
The Military Survey (Geographic) Association



Spring 2013 Newsletter

Issue 48



Association Annual Award 2013

"Spirit of Good Fellowship beyond Normal Expectations"

Sapper Leroy Heritage

Sapper Leroy Heritage has overhauled the Geospatial Support Team (GST) procedures and identified areas for development that made a significant improvement to the way in which the section supports operations.

He has worked to improve the Task Register by taking the basic Access database and scripting additional elements to form a complete tracking system with reporting tools. The tracking system has imbedded filters making it vastly easier to use and identify incomplete or overdue tasks. He further developed the tracking database by adding links to the hard drive holdings so that the system can act as an asset tracker, enabling the Commander to make more timely decisions over the allocation of personnel and time to operational commitments. The database has made a marked improvement to the timely delivery of datasets to operational theatres, enhancing Operational capability and providing greater assurance on the location of IT assets.



He undertook this work to develop the Task Register on his own initiative, applying his knowledge of databases and his inquisitive work ethic, after normal working hours. Due to his efforts, there are now discussions with the Geospatial Analysis Support Cell (GASC) on how Sapper Heritage's Task Register database could be implemented across the wider Geo community and particularly in the Future Deployable Geospatial (FDG) hardware.

He demonstrates the determination and proactive approach in seeking to develop GST capability whilst fulfilling his own duties as a ME Geo Sapper and covering for a depleted workforce in GST. Spr Heritage, has performed well above that expected of his rank and ensured operational updates were distributed efficiently to deployed teams in support of *Operation Olympics*. His drive and enthusiasm for Geospatial data management has inspired his peers to raise their own aspirations and he sets a model example of a Royal Engineers soldier.

Association President Bob Avenell presenting Sapper Leroy Heritage with this year's award at the AGM.

Chairman's Piece

It's early April in the Cross household, (apparently everyone else's also), and it seems that the long cold winter is finally giving way to a very reluctant Spring. Since the last newsletter we have held the newly programmed AGM. If you remember we changed it to March from the September to bring it more in line with the accounting year so that the audit could be accepted, or otherwise, within living memory of it having been done! Pleased to say that the AGM was well attended and as usual and thanks to Mick Perry's organising the meeting was followed by curry and various quantities of beer and wine as old mates caught up.

The move north has now begun with the HQ JAGO heading up the motorway to leave the Regiment and the School in situ for another 18 months when the Regiment will follow. This year 14 Squadron returns from Germany thus ending a long relationship over there, many of us will have very fond memories of our times in Ratingen and Mönchengladbach which I would encourage you to send to the editor.

The Regiment are starting to think about how they will mark their departure from Hermitage and have agreed to have one of us on the project team; my thanks to Mick Perry for jumping at the chance! The School stays on for an unspecified time but it becomes a lodger unit to the new unit moving into Hermitage; we have put down a marker for the continued access to the camp for the Association meetings and functions so we are not having to move home yet.

I wish you all a happy and healthy year ahead, I'm off to plant my onion sets and perhaps a few other seeds now the soil is beginning to warm up. I'll be out sailing before you know it!

Gus Cross

Annual General Meeting 2013

The Association held the 2013 AGM at Hermitage WOs' & Sgts' Mess on Friday 15th March and it was attended by 29 Members, two of whom brought their wives.

It was really good to see some members who had not managed to attend for quite a while and admirable for the "regulars" to attend despite the short period since the previous AGM held in September. The Chairman, Angus Cross, explained that this was the first of the separated AGM's to be held each spring since the change from the joint AGM/Reunions. (The reunions are likely to be held in late summer.) The Committee has to hold an AGM annually to agree and accept the Association's finances but Reunions are held as when the Committee decide.

The Chairman promised he would do his best to keep the meeting to the minimum possible so that the members could enjoy the buffet and each other's company. He reported on the following:

- a. Success of the RSMS course photographs CD.
- b. The Association's sponsorship of the "Soldiers Soldier" Award of a new Geo stable belt which will help to promote the Association to the younger Geo soldiers.
- c. The membership is holding around the 350 mark.
- d. Although there had been only one member's death reported since the last AGM there had been a number of other friends and comrades who had passed way including very recently Cpl Clark.
- e. Mike Payne then gave the Standard Bearers Report in which he said the Standard had been paraded four times, two for funerals, Remembrance Sunday and at the Memorial Service for David Wright. The Standard Bearers were very much appreciated by all and on behalf of the membership the Chairman thanked them all.

The RSM then gave a comprehensive Geo Military Update to an appreciative membership which is summarised in this newsletter.

Alf Isherwood presented the Financial Status of the Association which he explained showed our expenditure exceeded our income by £318.04 as a result of the investment of £1000.00 for the RSMS Course Photographs CD. However, we were still solvent with £911.46 in the Current Account and £7,119.67 in the Savings/Reserve Account.

Tony Keeley and Chris Nash were elected to carry out the duties of Independent Auditor/Examiner and Assistant for the financial year.

The Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, current officers of the Association, were willing to stand again and were all duly re-elected. However, The President spoke of the need for “new blood” to retain good governance and support for our Association or we will fade and die.

Under AOB there were a number of points raised including:

- a. Mike Nolan informed everyone of the DSA’s next seminar which was to be held at Hermitage on 22 June 2013.
- b. Mike Payne informed members of the Reading & West Berks Branch, their “local” Branch, which he requested they didn’t overlook. Everyone was most welcome to join or even just attend their meetings which were held at the Mess every month.
- c. Adrian Lovell asked the Chairman if he was going to mention that our name change had been adversely reported upon at the REA Management Committee Meeting. The Chairman said that he had not intended to as there was nothing really he could report upon but as it had been raised he had better explain: despite having been sent all the correspondence concerning the name change matter and having met our Secretary face to face to discuss and confirm our Associations intentions **not** to leave the REA, the Deputy Group Director of Central Southern Group had still presented our name change in a very negative light. Also, HQ REA was very unhappy with our TOR concerning who our membership was open to, which it seems is at odds with REA Membership. Accordingly, the minutes of that meeting stated that the Corps Colonel and Controller should discuss and contact our Chairman. Angus stated that they had not done so and therefore there was no action or anything for him to report at this time. The Chairman reiterated that we have **no intention** of leaving the REA.
- d. Major General (Retd) Roy Wood commented that our Association represents a very wide community and we should not feel uncomfortable, we should remain robust in our defence of our decisions. He explained there are others in the RE world that also have similar wide communities.
- e. David Taylor asked if there was to be a Reunion this year. The Chairman explained there was not but it was hoped that we would be trying to tie in with the Regiment’s commemorations for their Hermitage departure likely to be in July 2014. Indeed Mike Perry was already engaged in some consultation on the subject and our wishes to be included were well known and accepted by the Regiment.
- f. Adrian Lovell asked the Secretary how many new members had joined as a result of our name change. Rod explained that there had been approximately 15 new members since 2011 although how many had joined as a result he did not know. He doubted we would ever know in the short term. The Chairman said it was also only one of a number of things we were introducing and he had already mentioned others. He welcomed Adrian to attend our next Committee meeting.

