



Military Survey (Geographic) Association

A member of the Royal Engineers Association



MINUTES OF THE 15th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held at the WOs' & Sgts' Mess, Denison Barracks, Hermitage on Friday 14th March 2014, at 1900hrs

In Attendance:	
President:	Bob Avenell
Chairman:	Angus Cross
Secretary:	Rod Siggs
Treasurer:	Alf Isherwood
Military Representative:	WO1 (RSM) W Robinson RE
Function Co-ordinator:	Mick Perry
Editor:	Alan Gordon
Welfare Officer:	Noel Grimmett
Webmaster:	Dave Johnson

26 Members were present. *A list is attached.*

The presentation of the **Association's Annual Award** was made prior to the commencement of the meeting by the President, Bob Avenell, to Spr Ryan Kennedy. (*A separate report with citation will be contained in the next Newsletter.*)

ITEM 1 – CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed those present, commenting that this was a good turnout considering the reunion and the Regiments planned events commemorating the Farewell to Newbury planned for June. He thanked all for attending and stressed his customary wish that the AGM would be kept to the minimum possible and he hoped members would enjoy the evening.

ITEM 2 – APOLOGIES

The names of those members who had tendered their apologies were listed on the notice board and are *attached*.

ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF THE 14th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) 2013

The Secretary was asked if there were any action points outstanding from the previous AGM and there were not. The Chairman asked if there were any comments, errors or omissions from the floor and as there were none, he asked for a proposer that they be accepted as a true record of that meeting:

Proposed:	Noel Grimmett
Seconded by:	Ken Hall

Carried unanimously.

ITEM 4 – ANNUAL REPORT ON 2012/2013

a. The Chairman reported that following the success of the RSMS Course Photographs CD the committee were now looking at preserving the historical artefacts associated with Military Survey (Geographic) to produce an online archive accessible to anyone in the world through a browser. Dave Johnson had been asked to scope the project which had already identified that Alan Gordon had 4,500 images, Dave himself had approximately 3,000 and 14 Sqn had identified “piles”. It is also known that many others have vast collections of photos and memorabilia. The object was to look, reference and retrieve but costs could be as high as £40k to provide such a service although Dave has found an organisation which would provide a service for £4k with an annual maintenance fee of £400.00.

Angus said there were still many questions to be resolved, like where would the originals be stored?

Chris Nash interjected that it was a good idea but he thought we would not be in a position to maintain the service indefinitely, so perhaps the Corps and Army Museums should be approached as they have the wherewithal and experience.

Roy Wood mentioned that the DSA had been looking at this and care should be taken to avoid duplication of effort and costs, but he warned that the Corps Museum was notoriously slow on these sorts of projects and impetus, once started, must be maintained.

There followed various comments from the floor advising, for example, that the Travel Society might be a good source of advice as they had been involved since 1929 in a variety of projects, and a warning was given about duplication of photos etc. which often meant that the originals could conceivably be reduced by as much as 50%.

Dave Johnson explained that a small group should decide what should be included before going through the originals which should eliminate this problem.

Mike Nolan said a digital library was investigated in a small way by the DSA and they had spoken with Manchester University. He also said that Ordnance Survey had a system that can be searched by just a single word.

Chris Nash asked if we had done more than just think about this project – he felt we needed a plan. The Chairman explained that the committee had an outline plan which, hopefully, would be taken forward.

b. The Chairman said we had 13 new members join us this year but we did not ask on their application if this was as a result of the name change.

c. Angus also said that we had sadly been informed of the deaths of three members and a number of friends and colleagues since the last AGM, he said that their names appear on the notice board.

d. He told the meeting that there had been a number of spends for our serving geographic military family all of which came from the memberships contributions and he thanked the members for their generosity.

e. The Chairman then asked Mike Payne to present the Standard Bearers report, he indicated that he had forwarded it to the Secretary, but in essence the standard had only been paraded once during the last year, by Mick Nottage, for John Eady's funeral. The Chairman said that he knew the Standard Bearers were all very much appreciated and on behalf of the members thanked them all for undertaking these duties.

ITEM 5 – MILITARY UPDATE.

The RSM, WO1 Will Robinson, gave a comprehensive update on Geo matters which is *to be published in the next Newsletter*.

ITEM 6 – FINANCIAL STATUS.

The Treasurer, Alf Isherwood gave a résumé of the Audited Accounts of the Association that had been examined by two people and not one, as previously, and he said their comments had been displayed on the website and had been attached to the noticeboard, prior to the meeting. They were favourable and commented that the presentation made it easy to audit.

The headline statistics of the accounts were as follows:

Current Account and Savings/Reserve Account Total	£10,478.90
At the yearend there was one uncashed cheque	£192.80
Geo Sldrs Fund	£2,382.96

Alf explained that our accounts show an excess of income over expenditure of £1,050.29 for the year. Donations had been made from the Soldiers Fund of £341 to purchase various items for soldiers in Afghanistan and a contribution was made this year towards the wives Christmas Dinner. He then asked if there were any questions about the accounts and as there were none, he asked the accounts be accepted.

Proposed by: Mick Perry
Seconded by: Les Morgan

Carried unanimously.

ITEM 7 - ELECTION OF INDEPENDENT AUDITORS/EXAMINERS 2014/2015

The Chairman explained that Maj A Keeley (Retd) has volunteered, together with Mike Gowlett, to undertake the duties of independent examiners of the accounts on behalf of the Branch for FY 2014/15 and he therefore would propose that they be re-elected and asked for a seconder to re-elect them.

