM, this post was always filled by an air surveyor and the SQMS post by a field survey sergeant who could also provide technical experience to the field survey office which was headed by a corporal. Its total strength was only one officer and fourteen soldiers, later increased to sixteen, but it made its mark on the island not only by its technical work but on

the sporting front; it once won the prestigious Station Commander's Cup and was instrumental in initiating both the Cyprus Walkabout and the Akrotiri swim.

The unit's principal role was to plan, assess and record the aerial photography flown by the RAF for survey purposes. However, as the Section was soon to become the only Military Survey unit on the island its establishment included a small field survey element and two draughtsmen in order to provide a limited but useful survey capability for the entire Near East and Gulf Command.

1 ASLS's offices were on the first floor of the eastern wing of the HQ Building at RAF Episkopi with the field survey, SQMS, drawing and SSM's offices on the left of a long corridor and the large air survey room and then the Chief Clerk and OC's offices on the right. Downstairs the ground floor was occupied by the Survey Directorate, the Map Depot and the Map Library which was run by the wonderful Miss Anne Cavendish. There was also a small room containing a Mark 1 Multiplex retained ostensibly for the air surveyors to maintain their skills.

The unit stayed on Cyprus until January 1976 when it moved to RAF Luqa on Malta for eighteen months before moving to join 6 ASLS at RAF Wyton in May 1977. The following year the two Sections merged under the 1 ASLS RE title. During 1 ASLS fourteen years in the Mediterranean it mounted detachments across Africa, the Middle and Far East, the Indian Ocean and even to the New Hebrides in the Pacific and was almost certainly the best posting in Military Survey at that time.

Exercising the Freedom of Test Valley

In 1982 Test Valley Borough Council granted the freedom of the borough, essentially Andover, to the Corps as a mark of the close relationship between the town and 42 Survey Engineer Regiment. When the Regiment was disbanded in 1985 and the squadrons moved to Hermitage the responsibility for exercising the Test Valley Freedom was passed to 22 Engineer Regiment at Perham Down.

On Saturday the 12th of October 22 Regiment exercised the freedom won all those years ago by 42 Regiment with a homecoming parade through Andover which was watched by the largest and most enthusiastic crowds seen in the town for many years.

Life after Military Survey: Len Sellwood

On March 13th 1968 at 15:30 I passed through the gates at Brompton Barracks, Chatham as a civilian. I had enlisted at 17 ½ and served 6 years 104 days according to my Record of Service. In that time I had risen to the rank of L/Cpl twice, enjoyed three postings to 14 Field Survey Squadron, a two year tour with the Trucial Oman Scouts and was an A2 Topographical Surveyor.

In late 1967 I began thinking of the future and I didn't see it in the Army or in survey, computers were just becoming commonly used in industry and that I thought was the future so to that end I 'transferred to the reserve by purchase'. However, after a computer course in London the only job I could get was operating an IBM 360 on the night shift. Fate stepped in by way of a discarded Guardian newspaper left on the underground, in the employment section was an opening for an Airborne Geophysical Compiler at Fairey Surveys based in Maidenhead, I had no idea about geophysics but a trip to the library to learn some key words and a carefully worded letter of application got me started in 1969, a profession that kept me busy one way or another for the next 40 odd years.

North Sea oil was the big happening and airborne geophysical surveys were the means to new discoveries and, after a year of 'in office' training, I went on my first "field" job, an area north of the Shetland Isles. We were based at Sumburgh airport, on the second day there and fogged in I ran into Norman Brindle who I hadn't seen since our Hermitage days in 1963. He was part of a team surveying some of the islands. There was also a Loran C station maintained by the RAF and the cook was an ACC corporal I had served with in the Trucial Oman Scouts – his name Dennis Nilsen, the mass murderer.

During the next four years I mixed land survey and airborne work, during slow geophysical periods I transferred to the land survey department, carrying out photo levelling for a UN funded irrigation scheme in Burma and a 650 km traverse for a new road from the Gulf of Sirte to Sebha in Libya. Whilst In the army I had never felt really threatened but at that time Burma had an insurgency problem and 'they' wanted one of us as a hostage so we had a personal bodyguard of 24 Burmese soldiers and up to 1200 swept ahead of us when working in the jungle, for that I was paid an extra £1 a day danger money. As well as land survey we carried out airborne geophysical surveys in Egypt, Ireland, Nigeria, Norway and offshore UK from south of the Faroe Islands to Southern Ireland.

In 1974 I was offered and took a six month contract to work in Zambia; based in Livingstone the hotel was literally overlooking Victoria Falls. Flying in that part of Zambia was one continuous panorama of African wild life, with elephant herds, rhino and, along rivers, numerous hippos.

Contract over I went to South Africa to visit friends and stayed for 18 months. At a party my second night there I met a geophysicist who offered me contract work. A change of government in Australia and a change of policy meant an end to uranium exploration in that country so attention shifted to South Africa and I was kept very busy, sometimes flying the same areas four and five times for different mining companies. Navigating then was by following a grid pattern drawn on 1:50,000 maps and resurrecting the flight path using a 35 mm film camera, flying height was 200 feet, my air survey training made it easy for me to map read, just like using the multiplex the ground was all laid out in front of me.... Flying could be hazardous and I did lose a few friends in flying accidents. Aircraft types varied from Cessna 185, Cessna 206 Stationair and Cessna 207 all reliable 'bush' planes and for government contracts a DC3. Usually the crew consisted of just the pilot and myself, early starts were the norm, the equipment had to be bought up to temperature, tested and calibrated, chart paper and recorders tested and the tyres kicked, refuelling was by hand pump from 40 gallon drums, the fuel filtered through a chamois to prevent water and any gunk getting into the tanks. If any kids were around we would line them up and get them to do ten turns each at the pump in rotation, then tanks full give them a very quick flight over their village. All great fun.