The President thanked:- All members for attending; the Committee for their efforts in keeping the Association going; the RSM for his informative update, use of his Mess and also asked him to thank the Mess Manager and Staff. He asked that all members give the move of the Regiment to Wyton some thought, as it will no doubt mean a degree of loss of “being on the spot” and having “hands on” as we currently do at Hermitage.

The meeting closed at approximately 2003 hrs and everyone enjoyed a terrific curry buffet and each other’s company for a few hours more.

Rod Siggs

News from the Military Front

RSM's Column

It is now 12 months since I assumed the position of RSM and it occurs to me that time flies when you are having fun! It is of course an enormous privilege to be able to contribute to what we do as a Regiment and to have a role in the mentoring and development of our specialisation but more importantly of our people. The quality of our officers and soldiers continues to drive the demand for support from the RE Geo community from new sectors of the Army and the wider Defence community. Indeed, it is noticeable that in a shrinking Army in the midst of Tranche 3 Redundancy we have remained untouched.

In February the RE Geo community was rocked to its core by the tragic loss of Cpl Colin Clark of 14 Geo Sqn to terminal cancer. The courage that Colin and his wife Katy displayed in fighting this cruel disease was both humbling and inspiring. The Esprit de Corps displayed by serving officers and soldiers as well as our old comrades and the support offered to Katy and the Clark family from the extended Regimental family was also quite remarkable. We said goodbye to Colin at All Saints Church in Barton Stacey with a full military funeral as per his wishes and both it and the wake were a celebration of his life and his achievements. It was a sad day in many respects but one where the RE Geo community paid its respects to Colin and grieved for him in a dignified and in an entirely appropriate manner.

Other significant events since my last instalment to you have been the running of a Potential NCO Course (PNCO Course), Mission Specific Training in Germany for the next roulement of soldiers destined for Afghanistan and the breaking news on the re-basing plan for the Army. The uncertainty surrounding the future of Denison Barracks has been removed with units earmarked to fill the void left by 42 Engr Regt (Geo) next year. The School will remain for the foreseeable future although plans are well advanced as regards a move for them in due course too. Interestingly, there are organic Geo posts within some of the small and specialised units within the Security Assistance Group (SAG) coming to Hermitage and therefore RE Geo officers and soldiers will, in small numbers, continue to serve here.

This year sees a drastic reduction in the numbers of British servicemen and servicewomen deployed to Afghanistan and as a result the numbers of Geo personnel are also being reduced as we continue to hand over security responsibilities to the Afghan Army and Police. That reduction however will coincide with a focus on 'Return to Contingency' and in how the Army continues to restructure under Army 2020 and Germany drawdown. The Army will maintain two Divisions one being 'Reactive' and the other 'Adaptive'. As this reorganisation works through with more focus on 'Contingency' operations rather than established operational theatres where we have an established footprint, the nature and composition of Geo Support at all levels is being examined. We are meeting and facing new challenges and using our Op HERRICK (Afghanistan) reputation as a vital component in the planning and execution of any operation as we are in high demand.

Therefore, since Christmas we have seen some real low points, significant success and now a period of opportunity as 14 Geo Sqn prepare to move to RAF Wyton and the brand new bespoke 'Roy Lines'. The Army and Defence as a whole restructure and our presence in British Forces Germany ends in July heralding a new era for RE Geo as a specialisation. It is the dawn of a new chapter in the history of our specialisation and an exciting time as we move ever closer to a complete Regiment at RAF Wyton, adding Geospatial context at the centre of everything that Defence delivers.

Operations Update (As At April 2013)

- Geo personnel currently deployed on Op HERRICK: 3 Officers, 25 Soldiers. These are stationed throughout Afghanistan (Kabul, Kandahar and throughout Helmand province).
- The Geo Team within Helmand province is led by Capt Snow. 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 have been reduced by two posts with a further reduction in manpower and equipment expected later this year.

- The Geo team within Regional Command (SW) led by Maj LeClerc 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 the theatre recognised mapping and imagery to a number of other command and control systems.

Contingency Teams

- In addition, the Regiment are providing Geo teams in support of contingency operations. These include supporting the Air Assault Task Force (AATF), Lead Commando Task Group (LCTG), Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Joint Force Head Quarters (JFHQ). All at a high readiness notice to move. Currently PJHQ are running a joint exercise involving a large number of the contingency teams with Geo playing a key role in vital parts of the HQ.

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** are supporting exercises with a PJHQ led Ex Joint Warrior, Bde's FTX in Kenya, 1 Div lead Ex support to Herrick 19 Mission Specific Training in Granfenwohr (Germany) and Warminster. The Regt is also sending a Geographic support section to Canada as part of Ex Northern Reaction. Northern Reaction is a multinational exercise with Canadian, US, Australian and NZ forces with the aim of enhancing interoperability and integration and ultimately improve operational effectiveness
- 13 Geo Sqn are deployed on a five day technical exercise at Barton Stacey.
- The Regiment ran their confirmation Mission Specific Training for the next deployment of Geo personnel to Afghanistan. Led by 14 Geo Sqn at Haltern Training Area last month, the exercise involved both technical and military training to practise and enhance those skills required by our soldiers for their deployment to Afghanistan.

RSM - Summary

As we enter the Spring the Regiment looks to the introduction of Future Deployable Geoint (FDG), a new capability I described in my last update. The focus will soon shift to how we train on it, introduce it to 13 Geo Sqn and 14 Geo Sqn and begin to operate and deploy it as a Regiment. A rigorous exercise programme is planned culminating with Ex FOUGASS RETURNS in October where all Squadrons will deploy to Barton Stacey and start to explore and operate this new concept in earnest. This is in conjunction with support to operations, exercises and other Regimental business such as the RE Games, Beating Retreat, COs Competition and so on.

However, in the best traditions of the British Tommy we continue to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem with that immortal phrase as alive today as it has ever been.....'Follow the Sapper!'



WD Robinson
Regimental Sergeant Major

Sporting Success Jan-Apr 13

Squash

The Regt Squash Team competed in the Sp Comd Squash Championships on the 20 March 13, with some fairly new players in the squad we were able to beat DMSTG in the final to become Sp Comd Minor unit squash champions for the second year running.

Football

The Regt football team has had some great wins over the Armoured Centre, 4 Med Regt. Spr Cameron has been selected to represent the Corps.

Rugby

The Regt Rugby team have not had many notable fixtures this side of January but we are very fortunate to have a few star players that are playing at high levels, SSgt Vic Reeve has played for the Corps and has been selected to play for his County. Cpl Cartmell has represented the Army Rugby League team. Cpl Greene has represented the Army Vets team and finally SSgt Ball captains and plays for the Army senior Rugby team and is captaining the side against the Navy at Twickenham.

SSgt Mobbs-McQuilkin RAPTC

42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) Potential Non-Commissioned Officers Cadre – 12/009

On Saturday 12 January 2013, 35 young Sappers arrived at 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) to attend the one of the most important courses of their careers – their Potential Non-Commissioned Officers Cadre. This was the first day of what would be an intense, stressful and rewarding four weeks, all in the hopes of qualifying for promotion, and with any luck, receiving the rank of Lance Corporal at the end.