Proposed by: Angus Cross
Seconded by: Mike Perry

Carried unanimously.

ITEM 8 – COMMITTEE

The President, Bob Avenell, informed the members that in accordance with our TOR the three Officers of the Committee, the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, had to be elected each year. He said that he did not know of any volunteers for any of the posts and had accordingly approached the three incumbents to confirm their willingness to re-stand and therefore, unless there were any different nominations from the floor, he would ask the membership that all three be re-elected en bloc.

Proposed by: Dave Johnson
Seconded by: Alan Beeston

Carried unanimously.

The Chairman then spoke of the need to replace Alan Gordon as Newsletter Editor, a post he has held for many years, and requested that any volunteers or names that might be approached be passed to him.

ITEM 9 – AOB

a. The Chairman explained that he had received a 2nd letter from the Chairman of the REA who had failed to appreciate why our organisation had changed its name from Branch to Association, and who pointed out in no uncertain terms that we must change our name from Military Survey (Geographic) Association back to that of a “Branch” or:

- Have no entitlement to REA funds and **must handover our funds to REA trustees.**
- **Have no access to military property.**
- Not be supported by the Corps.

The letter also advised that we must abide with the REA rules in regard to our membership.

Angus said that he was extremely disappointed but thought we had no choice. We were reliant upon military accommodation and he did not want to compromise our serving Geo family. Accordingly, he proposed we accept the name change back to Mil Svy (Geo) *Branch* with immediate effect and said that the Committee will undertake a root and branch review of our membership and TOR.

Discussions followed and Mick Perry advised that in his opinion our membership was not that dissimilar to that of the REA anyway. Mick Nottage asked if we knew why our new members had joined, but unfortunately we had not. Roy Wood said that as a previous Chairman of the REA he knew of other “associations” but if we wished to remain in the REA then name change was probably inevitable.

Proposed by: Angus Cross

Seconded by: Noel Grimmett

Carried by a majority.

Chris Nash proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman and Committee for their indulgence and undertaking to continually try and improve the membership of our organisation.

Mike Payne questioned the need for separate TOR, but thought a “standing minute” might be necessary for the existence of the “Soldiers Fund”. The Chairman said that these considerations would be looked at by the Committee.

b. Phil Maye had written to the Secretary and asked that the membership might consider the placing of a (garden style) bench in the Hermitage Church cemetery, near the memorial and have a plaque to commemorate Mil Svyr’s / RE’s that have passed through the gates of Denison Barracks / RSMS with dates.

There followed discussions reference maintenance and the timing of such a consideration as the RSMS will still remain in situ for a while longer so the Committee agreed to consider this further.

c. Mick Perry then outlined the Regiments events commemorating the **Farewell to Newbury Weekend** and said he understood that all will be advertised not only in our newsletters and on our website but in the Sapper magazine. He emphasized that **only** the Branch and Reading & West Berks Branch had been invited by the RSM and members of the WOs’ & Sgts’ Mess to a curry buffet prior to Beating Retreat by the Corps Band. The Officers’ Mess had a Cocktail Party prior to the same event but was by invitation only from the Offrs’ Mess.

The Sunday exercising The Freedom of Newbury Parade will be attended by those elements of the Regt still remaining at Hermitage at that time with the Corps Band and members of the Reading & West Berks Branch, and possibly the RBL. There will possibly be a curry lunch for all at the Newbury RBL following the parade.

Tickets for the Saturday night dance at the Corn Exchange were going very well and will benefit the Army Benevolence Fund.

Mike Payne requested an Officer volunteer to head the REA contingent and asked that he should contact himself or Mick Perry and Mike explained that those who did not think they were capable of marching the full distance through Newbury could join at various places along the route.

Mick Perry had a dedicated £1,000.00 from our Branch funds and requested a further £1,000.00 as an emergency contingency safety net.

Proposed by : Mike Payne

Seconded by: Chris Nash

Carried unanimously.

d. Roy Wood asked if the DSA programme on the Friday 20th June had been advertised but was assured it had been.

ITEM 10 – DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

No date has been fixed at the moment but the next meeting will take place in spring, 2015, at Hermitage.

ITEM 11 – CLOSING REMARKS

The President remarked upon the RSM's brief and in particular about the "scattering" of our Geographic soldiers, many in individual posts rather than as many of us remember our service. He thanked the RSM for the continuing use of the Mess and also Alan Gordon for his outstanding contribution as our Editor, and asked him to "hang on in there" and we will find him a well-earned replacement.

He thanked the Standard Bearers, Mike Payne and Mick Nottage, for their continued support and said that Dave Johnson should get a real vote of thanks and clap for taking on the very important work of capturing Military Survey's heritage.

He spoke of the move of the Regiment and said we should consider how it would affect where we place our centre of gravity and possibly how we, as a Branch, might survive.

Bob said of our name change that we (the Branch and especially the Committee) must retain our sense of humour but he felt common sense had prevailed.

He also mentioned that he now wished to stand down and hoped a replacement could be found as soon as possible.

This elicited a vote of thanks for his work with the committee and his wise words.

He thanked all for attending and hoped they would all enjoy the remainder of the evening.

The meeting closed at approximately 2014 hrs.

Rod Siggs

Honorary Secretary
Military Survey (Geographic) Association

Attachments:-