

250 men with a special job

THEY BELONG TO A REGIMENT UNIQUE IN BRITAIN'S ARMY

“Echo Staff Reporter”

The 250 or so men who make up the 42 Survey Engineer Regiment are special men, doing specialised work, in a regiment which is the only one of its kind in the British Army.

Map-making is their business and it's a job every one of them loves doing – they have to, for it's the sort of work that often requires great patience and attention to the finest detail.

With the many different facets of work involved in map-making, each man has to be specially and highly trained. A fairly high standard of education is essential and you will find that most of the men will have reached or passed GCE level.

Formed in the Middle East in 1939, the regiment came to this country for the first time in June last year and is at present stationed at Barton Stacey, near Andover.

Just back from Aden

The regiment consists of three squadrons: 19 Topographic Squadron, 22 Lithographic Squadron, and 47 Cartographic Squadron.

The Topographic Squadron recently returned from Aden and at this moment a troop of about 20 are working in Borneo. The calculations they make on the spot will be sent back to Barton Stacey where their work will be interpreted into map form.

This weekend parents, relations and friends had an opportunity – for the first time – of seeing what sort of work the regiment does and how the men live.

An open day was an attraction today with technical demonstrations in the morning and an inter-squadron athletics meeting in the afternoon. In the evening the band of the Corps of Royal Engineers were due to Beat Retreat.

Schools pay a visit

Yesterday, about 150 school-children from Andover and Winchester were shown around the camp. They were able to see the complete process of map making from the original survey work to reproduction and final printing. To provide a mobile element capable of technical survey and map reproduction, a number of survey vehicles are held by the regiment.

The Topographic Squadron have “computing vehicles” fitted out as office vehicles and carrying a range of survey equipment. Included among this equipment is the tellurometer, a device which has virtually revolutionised field survey work. Based on radar principles, the tellurometer is used for measuring distances.

The Lithographic Squadron has a printing train capable of undertaking the complete task of map reproduction in the field. Included in the train is a press which can print 5,000 maps an hour and in seven different colours.

A pleasant change from the mass of complex machinery was provided by an exhibition of uniforms and badges of the Royal Engineers over the years. The exhibition was arranged by Major Brian Davies, O.C. of the 47 Cartographic Squadron who is at present engaged in writing a series of works tracing the history of the uniforms and badges of the Royal Engineers. Like Major Davies, whose home is in Bournemouth, a number of other officers and men in the regiment come from the South.

Commanding Officer of the regiment – which has spent most of its time “hopping around the Middle East” – is Lieut.-Col G. A. Neale.