The first step was assembling in the gym, suited up and eager, if slightly nervous to begin. There were some friendly faces and old friends to catch up with, as well new faces from the outside Regiments (38 Engineer Regiment and 24 Commando Regiment), who quickly bonded with the Geo Sappers. The initial briefs left us in no doubt about the physical and mental challenges ahead and the first night was a tense, sleepless affair for many. As soon as the next day began however, we were thrown straight into it with a kit inspection, where many of us found just how important it is to bring **everything** on the kit list, followed by lessons and an Annual Fitness Test (AFT). The next day the pressure was increased with a Personal Fitness Assessment (PFA) before being whisked straight off to Wretham Training Camp (WTC) in Thetford Training Area. To say that WTC was somewhat less inviting than we had hoped was an understatement with a few references to 'Tom, Dick and Harry' being made. However, as Royal Engineers, we weren't put off by the morbid feel of the camp and quickly made ourselves at home, dividing into our sections and going straight into a navigation exercise!



What followed was a non stop whirlwind of activity for the first week with gruelling PT sessions where every mistake was brutally punished, much to the delight of the PTIs, and room inspections where the section commanders' eagle eyed gaze left no bed or shirt unturned. For many of the Sappers this sudden step back into a training environment was a huge shock to the system, however, quick change parades and regular 'reminders' of faults kept us alert and on our toes!

This was also the first taste of giving and receiving orders for many of us with the lessons coming thick and fast. Revision of our basic military skills took place on the Training Area and its ranges. By this point, the weather had truly settled in and everything we did was accompanied by a thick layer of snow. This made for some interesting scenes when returning from a wet and muddy PT lesson only to find that the cold had turned the showers into an icy deluge of water and not the warm relief we had hoped for!

By the end of the first week we were mentally and physically drained but the pressure put on us was forming us into a team. Where we may have originally worked for ourselves we were now starting to work as a group with the natural leaders starting to come to the fore, although everyone did their part to get a few career shouts in where possible!

Now that we were working as a team the second week (although it felt closer to a month), saw us getting into the meat of the course with us practising orders, conducting CBRN training – naturally with a CASEVAC in 4 Romeo, an aggressive day of bayonet training and our first taster of the assault course! While the pressure did not relent we found ourselves starting to enjoy it slightly as we could all see improvements in our day to day conduct after only a week. This was a result of everyone giving it their all in both PT and the training exercises we did while out on the ground. This was also the time of the infamous ‘G4 incident’, where Spr Simpson earned himself the name of G4, when under his own steam, he started procuring soup in the evenings from the cookhouse and distributing it between the sections! However, when the Admin Sergeant found out that someone was ‘repurposing’ his supplies, it was all soon sweated back out as we felt the full effect of his wrath!

This was also the week of the first exercise and the first real test of everything we had learned so far. It was also the first time many of us had used/carried BOWMAN in a combat role. Many a friendly discussion was had over who got the privilege of carrying the radio into battle! It was also a stark reminder of the dangers of the cold, as the snow meant our boots were constantly wet. Good foot care quickly became a priority after people started feeling its effects after only one day! The Command Tasks gave us our first taste of leading a section and the navigation training paid off when we performed a night nav, although Spr Davey managed to get ‘momentarily geographically challenged’, when he started using boundary lines as routes and reference points! We were also introduced to Close Quarter Battle (CQB) and practised room/compound clearance before heading back to camp.

After the first exercise was completed we got straight into our admin and after some remedial harbour area drills, we could finally get our heads down and get some much needed sleep! At the end of the week we had the shooting competition where we were judged on shooting ability and personal camouflage as well as the concurrent activity of abseiling down the 100ft range tower! Suffice to say, there were some wobbling knees and pale faces

The third week was mostly taken up by the final exercise. This was a confirmation of all the things we had learnt and where we were assessed on orders, leading a fire team and constantly watched for our personal drills and admin. We moved into a harbour area for the first two nights before occupying a Forward Operating Base (FOB) and then for the final night, a compound. We were given complete control as the section commanders left to see how we would manage with our own command appointments. The attacks and patrols were relentless and we were taken by surprise when on one patrol we took an enemy casualty played by a real amputee! This really brought home the reasons behind all our drills and put all our hard work into perspective! As the final exercise was much more controlled by the Sappers, it gave a real sense of achievement and responsibility as we took charge of our sections and found out just how far we could push ourselves and motivate others. However, this meant that the Directing Staff had more time to creep around looking for mistakes so, after a few surprise encounters at night and the occasional rifle getting tied to its owner, we were soon living out of our bergens like experienced infantrymen! The final test of the week was the run in. This was a harrowing run back to camp, stopping for a quick blast round the assault course on the way

When it was all over we left for our rooms with an incredible sense of achievement. The end was in sight and all that stood in our way was a few days of weapon cleaning and drill! The coaches arrived and it was no surprise that the Geo Sappers had never been happier to be back at Denison Barracks! The main effort now was to sharpen our drill, sort out our No.2 Dress and keep our bodies from falling apart for one last week! Cue lots of late nights polishing, cleaning, ironing and more polishing! This was no problem however, as we were all too excited about the pass off to need sleep!

There was also the Mess function whereby the Regimental Sergeant Major invited us into his Mess. So after scrubbing up and donning our suits, we proceeded to enjoy a five course meal, whilst observing the responsibilities and protocols that come with earning your rank. There was time for a few skits and jokes as well, as Spr Hoar recounted the funniest moments of the Cadre. The following day we had a trip to the Royal Engineers Museum in Chatham where we learned some of the history of the Corps and were able to see examples of bravery and leadership throughout the history of the Sappers; the same rank and age as us.

Then it was the big day! All the rehearsals, sleepless nights, hard work and effort had culminated in the Pass Off parade and there was not a single person who did not want to get out there and strut their stuff! Commander 8 Force Engineer Brigade, Brigadier Jones, was there as the inspecting officer and personally awarded the five sappers who were promoted off the square their rank (Spr's Glazebrook, Jones, Cotton, Beedie and MacLauren). The Cadre was over and everyone went back to the Junior Ranks Mess with their family and friends feeling a well-deserved sense of accomplishment.



The course had its highs and lows but in the end it was worth every single drop of sweat and blood that went into it. We all learned a lot about ourselves and, most importantly, we can take the skills and confidence gained on the course back to our Squadrons and carry out our duties with the knowledge that we have proved ourselves worthy of the promotions that are no doubt headed towards many of us in the near future! Thanks to the outstanding efforts of the Directing and Admin Staff and the hard work of the sappers, PNCO cadre 12/009 will long be remembered by everyone who took part!

Written by Spr Harris with photos by Sgt Havenhand

Mission Specific Training (Haltern Training Area) – The Military Phase

The military phase of the Regimental Pre Deployment Training (PDT) started with a bang on the Counter-Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) lane! The majority of the training was unfortunately based outside and it was absolutely freezing. The only similarity between our location and Afghanistan was the sand in the C-IED lane which was full of IED's but covered in Snow!

