

# The Military Survey (Geographic) Association



## New Year 2013 Newsletter

### Issue 47



### PRESIDENTIAL JOTTINGS

I hope that everyone had a very happy Christmas and on behalf of the committee, here's wishing you all you would wish yourselves and your families for 2013. Thirteen is often regarded as an unlucky number but managing to duck the (Mayan) ending of the world on 21 December last, might give us grounds for a more optimistic point of view.

It is gratifying to learn that the phased withdrawal of (some of) our forces from Afghanistan has been brought forward by approximately one year and our thoughts, as ever turn to the serving soldiers and their welfare. Trying to provide those extras and, where it is perceived necessary, essentials to them is one of the key objectives of our Association. Your subscriptions and donations play a vital part in this.

The efforts in particular of Dave Johnson and Alan Gordon have now born fruit and an excellent CD of the Military Survey course archive – and much more – is now on sale @ £5 per copy through your secretary, Rod Siggs. This has been covered elsewhere in this newsletter but I would like to give my thanks to Dave and Alan for their hard work to produce a permanent record of all who have passed through the hallowed portals of The School.

Our last AGM was well attended – almost as many of you as at the previous combined AGM and social at 135 the preceding year. The debate concerning the 're-branding' of the Association was particularly stimulating and, to me, demonstrates healthy concern for its wellbeing by our members. I hope that any fears of an initiative to depart the REA by stealth have now been allayed.

The 2014 move northwards from Hermitage looms ever closer and thought needs to be given with regard to whether the Association's centre of gravity should remain rooted in the south. It is no secret that the existing committee is domiciled there for purely practical reasons – minimising journeys to attend committee meetings to name but one – and the presence of The Regiment in the area makes this eminently justifiable. However, it will be necessary to grasp this nettle and give consideration to the practical challenges that the move presents for the Association.

I believe that the forthcoming AGM (14<sup>th</sup> March; don't forget) would make the ideal forum for a discussion of the move's implications for us and I hope that as many of you as possible will make the effort to attend this important event.

On the brighter side, under the iron control of our Chairman, Gus, I am confident that the AGM will accomplish its business swiftly in order to maximise the time for good fellowship and lots to eat and drink.

See you there.

**BOB AVENELL**

Verwood, Dorset

**MILITARY SURVEY ASSOCIATION  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**1800hrs for 1900hrs FRIDAY THE 15th OF MARCH 2013  
Location: SGTs MESS - DENISON BARRACKS - HERMITAGE**

Our next AGM rapidly follows the last one and will, hereafter, always be held in the spring separate from any planned major reunion. Thus this year's AGM will take place on the evening of the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2013 and we would encourage all members to attend. None of our meetings are boring and anyone who has attended recent meetings will be aware they are short, to the point and entertaining; this will not change.

We intend to provide sustenance in a similar vein to that of last year's AGM which was highly commended by the diners. You will be asked to contribute something towards this on the night rather than in advance, any such charge per head is expected to be minimal (£10) and as you all know the beer is not expensive.

Thus your Committee, with the kind permission of Commander JAGO, Colonel Mark Burrows and of course the RSM, WO1(RSM) W (Will) Robinson, extend an invitation to members to attend the AGM in the Sgts Mess Hermitage at 1900hrs on Friday night the 15th March 2013.

**FURTHER DETAILS AND THE RETURN FORM ARE AT THE LAST PAGE**

**RETURNS BEFORE 28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2013 PLEASE**

**AGENDA**

Chairman's Opening Remarks Apologies	On Notice Board prior to AGM
Minutes of 13th AGM	Secretary
Annual Report on 2012/13	Chairman
Financial Status & Audited Accounts 2011/12	Treasurer
Election of Auditors for 2013/14	Chairman
Committee	President
Any Other Business*	Chairman
Date of Next AGM	Chairman
Closing Remarks	President

\*Members are requested to note that "Proposals", under AOB, should be submitted in writing to the Honorary Secretary a week before the meeting.

The Military Update will be given by the CO of 42 Engr Regt Geo, or his representative, prior to the AGM or immediately afterwards.

## PLEASE HELP THE SECRETARY

Do you recognise one of these “failed” email addresses that keep rebounding? Please let the Secretary know of your change of email address (and postal address when that happens) and if one of your colleagues changes his/hers, ask them if they have let me know.....PLEASE. They won't get their newsletter and other Association information without letting me know.

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Contact Rod Siggs the secretary on either:  
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email [rod.siggs@ntlworld.com](mailto:rod.siggs@ntlworld.com)

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## Were You There?

The editor is always looking for personal story input and at the same time, the small team working on researching and writing our history are keen to add such articles to the ever growing library of source material from which they intend to distil the Story of Military Survey. The following are some of the events that are not well recorded – were you there? If so the editor and the team are keen to hear the why, where, when, how and who from someone who took part. Please take the time out to tell us your story.

**Op Mandau.** One interesting field survey task was the deployment to Kalimantan so shortly after the end of the four year Confrontation with Indonesia. We have discovered some photographs of the operation but would appreciate a short write up about the task.

**42 Regiment Leaving Fayid.** What was it like to be there when the huge British base in the Canal Zone, one of the largest ever, was so quickly closed down and the Regiment moved to Cyprus?

**13 Squadron's Withdrawal from Aden.** Similarly, the withdrawal from Aden was a rushed affair carried out amid violence and civil war. What did 13 take and what happened to what was left behind?

**Living with EOKA.** What was daily life like in Cyprus during the EOKA terror campaign not only for the single soldiers living at Zyyi but for the families living elsewhere? What tasks did the Regiment do specifically to support operations against EOKA?

**The Original SBA Boundary Survey.** This issue of the newsletter includes a write up of last year's Ex Trig Med. Were you involved in the original survey that put the boundary pillars in place?

**ASLS Detachments.** Both 1 ASLS from Cyprus and the SLS(UK) at RAF Wyton carried out detachments to some rather exotic spots, for instance, the South Pacific and Kenya. We'd love to hear about any detachments that you did.

**BAOR Exercises.** Throughout the forty years of the Cold War the forces in Germany continually exercised their war role. 14 Squadron, sometimes augmented by 42 Regiment and 135 Squadron, carried out Military Survey's field role. What actually happened when the 'train' deployed? Details, from the early preparations to the hot wash up afterwards are not officially recorded but would tell the story of soldiering in Germany.