In the airborne geophysical world Canada was the place to be, most of the big companies were there and most of the research and development was carried out there. Through contacts and luck I arrived in Canada in September 1976, and started a blitz of survey work for an R & D company, work that in my first year took me to the USA, Northern Canada, South Africa, Australia and Fiji, many of the jobs took

several months to complete often in different locations within the same country, for example the Australian survey was made up of 18 areas starting in Tasmania, north around the coast to Perth in Western Australia.

I was spending very little time in Canada and I wanted to see more of this beautiful country, to this end I joined a mining company as crew chief running their exploration in Canada and over the next four years we traveled coast to coast, Canada is an awful large country and flying in a 40 year DC3 at around 130 mph it took lots of time to get from one survey location to the next.

The big drawback of working in the natural resources industry is every 10-12 years with economic downturns you lose your job and so it happened, I spent a year studying electronics and entered a part time mechanical engineering course in Toronto before starting again for the R & D company I had worked for previously, they were still as busy and had numerous contracts to fill. We carried out research into natural oil seeps around the world and a means to their detection, developing airborne sniffer techniques and a laser fluorescence sensor, again this meant much travel including Fiji (the hardship of it all) and also to Tonga where at certain tides oil was seeping to the surface. We rented and outfitted a Britten-Norman Islander aircraft in Fiji and flew it over to Tonga, much to the interest of everyone there including His Highness King Taufa'ahau Tupau IV who visited us and invited us to afternoon tea which needless to say we couldn't turn down, a wonderful afternoon was spent and he told us many interesting stories....The oil seep turned out to be WW2 leaking oil drums buried on a small outer island. Part of the research we carried out to develop geophysical equipment involved ionization technology this was put to use in developing the explosive and drug detectors we see used in airports and other ports of entry today, the company was bought out by Smiths Industries of Britain and dropped the geophysical side of work.

By now I had finally married and decided to join my wife in her marketing research company in Toronto which we sold in 2000. Not knowing what to try next we bought a B & B in historic Niagara on the Lake, 30 minutes from Niagara Falls, anyone contemplating running a B & B please DON'T, that's it.

My wife, ever the entrepreneur started another business while I decided to get back into airborne geophysics, my first job was for a mining company in the Arctic with 24 hour daylight and mosquitoes that could outfly the helicopter. The following year I spent a few months in Northern Quebec around Hudson Bay, more 'mossies' and blackflies with the added wolf pack and strangely a polar bear with cub 200 kilometres inland from the Bay. We were refuelling at the time and with the bear and cub swimming towards us it turned into a race to get as much fuel into the helicopter and get airborne before they got into charging distance.

In the next couple of years I spent 4 months or so each year working in the Amazonas region of Venezuela, mapping geology. With a full array of instruments, a 5 channel EM system, magnetometer and spectrometer it made a full load for a helicopter in those temperatures and altitudes, to maximise production and cut down on transit time fuel dumps were located in clearings previously made by Indians, this time we had the luxury of an electric fuel pump. Maybe I should briefly describe the instrumentation, EM (Electro-Magnetic) system detects electrical conductors in the earth utilising eddy currents, transmitter and receiver coils are housed in a torpedo shaped casing flown on a tow line below the helicopter: Magnetometer measures the earth's total magnetic field and the Spectrometer detects radioactive particles, used together they make a very powerful tool for mapping geology and for mineral exploration.

My last job was in a bush camp in Peru, perched – literally – on a mountain, high in the Andes in thick rain forest and that convinced me that at 67 I was getting too old for anymore surveying.

So having flown many thousands of line kilometres, one copper/zinc deposit- now a mine, one helicopter crash, two inflight engine failures, quite a few “@#*\$ that was close”, many bottles of scotch and the loss of 17 friends, we are at last enjoying retirement, winters in Florida, travel, canoeing, photography and still having fun.

Len Sellwood - 1 Primary Surveyor Topographic Course

News from the Military Front: The RSM's Column

In this coming month of Remembrance I begin with a passage from the "Birdsong" by Sebastian Faulks:

'After ten minutes she began to see small brown signs by the side of the road; then came a cemetery, like any municipal burial ground, behind a wall, belched on by the fumes of the rumbling container lorries. The signs began to come faster, even though Albert was still some ten kilometres away. Through the fields to her right she saw a peculiar, ugly arch that sat among the crops and wood. She took it for a beet refinery at first, but then saw it was too big: it was made of brick or stone and on a monumental scale. It was as though the Pantheon or the Arc de Triomphe had simply been picked up and dumped in a meadow.

Intrigued, she turned off the road to Albert on to a smaller road that led through the gentle rising fields. The curious arch stayed in view, visible from every angle, as its designers had intended. She came to a cluster of buildings, too few and scattered to be called a village or even a hamlet. She left the car and walked towards the arch.

In the front of it was a lawn, lush, cropped and formal in the English style, with a gravel path between its trimmed edges. From near to, the scale of the arch became apparent: it was supported on four vast columns; it completely overpowered the open landscape. The size of it was compounded by its brutal modern design; although clearly a memorial, it reminded her of Albert Speer's buildings for the Third Reich.

She walked up the stone steps leading to it. A man in a blue jacket was sweeping the space enclosed by the pillars. As she came up to the arch Elizabeth saw with a start that it was written on. She went closer. She peered at the stone. There were names on it. Every grain of the surface had been carved with British names; their chiselled capitals rose from the level of her ankles to the height of the great arch itself; on every surface of every column as far as her eyes could see there were names teeming, reeling, over surfaces of yards, of hundreds of yards, over furlongs of stone. She moved through the space beneath the arch where the man was sweeping. She found the other pillars identically marked, their faces obliterated on all sides by the names that were carved on them.

'Who are these, these ...?; She gestured with her hand.'
'These?' The man with the brush sounded surprised. 'The lost.'
'Men who died in battle?'
'No. The lost, the ones they did not find. The others are in cemeteries.'
'These are just the ... unfound?'

She looked at the vault above her head and then around in panic at the endless writing, as though the surface of the sky had been papered in footnotes.

When she could speak again, she said, 'from the whole war?'

The man shook his head. 'Just these fields.' He gestured with his arm.