After the CIED Trg it was on the buses to sunny Haltern Trg Camp which we would call home for the next ten days. On arrival it was not so sunny and was again covered in snow. A warming curry and a night of weapons training was all that greeted us.

The first day on the ranges was long and most possibly my coldest day in the Army. The icy wind and the snow blizzard were not ideal conditions to hone your marksmanship skills but over the course of the day that is what we all achieved, eventually. The night shoot and use of night vision sights was a good but even colder end to the day.

The second day on the ranges was equally as cold but at least it was a little shorter. It was a good day of shooting which saw us being let loose on automatic, a good blast on the General Purpose Machine Gun, especially the lucky and nervous sapper who was firing a runaway gun, which is something he will *never* forget!. The pistol shoot also put an end to any thoughts of a second career as a gangster, so it's the Army for me! The Fire and Movement Test was next which I personally liked so much I managed to have five goes. At least it was the first time I had been warm all day as it involved much dashing and crawling into fire positions.

The final day on the ranges saw us put into practice a number of our military skills and zero'd weapons in a section in defence range which replicated our defence of a patrol base in Afghanistan. The shoot was a great end to a cold but challenging range and military skills package.

Spr Quilliam (14 Geo Sqn)

Mission Specific Training (Haltern Training Area) – The Technical Phase

After completing the military phase of MST we moved onto the technical part of the exercise. This involved us being split down and sent to specific replica Forward Operating Bases and battle groups reflecting where we are most likely to serve in theatre.

The first two days of the technical phase involved lessons and familiarisation with the Geo systems and data sets. The initial focus for the training included data management, GeoViewer training and care and maintenance of our equipment. In between these lessons and for the duration of the tech phase, tasks were produced and products were requested for Exercise Control (EXCON). The tasking started off steadily and required a basic level of creating products such as simple compound mapping and route maps. As the days passed the tasking became more challenging and technical.

Many of these tasks throughout the week were scenario based and were created to add a sense of realism to the exercise. This included an IED incident and assaulting a compound. Both of these tasks required a selection of different products for both the analysis and planning of operations. The meeting of deadlines for the products meant that early starts and late nights were needed. However, this again added to the realism of the exercise as this is what would be required out in theatre.

The technical phase proved extremely beneficial to exercise troops as it was a very progressive, challenging and enjoyable experience which enabled us to both consolidate our core skills as well as learning some of the tricks of the trade from our mentors.

Spr Taylor (14 Geo Sqn)

Terminal Aeronautical Gns Geodetic Survey (Taggs)

15th October - 18th November 2012

On the 15th October 2012, eight members of 13 Geographic Squadron and the Royal School of Military Survey flew to Afghanistan from RAF Brize Norton to conduct a geographic survey of three airfields – Camp Bastion, Kandahar and Jalalabad.

The first port of call was Camp Bastion, where everyone conducted the five day RSOI package which was a useful, if sweaty, refresher! Once we were all acclimatised and up to speed, we immediately started with a recce of the area. This meant checking the old control stations and deciding which obstacles were new while ensuring that previously surveyed masts and towers were still standing. We set the control stations up and after a bit of a slow start we were soon sprinting all over Camp Bastion heighting masts and making the very occasional stop at the Green Beans coffee shop!

Admin was conducted by Lt Robinson who also provided us with a unique and handcrafted key press at each location, showing some traditional engineer ingenuity in the process!

After spending two weeks in Camp Bastion and having finished ahead of schedule, we were loaded onto our flight to Kandahar (though not without plenty of delays) to conduct the second part of the survey.

When we got over the initial shock of how westernised Kandahar really was we cracked on in much the same way as before. This time there was a greater degree of autonomy for the Sappers as we settled into the routine of survey (though still under the watchful eye of LCpl McKeivitt). Barring the odd run in with planes and the occasional stench of the sewage recycling pond the survey went well, although the working hours were getting gradually longer as we forged into the night completing paperwork. In just a few days we had completed the survey and were ready for the next step of our task – the entirely US run camp – FOB Fenty.....Jalalabad!



Spr Conboy using a theodolite

Our flight into Jalalabad, or J-Bad as the Americans

called it, was classed as VIP! Cue some bewildered civilians as a team of eight Royal Engineers took over the VIP room normally reserved for 1 star Generals and above! On arrival to FOB Fenty, we were straight away shown some American hospitality as they drove us in broken cars to what seemed to be the worst accommodation on camp. This continued for the rest of our stay, culminating in a run in with an American Officer about using their toilets! In between questions about our rifles, restricted CIA

compounds and greasy American food, we were able to smash out the survey in a matter of days even including setting up the four control stations, though not without the help of the US Engineers!



TAGGs Team Jalabad

Due to the low number of obstacles the original two week plan meant that we could fit things into our spare time - such as a 5km charity run, with both Lt Robinson and Spr Thomas coming in the top 10, and a British Service of Remembrance. This was led by Lt Robinson and WO2 Keiras and held in the chapel along with two Fijian civilians at 11 o'clock UK time.

Also helping speed things up was the use of the RTK process on the runway - which meant we could drive instead of walk.

Even after we managed to upset the length of the survey also meant that we 'unfortunately' had to stop off in Cyprus for decompression! The wind conditions and flight delays meant that we were there longer than anticipated, but as determined Sappers, we managed to stick it out with no more than mild sunburn and wet swimming shorts!

Overall, the survey was an enjoyable, if occasionally stressful task, which challenged us, provided a new experience for some and a healthy dose of revision for others!

Spr Sam Harris 13 Geo Sqn

2 ASLS RE: Flying the Far East 1949 - 1952

I boarded the troopship '*Devonshire*' to the strains of Tony Bennett singing 'Slow Boat to China' – I think the date was 9th Feb 1949 - and some weeks later disembarked at Singapore to join 2 ASLS RE.

At that time communist rumblings were everywhere in the Far East. 81 Squadron RAF, equipped with Mosquito aircraft, were involved in an operation called '*Firedog*' initially covering Malaya with aerial photographs - ultimately to prepare maps. I was to become a member of the team based initially at RAF Tengah and then moved to RAF Seletar when Tengah was commandeered to temporarily accommodate civil aircraft. Our task was preparing flight plans, organising aircraft height and speed, camera operation and speed setting and checking the resultant photography. The country was split in half with photographs for the eastern half being sent to the drawing office in Kuala Lumpur whilst those covering the west were sent back to Blackbusch in UK however, this was later stopped as having no access to local knowledge so many mistakes were being made. With the weather mostly being excellent, the 'photographics' went at a very smooth rate whilst the work in the drawing office was of a much slower nature. They needed more draughtsmen - my next move.

My journey from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur was by rail (later to become the 'Orient Express' of Malaya). The RAF caterers had given me enough food to last a week. When one normally passes Singapore Station the impression is stunning but, on entering, it was a real mind boggler; the sort of thing that you can't take your eyes away from - Colonial magnificence. The journey was quite slow and the train interior was amazing but with too much differentiation of class. I travelled in comparative luxury but, on the rear of the train, an open truck carried the families of Gurkha troops lying on an open floor. In Kuala Lumpur I lived at a Civil Engineering unit traveling daily to the Malay Survey office in Mountbatten Road. As I travelled through town on a regular basis I became more aware of local life and customs.

