

# The Military Survey (Geographic) Branch

Royal Engineers Association



**HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II**

**1926 – 2022**  
**Colonel – in – Chief**  
**Royal Engineers**

## Introduction

The death was announced of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at Balmoral on the afternoon of Thursday, 8 September 2022. Her Majesty was Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Engineers at the time of her death.

The Branch Committee decided to mark the event by seeking to record details of members of the Military Survey who had the privilege of meeting Her Majesty personally, either on an official visit, or at an investiture.

A call to the membership was broadcast, requesting they submit their personal recollections to include photographs, citations and details of any interesting conversations held between Her Majesty and themselves.

There are good records of the two main events when Her Majesty visited the School of Military Survey Hermitage. The first in 1980, to mark the opening of the re-built school, and the second in 1998, which was the sequel to the granting of the Royal Accolade in 1997.

The records below have been placed in chronological order be they of members currently serving or retired, and in some cases non-members.

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### Eric Davey receives his MBE from H M Queen Elizabeth II



Eric met the late Queen when he attended an Investiture at Buckingham Palace on 31 October 1973 to receive the MBE.

The award was given for Survey Operations in Northern Kenya during Op Topo Kenya 1972. The operation undertaken by 19 Topographic Squadron RE was basically a primary traverse in the Lake Loiengalani (Rudolf) area. It was a 5-month operation based in the village of Loiengalani.

Eric was appointed WOI (RSM) of 42 Survey Engineer Regiment RE from 1972 to 1974.

## MIKE PAYNE BEM



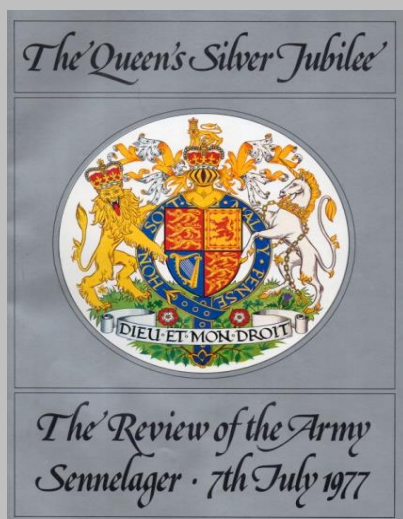
Over the record 70 years of the late Queen's reign, many Military Surveyors/Geographic personnel have been recognised with awards. Indeed, even amongst Branch membership we have over 19 award recipients ranging from Commander of the British Empire (CBE) to the British Empire Medal (BEM) and there may well be more.

Whilst many of those individuals were awarded their 'gong' by Her Majesty, many more were not so fortunate. Mike Payne, BEM, is one of those who didn't receive his medal from the Queen, instead he was awarded the medal by a Brigadier "in the summer of 1976, on an extremely hot day, on the parade square at Barton Stacey". "But" as Mike says, he does "have the Queen's signature, and an apology that she didn't present it"! The letter, framed together with a copy of some of the work that earned him the award and the medal ribbon, adorns his hallway at home.



## The Queen's Silver Jubilee Review of the British Army, Sennelager, 7 July 1977

Ian Thurgate



In July 1977 I was in 512 STRE based in Washington DC and was tasked to take a Geociever Satellite Tracking Set to the Queen's Silver Jubilee Review of the British Army being held at Sennelager.

I joined a party from 14 Field Survey Squadron, then based at Ratingen near Dusseldorf, and deployed up to 35 Engineer Regiment based in Hameln. 14 Sqn had a variety of Survey equipment and materials to display. I was joined by John Siddell from 14 Sqn to show off the Geociever – John had recently completed his 512 tour and so was familiar with the equipment.

As per normal Army procedures there were 3 days of rehearsals, but things went well, even on the first day. On days two and three, the personnel who were involved in the display element, which was taking place after the main parade, were permitted to watch the Review, and what an amazing sight it was: From a mass of spectator stands we looked out across a flat plain about half a mile wide and probably two miles distant.

Those first three days were damp and misty and when the review started not a lot seemed to be happening. Then, gradually, shapes started to appear in the mist, those shapes got a bit bigger, and then were joined by more shapes, and

then more shapes. Then the noise started. Hundreds of growling engines gradually getting closer and closer, and more and more shapes joined the others until it seemed the complete width of our vision was filled. The shapes became "Armour": Chieftain and Scorpion tanks; Scimitar reconnaissance vehicles; 432s\* and a host of other vehicles. Further back we could just make out Combat Engineer Tractors, AVREs\* and Bridgelayers\*! They advanced to within 200 metres of the viewing stands and then Gazelle helicopters came from behind and hovered over the lead tanks. It truly was a spectacular sight!



The master plan was that after the Review, the Armour would drive past and leave the parade area clear. The Queen and dignitaries would then have lunch whilst the display teams would move onto the parade area and set-up ready for Her Majesty, guests and families to tour later. Once we knew our position on the ground and confirmed our layout, the display rehearsals were plain sailing. We spent quite a lot of time waiting in the holding area whilst the Review rehearsals took place. There was great amusement amongst we Sappers watching the Gunners in the neighbouring area who, each day, spent most of their time painting, and repainting, their vehicles!



*Gunners doing what Gunners do best!*

After 3 damp and misty days the day of the Review was beautiful. The sun shone, the sky was blue, and it became a scorcher. The event itself had many parts. After various colour parties marched on to the parade, Her Majesty and His Royal Highness, Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, arrived followed by a host of dignitaries. The Review then began with the advance of 4th Division on to the parade area followed by the inspection by the Queen. After the inspection there was the Drive Past. With typical cavalry aplomb, a hundred or more tracked vehicles roared away from the parade area and past the display teams holding area, coating us all in black dust!