Such events as these are now half forgotten history but your story could add the colour to bring them alive. If you have a story to tell please send it to the editor – contact details are given later in this newsletter.

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## The Hermitage Course Photographs Archive CD

The Course Photographs CD has proved to be an instant hit as shown by the following extracts from some of the 'thanks' emails recently received.

*Just to say many thanks for all the hard work that obviously went into producing the CD. Great job and much appreciated. I received my copy this morning and have spent the last few hours looking at old faces.*

*Just had an Email from Mike Keeble in Australia with his latest news. He tells me that Steve High (ex Chepstow) is visiting him shortly. I knew him from Singapore but could not put a face to him. Problem solved - I simply put in your CD and there he was. Once again, great job and all the very best for 2013. Regards Bev (Hill)*

*Could you please accept my sincere thanks for the excellent product you have both produced..*

*I have thoroughly enjoyed looking through the images although it will take a long time to study them all carefully. Well worth the £5, in fact I think you have undersold the product. Having all the photos and the potted histories has made it an excellent product.*

*Best wishes.  
Nick (Collins)*

*I spent hours looking at the MCE courses and the colleagues I worked with on my final posting at Feltham - absolutely absorbing.  
Noel (Grimmett)*

*Only just started to really look into the cd. Looks great and a lot of memories. Thanks for your efforts.  
Streak (Hobson)*

To get your copy send a cheque for £5 made payable to Military Survey Branch REA to:

Rod Siggs, Military Survey Association Secretary, 11, Merlin Way, Southwood, Farnborough GU14 0PF.

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## News from the Military Front

### RSM's Column

As we begin 2013 I would like to wish you all a happy and prosperous New Year on behalf of the officers and soldiers 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic). This will be a significant year for us with the return of 14 Geographic Squadron from Monchengladbach in June and the introduction of Future Deployable Geoint (FDG) – which will see a new fleet of Geo vehicles and equipment – in the middle of the year, to name but two significant milestones.

My column includes a piece on FDG itself as a broad concept which I am sure readers will find very interesting. FDG will take up a great deal of Regimental time this year and will be the Main Effort (after operations) with Ex FOUGASSE START in June and Ex FOUGASSE RETURNS in October being used to introduce FDG and train on FDG respectively. I have also included an operational update and it is worth noting that 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) has had personnel deployed on operations continuously since 1992 – something unrivalled by other units in the Army and commented on recently by General Sir Peter Wall, the Chief of the General Staff. There are also several articles from the Squadrons

As I write this introduction we have just briefed Tranche 3 of the redundancy plan to the Station in which the Army aims to reduce by 5000 officers and soldiers by June 2014. You will have seen this discussed in the media and will see (with a further Tranche of redundancies to follow) the Army reduce to approximately 82,000 in total. This will take the form of compulsory redundancies, should there not be enough applicants for voluntary redundancy, and individuals that fall within the redundancy bracket are being informed as regards their options at this very moment. Geographic officers and soldiers remain exempt from this programme due to the 'Pinch Point' nature of our specialisation but our essential and valued attached personnel are in uncertain times. Royal Engineer drivers and signallers as well as REME soldiers and RLC chefs all fall within the bracket with an announcement to be made in June on who has been selected.

I have now been the RSM for nine months and am delighted to report that the Regiment and its men and women continue to impress the wider Defence Community. Their flexibility and determination to provide geographic support to both operations and training are our hallmark and it is our most junior soldiers who impress the most, delivering intimate geographic support to the tactical level on operations in Afghanistan, as well as at the operational and strategic levels providing situational awareness, Geoint and analysis on which key decisions affecting UK posture on international affairs are based. It is a privilege to have a hand in the mentoring of our 'people' and we are as ever punching above our weight and providing an essential component to operations across the globe.

### HQ JAGO Capability Development – Future Deployable Geoint (FDG)

The Future Deployable GEOINT (FDG) capability provides geospatial information (GEOINF) and geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) support to deployed operations. FDG forms part of a larger programme that aims to improve and harmonise the provision of GEOINT across allied nations. The Allied System for Geospatial-intelligence (ASG) is a five-nation programme (UK, USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand), and the UK element will fund further improvements to deployed GEOINT capability, building on the capability and systems delivered under FDG.

The field deployable equipment therefore that 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) use will be refreshed and will see a move to new vehicle variants and new ways of deploying and working. Exercises this year in the Regimental calendar will see FDG become the focus and the Commanding Officer's direction is that we will make this a Main Effort after Operations. 2013 will be an exciting year!





FDG Concept –future vehicles for Geo Squadrons

## 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) - Operational Update

The Regiment is extremely busy and at the time of writing the following are the key:

- Geo personnel currently deployed on Op HERRICK: 3 officers, 27 soldiers. These are stationed throughout Afghanistan (Kabul, Kandahar and throughout Helmand province)
- The Geo Team within Helmand province are commanded by Captain Ross Schreiber. Geo personnel continue to provide direct support to kinetic operations down to Company level. This support includes complex Geospatial analysis using intelligence gathered from a variety of methods. In line with the Op HERRICK draw down, Geo posts are being reduced by two in early 2013 with the possibility of a further reduction mid-year.
- The Geo team within RC (SW) is commanded by Major LeClerc and are providing Geo support to the Regional Command as well as providing both basic GIS training and map reading instruction to the Afghan National Army.
- DATAMAN continues to be a vital source of Geo capability in theatre. Not only is it providing its own web service (Geo Viewer), but it is also feeding theatre recognised mapping and imagery to a number of other command and control systems. Its success in theatre has resulted in a further two systems being deployed, supporting specialist operators in RC(SW) and a master system situated in Bastion.

### Contingency Teams

- In addition the Regiment is providing Geo teams in support of contingency operations. These include supporting the Airborne Task Force (ABTF), Lead Commando Group (LCG) Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ). All at a high readiness notice to move.