Elizabeth went and sat on the steps on the other side of the monument. Beneath her was a formal garden with some rows of white headstones, each with a tended plant or flower at its base, each cleaned and beautiful in the weak winter sunlight.

'Nobody told me.' She ran her fingers with their red-painted nails back through her thick dark hair. 'My God, nobody told me'.

The Station has a number of parades and honour guards running on the 10th of Nov in Hermitage, Newbury, Thatcham, Chieveley, Beedon and Lambourne. Currently, Sergeant Majors are refining the standard of dress of our soldiers and are rehearsing them for these parades. The public spectacle of the Army 'remembering' the fallen and absent friends. You will all have a particular person that you will think of on the 10th during the silence; somebody significant and who perhaps did not come home.

I have been struck this year by the number of requests from young soldiers in the Regiment who have asked to parade elsewhere, whether it is at home or a previous Duty Station. Their reason is simple. It is where they knew, worked or lived with a comrade. A battle buddy. Somebody they trusted. Somebody they built a basha with or dug a trench with. Their friend. A friend who did not come home. This is the reality of Army life for those today – operational tempo has been demanding for the last 20 years and the modern soldier is a seasoned professional who has deployed several times and who has been the epitome of selfless commitment. He has deployed to Iraq, Bosnia, Macedonia/Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan to name but a few and he or she has witnessed the horrors of warfare.

"We will remember them"

Other business: 14 Sqn are now up and running in Roy Lines at RAF Wyton. Its impact on Wyton has been immediate and impressive, injecting new life and vigour into the Station with comments on our soldiers' professionalism. In the first 'Station Commanders Competition' teams from the Squadron came 1st, 2nd and 3rd! A great start and they begin to lay the foundations for the unit move next year.

Hybridisation, (the 'One Army' concept), gathers pace with our Army Reserve unit, 135 Squadron, coming under command of CO 42 Engr Regt (Geo) on 1 April 2014. Our already excellent relationship with them is being fostered and further developed and we look to the Reserve to be the future provider of certain specialist skill sets that we find increasingly difficult to maintain e.g. Field Survey. I have included several articles which will give you a feel for the quality of those who are part time soldiers.

Op HERRICK

The Regiment currently have 17 personnel in theatre. Op HERRICK 18 has now handed over to Op HERRICK 19, with this has come the reduction of 3 Geo PIDS with a further 5 to follow before the start of Op HERRICK 20. Field Deployable Geoint (FDG) implementation team of 6 has deployed and an airfield survey team has deployed to BASTION to carry out a check survey.

Op ATALANTA (Anti-Piracy Operation Somali Coastline)

The Regiment continues to support Op ATALANTA with one Geo Analyst (GA) working in the EUNAVFOR HQ currently located within PJHQ at Northwood.

Defence Intelligence Assessments Staff (DISA) –MIDDLE EAST and NORTHERN AFRICA (MENA)

There is currently one GA working with the MENA desk in DIAS situated at the Old War Office Building.

Op FORTIFY (Reserve recruiting).

The Regiment have deployed 2 x GA to provide Geospatial Advice to the team working on Op FORTIFY

Op TOSCA (UN Peacekeeping in Cyprus)

42 Regiment have deployed 1 x GA to provide Geospatial Support to the PDT for Op TOSCA.

Director Special Forces (DSF)

Two GA are deployed to DSF in support of current operations in the Eastern Mediterranean.

British Forces South Atlantic Islands (BFSAI)

The Regiment continues to provide a GA to support HQ BFSAI.

Exercise COUGAR 13

This exercise is the Royal Navy's long range deployment testing the ability of the newly-formed UK Response Force Task Group to deal with major events thousands of miles from home. Deployed on the exercise the Regiment currently has a GA in support of 3 Commando Brigade, two with the Lead Commando Task Group (LCTG) and two in support of the METEOC on board HMS ILLUSTRIOUS.

Op NIGHTINGALE

The Regiment has deployed four GA, two from 135, to provide survey support to the recovery of a downed Spitfire from World War 2.

Exercise Support

42 Engineer Regiment (Geo) has also supported 14 external exercises.

“This is Not a Holiday” - Ex DENISON DIVER, 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic)

27-28 Sep 13 by LCpl Gatrell – nominated for diary of the day for nearly running out of air!

Dark o'clock on 27 Sep 13, 21 personnel from 42 Engr Regt (Geo) departed Denison Barracks for Gatwick airport on Ex DENISON DIVER; a week long, live aboard, diving expedition in the Red Sea, Egypt. The team of 21 were supported by two JS Sub-Aqua Diving Supervisors (SADS).

Unusually there were no issues with the journey, albeit long, and we all arrived on board the Blue Horizon in one piece but minus a bottle of Lt “Big Fish” Moran’s Southern Comfort (which she kindly left for the air crew to enjoy). We were then treated to a delightful dinner before checking our dive kit all worked and retiring to bed to start early in the morning.

Our first dive was at Poseidon and a shakedown to sort out our buoyancy, remind ourselves of the skills we learnt during our pre-deployment training, and to blow away the cobwebs. All went well and the boat set off for the next location at Small Gubal. With everyone back in to the swing of things the barge at Gubal was a chance to sample some of the glorious marine life the Red Sea has to offer including clown, trigger, cat and stone fish to name but a few.



The last dive gave the opportunity for the more experienced divers to dive at night who came back describing WO2 “Fingers” Robinson’s slightly disturbing penchant for guiding lion fish on to their pray.

29 Sep 13 by Spr Pike – for losing my £200 dive computer

The day began with a 0530 wake-up and brief for another Small Gabul dive. Feeling much more awake, we surfaced to breakfast and prepared for our second dive, the wreck of The Kingston at Shag Rock. Shag had a great coral reef teeming with shoals of butterflyfish, and many small eels hiding in the coral expanse. Being picked up in the zodiac, a pod of dolphins arrived to escort us back to the boat which was an amazing site, and a much better boast than the first dive group’s sighting of a turtle.