The display set up went without a hitch and we were warned that the Queen was going to be coming through the RE stands. There was a quick refresher as to the etiquette and what we were say to Her Majesty should she talk to us, and we were ready to go! The Queen arrived at the RE stand and the anticipation started to grow..... Were we going to meet the Queen? Sadly, No! She went to look at the Medium Girder Bridge.

A disappointment? Yes, a little, but it was still quite an experience!

- \* 432s – Generic name for Armoured Fighting Vehicles based on the AFV 432 Armoured Personnel Carrier chassis.
- \* AVRE – Armoured Vehicle Royal Engineers
- \* Bridgelayers – AVLB – Armoured Vehicle Launch Bridge
- \* MGB – Medium Girder Bridge

#### **Afterthoughts:**

At the time of the Queen's Silver Jubilee, there were 55,000 troops stationed in West Germany.

The main review parade had personnel from 28 Regiments/Battalions present – a further 2 were serving in Northern Ireland.

The massed bands on parade were from 24 Regimental Bands. There were 13 Corps of Drums and Pipes & Drums present and Colour Parties from 31 units.

**We shall never see the like again!!**

## THE OPENING OF THE NEW SCHOOL

### HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN ON 27 JUNE 1980

On Friday 27 June 1980, Her Majesty the Queen visited Hermitage to open the new barracks of the School of Military Survey. Despite the wettest June in the South since 1909, the weather remained fine throughout the visit. The sun shone for most of the time but there was a chilly wind.

The Queen arrived at the School at 12.45 having stopped outside the main gate to accept a bouquet of flowers from local school children who were lining the road to the camp. The guard consisted of one sergeant, six sappers and a bugler and the road to the Officers' Mess was lined with apprentice soldiers from the Survey Wing of the Army Apprentice College at Chepstow.



Arriving at the Officers' Mess, the Queen was received by the Lord Lieutenant for Berkshire, Colonel the Honorable Gordon Palmer OBE and was welcomed on behalf of the Corps by the Chief Royal Engineer, Lieutenant General Sir David Willison, KCB, OBE, MC. The Chief Royal Engineer then presented Major General and Mrs. E W Barton and Lieutenant Colonel and Mrs. T H Stewart. The Queen was wearing a canary yellow coat and hat over a matching striped silk dress with black accessories, white gloves and the RE brooch given to her by the Corps. Accompanying the Queen were Her Majesty's Lady in Waiting, the Lady Susan Hussey, Her Majesty's Private Secretary, The Rt Honorable Sir Philip Moore KCB, KCVO, CMG, PC and an equerry, Lieutenant Commander Robert Guy RN.

Before lunch, the Queen met all the 92 guests who were lunching with her at an informal reception. These included Lt General Sir John and Lady Stanier, Lt General Sir George and Lady Cooper, Lt General Sir Hugh and Lady Cunningham, Major General and Mrs. C P Campbell, Major General and Mrs. B St G Irwin, Major General and Mrs. J Kelsey and Major General and Mrs. F M Sexton. A fanfare by the trumpeters of the Royal Engineers Staff Band, Chatham announced that lunch was ready, and the Queen was escorted into lunch by the Chief Royal Engineer.

#### MENU

Chicken Liver Pate

Noisette of Lamb Flueriste

with

Chateau Potatoes, Stuffed Mushrooms & Broccoli

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Fresh Pineapple with Kirsch

Whipped Cream

Coffee

Chablis 1976 and Chateau Lasalle 1971 were served with the meal and the Loyal Toast was drunk in Martinez 1960. The Loyal Toast was proposed by the Chief Royal Engineer and responded to by Mr. Vice, Captain N H Harcourt RE. Music was provided by the Light Orchestra of the Corps of Royal Engineers, Leader WO1 P H Sleep, MBE. A feature of the Officers' Mess was the flowers which included displays using flowers sent specially for the occasion by the Governments of Hong Kong, Malaysia and Indonesia who have students currently at the School.

After lunch, the Queen signed the Visitors' Book and new colour photographs for the Officers' and Sergeants' Messes. Then Corporal D N Johnson RE presented the Queen with a pictorial map of Her Majesty's visit to Eastern Arabia which he had designed and drawn. The map features a number of sketches of local scenes and personalities superimposed on an outlined map of South East Arabia and was produced in colour.



At 2.45 pm the Queen arrived at the front of the school headquarters building in the Royal car and was received by the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Royal Engineer. After the National Anthem, played by the Band of the Royal Engineers, Aldershot, local civic dignitaries, and their wives were presented to the Queen. These included the High Sheriff of Berkshire, Mr. A Greenly, the Member of Parliament for Newbury, Mr. M McNair-Wilson, the Chairman of the County Council, Councillor L D Moss, the Chairman of the District Council, Councillor R J Stubberfield, and the Deputy Chief Constable, Mr. I E Emmet.

The Chief Royal Engineer, in inviting Her Majesty to unveil the commemorative plaque said "Your Majesty, all Sappers here today are immensely honoured, and delighted, that their Colonel in Chief is present to open the new School of Military Survey. On your last visit to the Corps at Minley your Military Engineers showed off their skills.

On this occasion the Military Survey element of the Corps are about to do the same. Before I let them off the leash may I invite Your Majesty graciously to unveil this commemorative plaque”.

To loud applause the Queen unveiled the commemorative plaque.