## Exercises

- The Regiment has continued to support a large number of exercises in support of Brigades and Battle Groups in preparation for their deployment. Currently the Regiment this month is supporting exercises with 1 Bde's FTX, in Kenya with 20 Bde, 19 Bde's PDT, LCG to deploy with 3 Cdo on HMS Bullwark, 20 Bde's Germany PDT and MST,
- The Regimental Potential NCO (PNCO) Course commenced on Sat 12 Jan. This will allow our extremely hard working Sprs the opportunity to gain that first tape and hopefully propel them to a full and promising career. The PNCO Course Pass Off will be held on 8<sup>th</sup> February.

## 13 Geographic Squadron - Project TRIG MED 2012

Between the 23 Oct and 25 Nov 2012 members of 13 Geographic Squadron embarked on Project TRIG MED. This is a biennial exercise that takes place within the two British Sovereign Base Areas (SBA), Cyprus. Its aim is to locate all 722 Boundary Pillars (BP) which mark out the legal boundary of the SBAs and the Republic of Cyprus and reinstate those that have been damaged or removed. We expected an easy task of counting the pillars that have stood since 1961, how wrong we were...

The journey began from RAF Brize Norton and saw us landing in Akrotiri where the locals were preparing for the onset of winter however, we were still sweating in shorts! The next day we were split down into five pairs, briefed on the coming work, and issued kit, paperwork and the coveted Toyota Hilux – one of the best all terrain vehicles which for some teams turned out to be essential as some of the BPs were at heights only aircraft should be.

The first phase consisted of the teams' receiving their allocated BPs in the Western Sovereign Base Area (WSBA), which were anything from 100 to 600 metres apart, to see if they were still in place. To do this we used what's known as a Station Diagram; this is a drawing of each pillar's location and the features around it. This document also includes the whereabouts of four 'Witness Marks' which aid in locating the correct position of the BP in the event that it is missing. The BP location can be resurrected through using a resection between these known locations and bearings.

The next phase was to re-establish the pillars that had been destroyed or declared missing. This meant construction time – time for Geo Techs to get their hands dirty! Non Geo Sgt 'Gaz' Coates was on hand, for the first pillar, to give the "Geo" a perfect demonstration on how to dig out any remnants of the old BPs, make the concrete base, and construct a pillar. However, the first pillar proved to be the worst as the 1961 vintage ridiculously large, concrete base was still buried in place however; it did eventually come out after three hours of effort and several broken picks and shovels. Once it was out, the next one was put in then cemented and painted; finally looking quite professional. With all teams familiarised they were soon on their way to the relevant pillars to start constructing.

Once all the construction had been completed in the WSBA there was time for a little relaxation by the beach and later that day the teams moved to Dhekalia in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area (ESBA). The next day all teams were ready to go with the same tasks needing to be carried out as previously in the WSBA. However, this time the majority of the BPs were along the border separating the SBA in the Greek south and the Turkish controlled north. In order to avoid international incidents it was arranged that each team would be allocated a Turkish military liaison officer, a friendly bunch who even helped to find and paint some of the pillars. This was only because they were on their side of the wire, not because we couldn't be bothered. One of the other teams had the privilege of going over to the Turkish side and being 'chauffeured' to each point. Lucky them! This phase of the tasking was carried out over the next week as there were 400+ pillars to find.

A couple of days had gone by when the 'dream team' of LCpl 'Dan' Mumford and Spr Ade 'Dino' Davey ran into a little incident. Pillar E353 was in the middle of a farmer's crop, once half way across the track that led to it they sensibly decided they would walk the rest to avoid the mud from the previous day's downfall. On the walk back however another thunder storm hit and the vehicle sunk before their eyes. It

wasn't going anywhere! Another team, LCpl 'Freddie' Maylon and Spr 'Jamie' Gwilym, soon arrived to assist in the rescue. Both teams tried to dig the vehicle out, packing wood and rocks under the wheels but nothing would help budge it! The SBA police even got involved calling out a JCB but that got stuck too. Finally, the dreaded call which they had tried to avoid was made to the STCO and, after a while, more man power arrived. In no time everyone was covered in mud and were on hands and knees trying to dig the vehicle out. After much effort, the all-terrain Toyota Hilux was out with a big sigh of relief. This mammoth job stopped all work for the day and took seven hours to recover! The 'dream team' weren't happy as it then took another five hours to clean.

With all teams back to work the following day, the rest of the pillars were located. The same detail was carried out on the pillars that were destroyed or missing, meaning more construction. A couple of days adventure training finished the trip off nicely and then back to UK.

## ***LCpls Malyon and Mumford***

### **13 Geographic Squadron - Op OLYMPICS**

Long before the 19,500 strong Venue Security Force (VSF) were drafted in to ensure a safe and secure London 2012, three of 42 Engineer Regiment's finest were stood up and embedded in the London Military Operations Centre (LMOC) in Wellington Barracks from Jan-Sep 12 to provide Geographic Support to the games from the initial planning phase right through to the execution and recovery.



*London Military Operations Centre (LMOC) Staff in Wellington Barracks*

With 28 live sites, 3 million spectators in London on its busiest day, and 19,500 troops working in the capital we soon realised that this was not going to be the "jolly" we were promised!

From a planning perspective Op OLYMPICS was a logistical nightmare. The planning team had to fit 19,500 soldiers, sailors and airmen into TA Centres, Temporary Deployed Accommodation (TDA) and rented commercial sites scattered throughout London and move them to and from 12 Olympic venues in time for their shifts. Therefore, the Geo Cell was initially tasked to create basing and force lay down products to use as planning tools to aid this process. Once the force lay down was established we created infil and exfil products to enable the transportation of each VSF subunit to its respective venue, using the Olympic Route Network (ORN). Just when we thought we had it sorted our plans were steamrollered by the G4S "hiccup" that resulted in more than double the anticipated number of service personnel deploying into London, so our plan had to be reworked.

From March augmented staff started to filter into the HQ and we began a series of 4 preparatory exercises; soon after the LMOC went live with 24 hour manning. By this time we were dealing with bespoke requests from all staff branches, the VSF at each venue, TFL (Transport for London), the Metropolitan Police and the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG). In order to minimise the demand on the Geo Cell and ensure personnel were not entirely reliant on our systems, we gave widespread UK GeoViewer training, allowing personnel to quickly access mapping and imagery



during incidents. To ensure all organisations were collaborating and communicating effectively the contingency team back at the Regiment put together detailed individual venue products. When it was realised that the LOCOG maps were not available in the quantity needed or in some cases fit for purpose, we distributed our products to VSF all over the AO and at their respective Olympic sites and uploaded them onto MOSS for all to access.