The Drawing Office staff were quite a mixture - Sikh, Moslum, Hindu, Malay, Chinese and four Army draughtsmen. We all co-operated with each other, with very little discord. We started with a 'Master Grid' probably as big as a small village hall. The grid was two and a half times the finished map scale; on the grid were plotted spot heights and trig points which were then identified on the photographs. Detail became controlled by the slotted template method, covering the whole floor. This information was taken back to the drawing board and by use of a stereoscope, detail was drawn as required. Some information required site visits, as some jungle areas have trees with an average height of 150 feet. I had a very enjoyable time in Kuala Lumpur and our team produced quality maps of areas where there had previously been none.

81 Squadron's fame was spreading and they were now commissioned to do similar work by other governments. With this in mind a detachment was set up in Butterworth (North Malaya) with a view to cover Phuket, other parts of Thailand and the Isthmus of Kra. So Butterworth|Penang was my next move. At that time the distance between Butterworth and Penang was 'bridged' by local ferries. The mainland was very bland and colourless, so most free time was spent in Georgetown (Penang). Phuket was much undeveloped - whoever would have thought it to be a future holiday plum? The task was finished by the latter part of November 1950; a return to Singapore incorporated short visits to Bali and Sumatra and my first promotion.

Indo China was then a French Colony and France was fighting a losing battle to retain it. An SOS to the British government was for aerial photography to produce maps up to the 39th parallel. That was to be our next move. We were based at Tan San Nut, an aerodrome some 6 kilometers from Saigon. Local money was of poor value and our daily allowance was several times greater than our Army pay. We could get 300% - 500% profit on cigarettes and in town drink was like 'gold'. Water was infected and hence, undrinkable, but the French troops didn't know what water was for - they didn't even wash! There were 57 bars on camp, open at all hours. French services consisted of Army, Air Force and the Foreign Legion. The French Foreign Legion (64% German) was the only outfit that looked reasonably disciplined; the remainder were pathetic. Their world seemed to revolve around sex, booze and looking slovenly. The Foreign Legion was a slight embarrassment as RAF bombing during the war had affected some of their families.

Saigon/Choulon was a very interesting and colourful town with the Oriental aspect very much to the fore and the architecture very much French, a colourful, wide boulevards with a good mixture of Oriental and European transport. Back at the camp the image was very different, hygiene left a lot to be desired. The 'mess' kitchen was black everywhere (with fifes), the French troops formed a four deep, 100 yards long queue before breakfast (for the brothel). With just four Army personnel attached to the RAF we were very much in their hands but, to our amazement, they went on strike (a onetime shooting offence) for better food and eating conditions. An Air Vice Marshal came out from UK and, after much discussion, we were given authority to have two meals per day in the Civil Airport restaurant. I now got my second promotion but was cursed with medical problems – haemorrhoids! I went to a French doctor along with about 75 Legionnaires. The doctor suggested that I go into their hospital - it was filthy. My Staff Captain (Bill Saxby) said "you're not going into that dirty place" so I 'thumbed' a lift on a Dakota back to Singapore. After a week of treatment I was fit enough to return to Saigon.

Everyone was working all hours to complete the task but the heat played havoc with the Mosquito aircraft. Being constructed mainly of wood the fuselage warped occasionally and the answer was to get as much from the aircraft before it went back to Singapore to be re aligned. I did my first serious driving at that time - mainly in jeeps and 15cwt Dodges. The time in Saigon ended with the French hosting a farewell lunch. The request was for us to be seated at 11 am for a 1 pm lunch. The 2 hours was to be spent drinking. The air was thick with flies and, in no time at all, our glasses had many flies floating in the drink. Our hosts solved the problem by scooping the ice from our drinks, placing it in their mouths whilst removing the dead flies with their fingers, then replacing the ice from their mouths to our drinks. They then had the nerve to offer the drinks back to us! I've not been able to write about all the bad hygiene in French behaviour experienced during my time with them but since that time just to say 'French' gives me the need to wash my hands. From Saigon (surely a city too good for the French) we returned to Singapore.

The aftermath of war had left Singapore somewhat neglected - map wise. Our next task, in early 1951, was to produce a "Town Map' mosaic from low flying photography. For this task an Anson was used and I actually flew, as photo operator, with the crew. We used an F 52 (20 inch focal length) camera. Any questionable detail was checked on site using theodolite and level. The maps were rather hurried and made up in mosaic form and, though I say it myself, the bonding and photo shading was quite brilliant. With the completion of this job, and after a short time at RAF Seletar, we were given a government secondment to Sarawak.

For this task we worked with Shell geologists, looking for new areas to drill for oil. The third largest working oil field at that time was Seria and staff wise the whole area was very racially demarcated. The French did the drilling, American equipment, Canadian and Dutch expertise, with a smattering of English personnel in all departments. We were based on the Island of Labuan nestled in the Brunei Bay. It was a very primitive island at the time with the beaches littered with Japanese ammunition from the war. Since then the island has become a luxurious jewel of the China Sea. We only had about three Mosquito aircraft and an Anson, the heat was extreme and the aircraft working life, between maintenance, was about a week to ten days. As a result our life did become something of an extended holiday: socially the Shell Company was very hospitable and I remember a lot of time with an Australian group playing water sports. There was also considerable time playing chess. Each time an aircraft came back from 'treatment' we were asked for help with instrument testing. I would go up with the pilot and once in the air I took over the controls whilst the pilot crawled around checking various instruments.

A Mr and Mrs Brodie were representatives of the Hudson Bay Company and they had a very large house with an enormous private beach: they contributed a lot to the social enjoyment on the island and midnight barbeques were quite frequent. The mixture of hard work and much enjoyment worked wonderfully.

From there I had a short spell back in Kuala Lumpur and then back to RAF Seletar until around February '52. That was the time earmarked for my return to UK and my promotion to Sergeant. I remember waiting for the ship when the death of King George the 6th was announced. Our troopship home was the *Empire Windrush*, a onetime Hitler Youth ship. Having set sail for about 30 minutes the ship dropped anchor - we did not move again for seven days. The ship broke down about every third day throughout the journey to Southampton, spanning 23 days.

Extract from the Memoires of Bill Dace

The Cyprus SBA Boundary: A Continuing Story

The treaty giving Cyprus independence was signed on the 15th of August 1960 and included the provision of the two Sovereign Base Areas (SBA). Due to the speed with which the treaty negotiations were conducted it was not possible to mark the boundaries between the new republic and the SBAs on the ground before the treaty was signed instead the 90 mile long boundaries were defined by 233 points pinpricked on 1:5,000 scale stereo pairs of air photographs and by lines joining them. The boundaries were selected as straight lines between the 'photo points' and followed either a land registry plot boundary, road edge or municipal boundary. The master set of photographs was supplemented by a set of 1:10,000 maps and written descriptions. All these treaty related tasks provided Military Survey staff and units in both the UK and Cyprus with a considerable workload against a tight timescale.