The Chief Royal Engineer then invited Her Majesty to accept a gift from all ranks of the Corps of Royal Engineers: “Your Majesty, as befits so ubiquitous a corps, some of your military surveyors have recently been practicing their specialty around Your Majesty’s estate at Sandringham. To mark this great occasion, may I invite Your Majesty to accept the fruits of their labours; first a full map of the Sandringham Estate for wall mounting and beyond a folio of maps enhanced with additional information for special use on your estate”. Sergeant P J Markley, who had coordinated the production of these gifts, was presented to the Queen. The folio, consisting of a set of 1:10,000 scale grey base maps, with information about the estate in colour, together with a 1:50,000 scale index, a legend, and an appropriate title page, was bound in maroon coloured leather with the Royal Engineers monogram stamped in gold on the front cover.



Before the presentation of a bouquet of pale pink roses and alchemilla by six-year-old Miss Karen Gilhespy, the daughter of Staff Sergeant N S Gilhespy, members of the Property Services Agency and the contractor’s staff presented to the Queen. These included Mr. J Clemits, Director of Works, Army, Mr. A R Cuttenden, Southern Regional Director, PSA, Mr. G D Trentham, Chairman of G Percy Trentham Ltd, and Mr. D Stone, the site Agent.

The opening ceremony was watched by approximately 800 specially invited spectators, most of whom were seated in stands on either side of the main entrance of the School headquarters building. In addition, 350 children from local schools were invited. Others attending included ex-Company Sergeant Major Leonard James Lowden who joined the Engineers in 1912, retired in 1933 and served with the Ordnance Survey until 1954. Whilst the Queen was touring the Instructional Wing, they were entertained by the Band of the Royal Engineers, Aldershot, until proceeding to the garden party area on the sports field. Two parties of VIP guests were conducted on short tours of the Instructional Wing.



The Queen spent about an hour touring the Instructional Wing and spoke to many of the staff and students. In the Map production department, after meeting the Senior Instructor, Major J Rylatt, Her Majesty saw 14 Advance Photo Technician course and 17 Intermediate Print Technician course making proofs of NATO map sheets and printing a variety of NATO maps on the Heidelberg printing machines. The Queen was shown an exhibition of recently published special military maps including maps of Northern Ireland, Zimbabwe Rhodesia, and the New Hebrides, whilst proceeding to the exhibition room. After being shown round the exhibition room by the Chief Instructor, Lieutenant Colonel M A Nolan RE, the Queen visited the Air Survey and Cartography Department. The Senior Instructor, Major M Harvey, showed Her Majesty 11 Advanced Cartographic Technician course working on a map design project and 11 Primary Cartographic Technician course, which included 3 Saudi Arabian students scribing and drawing. In the photogrammetric laboratory the Queen was shown 15 Intermediate Air Survey Technician course and 6 Mapping and Charting Establishment/Ordnance Survey Basic Machine plotting course operating Wild B8 and Thompson Watts precise photogrammetric plotting instruments.

Her Majesty viewed a stereoscopic model of a plot in Norway in B8. Whilst proceeding to the Field Survey Department, Queen was shown the new TACIPRINT vehicle, designed to provide a rapid field printing capability in support formation headquarters. On entering the Field Survey Department, the Queen was shown a display of the Survey Western Palestine 1871-1879, including one of Kitchener's theodolites, which was presented by Brigadier A Walmesley-White, CBE. After meeting the Senior Instructor, Major Zorichak, Her Majesty visited 64, 65 and 66 Army Survey courses, which included students from Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaya, and Pakistan. The Queen then saw 3 Primary Field Survey Technician course operating short range electronic distance measuring equipment and was shown the AGA 14.



*Army Survey Course students*



*Print Technician Course*

The Garden Party was held on the Sports Field. 240 special guests, including past Commandants and Chief Instructors, past Regimental Sergeant-majors and Senior Military Instructors, representatives from all survey units and civilian and military staff of the School, were assembled in groups and the Queen spent 45 minutes talking informally to many of those present. Her Majesty then retired to a special marquee beautifully decorated with floral trees manufactured from greenery and fresh flowers in delicate shades of yellow, flame and cream, where she took tea with the Lord Lieutenant, the Chief Royal Engineer, and past Directors of Military Survey, Major General R Llewellyn Brown, CB, CBE, Major General A H Dowson, CB, CBE, the Commandant, and a representative selection of all ranks of the School and their wives. At 16.45 the Queen said goodbye to her hosts and departed to the accompaniment of three cheers from the spectators.

It was a day that will long be remembered by all who took part, and everybody present will have their own particular recollection. To those who had served at the School in its earlier days, perhaps the most striking memory is that of seeing the Royal Standard on the flagstaff with the new multi-story School behind it. One could not but help feeling that at last the School of Military Survey had come of age and that all the struggles of the past had been worthwhile. As the Commandant said in his forward to the programme "The school is ready to move forward into an era of new technology which will have a substantial effect on the requirements placed on Military Survey". The other striking feature was the relaxed atmosphere of the whole visit, particularly at the garden party.

At the end of the day, the Chief Royal Engineer sent the following letter to the Palace:

“Would you kindly convey to the Queen our great appreciation of the honour paid to us by her visit today to Hermitage as Colonel-in-chief of the Corps. I know that all those present were very encouraged and inspired by the great interest which the Queen showed throughout the programme. All those in the Corps who have been concerned with the visit have shown great enthusiasm and I am sure that news of the visit will be received with great pleasure and satisfaction by Sappers serving throughout the world. The whole Corps is deeply grateful to the Queen, our Colonel in chief, that she was able to spend the day with her Corps and to open the School of Military Survey”.

On the 1 July the following letter was received from Her Majesty’s private secretary.