It was a high tempo couple of months. However, by the time the Olympics started and more than 4 billion spectators tuned in (over half the world's population!) we were ready. We even got to see some sport and have a photo shoot on The London Eye. Thanks to some pretty fantastic guys staggng on the venues and a lot of hard work behind the scenes from some relentless Staff Officers (helped along by the Geo Cell) London 2012 was a great success with the armed forces saving the day. As the huge poster above our desk said *Keep Calm and Carry On, The Army is Here.*

### 14 Geographic Squadron – Exercise ROY'S RIOT

Halloween 2012 offered an unusual opportunity for 14 Sqn when at short notice they were contacted by 7 Signal Regiment looking for available personnel to take part in helping the local Dutch and German police in riot training. Questions were raised as to whether it was a sensible idea to train the blokes how to riot correctly. However, it turned out it was mainly for the police's benefit. We would be playing the civpop in order to replicate a public disorder scenario, with the police using their existing crowd control tactics to try and control the situation. Hands couldn't shoot up fast enough, but with the squadron being short on 'bods' only eight of us were available to take part, however we did have a secret weapon in Spr Westhead, the approximate size and weight of a Challenger tank.

We dressed in appropriate civilian clothing (tracksuits, scarves, balaclavas etc) LCpl Swales actually looking slightly smarter than usual. Not being born yesterday we also took a few safety measures wearing steel toe-capped boots, shin pads and borrowing some motorbike under-armour. Upon arrival we realised we were facing Rourke's Drift-like odds, with roughly 100 police, heavily armed with night sticks and full riot gear attempting to control 20 rioters. In tracksuits and shin pads.

The scenario was set during a quick brief during where ground rules were laid down; with things we could do (punch, kick, throw insults) with things we couldn't (throw bricks). They then gave a very dry run through to demonstrate the scenario; with the police playing both rioters and themselves to much giggling and camp feigned injury and then gave us a go. Within seconds LCpl Newbold had thrown a full wooden pallet at a policewoman's head.

The Dutch police were first to practice their drills, equipped with batons, helmets and small circular riot shields. We had built a barricade across the road using wooden pallets which they broke through under a hail of missiles and clog-related abuse and started to engage in control measures with the rioters. It quickly became apparent that we were not going to hold our position as they charged us in 10m bounds, swiftly dealing with anyone who was unlucky enough to fall through their lines on the charges. Any attempts to kick the shields from a distance usually resulted in a satisfying annoyed noise coming from the other side of them, however with the downside of a baton cracking you in the shin.

After a few minutes (30 seconds) of this, we withdrew (ran off) to a building and began barricading the door with anything we could find and braced against this. The police struggled with this at first as there was only room for one of them to tackle the barricade at a time. Having seen the film "300" I was very pleased with these tactics until the Dutch overcame this by spraying water (tear gas for the scenario) through a small gap which led to us having to back off. At this point everyone ran off and hid in dark cupboards/corners of the building, except for Westhead who climbed out a window and wasn't seen again for the remainder of the detail.

I was then "arrested" in a way that I can only describe as painful with one of them frogmarching me to their van with my nostrils pulled towards the sky and a punch in the kidney for good measure. Another then joined him to put a hand over my mouth and whisper "vil you shut aap comedian" menacingly in

my ear. The next step I was expecting was to be dragged into a van and told “for you ze var is over”, but at this point I was released and got to enjoy the sight of everyone else being dragged out of the building.

We were now informed the Germans used different tactics to the Dutch, being more aggressive and using long night sticks instead of 2 foot batons. We found this out as, after taking 10 minutes to set up their formation like a chess game, they simply charged at us, around the barrier, and about 100m down a road. The only positive I could gain from the situation was that they had set themselves up and stood for 10 minutes in what they assumed was out of throwing range, but what was actually just inside it. Probably explaining why they were so angry by the time they did get the order to charge, however it might be due to us stealing bananas from their refreshment tent to throw at them.

We adapted our tactics to deal with this new, slightly more dangerous police force by using the only weapon now available to us; trying to throw turf under the visor on the helmets from a distance and then running off. It’s easily the most amount of times I’ve been chased by the police on Halloween since I’ve turned 16; luckily a German carrying roughly 25 kg of riot gear is not going to catch a bus, let alone a soldier in a tracksuit. After about 15 minutes of this the detail was brought to a close and those that had been caught were kept in handcuffs whilst they practiced their custody drills; fingerprints, searches etc.

We received warm thanks by the training organiser and headed merrily back to work to compare bruises.

Moral of the story: if you want to go rioting in your free time, do it in Holland, not Germany!

### ***Spr Eades***

#### **Summary**

Our men and women continue to work hard in the best traditions of the British soldier, whether they are an officer, other rank, Engineer or attached arm, and all are focused on supporting operations in Afghanistan.

The Army is undergoing huge change and restructuring and will be a very different organisation afterwards. Flexibility, value for money and high calibre are the watchwords and we can be justifiably proud of the successes of our people, at home and abroad, on operations or on exercise and as ever they maintain that famous ‘Sense of Humour’.

FDG will see new and exciting changes to how we provide Geographic Support and we also begin our gravitation as a Regiment to Wyton Station this year as 14 Geographic Squadron are ‘re-based’ there on their return to the UK from Germany. The Regiment itself will move in 2015.

The old adage of ‘Follow the Sapper’ has never been more apt as we push on and embrace the future – but that does not mean that we will forget our proud history and heritage or those that have been a part of the Regiment at some stage in that past – ‘Once a Sapper, always a Sapper!’.



WD Robinson  
Regimental Sergeant Major

## PS to the Computing Vehicle

Mike Nolan's article on the Comp Truck in the last newsletter has prompted two more reminiscences on the subject, odd how such an unlovely vehicle stirred such fond memories!

### Computer Vehicle

In 1962 I was posted from SHAPE (Paris) to 14 Squadron in Germany and attached to one of the field troops. One of the first things I had to do was take a driving test on the computer vehicle. Thank goodness I had no problems with this which meant that on many occasions during the rest of my time with the squadron I was called upon to man this vehicle both as driver and NCO in charge of the computing section. Because the vehicle required an electricity supply I always had a generator in tow.