Lunch over; we moved to the wreck of SS Thistlegorm. Thistlegorm (Gaelic for blue thistle) was a British transport ship with a displacement of 5000 tonnes. Destined to supply troops in Egypt and Libya during WWII with vehicles, weapons and ammunition, she was bombed by German aircraft which got lucky and exploded the ordnance she was carrying. This was an interesting dive and the highlight of the trip for many due to the ship’s incredible size and interesting military cargo, with storage areas full of stacks of rifles, motorbikes, artillery shells and even a small tank called a Bren Gun Carrier. It also fully tested our buoyancy control and awareness of obstacles for the first time as, under dive guidance, we penetrated the hold and other parts of the ship – we generally did well, although a few cylinders received some knocks on doorways along the way. LCpl “Cheetara” Lofts also took the wreck on in a head-butting competition, and strangely lost.



The night dive was also at Thistlegorm and the first for the Ocean Divers (who all manned up despite some admitting they were scared of the dark!). Highlight was Lt Moran and Cpl Urquhart allegedly seeing a fish “as big as a human” - adding value as usual.

30 Sep 13 by Spr ‘Wifi’ Woolliscroft - for attacking people with my fins and generally annoying all

Bright eyed, bushy tailed, and ready for the days dives, we went down onto the Thistlegorm at 0600; the gods of the sea were kind and throughout we had little or no current and the viz was lush. This time we went more intricately into the wreck itself exploring the hold and the cargo that was lost among the wreckage. Others more experienced went to look at the stern, as well as one of the locomotives (blown off the ship in the explosion). While I was trying not to have a panic attack, as I hate small spaces, quite a few of the others saw the resident turtle munching away at the soft coral which was talk of the boat!

After breakfast we dived The Dunraven, an old wreck of a steam boat upside down, however the main attraction of this dive was the reefs next to it and the coral and marine life.

After lunch we dived on Shark and Yolanda Reefs, teeming with life as they reside within the Ras Mohammed National Park, a marine sanctuary. We were dropped next to them on a huge 800 metre drop off, at this point many of the others lost their heads and became seduced by the “deep blue” (and the thought of finding sharks) accidentally breaking their depth. Once recovered we made it to the awesome reef; the best sites being turtles, tuna, and a huge napoleon wrasse, as well as the only intact remains of an old wreck which happened to be its cargo of porcelain toilets. LCpl “Cheetara” Lofts let Harvey, the duty rabbit, have a toilet stop here.

With the final day dive finished we moved 2 hours to the northern Straits of Tiran for the night dive where we encountered a few lion fish and a big school of small fish milling around under the boat before Spr “Little Sergeant” Sargeant and I made some shadow puppets before ascending. Highlights of the day were seeing a turtle on the surface and pretty much 50% of the divers breaking their depth (me not included) and not being allowed to do the night dive as a consequence. All in all a good day and some bitter lessons learnt!

1 Oct 13 by Spr Seymour- for taking my first stage off without turning off the cylinder and scaring everyone to death with loud a blast of air

A lovely start to the beginning of the month, our first, second and third dives were at adjacent reefs. These were Gordon Reef, Thomas Reef and Jackson Reef. Gordon Reef was a drop off dive with a plateau at the top full of coral boulders, sandy bottoms and a variety of marine life. We were all extremely careful with our depths as they did not want a repeat of last night!

Both Thomas and Jackson Reefs were drift dives (where we all took the opportunity to superman through the water), with Jackson being a zodiac drop off (which we took the opportunity to backwards summersault off of). On both dives we saw a turtle with one of them trying to kiss Spr Scott Conboy before he gracefully backwards somersaulted out of the way matrix-style. During these dives we were able to challenge the paradigm to make the experience “totally awesome dude” (Finding Nemo quote of the day).

During a rare relaxed period between dives, there was a lot of acrobatics from the boat into the water. A turtle was spotted, and minutes later a blue spotted stingray was seen cunningly disguised as a Tesco value plastic bag...

The final dive of the day was Temple Reef, a nice relaxed one to end the day. Many of us swam along with a giant moray eel and a crocodile fish. During this dive certain individuals became navigationally embarrassed as they once again ascended at the wrong boat (not mentioning any names..... SSgt Mitchell, LCpl Lofts, WO1 Noel and LCpl Urquhart)

2 Oct 13 by WO2 (QMSI) Robinson - for using my “pathetically ineffective” torch in a wreck for 5 minutes without realising I hadn’t actually turned it on

Day 5 consisted of a reef dive at Jackfish Alley, wreck dives at Chrisoula Wreck and Giannis D (both at Abu Nuhas) and a simple night reef dive at Poseidon II. The day started with another welcome 0530 reveille and 0600 dive brief. The dive at Jackfish Alley presented the Ocean Divers their first opportunity to conduct a cave swim-through, before apparently an 800m “race” along a stunning hard and soft coral reef. The usual fauna were there to say hi and there was also an opportunity to swim with barracuda. Recovery was via a 12 man RIB which was definitely only designed to carry 6!

Dive 2 was on the Chrisoula K, a Greek cargo ship that sunk in 1981 carrying Italian tiles. This dive gave the opportunity for the inexperienced divers to progress with some basic wreck penetration exercises, predominantly effective buoyancy using controlled breathing, and navigating through a ship with minimum finning (to prevent kicking up silt and reducing the visibility).

Dive 3 was on the Giannis D wreck, a Greek freighter sunk in 1983 carrying wood – afternote: don’t ever travel on a Greek registered ship in the Red Sea; they might be planning an insurance job. This wreck presented the most challenging wreck penetration to all the divers on the expedition. Despite the perfect opportunity to explore some lesser visited areas of a wreck, the general beeline was to the bridge to pretend to be Captain. A special thank you needs to be paid at this point to LCpl “Jack by name, Jack by nature” Gatrell and Spr “each to their own” Conboy who were directed to remain with me while I completed my additional safety stop. Who, on acknowledging this direction both instantly abandoned me to the mercy of the deep blue all alone. Luckily, and safely, there were others coming up to the safety stop, or their manhood’s may have been in jeopardy.