#### PALACE OF HOLYROODHOUSE

“The Queen has instructed me to write to you to express her appreciation for a splendid day at the School of Military Survey on Friday and I should be grateful if you would convey to Lt Col Stewart and all his officers and men Her Majesty’s warm thanks and congratulations on a most successful occasion. The Queen, as Colonel in Chief of the Royal Engineers, was delighted to be able to open the new barracks at Hermitage and is very glad that the School of Military Survey should be now so excellently and permanently housed.”

“The programme for the day was very well devised and executed and your Colonel in Chief was so pleased to have the opportunity of meeting many of the officers and other ranks engaged in military survey and to see their work. The period after lunch enabled the Queen to get a good picture of the wide variety of important tasks which are performed under the control of the Director of Military Survey. After her very interesting tour the Queen much enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere of the Garden Party.”

“Your Colonel in Chief has asked me to thank you both for your hospitality and imaginative presents. The lunch was excellent, and Her Majesty is so pleased with the folio of maps of the Sandringham Estate and the pictorial map of her visit to Eastern Arabia. Perhaps you would be kind enough to convey to Sgt Markley and his team and to Cpl Johnson, the Queen’s appreciation, and congratulations on their excellent work.”

“The Queen wished me also to thank you personally for having escorted her throughout the visit and for having helped to make this such an entertaining occasion for her. Your letter of 27 June was much appreciated by Her Majesty.”

“Finally, I should like, on behalf of the members of the Royal Household, to say how grateful we were for your hospitality and how much we enjoyed the day.”

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### Memories of Meeting Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

#### Cpl Dave Johnson RE

The pictorial map I produced was completed as a stand-by in case the book of maps covering the Sandringham Estate was not ready.

Standing outside HQ where the HM The Queen was presented with the book of maps was memorable, as before the Queen arrived, on a very hot day, all you could hear was a creaking and groaning from the book of maps in the sun, where the top cover bowed upwards and the bottom cover bowed downwards – that’s the effect of Planatol, Leather Cloth and Mill Board under heat. I’m not sure Her Majesty was impressed!!.

The artwork which commemorated Her Majesty’s Royal Tour of Saudi Arabia was presented in the Officers Mess by myself and my wife.

The comments from Her Majesty were very complimentary, of which she said it would hang in a prominent place. A few years later Dave Jordan had to deliver some maps to the Royal Yacht Britannia. He was given a tour of the ship and saw my artwork hanging in a room. On a recent business trip to Edinburgh, I boarded the Royal Yacht and was pleased to see that the artwork still hangs in one of the rooms.

## ROYAL REMEMBRANCE

### An Unexpected Audience with Her Majesty



As we mourn the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, my memories turn to what can only be described as the highlight of my life, an unexpected audience with the Queen.

In June 1980, two years after retiring from an Army career spanning 27 years, I received an invitation to visit the opening of the new School of Military Survey by the Queen. Enclosed alongside the invitation were details of the protocol and etiquette procedures to be followed by selected personnel who would be presented to Her Majesty.

As a former Regimental Sergeant Major and Officer of the Military Survey Service, I was most pleased that 'someone somewhere' even remembered me, but I took little notice of procedures as being totally irrelevant to my standing.

Having arrived at the School and showing my invitation through security checks of both Military and Civil Police, I was surprised to be separated from the general audience and escorted to a garden enclosure where I found myself amongst four or five dozen very senior personnel and civilian dignitaries. Within a few minutes her Majesty arrived to be introduced to members present.

Unbelievable, as I was introduced to the Queen it became more than a 'royal handshake' but a full blooded conversation. I became totally relaxed as she discussed differences between military and civilian surveying and was pleased that I had carried on in this speciality from Army training to British Coal. The conversation somehow turned to horse racing when she stated that most of the School's surveys were carried out around her Berkshire training establishment where she had horses stabled.

That day was certainly the highlight of my life but will perhaps make me pay more attention to official letters in order to be more prepared. However, if I had read all those protocol details before being presented to her Majesty it would never have been such a pleasant surprise!

(First published in the Hinckley Times (a major Leicestershire paper))

**Captain (Ret'd) Ron Birch Earl Shilton**

## Memories of Meeting Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Colonel (Retired) Mike Nolan

Chief Instructor, School of Military Survey 1980

It was announced that the SMS was to be opened by HM the Queen. The Commandant was Lt Col Trevor Stewart and for the first six months of 1980 the opening preoccupied him while the new C.I. struggled with his own problems.

There were numerous visits by someone from the Court, whose name escapes me, and who stood in for HM the Queen on the dress rehearsal.

As the opening neared, the C.I. was caught having an early coffee and read of the daily in the Officers' Mess anteroom by the Chief Royal, Lt Gen Sir David Willison etc who had arrived, in full-service dress etc., at the wrong location for a planning meeting. Within his earshot I phoned Trevor to let him know of this unannounced visit saying "The CRE is in the Mess", only to be interrupted by the Chief Royal saying, "The Chief Royal!"

The SMS had a brand-new Officers' Mess building with ghastly orange wallpaper and a set of white cylindrical ceiling lights in the Dining Room that resembled F49 film tins. For the opening, the ladies, under the leadership of Joanna Burrows, were to decorate the Mess with flowers which they did, admirably.

The Project Officer, Lt Col J Coulson, had acquired an antique Georgian fireplace for the ante room. Because, as usual, there is no corporate memory, this fireplace has since been removed and replaced with a modern monstrosity. Fortunately, English Heritage, or whomever had provided it on long loan, probably also lacks corporate memory.

I forget the sequence of events, but I think the Queen arrived for lunch by limousine and the opening followed this. Naturally we had had a full dress-rehearsal of the lunch, which was quite light, as laid down by the Palace. Lunch was preceded by a round of introductions in small groups. One of the first groups of about 12 was mine and on my right was Joanna Burrows whom I duly introduced, mentioning her role in decorating the Mess with flowers but this went without any obvious reaction.