When doing routine tasks we stayed in military camps or if we were lucky we could stay in hotels so the vehicle was only manned while we were working. During this time the field observations were being delivered throughout the working day when requirements were being calculated. At times when the weather was so bad no fieldwork could be done the wagon became a shelter and before long a bridge school was started usually led by the troop officer.

At other times, for example exercises, I found myself living in the vehicle. The layout of the interior was as follows, a large working surface and plan press at the front (which allowed just enough room for a camp bed) and working desks along the sides, at the rear and in one corner was a radio operator's desk with the radio mounted on dexion frame. The radio, to the best of my memory, was only used during exercises. One benefit was the air conditioning units at the front above the plan press which gave us cooling and heating. One problem was that heating never seemed to reach floor level so your feet were very cold during the winter. To try and resolve this problem a contraption just like a wind sock was made to direct some warm air down to foot level, although this was not highly efficient it did give us some limited comfort.

One advantage that was soon discovered was that the grills on the face of the air conditioning units could be removed which revealed sufficient room for several cans of beer or soft drinks to be kept cool. While on one of our regular exercises we had a visit by AD Survey (I think) and he was asked if he would like a cold beer, his eyes could be seen looking around for a fridge, to his surprise the grill was soon removed and a cold can presented. Thank goodness there were no objections to our initiative.

During this time we were doing our calculations using Facits, natural and logarithmic tables. All calculations were done by both natural and logs as a check.

At the end of my tour in Germany I was posted to 84 Squadron in Singapore when very soon I was sent to 1 Troop in Sibu, Sarawak where I worked for six months before being transferred to 2 Troop who were based in Tenom, Sabah and, low and behold, there was another comp vehicle, here it was mainly used as the troop office. Once again its major benefit was the air conditioning, the climate could be quite hot and sticky.

In December 1966 at the end of the Indonesian Confrontation period the troop was moved to Labuan as outlined by Mike Nolan in his article. A picture taken, driving the vehicle off a railway flat bed, during this move can be found on the website.

From Labuan I was transferred back to Singapore so that was the end of my association with comp vehicles.

*Alf Isherwood*

## Comp Wagon in Aden

I enjoyed Mike's article on the Comp Wagon, it brought back many memories as a Troop Sergeant, with Philip Robinson as my Troop Officer, in Aden in the mid-60s.

When 13 Squadron came out to Aden to replace 19 Topo I stayed on with the new squadron. Along with 13 came the Comp Wagon and generator, what luxury!

The first time we were going up country with it I told the OC, newly out from UK, that we would have to mount the generator onto the back of a 3 tonner as you couldn't tow trailers in Aden due to there being no roads as such. *"Don't be silly, I've used trailers all the time in Germany with no problems, just get on with it"*, he said. When we came back with all the electrical controls mounted on the rear of trailer smashed to pieces he had a few explanations to make to the REME workshops and, of course, we mounted it on the back of a 3 tonner after that.

We then took it up to the Radfan, when that little war broke out, and parked it alongside the airstrip at Thumair. The air conditioning was utter luxury in Aden in July with the secondary advantage of keeping our beer cold in front of the A/C units. Occasionally there would be a timid knock on the door during the day and I would shout come in. In would creep a soldier or airman saying *"I heard you have air conditioning in here, may I sit for five minutes and cool off?"* This quite often happened two or three times a day.

One time I was visiting the Brigade Major to arrange for one of our survey parties to go into the front line with the East Anglians. He told me that the Brigadier had heard about our air conditioning and had



contacted GHQ in Aden asking why he had to suffer the heat in his four wheeled office trailer and those young sappers had air conditioning? The answer came back – *"Because they need it and you don't"*. Much mirth in the Troop!

The photo is one from Dave Nunley, a Corporal in the Troop. I think the chap with his back to the camera on the left is myself. If my memory is correct we got it out of the ditch without much damage done.

**Alan Roberts**

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## **"MAPS & SURVEYS 2013" - SATURDAY 22 JUNE 2013**

The Defence Surveyors' Association's seventh "Maps & Surveys" Seminar on historical military and hydrographic surveying, mapping and charting will take place at the Royal School of Military Survey on Saturday 22nd June 2013 commencing at 1000hrs. The cost of attendance is £20, to include tea and coffee breaks and a finger-buffet lunch with drinks.

As usual there will be an interesting and varied programme of six presentations ending at 1700hrs.

Bids to attend this seminar may be made as follows :-

By Email [maptolan@googlemail.com](mailto:maptolan@googlemail.com) By Telephone (01635) 253167  
By Letter M.A. Nolan, Tall Trees, Broad Layings, Woolton Hill, Newbury, RG20 9TS.

For those arriving by car, it would be appreciated if bids could include details of car make, model and registration number. Cheques, which would be appreciated in advance of the day, should be made out simply to DSA and sent to the above address. Refunds will be made for any cancellations notified more than a week before the seminar. Those wishing to display any historical military mapping, charting or "Survey" memorabilia on the day should contact Mike Nolan in advance.

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## Memories of 14's 150th



This recently discovered photo was taken in May 1975 as one of the events to mark 14 Squadron's 150th Anniversary, the unit having been formed in 1825.

As part of the anniversary celebrations the Corps was granted the freedom of Ratingen which the squadron, under the OC, Peter Andrews, exercised by marching through the town. Other celebrations included an open day for the wives and families, a ceremonial parade in Roy Barracks where the salute was taken by the Commander-in-Chief BAOR, General Sir Harry Tuzo, an all ranks ball and, of course, a rugby match

between 3 BAPD Bracht and RE Ratingen. Also Chris Robins researched and wrote up the Squadron history which is available to download from the DSA website at [www.defencesurveyors.org.uk](http://www.defencesurveyors.org.uk). A piece in the 'The Union Jack' BAOR forces paper said "it had been a big weekend for the little unit, total strength of only 90 all ranks."

I was there in the photo on the left somewhere but what I remember most about the photo was that the photographer kept asking the helicopter pilot to get him closer and closer until in the end the down draught not only blew the dust and muck into our eyes but blew our berets off as well.