The treaty included the requirement for a joint British/Cypriot Boundary Commission to "mark the boundary clearly and effectively on the ground", it also allowed the Commission to make any minor deviations from the agreed position to suit local situations and gave it nine months in which to complete the task. Military Survey provided Major TF Watling as the Commission Secretary and a small team of surveyors under Sergeant Brian 'Sam' Reeder. Sam had been working at the SPC RE in Feltham on Operation Emily, a huge task to survey the sites for the Thor Missile system, when, in August 1960, a call came for him to prepare to go to Cyprus for the Boundary Commission task. After a short period of amassing equipment, including a visit to Tolworth for a conversation with Colonial Office personnel, he left to take over a quarter in Limassol and start the task of marking the new international boundary.

Each field party comprised a Cypriot and an NCO surveyor and parties started from opposite ends of the Western SBA covering Akrotiri and Episkopi identifying the 'photo points' on the ground, marking them with an angle iron picket driven flush to the ground and then producing 'witness marks' on trees or rocks and writing up the Point Identification Report (PIR). The field parties were followed later by Major Watling and the Cypriot Chief Survey Officer who together checked the accuracy, considered whether any slight changes might be required and how many intermediate points were needed. The field party then marked and produced the PIR for all the intermediate points. Cypriot works parties then installed precast concrete pillars as the actual boundary markers; main pillars were three feet high and five inches square and intermediate pillars were 18 inches high with the same cross section. Once a pillar was cemented into position its position was 'fixed' by an instrumental survey by the joint field party.

Generally the 'photo points' had been well selected although one was found to be the centre of a deep well! One can imagine the field surveyor's opinion of the air surveyor who stuck his pin in the well and expected it to be marked with a picket! Other problems included marking the mean sea level. Although the process was carried out in a business-like manner it soon became obvious that it was going to take much longer than the time allowed by the treaty. To speed up the work a small party of airmen was drafted in to assist the survey and pillar parties, then three MRA2 tellurometers were loaned from UK but finally the Commission extended to time frame up to the end of 1961.



Sam Reeder with his daughter by Boundary Pillar No. 1 November 1960.

Once the Western SBA was completed the parties moved to Dhekelia and started the Eastern SBA boundary which was twice as long as the Akrotiri/Episkopi line and included four enclaves and had much less reliable trig control. Nevertheless, work progressed and all 'fixes' were first computed by the Republic's Lands and Surveys Department and then sent to Feltham for a 100% check, no mean feat as this task included all the computations for all the trig control, traverse points and the 774 pillars themselves. The final Boundary Commission report was signed by the British and Cypriot representatives in Nicosia on the 5th of December 1961.

The whole task had been carried out in an amicable manner, so much so that Sam and his wife were invited to the wedding of one of the Cypriot surveyors. The commission disbanded upon completion of the report and Sam and his family, now with a second daughter, returned to UK in January 1962. But this was by no means the end of Military Survey's involvement with the SBA boundaries and the pillars as it became responsible for checking and maintaining them. Following Cypriot independence British units based outside the SBAs were either moved into one of them or withdrawn to the UK which was the case with 42 Survey Engineer Regiment in the summer of 1963. This left 1 ASLS RE as the only Military Survey unit in the Near East and Gulf Command but its establishment included a small field survey section in order to maintain that capability within the theatre. Included in the ASLS remit was the task of checking and maintaining the boundary pillars.

The early years of the Cyprus Republic were marked with continuing outbreaks of violence caused by former EOKA members who, despite independence, still hankered after union with Greece. Their targets were the Cypriot government which they considered had reneged on the principle, the Turkish minority and to a much lesser extent the SBAs where several boundary pillars were demolished only to be replaced almost immediately. By the late Sixties there was a virtual civil war among the Greek Cypriots who either supported union with Greece or opposed it and another between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Finally in July 1974 Turkish forces invaded the north of the island and the international border status of the SBA boundary was put to a severe test as over 9,000 Turkish Cypriots fled their homes in the Limassol area and moved into the sanctuary of the Akrotiri SBA. The boundary pillars served their purpose and the integrity of the border survived with the refugees staying until the following year when they were moved to Northern Cyprus. The SBA boundaries then lapsed into quiet as the previous violence ended and Cyprus attained a more stable political situation.

1 ASLS left Cyprus in January 1976 for a short spell in Malta before moving to RAF Wyton which left no Military Survey unit on the island. 19 Squadron, based initially at Barton Stacey, were then tasked with the biennial checking and



Trig Med 2012 - Sapper Ade Davey getting his hands dirty digging out an old pillar base.

maintenance of the pillars which was carried out as Exercise Trig Med which continued until the squadron's disbandment in 1993.

The short lived 19 STRE then took over the task until it

merged with 512 STRE which in turn was disbanded and Trig Med passed to 13 and 14 Squadrons with 135 Squadron fulfilling the task in 2006 with support from 14 Squadron.



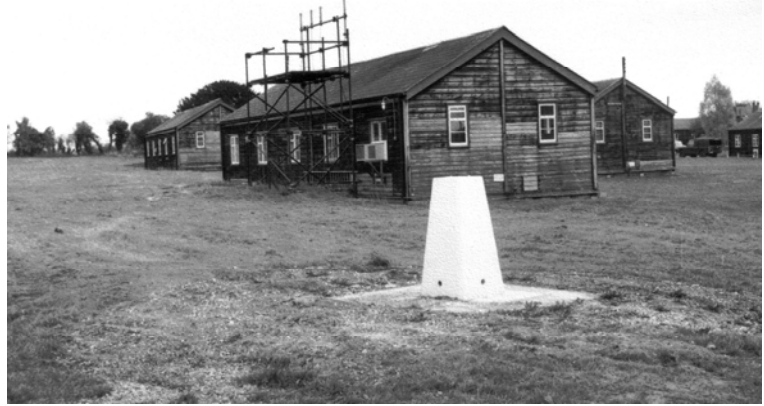
John McGuinness on a 19 Squadron Exercise Trig Med in the early Eighties.

And so next year, 54 years after Sam Reeder and his team marked the boundaries on the ground, some of his successors will be enjoying the Cypriot sun and ensuring that the boundaries are still clearly defined on the ground.

TRANET Station 016

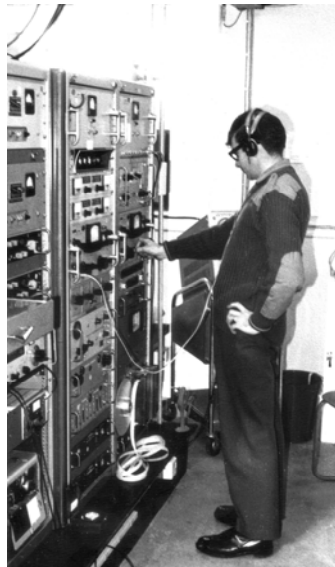
There can be few 19 Squadron field surveyors who were sappers or lance corporals in the Seventies or Eighties, or come to that also junior air surveyors, who did not do a tour as the TRANET Operator. This was considered to be a plum job as it excused you all the petty irritations of Regimental life; squadron parades, RSM's drill parades, menial duties, block inspections and so on.