The final dive of the day was a simple navigation exercise around a small reef back at Poseidon. For the first time all the experienced divers could not dive (as they had been practicing a deep, (nearly) 40m, dive that day) and the guides were stood down; what could possibly go wrong?... With lots to see and highlights like giant morays, blue-spotted stingrays, and various starfish the dive was enjoyed by most. LCpl Gatrell and Spr Conboy provided the highlight however by demonstrating their remarkable navigational skills. They dived on a south bearing for half their dive, expertly identified the requirement to turn around when they had used up half their air, and conducted a 360 degree turn... resulting in them continuing on the southerly bearing. When (obviously) failing to find the boat at the end of the dive, they deployed a Delayed Surface Marker Buoy (DSMB) with cyalume attached; thankfully they were just about spotted in the dark and rescued by RIB. GEEEEEO!



3 Oct 13 by Cpl Ireland - for sitting at the dinner table in wet shorts

The final day of diving was to be a shorter one than usual as we only had two dives to carry out. We were afforded the luxury of a slightly later wakeup call before it was business as usual for the briefing of the first dive on the Umm Gumar. This consisted of following a wall drop off, which was down to about 900 metres meaning buoyancy and depth checking were particularly important. As we were all now conserving our air like pros we were allowed to explore what the reef had to offer for an hour which was a great change

from the start of the exped where most of us only lasted 30 minutes.

Afterwards we moved on to Fanous East, which involved a slightly choppy crossing over breakfast, then brief and dive. This reef system was full of marine life including a turtle and a couple of blue spotted rays. We had also been briefed on a particular hollow pinnacle that housed ‘tamed’ cleaner wrasse who would be happy to clean you if you hovered around their home long enough. Once I navigated to the pinnacle I experienced this very unnatural sensation as two swam out and started nipping inside my ears, my hands and arms as I stretched them out, and finally my mouth as I took a big gulp of air, removed my regulator and opened it. It may sound odd, but this hilarious experience was certainly the highlight of the dive, if not one of the whole trip. A group of about five of us had queued up to have this

underwater cleaning treatment before realising a little late that we had used up a bit too much air giggling at the strange sensation and had to make a speedy retreat back to the Blue Horizon. Very disappointed when we realised we had once again surfaced at the wrong boat we had to fin about 100m back, which isn't the easiest way of getting about.

This was the last dive of the trip and after that we had the obligatory stripping out of cleaning of kit before it was time to grab a few well deserved beers and head to the onboard hot tub (yes, there was a hot tub). Then it was home the next day after the mandated 24 hour non-diving period, and a few more beers. Overall Ex DENISON DIVER was a fantastic experience that I was privileged to be a part of and will always remember as one of the highlights of my Army Career... AND NOT A HOLIDAY.

EX DHOWES PEAK 16 – 23 Jul 13

Ex Dhowes Peak was a 13 Sqn Military Assistance to the Civilian Community (MACC) task to upgrade and help maintain the mountain bike trails at Whinlatter Forest, Cumbria.

The week started with a six hour coach trip to Cockermouth Rugby Club where we were kindly allowed to stay for the duration of the exercise. As we were staying at the rugby club most of the facilities we required such as showers, toilets, kitchen, dining area and the most important one – the Bar, were already there. Consequently on arrival, all we had to do was set up our tents. When this was done we all waited patiently for the club's bar to open at 2000 hrs. Thankfully this would happen on time religiously over the week and to make it even better, they were serving their beer at a reduced rate for us.

Our first day on the actual task at Whinlatter was one of the hardest days we had that week. We were tasked by Paul (The Forestry Commission Ranger) with upgrading a section of the blue route. To upgrade this route we had to start by creating culverts and drainage areas for the water to run off. When this was done we then had to lay a thick layer of gravel over the top and compact it. We split into two groups, one working from the top of the route and the other from the bottom. The drainage was 'smashed out' within an hour but laying the gravel seemed to take forever. It was such a repetitive task walking up and down the hill with a wheelbarrow full of gravel. Morale was starting to decrease at an alarming rate due to the heat and monotony of the task, but then there was a massive morale boost in the form of a bag full of ice lollies! After this break, things started going a lot quicker, mainly due to Cpl Wilkins efforts to improve his time going up and down the hill with the gravel. When this day was finally over it was a short trip back to the rugby club to wait for 2000hrs for a well deserved beer.

For two days after this, the section I was in got to go mountain biking along the trails at Whinlatter. After the first day this was definitely something we were looking forward to. We were constantly winding the other boys up about how they had to work and we were having fun for two days...How wrong we were!!! The mountain biking was brutal. On the first day we had a good start with Spr Fieldhouse falling off in the car park (after riding for all of 5 seconds). We then went on to the blue route (one of the easiest routes) which was a good start to the day. After this however, we moved on to do two of the red routes which were significantly harder. It was enjoyable coming down the hills (when you stayed on your bike) however, 50% of the day was uphill! On one of the red routes there was a hill called "Heartbreak Hill" - it was never ending. Every time you thought you were at the top there would always be another bit to go. By the end of this day I was dreading doing it all again, mainly due to the fact that I couldn't sit down without being in agony.

On day two of the mountain biking we conducted exactly the same routes as the previous day, for some reason this day seemed to fly by and was a lot more enjoyable. You could see a massive difference in the confidence of the group when it came to going over obstacles. It was probably the best day of the exercise made even more enjoyable when we went to a nearby lake in the evening for a refreshing dip.

After our two day break from manual labour it was time for us to swap with one of the other sections so they could enjoy the mountain biking and we could get stuck into some real work. We were upgrading a section of one of the red routes which was exactly the same as the first day but not on the side of a steep hill. That afternoon we were playing rugby against Cockermouth RFC and although we unfortunately lost one of our players with an injured collar bone in a closely fought encounter but still recorded a commendable 10-7 win. To celebrate this win we had a hog roast which we shared with the

local players and then we went out en masse into Cockermouth wearing fancy dress. Some people looked too comfortable in their fancy dress, especially the OC – Maj Simon Finch RE dressed as his wife.