**Rod Siggs**

## Association Member Awarded Omani Medal



*Admiral Abdullah Khamis Al Raisi, the Commander - Royal Navy of Oman presenting the medal.*

Keith, known as Joe, Brown has been working overseas since 1973 but last year he took time out whilst visiting UK to attend our AGM and as a result he made contact with John Rowan, a fellow member of Intake 64C at Chepstow. On Joe's return to work in Oman he was very much surprised to be informed that he had been awarded the Sultan's LS and GC medal, a rare event for an ex-pat.

Joe was a carto tech who served in 84 Squadron immediately after leaving Chepstow and then spent a two years at the Regiment before deciding to try a career outside the service. He worked in Zambia and Brunei before taking up the post of Head of Map Production for the National Survey Authority

of Oman in 1991. He was head-hunted to project manage a new charting capability for the Oman National Hydrographic Office where he was pivotal in establishing the charting programmes and later the installation of a digital charting system. Keith then established and sustained a centre of excellence for hydrographic training in Oman and is currently the Head of the Oman Hydrographic Training School.



Joe has certainly enjoyed an interesting and very successful 'life after Military Survey'. We hope to catch up with him next time he visits the UK.

## 84 Squadron and Gillman Barracks

Dave Jordan sent the editor the article below which he had seen in an inflight magazine about what is happening in Gillman Barracks in Singapore today. This prompted some research which included emailing a contact in Singapore and also some reminiscing about a near forgotten life in 84 Squadron in the mid-Sixties. The following three articles are the result along with apologies to those not lucky enough to have been posted to 84.

### Gillman Barracks: The Continuing Story

On the first of December this year I boarded a Bangkok Airways flight to fly up to Bangkok from my house on Samui to do some Christmas shopping before returning to UK to spend Christmas with the next generation of Jordans. I settled into my seat and waited for take-off. As we were some of the first to board I took out the inflight magazine to help while away the time. I nearly missed it, but there on the contents page was listed "Gillman Barracks, Singapore page 27" I had to do a double take to make sure I had not misread it.

The flight is only 50 minutes in which time the stewardesses serve a meal and drinks so there was no time to read the article. Luckily my girlfriend has a taste for large handbags, so in went the magazine. (Actually it was a very large handbag and may well have held quite a few copies).

Safely back in our apartment in Bangkok I finally turned to page 27 to find it was headed "art scene" (it is one of those trendy magazines that don't believe in using capitals). Half the page was a full colour photo of many different contemporary designed ceiling lights. "This can't be right" I thought, "What has this got to do with the Gillman Barracks I remembered so fondly". Then I noticed paragraph two. "September saw the opening of the city-states most exciting art project to date: Gillman Barracks, a former military encampment that's now home to 13 galleries, and starting next year will house the lavish new Centre for Contemporary Art". The article then went on to list how much money had been spent on the project and some of the galleries from around the world that were exhibiting there. It went on "dating back to the 1930s and surrounded by tropical greenery, Gillman Barracks is made up of a number of colonial style buildings that have been converted into loft-like well-lit gallery spaces".

My mind drifted back some fifty odd years to when Gillman was the home for us 84 Squadron "singlies" along with 10 Port, 54 and the Malay support troops. Drinking Tiger Tops in the NAAFI, a late night egg banjo and old Sew-Sew trying to sew my very faded OG jacket back together.

I could almost smell the place and here the slow "whoosh whoosh" of the fans trying vainly to cool the place down. I expect some of our Litho Artists may well approve of the new use for Gillman but I can imagine some of the big old stevedores from 10 Port not being too happy!

What I love is that they have kept the old name alive and not renamed it some arty farty thing such as Art4U. There is even a website: [www.gillmanbarracks.com](http://www.gillmanbarracks.com), which is worth a visit for more information for those of you who are interested. I wonder which up and coming young artist has his or her work mounted over my old bed-space?

### Afternote

Since those halcyon days with 84 I have never been able to go back to sleeping in pyjamas. To this day I sleep in a sarong, or is that too much information?

*Dave Jordan*

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## Gillman Barracks 1936 - 2013

In March 1927, the Army Council sent a Commission under the Chairmanship of Lt General Sir Webb Gillman to Singapore to investigate the details of the proposed defences of the Singapore Naval Base – the creation of the so called ‘Fortress Singapore’. On the committee were Colonel LN Malan (late RE) and Lt Colonel RF Lock RA.

Gillman Barracks consisted of fourteen buildings built in 1936 to house additional infantry units sent there as part of the buildup of ‘Fortress Singapore’. After the war it became the home of the Engineer Base Group with the administration offices along Lock Road at the bottom of the hill and the single soldiers from all the RE units on the island accommodated in the buildings at the top, reached by Malan Road.

The barracks was taken over by the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) in August 1971 following the withdrawal of the British military from Singapore and they remained there until the 1990s when the buildings at the bottom of the hill were used for commercial purposes. The site was renamed Gillman Village in 1996.



*A Gillman barrack block as an art centre today.*

The Singapore public housing authority announced in 1998 that a new public housing estate would be built on the land at the top of the hill in the former Gillman Barracks and by 2000 all the accommodation blocks had been demolished. Multi storey housing blocks have since been built on the land.

In 2010 the remaining barrack buildings along Lock Road reverted to the original name of Gillman Barracks and are now a contemporary art centre as described in Dave’s article.

## An Overseas Posting: Singapore in the Sixties

From the Second World War until 1963 virtually all military surveyors other than those in the training organisation were based permanently overseas and even after that date, until the end of the Sixties there was a 50/50 chance of a foreign tour. An overseas posting in those days was a very different thing from today’s six-month operational tour.

The posting process started with a call to the office to ascertain from the posting order, newly arrived from Ditchling Road, Brighton, whether you had won the posting lottery (Singapore or Cyprus) or lost it (Fayid or Aden). 14 Squadron was considered somewhere between the two. I got a winner - 84 Squadron. Next it was off to the QM’s to order tropical kit and MFO boxes.