Because Trevor Stewart was deaf in one ear, the Queen had graciously agreed to sit on the side of his good ear! During the planning it had been proposed by the SMS that when she "retired" after lunch she should walk to the end of the South Wing, but the Courtier favoured use of the Gents Toilets in the entrance hall and these, with the urinals suitably blanked off, were what was used!

Immediately after the lunch, all the participants from the SMS moved across to the Instructional Wing.

Cpl Dave Johnson, who had spent six months drawing a record of the Queen's recent tour of the Middle East, was, with his wife, introduced to the Queen when this drawing was handed over. The Queen's comment was that it might hang in the Royal Yacht.

There then followed the signing of the Visitors' Book. After several attempts to get the fountain pen, kindly provided by Col. Burrows, to write a gentle click of the fingers and the Lady-in-Waiting, Lady Susan Hussey, handed over the Queen's handbag from which a working pen was withdrawn and used.

The Queen then proceeded from the Mess to the entrance of the School by limousine where an already emplaced plaque next to the main door was unveiled.

Her Majesty was then shown the leather-bound Sandringham Estate map folio which had been compiled from large-scale Ordnance Survey plans with land-use added in colour. Sergeant P J Markley, who had coordinated the production of these gifts, was presented to Her Majesty, along with his team.

The SMS staff and families were congregated on the west side of the square outside Carto Wing while this was happening. It was here that Karen Gilhespy, the daughter of Sgt and Mrs Neil Gilhespy presented a bouquet of flowers to the Queen.

Her Majesty was then escorted by the Chief Royal, the Director of Survey and the Commandant to the entrance to Litho Wing where I conducted the Queen around the Instructional Wing starting with Litho under Major John Rylatt. The Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire, Col. The Hon. Gordon Palmer was in attendance.

Next was the Conference Room in which there was a circular display of photographs of Ex Carto Norge. At the bottom entrance to the Field Survey Wing, Dr Yo Hodson explained a further display of the Palestine Exploration Fund and the activities of various Royal Engineers who had been involved in surveys of Sinai and Palestine, including those of Wilson, Conder, Kitchener and Mantell.

The senior Instructor of Field Survey Wing, Major John Zorichak then guided Her Majesty past students from various courses. Amongst others, Her Majesty chatted with Maj Tommy Pereira, Malaysian Engineers and other overseas students.

The tour exited the far end of Instructional Wing where all the staff and their families had assembled on the playing fields. In case of wet weather there was a large marquee on the edge of the sports field, once again profusely decorated with flowers.

## Memories of Meeting Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

### WO2 Dave Jordan RE

#### QMSI Print Wing School of Military Survey 1980

The rebuild of SMS was completed, now all that was required was a date for HM The Queen, Colonel in Chief of the Royal Engineers, to carry out the official opening. Friday 27 June 1980 was the duly elected date. But before that momentous day there would be days and weeks of rehearsals and the inevitable ‘bull’ sessions.

I was QMSI print at the time and one of those chosen to be introduced to the Queen. Before then however there was plenty of work to be done producing the invitations and official programmes for the visit. In those days maps were still produced by line printing, a different colour ink for each of the colours on that particular map sheet. Blue water features were printed using blue ink, contours were printed with brown ink etc. Quite time consuming for a multi colour map but colour control on the single colour and 2-colour presses in use at the time was comparatively easy. Once a fit of the colour component was obtained, the actual colour could be visually monitored throughout the print run. Adjusting the amount of ink being supplied to the printing plate up or down as required. Producing the official programme however was a completely different experience as it was printed CMYK (4 – colour process). Only 4 colours of ink are used to produce the full spectrum of colours required. No easy operation on a 2-colour press when you can only see if the finished item is the correct colour once all 4 colours are printed. Today colour bars and various measuring aids are used to obtain consistent results, but we were having to rely on our vision only. In addition, due to deficiencies in the CMYK process, silver and gold colours are virtually impossible to reproduce, both prominent colours on the Royal Crest. Nowadays they tend to be printed as separate “spot” colours or to a Pantone PMS colour formula, none of which we had back then. Eventually however we produced the required programmes to a satisfactory standard.

Less exacting was the requirement to act as one of the invited guests during rehearsals for the commemorative dinner. Members of the Sergeants Mess, including myself, duly stood in for the Mayor of Newbury, the local MP, various County officials and their wives (!! ) and non-Survey officers etc. attending the opening ceremony. WRAC personnel were drafted in to act as waitresses. All was going well at first until the Corps band started to play the incidental music. Within minutes all the “waitresses”, being military, had fallen in step and were all bobbing along in unison with their bowls of consommé or brown Windsor soup. Not quite the required effect! Take 2. Trying to get military trained personnel not to all walk-in step - Not easy. Take 3, or maybe more, I have forgotten, but I was fully replete by the end!

There were also rehearsals of the tour around the various departments and planned introductions. The Royal party were due to enter the print department and be introduced to Captain Dick Kingswell, the then AI Litho. He then was to turn round and introduce me lined up with the other print personnel alongside a bench with various printed items on display. It was drilled into us that, when addressing Her Majesty, you said ‘Mam’ to rhyme with ham and not ‘Ma’am’ rhyming with harm. Got it! Just bend the head and do not bow from the waist when introduced. Got it! A few more locally generated and one more official rehearsal followed till we had it off pat, but it still did not prepare me for the actual day.

We were in position in good time for the planned visit time, when a message came down that The Queen was running late, unheard of! Traffic on the M4 and meeting various local schoolchildren prior to getting to The School had thrown the whole schedule off course.