On our return to work we had a new task (as the paths had been completed ahead of schedule). We had been given a map showing where rhododendrons were growing in a local forest and we were to remove them. Initially this looked like an easy task when Paul was showing us what they were, his example looked quite small. When we were left to crack on with it, it turned out they can grow pretty big and there was loads of them. After struggling on for that day using hand saws to cut them down, it was decided the following day we will bring a chainsaw to make it a bit easier, and a bit more fun! On return to camp that night it was forecast to have heavy rain the following morning so it was decided that all the tents bar one will be taken down to save on drying when we returned to camp in a couple of days.

The following day it rained heavily. We were all ready to leave the rugby club to start our day's work, when Paul arrived with bad news. It was too wet to work in the forest. No midge bites for us that day! After finding this out the seniors then decided that it might be better if we left a day early as there was no more work for us to do. The morning was spent clearing up any mess we had left at the rugby club, saying our farewells, and embarking on our long journey home.

Spr Griffin

Turkey – Gallipoli Battlefield Tour 23rd/26th May 2013

On the early hours of the 23rd May, 15 TA and Regular soldiers made their way to Luton airport for the trip to Istanbul. Having been briefed on the visit, it wasn't long before somebody got found out for not paying attention to the finer points of the joining instructions. When boarding the flight 14 of the 15 got on ok, but I didn't. Packing lightly isn't something that comes easily to me so I ended up shelling out £40 to Easyjet as my bag needed to go in the hold, due to its weight and size. What I wasn't expecting was that this charge would mean that Easyjet didn't do anything with it, as it turned out they wanted me to take it to the plane – what was the charge for again?

After a 4 hour flight we arrived in Turkey, all wide eyed to what we were about to experience. The trip to the hotel was achieved by boarding almost all forms of transport, starting with a bus and ending with a boat ride. On arrival at the hotel everyone seemed keen to get a shower and fresh clothes but this was delayed when the hotel manager could only inform us that our booking was cancelled and we had no rooms. After many phone calls and haggling we managed to get a hotel in a neighbouring street which actually seemed better than the original.

I had pretty much learnt that Turkish people are quite friendly and are big on hospitality and making their guests welcome. Their national pride is also very obvious as most of the flags are big enough to be seen for miles. We also made sure the trip was packed with cultural visits to various places of interest within Istanbul. Sgt Walsh being the tour guide was a bonus, as it made visits to the Hagia Sophia and the city walls come to life.....The man is a walking encyclopaedia!

We were also all tasked in teams of three with answering questions related to the Gallipoli conflict a few weeks before the trip, this was to encourage us to study more about the history and the understand the purpose of the trip. Many of the presentations were very well put together and each team took it in turns to present theirs throughout the visit.

On the last full day of the trip we made the long journey from Istanbul to Gallipoli which was interrupted by the mini bus having a cam belt snap. Once the trip resumed we could look forward to seeing ANZAC Cove, the beach in which Australian and New Zealand forces landed. Here we could see the difficult terrain the Allied forces had to fight on, whilst observing why the landings failed.

I for one hadn't realised the task ANZAC forces had in taking the cove. Having seen the film of the event, and now actual visiting it I could now fully understand why they struggled to move forward. The Turkish forces had tactical supremacy as they occupied the high ground. I had also learnt from the trip that allied forces may have actually been successful if the British had continued to make ground and keep momentum, which they didn't.

At the British forces memorial WO2 Hunt was able to locate the name of a family member who fell all those years ago. Whilst it was interesting to see all the different Regiments and units that no longer exist, it did remind us of the huge loss of life that was a result of the failed mission of taking Gallipoli.



The visit to one of the beaches where the British forces landed turned out to be quite an experience. Craters still exist in the soil along with pieces of shrapnel, and bullet cases. I even found some pottery but was quickly told that it wasn't that old and I was just picking up rubbish.

Having seen the film about Gallipoli I now know that visiting is a lot more beneficial to learning about history. It gives a sense you were there and also the conditions the men were in. Hopefully we can all learn something from the mistakes made all those years ago.

Battlefield tours have a huge role to play in education. Sometimes a book or film isn't enough, seeing the very place and understanding the reasons for the outcome can become more apparent from a visit. I would recommend anyone to attend a battlefield tour, not just to learn, but also to pay our respects to those who fell.

LCpl Will Dawe

135 Geo Sqn RE - Exercise Cockney Muir – USA 2013 – “No plan survives contact”

Exercise Cockney Muir was a remote mountaineering Adventure Training exercise organised by 135 Geo Sqn RE, to trek the John Muir Trail through the Sierra Nevada, California. There were 12 participants from a variety of backgrounds including Regulars and Reservists; old/young; fit/less-fit; attractive/hideous, and the list goes on. On a Wednesday morning at the end of July, everybody gathered at the Reserves Centre in Ewell for a kit issue and last minute preparation - surprisingly the kit was all relatively new and lightweight, not the decade old kit that I was expecting – a good start.



The following day the team boarded a mini bus and headed to Heathrow for the long haul flight to San Francisco. Checking in was a breeze for most but the first challenge was for Spr Oliver “Penny” Farthing, who somehow offended the check-in attendant and was duly sent on a wild goose chase around the terminal with his ‘oversize luggage’ - which was exactly the same as everyone else’s – after 20 minutes of this a slightly suspicious man took his bag and we all hoped it wouldn’t appear at the other end!! After a quick change in New York we arrived in San Francisco and as we were travelling on NATO travel orders we went through the diplomatic immigration channel to comments from a larger than life American woman shouting “that's a hell of a lot of diplomats”. Unfortunately - everybody’s bags made it to the US safely and we headed into the city, arriving gone 2300 hrs at a dodgy ‘downtown motel’.