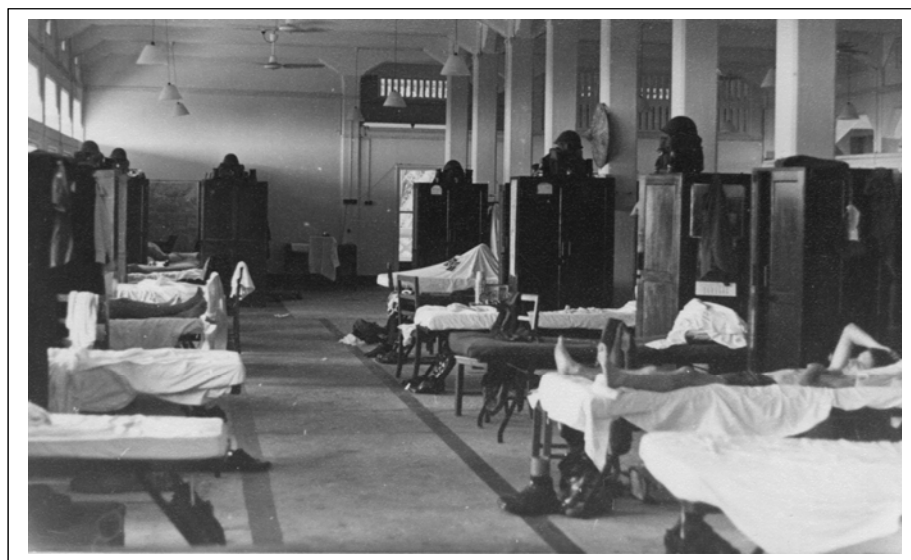
When the kit arrived you were presented with an array of shorts, longs, puttees, hoesetops, sandals (known as Jesus shoes) and tropical pyjamas in a fetching shade of pale blue. By the Sixties the MOD had pre-empted Ikea with the introduction of flat-packed plywood MFO boxes – you were given these plus a handful of screws to self-assemble – albeit no drill, bradawl or screwdriver was forthcoming! All your possessions that wouldn’t fit into an army suitcase were packed in these boxes and shipped off by sea. Next came several armfuls of jabs against all sorts of nasties and finally ‘embark’ leave. This gave a last chance to saviour Watney’s Red Barrel before your taste buds were converted, depending on the posting, to the likes of Tiger (straight or tops), Keo, Carlsberg (that tasted nothing like the Danish brew) or even Tennants with its ‘Ann’s Day’ pin-up gracing each can.

Until the early Sixties the journey to your new home would have been by troopship but then the RAF introduced air trooping using the world's first jet airliner, the De Havilland Comet, and the Bristol Britannia, woefully misnamed as the 'whispering giant' – some whisper!

In my case the trip to RAF Lyneham seemed to take as long as the flight to Singapore – 3-ton truck from Barton Stacey to Andover station then wait, train to Basingstoke then wait, change trains for Reading, a long wait there where for some odd reason seeing that we were off to the Far East, our small party of Tot Hodgson, Dick Case and Taff Eveleigh decided that our last meal in England would be a Chinese! Then train to Swindon and finally an RAF coach to Lyneham. There was no onboard catering and the flight to Singapore involved refuelling – both aircraft and passengers – at El Adem in Libya, Khormaksar in Aden and finally Gan, a tiny island in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

Stepping out of the plane at Changi you were immediately struck by the heat, humidity and the smell of the orient. A squadron rep met you and the journey across the island to Gillman Barracks proved that you were now in a totally different culture and somewhere far from home; this was long before universal tourism and the famous clean up and modernisation of the island by Lee Kwan Yew. As you drove along the Ayer Rajah Road past barracks and after barracks – Cloutman Lines, Rowcroft Lines, EBI, BMH etc - you realised just how large was the British military presence in Singapore. Eventually you turned into Gillman Barracks, home of Engineer Base Group (EBG), past pristine lawns and bright white colonial style buildings then up the hill to the impressive accommodation blocks at the top.

Gillman was very much the domain of the single soldier and JNCO – 'pads' only stayed there until married accommodation became available and officers and seniors had their messes on the other side of Alexandra Road.



*Inside the top floor of the 'Cookhouse' block. (Photo: Bill Brown)*

Gillman was the epitome of a pre-war Empire barracks – white painted three storey blocks with a veranda down each long side with rows of double doors that were always folded open to catch the breeze except when the regular storms rushed in off the sea. Four rows of bed, locker, bed locker - one down each external wall/doors and two back to back down the middle. New comers got a middle row bed and, as you gained time, you could move to

an outside bed – with nobody's head backing onto yours!

When I first arrived the 84 'singlies' lived on the top floor of the NAAFI block and the large open floor space had been divided into small four or six man rooms. Shortly afterwards 10 Port Squadron moved out on transferring to the newly formed RCT and we moved up to their old home in 'H' block at the very top of the hill with stunning views over the off lying islands and at the back was a huge Chinese cemetery – watching the funerals became a spectator sport. Then 59 Squadron arrived and we were again moved, this time back down the hill to the top floor of the Dining Room (Cookhouse) block that was alongside the parade square and there we stayed.

Gilman barracks had an excellent outdoor swimming pool that was visited most afternoons, an AKC cinema where the films were different every evening and a huge 'padang' sports field.

We were a mixed squadron long before 'multicultural' was a thought in a liberal head. On my right was Ngalim, an Malay Other Rank (MOR) driver, behind me, literally head to head, was Siong Tsa Chan an MOR storeman in 556 Map Depot and to my left was Cornishman Spr Vic Williams, a clerk in the squadron office and an ardent fan of Kathy Kirby – the pop star of the day. We all got on famously!

Having come from Barton Stacey where most of the camp infrastructure was manned by soldiers doing 'regimental duties' such as delivering the coke to fuel the stoves, cleaning the pans in the cookhouse and serving in the mess bars, soldiering in the Far East came as a pleasant surprise. Gillman Barracks had boot boys, albeit long past their boyhood years, char wallahs, a dhobi system and not to forget Sew Sew, an ancient Chinese lady who toured the barracks each day looking for buttons and stripes to sew on or shorts to tailor.

The routine was much the same each working day. Up early and down to breakfast in time to board the 3 ton truck for the 15 minute drive to get to work for 0700. Many skipped the eggs and bacon and opted for a mug of tea and piece of toast in the back of the truck. Mid-morning and 'Speedy' would arrive slowly pedalling a 'Walls' ice cream style trishaw containing NAAFI buns and cold drinks. Then the rush for the truck at 1330 and the race back down the road to get ahead of 54 Squadron's truck so that we were at the front of the lunch queue.