A delay was not good for the nerves which were already running at full throttle. We then got a heads up that the Royal party were due. The rehearsals had all been very sedate and regal, none of which prepared me for what happened next. The double doors burst open and a whole gaggle of press photographers burst in, lights blazing, and hidden in there somewhere was this little 5-foot 4-inch lady who appeared to have too much make up on. My brain was still in a loop remembering the "Mam as ham" mnemonic. I remember shaking her hand, but any conversation was wiped out by the sound of all the camera shutters and flashes going off. In no time at all the entire party were gone, obviously trying to make up lost time before the consommé got cold.

To commemorate the visit Her Majesty she was presented with a hand drawn illuminated map of the middle east which she and the Duke of Edinburgh had visited the year before. Historical sites such as famous mosques, castles and statues from the various countries were beautifully illustrated in gold and silver inks.

Fast forward six years and I was working in Oman helping them set up their National Survey Authority. It was 19 November 1986 when I got a phone call from the Sultan's palace. I was told that Britannia, the royal yacht, was in Muscat harbour and I was to deliver whatever maps I could supply of the Omani coast as Prince Charles and Princess Diana were on board. They were on a nine-day tour of the middle east. Oman is home to many old forts and castles, many of which are on the coast, mostly Portuguese and British built to combat pirates and bandits. Prince Charles wanted to view the forts etc. as Britannia sailed down the coast. It was approaching lunch time. I normally finished work at 1 p.m. and spent most of my spare time at the Sultans Armed Forces sailing club, sailing Hoby 16 catamarans. There was due to be a race that afternoon and I was looking forward to winning another watch and a case of Fosters. There was still time to do both I thought and duly gathered up the required maps and headed at full speed for the harbour. Once past dockyard security I was pointed to the tradesman's entrance, the rear gang plank, and ushered aboard Britannia. I was welcomed on board by a young Commodore who escorted me to a waiting room to wait while the maps were whisked away for presentation to the Prince. Over tea and biscuits with the commodore while I waited we were discussing 'The Royals' and I was asked if I had ever met any of them. I duly explained about the Queen opening the new SMS and the presentation of the illuminated map of the middle east. I was quite startled, and proud, when I was told that that map was on the wall in the royal quarters on board. There must be a huge warehouse somewhere full of gifts presented to the Queen over her lifetime, that never see the light of day, so to think that our little map was adorning her lounge wall and being used was a proud moment. Suddenly the Tannoy system sparked up "Royal movements, royal movements". My immediate response was to think that someone was going to the loo, though why it was announced I had no idea. What it actually meant was that the Prince and Princess were about to leave the ship and was my cue to also be ushered ashore. As the Prince's party descended the front steps to be whisked away in a six-car convoy, I left by the rear steps and drove after them in my Toyota. I made it in time to the sailing club to enter the race. I didn't win anything that time, but I had some good memories of being on the Royal Yacht along with our gift to the Queen, the illuminated map of the middle east. Back in my bungalow in Bayt-Al-Falaj that evening, I realised that the date 19 November 1986 was exactly seven years after the Queens tour of the middle east on board Britannia and seven months before she visited Hermitage to grant The School the Royal Accolade.

Memories of Meeting Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Sgt Simon Mears RE

6 Air Survey Liaison Section RE RAF Wyton



*Sgt Simon Mears is presented to Her Majesty at the Garden Party  
His wife, Carol, and WO2 Roger Jones are on his right and on his left Mrs. Isobel Henry*

At the Royal opening of the 'New' School on 27 June 1980, Her Majesty met representatives of all the outlying survey units during her garden party walkabout. I was representing 6ASLS and was introduced as Sgt Mears from RAF Wyton. On hearing this, the Queen asked if I worked for the RAF or with the RAF. I gave a short explanation of how we received the tasking for new aerial photography from Svy 4 and turned that into flight maps for the RAF to fly with their Canberras, and ended with 'so, your Majesty, I actually get the RAF to work for me!' She burst out laughing and walked on.. the above photo of the encounter was published in the October 1980 edition of The Sapper.

## Colonel Robert J Griffiths MBE Late Royal Engineers

Awarded on 28 November 1989

I was awarded an MBE by Her Majesty the Queen on the Northern Ireland Operational List and presented the medal by Her Majesty personally. My wife and 11-year-old son attended the ceremony.

I was the last in line to come before Her Majesty, affording me the privilege of a little more time with her. She asked me to tell her what I had been up to, which I did. One felt in conversing with her, the deep and abiding affection she had for her soldiers. I cherished its warmth.

For my son it was a day which started well: out of school, a visit to the Palace and the sight of Her Majesty, until I suggested a celebratory lunch at the Connaught Hotel. His face dropped and I asked him what was wrong. He was hoping to make it a perfect day with a Big Mac. We duly obliged him.

*Bob Griffiths*

## Major Mick Perry receives his MBE from H M Queen Elizabeth II

Awarded on 10 December 1991



The investiture was at Buckingham Palace on the 10 December 1991, when I was appointed MBE after the first Gulf War.

I had taken on the SO2 Ops post at Feltham at the start of the war (Ops didn't exist at Feltham prior to this) but was also (later in 1990) to be posted to the exchange post in Australia! This was delayed till the end of the war in early 1991.

One day at a coffee break in the mess of the Army Survey Regiment the CO announced (loudly) that "the resident Pom is to be congratulated on being appointed MBE" – It was the first I knew of it.....!

I had the pleasure of returning all the way from Australia with wife and daughter to see Her Majesty and found some humour when she said to me "I understand you've returned all the way from Australia for this." when I responded with " Yes, ma'am, and all the Australians I know asked me to give you their best wishes"!!! She was amused and laughed, which was nice!