The next day everybody broke down into teams and went off with jobs to do - I was on food purchases, so we headed off to a cash and carry and bought \$400 dollars worth of supplies to enable us to eat for the first half of the trip. It was soon very clear it would be hard to fit 8 days’ worth of food into our rucksack with all the other kit that we had to carry. So, as we were leaving the next day, any extra clothes that had been brought were dumped to reduce our weight and

the majority of people felt that binning them was appropriate. However, two members of the team decided to be charitable and donate to the local homeless population - they both appeared back at the hotel in the early hours wearing just boxer shorts and socks – the tone for the trip was set.

A walk, tube, train and coach ride later we arrived at the Yosemite national park to collect our permits and hire bear canisters (bear proof tubs big enough to be a nightmare to pack into your rucksack but not big enough to fit a weeks' worth of food). This was to be the first night sleeping under the stars but not yet in the wilderness, it enabled people to practice their tent erection and morning routine, this was especially helpful for Cpl Shane Morley whose tent was very limp after his first attempt but some helpful hints from the lads and it was certainly up (not well, but up). On day 4 of the trip we woke early and boarded another bus to the start of the trail head, we were finally there, in the wilderness well, almost the wilderness, we had a spectacular view of Half Dome but we were sharing it with 300 tourists. We pushed on and had a few hours' worth of trekking to test and adjust before we got to the prearranged camp site. With a few hours of daylight left we pitched tents, cooked dinner and I had the best job of digging a latrine. During the first night around the camp fire the seniors told story's of "the good old days when the army was fun" with the prime suspect being Capt "Nessie" Smith who has done everything and anything that has ever happened, possibly inventing fire, the karma sutra and the wheel. During the night I was awoken to the sound of rustling outside my tent, with the real possibility of bears in the area, I arose walking stick and knife in hand too discover a heard of deer foraging around the camp site - and back to sleep it was.

On day 5 we arose at dawn and were walking 90 minutes later, a cheeky 14 miler with over a mile of height gain throughout the day made it clear that there were different levels of fitness amongst the group, the day also highlighted the extreme temperature changes that we would be facing, freezing during the night and boiling (up to 95F) in the mid-day heat. As we progressed along the John Muir trail there were the obvious ups and downs, Spr Liam Loughran complained about almost everything, Capt Rupert Hurry (our doctor) said on a particularly steep ascent that it is "medically possible to breath out of your arse", Spr Victor Leung became strange and compulsive and Cpl Shane Morley never learned to put up a tent. The trail itself took us over some high passes seeing snow, through river valleys with crystal clear streams, passed ancient woodland, across open plains and into areas devastated by forest fire, a truly amazing mix of scenery. It became apparent was that John Muir didn't like contouring but preferred to zigzag up and down mountains continuously - he did it on a horse, so cheated a bit.

After 7 days of amazing scenery, lots of ups and downs, and many conversations with Americans who "just loved" that we were from the Military, we approached the half-way point at Vermilion Valley, having covered about 100 miles. We walked to where we should have got picked up by a boat to take us to the Vermilion Valley Resort for a rest day and to resupply but the lake had been half drained due to a two year California drought, so an extra couple of miles across the river bed was required before we reached the water's edge. The evening went well with a large meal and a few beers enjoyed by all. Unfortunately, at this point, I had developed an infection in my foot and Spr John Diston had been coping with large blisters across the entirety of both of his feet. So, the next day the doctor effectively said that Spr Diston and I would not be able to continue the trek and would have to meet the group at the end – after some hastily re-arranged travel and logistics we waved the group off the following day and extracted ourselves back to civilisation.

The rest of the group set off for the remaining 130 mile trek to Mt Whitney, refreshed and ready for more wilderness - and cold beer at the end. However, in classic, "no plan survives contact with the enemy" style, things were not to go to plan. The second half of the trip was more remote and the passes were higher, averaging around 12,000ft. But...after five beautiful and simply awesome days, passing through places with names like Evolution Meadow, Muir Pass and Crater Mountain, things took a turn for the worse. Major Batey had been feeling unwell for a few days and when his condition worsened, he and the exercise doctor decided to call for assistance from the Park Rangers. They in turn called in the Air Medic, who assessed the situation and decided to evacuate Maj Batey – the guys sat around patiently as this all took several hours and took turns to run up the hill to get a Satphone signal. After waiving off the Helicopter and a very sad looking boss, Capt Nessie Smith then decided to get the team to the nearest road head 25 miles away as he did not have enough qualified personnel to safely continue with the trek – effectively ending the trek after covering around 207 miles – the bear they spotted on the way to the road was a small consolation for their change of route.

This is where we come back in to the story - In order to get the team back together we hired a 15 seater van and drove to Fresno to collect, firstly Maj Batey from hospital (he's ok now) and then the rest of the group from the wilderness. After an emotional reunion, a drive along the bendiest road in America, and an overnight stay in the Motel where they filmed 'Psycho', the group headed to Los Angeles for a few days R&R. We arrived a day before our Hostel reservation but WO2 Mark Austin-Ellis managed to square away room upgrades for the group, the only bad part of the deal was that we were staying in Inglewood – not the best part of town. The next couple of days were spent exploring L.A and relaxing by the pool before heading back to England.

Overall the trip did not go to plan – but it was definitely an enjoyable adventure which took everyone out of their comfort zone – I think that's what adventure training is all about, so, all in all I would say it was a resounding success - I would do it all again at the drop of a hat if the opportunity arose.

LCpl Joe Atkins

Reservist Returns from Afghanistan to Win Parachute Gold.



LCpl Thelma Goddard, a reservist with 135 Geographic Squadron recently competed in the Armed Forces Parachute Championships at Netheravon. Thelma, a keen skydiver and instructor with 530 jumps under her belt, recently swapped the clear blue skies of Afghanistan (where she had just finished her operational tour supplying mapping support) for the cloudy Wiltshire skies and her love of parachuting.

The annual competition sees military and civilian skydivers competing for medals in various parachuting disciplines. Thelma competed in four-way formation skydiving which involves a team of four people exiting the plane together at 13,000 feet and, during freefall, making predetermined patterns as quickly as possible to score the most points before reaching "pull height" and having to deploy your parachute.