Afternoons were spent at the pool, water skiing or sub aqua diving from EBG's recreational speed boat, playing sport or up on the roof reading and generally passing the time of day. Evenings were filled by trips to the cinema, beer in the NAAFI and occasional trips downtown to either the upmarket Singapura Hotel or the more down market Bugis Street. In hindsight it was all very 'Virgin Soldiers' really!



*An afternoon on a Gillman roof top. (Photo: Bill Brown)*

This was to be home and the way of life for the next three years unless posted back earlier to the School for a course. Universal telephones and the Internet were not yet imaginable and the only contact with families in UK was by air mail letter that took up to a week and parcels that took six weeks by sea. Every aspect of life was centred totally on the squadron and those you lived and worked with. It proved to be a wonderful experience both as regards living and working in the squadron and the chance to see the Far East before the advent of the 'hippy trail' and widespread tourism. It was the very last 'knockings' of a colonial style life and as the Sixties drew to a close so British Forces withdrew from East of Suez and concentrated on a NATO role. Suddenly 14 Squadron leapt to the top of the postings preference list - farewell Tiger, hello Schlosser Alt!

PS – For the story of a completely different first overseas tour visit the website and read about Colin Price's time in the Middle East.

## **13 Squadron 1974 – On The Website**

Garry Asbery has put a 13 Squadron group photograph dated 1974 on the website and asked for names. So far a number of people have helped out but there are still gaps – how's your memory – take a look.

If you've got unit group photographs why not share them through the website – if you can't scan them the web master is happy to do it for you if you send him the original.

### Deaths of Old Comrades

It is with sadness that we record the deaths of the following old comrades.

#### **Frank Litterick**

Frank enlisted as an Army Apprentice at Harrogate in 1950, qualifying as a Surveyor Topo. After basic Engineer and cadre courses his first survey posting was to 13 Field Survey Squadron at Fernhurst where he served until late 1958 before joining the newly established 84 Field Survey Squadron in the Far East.

Returning to the UK he took up an administrative post at the School of Military Survey. However, his main employment was mostly within an instructional role both at the School and then at the Army Apprentice College.

On promotion to WO2 in 1963 he was posted to 1 ASLS RE at RAF Episkopi in Cyprus in the dual role of Sergeant Major and i/c Air Survey. Further tours at the School followed where he instructed on class two and class one Air Survey Technician courses. Many Branch members were his students and have Frank to thank for their later successful careers.

His last Military Survey posting was to JARIC and it was here that he left the Corps on being commissioned into the Intelligence Corps.

After leaving the service in 1977 he had a successful post-military career with senior positions in the Land Registry, Directorate of Overseas Surveys and finally at the Ordnance Survey.

He was an active member of the Late Entry Officers dining evening and a Branch member since its inception and will be sadly missed by his many friends and colleagues.

He passed away on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2013 at the age of 78 leaving his wife Rosemary, two children and one grandchild. A number of former military surveyors attended his funeral in Bournemouth on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January and the Branch standard was paraded.

#### ***A small tribute by Ron Birch***

#### **David Wright**

David was commissioned into the Corps in 1971 and in March 1983 joined 69 Army Survey Course. He served in Survey 4 at Feltham and was OC 13 Map Production Squadron from February 1987 until January 1989.

He left the service later that year and started a survey business in the West Country but then joined the academic staff at Nottingham Trent University, a position that he thoroughly enjoyed, and remained there until retiring in 2011.

David died peacefully in his sleep on the evening of Tuesday 18th December 2012. A memorial Service is planned to take place in the near future, date and location to be announced by email and on the website.



### Current Financial Status

Bank accounts from statements as at 31st of December 2012:

Current Account	£ 911.65
Reserve Account	£7,119.67
Geo Soldiers' Fund	£2,377.96 Ring fenced
<b>Total</b>	<b>£10,409.28</b>

Commitments

Geo Soldiers' Fund	£2,377.96
Other*	£3,380.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£5,757.96</b>

**Working Capital**      **£4,651.32**

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

**Alf Isherwood: Hon Treasurer**

### Association Ties

The Treasurer has a large stock of our extremely attractive Association ties which are a bargain at £8 plus postage, £2 for UK and £3 for overseas eg. Australia and Canada.

### Thanks and Apologies

The editor thanks all those who have sent items for the newsletter and apologises to those people whose articles are yet to appear - be assured – all input will be published as soon as possible. The newsletter hardcopy version is printed '4 up' and hence the page count has to be divisible by 4 which means that sometimes material précised or left to a later edition. Please keep your input coming – without it there is no newsletter.

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**Visit [www.militarysurvey.org](http://www.militarysurvey.org)**

MILITARY SURVEY ASSOCIATION: AGM

1800hrs FOR 1900hrs FRIDAY THE 15th OF MARCH 2013

You are to note that the bar will be open from 1800hrs and the committee will be present to welcome you at that time. Food will be served after the AGM is complete (at about 2000hrs) and the presentation has been made to the deserving Sapper. It is hoped that the Commander or the CO will brief members on current and future operations.

Accommodation: We are again hopeful that a small number of rooms will be available in the Sgts Mess and that this might be reciprocated by the Officers Mess and these will be allocated (if available) on a first come first served basis. You need to contact me directly should you wish to take up this offer - assuming it will be available.

Dress: Smart casual or better if you wish!

It is vital to establish firm attendance figures early and so once again we would request that you return this form ASAP:

RETURNS BEFORE 28 FEBRUARY 2013 PLEASE TO:

M. Perry, 101 Craven Road, Newbury, Berks, RG14 5NL
Problems? [Then contact me on] mandpdperry@sky.com or Tel; 01635 37510

Form with fields for: From: Forename: Surname: Address: Tel No: E-mail: Type & Make of transport: Registration No

I \*shall/\*shall not be attending the AGM on Friday 15 March 2013; I will be bringing the following guests:
1 ..... 2..... 3.....

PLEASE - PLEASE REMEMBER THE GEO SUPPORT FUND
I Enclose a cheque to support this for £..... payable to "Military Survey Branch REA"

If you have any special dietary needs or require disabled access please detail these below and every attempt will be made to accommodate them.

NB military units do not cater for severely disabled conditions (for obvious reasons) and we apologise in advance for any shortcomings that might cause individual inconvenience.

\*Delete as appropriate.