*Mick Perry*

Chris Nash (appointed OBE) also attended the same investiture.



## A Right Royal Visit - June 1998



On 26 June 1998, Her Majesty, as Colonel-in-Chief, visited her Corps of Royal Engineers at Hermitage, home to 42 Survey Engineer Group.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Berkshire greeted Her Majesty and then introduced the Chief Royal Engineer, General Sir John Stibbon KCB OBE, who invited her to take her place on the dais for the Royal Salute.

Her Majesty then inspected the Honour Guard mounted by 14 Independent Topographic Squadron and was escorted by Major Rupert Dash, OC 14 Sqn, and then inspected the Corps Band.



*Her Majesty Inspects the Honour Guard escorted by Major Rupert Dash, OC 14 Independent Topographic Squadron.*



Her Majesty was then introduced to Brig Whitley, Engineer in Chief (designate), the Director of Military Survey, Brig Wildman, the Commander of 42 Survey Engineer Group, Colonel Dorman, and the RSM, WO1 Watts. The Royal party and entourage moved into Group HQ for an update from the Chief Royal Engineer on the Corps and from Brig Wildman on Military Survey.



*Her Majesty meeting Brig Wildman, Col Dorman & RSM Watts*



*Her Majesty meets members of the REA.*

Her Majesty visited the Topographic Department and was shown some of the equipment used to provide coordinates for maps provided to the Gunners and the RAF. Sapper Nigh explained the advances in GPS equipment, using old and new pieces to demonstrate how compact and quicker to operate it has become. Sapper Meyer described how a theodolite is operated.



*Spr Nigh describes the G.P.S. equipment.  
Lt Col James Prain Chief Instructor RSMS looks on.*



*Spr Meyer describes the working of a theodolite.*

Her Majesty was then taken to the Terrain Analysis Department to be shown how the data would be interpreted and utilised to produce traditional mapping and more modern, computer generated 3-dimensional terrain models. Sapper Powles explained the operation of computer modelling, before instructing Her Majesty on how to use a computer mouse so that she could guide herself along the approach routes a helicopter pilot might encounter if flying into Sipovo in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia. The data, having been analysed and interpreted, was taken to the Reprographic Department to demonstrate how copies of the finished product would be produced. Sapper Warden described how a photographic negative is produced by TACICAM before handing it over to Sapper Riggott, who explained the operation of TACIPRINT, and how maps are printed from a plate which has been produced from the negative. Finally, Her Majesty was taken to the Map Supply Truck where Sapper Reeve briefed her on how the finished product is stored, referenced, and distributed.



*Some of the equipment used by the Geo Support Group*



*Camouflaged unit housing 13 Topo Sqn equipment for producing maps on operational deployment.*

Her Majesty was shown how the units were deployed tactically as a Geographic Support Group (GSG) in support of an operation which required geographic field support. The Royal party was then escorted to Squadron HQ where Major Jon Lane was finishing an Orders Group. Major Lane was able to show Her Majesty how skills, first learnt at RSMS have been used in theatres such as the Gulf and Bosnia. The GSG was carrying out various tasks as Her Majesty visited and she was able to see soldiers coming in from surveying nearby countryside, ready to examine and pass on data they had just recorded. Previous data was in the process of being analysed and Her Majesty took particular interest in a video which showed aerial photographs of her Balmoral estate superimposed onto a digital relief model. This allowed Her Majesty to climb inside a “virtual” helicopter and view Her Scottish estate from the air. The GSG was now ready to print maps for distribution and Her Majesty, under the guidance of Cpl Beeton, printed the first one. Cpl Beeton was recently awarded the Queen’s Commendation for Valuable Service for work in Bosnia and Her Majesty was interested to hear that he had worked with French throughout his tour and had to learn the language.



*More equipment used by the Geographic Support Group*



*Enjoying a simulated flight over Balmoral Estate*



Following lunch Her Majesty again moved to the front of Group HQ and in the presence of hundreds of people including 200 local primary school children and members of the REA, unveiled a plaque to commemorate the visit and the granting of the Royale Accolade to the School of Military Survey.



*Receiving a bouquet from Miss Courtney Caisley daughter of WO2 Caisley, 13 Topo Sqn*



*Meeting local school children*



*The Director of Military Survey Brig P R Wildman escorting Her Majesty to her car*



*Her Majesty bids farewell*

## Memories of Meeting Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

### BRIG (Retired) P WILDMAN AND HM QUEEN ELIZABETH THE SECOND

#### Director of Military Survey

*Brigadier Phil Wildman was lucky enough to have met the Queen on three occasions, the last of which was at the RICS in the late 1990s, when he was one of many presented briefly to Her Majesty. Any meeting with the monarch is of course special and memorable, but the two earlier occasions were particularly memorable, and for very different reasons.*

*He recalls:*

#### **OBE: Buckingham Palace 1990**

I was awarded the OBE in 1989 for my part in a joint US-UK project and my invitation to the Palace came in the late Spring of 1990. Maj Gen Chris Thompson, then DG Mil Svy, offered the services of his staff car and driver. Driver and car duly turned up at 0800 at my quarter in West Byfleet, with plenty of time to get to the Palace (by 1100). However, the moment we emerged onto the A3, less than 4 miles from the start, it was clear there was some sort of hold-up causing very slow-moving traffic. This would have been no problem had the problem faded after 3 or 4 miles, but it kept on so long that I eventually asked the driver to divert through Roehampton and over Barnes Bridge. There were queues this way too, and I was worried at one point that I might earn the title "The first officer to miss his appointment with the Queen". I arrived a little late, but the awards are presented in rank order (rank of awards, not of individual) so the senior awards such as knighthoods were still going through. I was in time for the briefing of the OBEs.