LCpl Goddard's four-way team was all female and included Flt Lt Thea Westly RAF, Major Anna Scott also of the Royal Engineers and Lieutenant Freddie Huntley of the Royal Navy. The name of the team was Virtus, named after the goddess of military strength. However, as Team Virtus included all three services and a reservist and it was pointed out that it should have been called "Future Forces 2020".

Operational commitments had meant that team Virtus had only been able to get together for one weekend of training jumps before the competition was due to start, so expectations of success were not particularly high. The idea was to have fun, enjoy the experience and to develop skills for the future.

After the first few rounds the Virtus girls realised that they were putting in a good competitive performance. The jumps are filmed by a camera man who flies above the formation and records what goes on for the judges to watch from the comfort of a TV screen.

On the final day of jumping, Virtus managed to snatch Gold in their category and are heading to the Nationals at the end of August where hopefully their success can be repeated.

Capt Archer, the Sqn 2IC, said "The Army Reserves (formerly known as the TA) subscribe to the 'work hard, play hard' ethic and adventure training such as parachuting is both mentally and physically challenging and hence great preparation for mobilised operational service".

Currently members of the Squadron are on Operations in Afghanistan whilst others are undertaking a gruelling wilderness expedition in the USA. Do you fancy a similarly exciting lifestyle? Contact us at 135ENGRVGEOSMI@MOD.UK or phone 0208 393 1913 to check out your options.

42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) Sporting Successes

Rugby

The Hermitage Hawks entered the Army Rugby Union Tens competition held at Newbury RFC on Wed 4 Sep 13. The team was entered into a group containing some of the Army's rugby heavyweights. The group contained 2 Scots, ATC Pirbright, the ARRC Support Battalion, which contained a Fijian International, and the current Army Champions – 1st Battalion Welsh Guards.

Hermitage Hawks sported a largely young side with five players coming from the RSMS. SSgt Ball and SSgt Corne added the experience and guidance these young players needed. However, with this in mind, and SSgt Corne's two tries (top scorer for the Hawks on the day), the Hawks could not avoid defeat in every one of the four games. On a positive note, the young players gained valuable experience by playing against such talented players and undoubtedly toughened them up due to the amount of defending to be done. All in all, a good experience for the Hawks on what was a sunny day of rugby.

Cycling

LCpl Cripps and Spr Royle represented the Army at the Tour of Dorset two day stage race over the weekend of the 29/30 July. Spr Royle finished 4th and 6th on stages 2 and 3 and finished 7th Overall. LCpl Cripps broke his bike on stage 2, the Army were the best team overall until this point competing against a number of nationally recognised civilian teams.

Spr Royle continues to impress in the Southern Race scene with a number of top 10 finishes notably 2nd at Thruxton on 2nd August and lapping the field at Ludgershall Mon 8th August for another strong 2nd.

RSM - Summary

In summary, it may look to many of you that the Regiment has been enjoying a good deal of sport and adventure training since my last update to you. We have, but I would ask that you bear in mind that these articles only reiterate the flexibility of our men and women in that despite all of the commitments outlined at the start of this 'column' they are still determined to get the most out of service life that they can. It is testament to them that they still find time to plan and execute these activities – often for the benefit of our young soldiers.

We are nearing the momentous changes that A2020 and rebasing are bringing and with 14 Geo Sqn now fully operational in Roy Lines it is getting closer and closer as regards the move of the Regiment out of Denison Barracks. Planning is really starting to warm up as regards 'Newbury Weekend' (20-22 Jun 14) where we will bid farewell to Newbury itself. The plan is to hold Beating Retreat, an Open Day and to exercise the Freedom of Newbury during the weekend with other social activities also going on around these main building blocks. More detail will follow and some of you may note the change in dates to those I mentioned in my last contribution to you (due to the Corps Band availability), but our veterans community is very important to us and I would ask you all to make a note of these new dates for your diary.

So, November is a month associated with Remembrance and as ever this is something we take very seriously and are supporting fully. However, you will note that we are still working hard and supporting operations as well as exercises across the globe. We also continue to plan for the new era and our move to Wyton.

Editors comment:

On behalf of readers I would like to thank the RSM for finding the time during his very busy day to put together such a comprehensive article to illustrate what fills the daily lives of our successors today in the Regiment.

Alan Gordon

Current Financial Status

Bank accounts from statements as at 11 September 2013:

Current Account	£1,815.28	
Reserve Account	£7,121.07	
Total		£8,936.35
Cheques to clear	£282.70	
Geo Soldiers' Fund	£2,460.45 Ring fenced	
Grand Total		£11,114.10

Commitments

Geo Soldiers' Fund	£2,460.45	
Other*	£2,116.00	
Total		£4,576.45

Working Capital £6,537.65

* contingencies ,standard bearers, awards, John Stevens Award, AGM and functions.

Secretary's Notes

Don't forget that the Secretary will be out of contact from 18th of October until the 9th of December. If you have a welfare matter or news of the death of a former military surveyor please contact the editor (details on the last page) who will pass on the information as necessary. If you have something to put on the website send it direct to Dave Johnson as usual. To keep in touch visit the website regularly and click on the New Contributions tab.

Currently from our membership of approximately 350 there are still 126 who receive their newsletters in hardcopy by post. This costs our Association approximately £800 to £850 annually plus a lot of work putting newsletters in envelopes every three months.

Ken Hall, our newsletter distribution member, undertakes this task voluntarily and we meet these costs willingly if they are genuinely required but if you now have a PC, or have reasonable access to one, please help us to keep our costs down and send me your email address.

By cancelling your hard copy you will help to save money, paper, time and energy. You will also get all the Association news much quicker and once received you will find it useful to be able to store your copies for future reference. Thank you.

Rod Siggs, Hon Sec

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Editor's Bit

We are always interested in your anecdotes and memories or indeed what you did after leaving Military Survey. Please send either Word documents and high res jpegs or handwritten pieces with original photographs which we will scan and return to the editor – contact details above.

Visit www.militarysurvey.org