The Transit Doppler system was devised in the USA almost immediately after the successful Soviet launch of Sputnik 1 in 1957 and was the first satellite positioning system. The first satellite was launched in 1959 but failed to achieve orbit and so a second was launched, this time successfully, the following year. Ground stations whose positions were known precisely were essential to support the system and five were built across the USA. However, the Transit project had a worldwide coverage and so ground stations were required outside



Station 016 with the first order trig point and scaffolding with the antennae.

the USA and, using a close relationship with the Royal Aircraft Establishment, the sixth station was built at Lasham in Hampshire, Station 006. Amazingly by today's thinking, the station was up and running within a few months and without any formal contract or written agreement of any kind and no payments were made or received. Station 006 helped to verify the injection into orbit of the first successful satellite and most of the three dozen or so follow up launches. Subsequently a further 79 ground stations were occupied around the globe.



Operating TRANET.

In the late 1960s responsibility for operating the ground station passed to Military Survey and so the Space Age came to an old wartime wooden hut at Barton Stacey when a new station, number 016, was installed with 19 Topo Squadron tasked to run it. A first order trig point was surveyed in as the reference point and scaffolding erected to hold the antennae that would pick up the signals from space, all rather surreal in a camp that was hastily built to last for only the duration of the Second World War.

The Lasham site ceased operations on the 31st of August 1969 and it is likely that station 016 took over immediately, it was certainly fully up and running by October 1970. Lieutenant John Critchley was the first station manager but later a REME SNCO electronics technician post was established to oversee the day to day operations.

In 1985 the station was transferred to Hermitage when the Regiment was disbanded and the two squadrons moved to join the School in Denison Barracks and there it continued until the Transit programme ceased in 1996 to be replaced by the Global Positioning System – the now ubiquitous GPS.

It is amazing, but right at the forefront of this space technology revolution were sappers sat in an old wooden hut! The editor would appreciate any memories related to TRANET.

Photographs by Mike Nolan who also supplied the information on which the article is based.

1 RASLS with Matelots and Macca in Malta

Eric Davey and I served with No 1 RASLS from 1954-1956 in Cyprus, Malta and Libya, not to mention a three month cruise in 1955 in the Mediterranean with the good ship *HMS Dalrymple*.

Our claim to fame, in conjunction with the Royal Navy survey crew, was taking part in possibly the last Macca base measurement which took place at the Marsa Sports ground in Malta. This was to form the base for our primary trig survey of the island.

We joined *HMS Dalrymple* in Larnaca and sailed to Malta in February 1955 and moored in Ricasoli Creek, Valletta. We were in Malta to carry out a re-triangulation and to establish additional primary trig points throughout the island, not forgetting Comino and Gozo, two islands to the north. To glue all this together we measured a primary base using the Macca base equipment specially flown out from the UK, I think from the National Physical Laboratory. In charge and the 'observers' were Captain Thomas RE and Lieutenant Commander Hunt RN who was also "No.1" on the *Dalrymple*. The team numbered 20.



The Survey ship HMS Dalrymple in Valletta Harbour, Malta.



Lt Anderson RE unwinding the measuring tape from the drum; Marsa Sports Ground.

The tapes (five of them made of invar) were wound on a large drum and, I think, were about 30 feet long. The Aligning Party set out each bay along the base. Each measuring tripod was set up, aligned and levelled. Either side of the measuring tripods was a straining trestle to which the tape ends were attached to pulleys each with a weight of 30lbs. The tape was thus suspended between the measuring heads in catenary. Each of the five tapes was measured four times for each bay. The whole base was measured four times, twice in each direction. No one was allowed near the sacred tapes without cotton gloves. Each measuring head was levelled to the Malta Datum and the temperature was taken at each end and for every measured bay. There was also one standard tape against which all other tapes had to be compared each day. After the physical measuring was completed corrections were made for slope, temperature and standard. I seem to remember there was even a correction for gravitational pull

which would affect the catenary curve.

My part was as a "Straining Trestle Man" with Petty Officer Froud. This may seem a lowly role but, in fact, all important as after we had set up our trestles we could nip off to the Marsa Sporting Club bar and get in a few bevvies for the team. We played an all important role under the hot Maltese sun!

With delays for weather, particularly wind against which the Navy erected canvas wind-breaks along the base, it took us about three weeks to measure the 3,000ft baseline – today, a few seconds! I also seem to remember, but this is mere conjecture, that the National Physical Laboratory came out later with a very primitive geodimeter or similar optical distance measuring apparatus to compare their obtained

length with our measured base length. After the base we observed two base extensions and off we breezed with our triangulation.

It was a great three months and an insight into the very different culture of the Royal Navy for example, the First Lieutenant's official 'orders for the day' were written in a jokey manner and referred to us as 'the 42nd Regiment of Theodolite' – not something an adjutant let alone a CO would ever contemplate. Any invitation to have a couple of "wets" on a run ashore usually finished in some totally insalubrious bar down the "Gut" but we survived, just!

I left the service in 1956 but Eric continued to make a real success of his army career. I continued my survey life mainly in oil exploration work, usually in far flung deserts but also in the US. Now I'm just a retired codger with rusty memories - most of them good!

Derek Fletcher

Editor's Afternote

HMS Dalrymple's connection with Military Survey continued when a small party from 47 Squadron at Barton Stacey spent several weeks on board in 1964 cruising around the Inner Hebrides and Ireland. Again, the surveyors enjoyed the naval culture especially as the daily tot of grog was still a daily highlight in those days – how anyone worked on as normal in the afternoons was a mystery. I still have nightmares about the hangover following a run ashore in pre-Troubles Belfast. We had to go ashore in uniform, best rig in matelot terms, and we were feted in a number of Orange Lodges, the hangover then had to face going out to sea in a very rough Irish Sea – never forgotten!

Tots Tales 1: Harrogate Square

I have many memories which made me laugh, as an A/T at Harrogate I soon learnt not too whilst I'm sure the Drill Instructors were doing their evil best to make me. The following took place on the drill square at Harrogate in 1959. Enter Sgt Ted Gray, WW2 Royal Artillery veteran and completely utterly deaf in one ear. Ted was giving us a real beating up and down the square as we were due to pass out very shortly and found occasion to chastise Johnny Salisbury marching one ahead of me "*Salisbury get those ----- arms swinging*" to which Johnny confidently responded with a not very complimentary remark. We carried on towards the bottom cookhouse and I can almost see the smirk on Johnny's face. Then came the "*about turn*" and the return to the centre of the square and Johnny without a care in the world until Ted ambles up alongside and says "*wrong ear sunshine - three xtra duties*". Well, that was me stuffed, my mirth was uncontainable and fortunately only Johnny got the three extra duties.

Air Survey Liaison in the Far East

If you served **with the air survey liaison section**/staff or were attached to it, we would love to hear from you. **We aim to put** together a timeline of all those that served on the staff from 1945 to 1970, when the British Forces left Singapore.