We were briefed on the whole process. This included careful instruction on how to approach and address Her Majesty, and how to retreat from her presence (three steps backward and a short bow before turning and walking away). Luckily, we were able to watch in the wings from our position in the queue and see two or three recipients in front of us, which helped consolidate what we had been told and helped calm the nerves. I cannot now recall my conversation with the Queen, but it was fairly brief. The whole operation was slick, as it had to be with a large number of recipients. At that time, award recipients could normally take just two adult guests, or one adult and two children under 18 as a family group. As a result, I could take my wife, Vicki, and both our children, who had a much better view than I did. Vicki said that the passing of the sword between equerry and monarch as newly dubbed knights came and went was a marvel of dexterity and timing.

#### **Military Survey 250**

I had a rather more central role when HM graciously visited the School in 1998, to officially mark the granting of the title Royal in 1997, part of the RE Survey 250 celebrations. We were to be the centrepiece of her day. As might be expected, there was much planning in detail, including a dress rehearsal a week before, with the Chief Royal Engineer and the Lord Lieutenant present, where everything was to take place on the exact timings. For the dress rehearsal we needed someone to take the place of the Queen. It needed to be someone who was of comparable age, and not known to too many younger soldiers. Joanna Burrows, wife of retired Lt Col Ben Burrows agreed to play this part. She arrived in a loaned limousine, exactly as Her Majesty would be doing. When Joanna alighted from the limo and the Royal Guard presented arms, one of the guard was heard to mutter: "I thought the Queen was coming next week". Joanna played her role as the Queen perfectly, asking just the sort of intelligent question which the Queen herself would ask, and it helped everyone to feel confident about the arrangements.

After briefings, the Queen toured a number of static stands within the school buildings, and an outside mock-up of a squadron deployment in Bosnia. I had the pleasure afterwards of being her host over a very pleasant all-ranks' lunch. She was very relaxed and good company, and the conversation was wide ranging. I would not wish to break any confidence, but I can say she talked very warmly about all her family. The unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the Royal title and a walk-about followed lunch, when she met more soldiers and their families. Her Majesty seemed genuinely to enjoy this walk-about amongst the soldiers' families, and my memory is of her smiling and happy throughout.

## Memories of Meeting Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Colonel (Retired) Chris Dorman

Commander 42 Survey Engineer Group

Security. Our first planning meeting involved the Lord Lieutenant's PA, the Chief Royal (Gen Sir John Stibbon), the Queens Private Secretary (Sir Robert Fellowes), myself, the COS (Lt Col John Stamp), the QM (Lt Col Nick Winder) and the Adjutant (Capt Neil Marks). We proudly explained that we had kept knowledge of the proposed visit to our small team to ensure tight security only to be told by Sir Robert that the visit had already been announced on the Royal website!! P.S. The COS, QM and Adjt were the key "behind the scenes" players in ensuring the whole event was such a success.

Balmoral Flythrough. As reported in the various articles, 13 Squadron showed a fly through around Balmoral. What is not reported is that the Queen was so taken by it that she asked for a copy so she could show it to the rest of her family when they went to Balmoral for Christmas.

## Memories of Meeting Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) James Prain

Chief Instructor, Royal School of Military Survey, 1995 - 1998

My tour as Chief Instructor was dominated by the Royal connection. The greatest honour was to be the Chief Instructor (CI) when Her Majesty the Queen visited the School in 1998 a few weeks before I completed my tour. This event was the sequel to the granting of the Royal Accolade in 1997.

The granting of this Royal Accolade was the result of the staff work of Lieutenant Colonel Simon Farley who was Chief of Staff (COS) 42 Survey Engineer Group. It was one of many initiatives taken to celebrate 250 years of Military Survey taking the production of General Roy's Military Map of Scotland as the start of 'modern' military surveying. I recall the day of the announcement and the impromptu party to celebrate our status and recognition by the appropriate MOD authorities that the School was indeed a 'Centre of Excellence'. To mark this event, I requested a copy of the granting letter which I had envisaged being handwritten on vellum. Reflecting on the modern age, I was provided with a copy of the fax sent by Buckingham Palace!



*HM The Queen learns about GPS from Sapper Nigh in 1998.  
(Published in the DSA Ranger the Winter Edn 2008)*

As it was not possible to arrange a visit by Her Majesty on our 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, a Royal Visit was arranged for the following year, 1998. The visit was to 42 Survey Engineer Group and after an honour guard and some introductory presentations, the technical tour started with the School. I was most impressed at how well the technicians spoke. The Queen quickly put the presenters at their ease and was keen to listen; she was also keen to shake their hands. One of the stands involved a digital mapping display in which we wanted the Queen to operate the mouse "like her grandsons". However, we had not rehearsed what would happen if the Queen declined the invitation. After three prompts, I realised that I could be heading for the Tower; so, we moved on swiftly.

Memories of Meeting Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



*Her Majesty being briefed by SSgt Bob Longridge RE on a visit to 1 ASLS RE at RAF Marham on 24 January 1996*

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The Branch Committee would like to thank the following for their contributions: -

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- Chris Dorman
- Bob Griffiths
- Dave Johnson
- Dave Jordan
- Bob Longridge
- Simon Mears
- Mike Nolan
- Mike Payne
- Mick Perry
- James Prain
- Ian Thurgate
- Phil Wildman

# The State Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II

Westminster Abbey Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> September 2022



(Westminster Abbey/Photos PA)  
(Compiled by Noel Grimmett - April 2023)