Mike Nolan has spent a lot of time at The National Archive and recorded a great deal of historical information, with names and dates. However the 1950's & 60's are a bit patchy, which is where your help is needed! We are also interested in the activities of the staff **both professionally and socially** and the interaction with the RAF and in particular 81(PR) Squadron.

We hope to put together some articles for the newsletter in due course.

Noel Grimmatt (RAF Tengah 1963) - noel@burwells1.demon.co.uk

BAOR “Quicktrain” Call-out 1969/70

When serving as a corporal (field surveyor) in Ratingen between 1969 and 1973, I remember that one of the most annoying and unpredictable events was the “Quicktrain” mobilisation. The threat of a “Quicktrain” seemed to perpetually hang over us like the sword of Damocles; it could strike at any time!

The idea was that, in the event of a Soviet invasion, “Quicktrain” would be activated and every soldier, no matter where he was or what he was doing, would have to race into his barracks and then his unit would move out (at great speed) to a pre-designated location, usually in dense woodland, “cam-up”, and then wait for instructions.

As anyone who served in Germany will remember well, this would all have been to no avail because the Soviets would have been much too clever to choose a mutually convenient time to invade and the obvious time would have been 2am on any Sunday morning when at least 90% of the BAOR were (to borrow a phrase from Private Eye) “*tired and emotional*”. I recall staying for a few weeks at a Geordie tank regiment barracks in Fallingbostal and I endured several Saturday evenings in the NAAFI where the scale of inebriation beggared belief! The thought of any of them driving a tank still gives me the shivers.

I remember one Quicktrain in particular; I was sitting watching a film in the cinema in Dusseldorf when a message came up on the screen ordering all soldiers to go to their barracks immediately as Quicktrain had been activated. I raced out of the cinema (I never found out how the film ended) and headed to my army quarter in Ratingen where I hurriedly packed some clothes and then made it into Roy Kaserne just in time to jump into the passenger seat of the comp wagon (see Alf Isherwood’s excellent item in Newsletter 47) and head out, in convoy, for the woods. As it was winter I had (wisely in my opinion) packed my standard issue army striped pyjamas.

The first night was spent somewhere in the middle of nowhere waiting for our orders. I made my self comfortable on a lilo in the comp wagon wearing the aforementioned pyjamas. At 6am the next day, a very senior officer from “Rhine Army” dropped in unexpectedly and we were all called out from our tents (and in my case, the comp wagon) to be addressed by this VIP. Everyone was in their combat gear except for me... standing there shivering in my pyjamas (picture Private Godfrey from “*Dad’s Army*”!). The said VIP went apoplectic (I have never seen anyone’s neck go such a deep purple since that day) and shouted... “*What would the Russians think if they saw that specimen in his pyjamas?... Sort him out!!*”. I was duly reprimanded but I still think that if the Russians had seen me they would have promptly fallen about laughing and we could have caught them off guard.

The farce continued when the Order (i.e. the nature of our task) came through. This had, traditionally, involved surveying a traverse at great speed to co-ordinate target locations for the artillery, etc., but on this occasion, the powers that be had got hold of our equipment list and spotted that, hidden away at the bottom of the itinerary of theodolites, tellurometers, etc was a “photocopier”.

Now, you have to take yourself back to the late 1960s when the photocopiers we use without thinking today had not been invented. This photocopier involved wet copying using bags of crystals and peeling bits of paper apart, etc. Not one of us on that Quicktrain had a clue how to work it. The Order, on this occasion, was a simple sentence typed on one sheet of paper and it said.... “*Make a photo-copy of this sheet*”. Well, the finest brains in Military Survey spent hour after hour failing to accomplish this feat and, I think I am right in recalling, one of us eventually sneaked off to a local town to get it copied in a civilian office.

The very word “Quicktrain” brings back many memories such as this and convinces me that it was more fun than any comedy show on TV.

David J Powell

The Tigers Are Back

By SG Jackson and Edited by FJ Litterick

Members may recall Sid Jackson who retired from Military Survey at Barton Stacey with the rank of WO1. Now fully retired and living in Southampton he has written a novel which has been accepted in Kindle version entitled "The Tigers Are Back." The book was kindly edited by another of our members Frank Litterick, who unfortunately recently passed away.

The book is a fictional tale of intrigue based on a deadly biological virus which has been released upon an unsuspecting public. John Mycroft, the Prime Minister's Director of Strategy and Communications, along with the unwitting help of David Hillman set in motion a series of events that rapidly escalate out of control with catastrophic results.

To what degree are senior figures from Number 10 and MI5 involved? Is the mysterious disappearance of Doctor Saunders connected to the theft of the deadly virus samples from Porton Down? Will these events change the world? Can Mankind survive?

Answers to these and other twists in this gripping story can be found throughout the 45 Chapters and 338 pages of this absorbing novel which has been priced at an affordable £2.59. A highly recommended read and a Kindle download can be purchased from Amazon.co.uk.

Tots Tales 2: Gillman NAAFI

1966 and I was Canteen Cowboy (Duty Corporal) for the Engineer Base Group (EBG) NAAFI in Gillman Barracks, Singapore. Before making out my report at the end of the duty I entertained myself reading the previous reports and found that recently Paddy Neeson of the Map Depot had been on duty.

Paddy's handwriting was beautiful copperplate calligraphy, truly outstanding. However, one could trace the history of the evening as a gradual deterioration in quality set in until his final remarks were completely illegible, so much so that it was even difficult to recognise it as handwriting at all! Hence the remarks in the margin by EBG RSM Heap '*This NCO has very quickly become either extremely illiterate or extremely inebriated. Three extra duties*'. Happy days!

A Survey Sgts Income 1960

As an aside to his research into his time on the SBA Boundary Commission Sam Reeder discovered details of his pay at the start of the task. It makes interesting reading not only as a reflection of the level of pay for an A1 sergeant but also the way in which allowances were paid for being married (hard luck on singlies) and clothing and the Local Overseas Allowance for Cyprus was 75% of the pay rate.

Weekly pay	£12 10 0
Marriage Allowance	£ 3 6 6
Clothing Allowance	£ 1 10 0
L.O.A.	£ 9 17 9
Gross Income	£27 4 3

All this changed with the introduction of the 'Military Salary' in 1970 when it was also goodbye to "Pay and paybook correct Sir!"

Current Financial Status

Bank accounts from statements as at 4 April 2013:

Current Account	£3,023.83
Reserve Account	£7,150.35
Total	£10,174.18
Cheques to clear	£22.00
Geo Soldiers' Fund	£2,661.19 Ring fenced
Grand Total	£12,813.37

Commitments

Geo Soldiers' Fund	£2,661.19
Other*	£3,296.00
Total	£5,957.19

Working Capital **£6,856.18**

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

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.

Maps and Surveys Seminar 2013

Saturday 22nd of June
The Royal School of Military Survey
From 1000 until 1700 hours

Six presentations on historical subjects that will appeal to all from the surveying and mapping fraternity plus interesting exhibits to view during coffee and lunch breaks. It is also a good opportunity to meet up with old friends.

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