



## Military Survey (Geographic) Branch Royal Engineers Association



### Newsletter No 34 – Summer 2009

## Branch Tenth Anniversary Edition

1999 – 2009

In 1997 Military Survey celebrated its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This milestone was marked by the production of dozens of souvenirs – maps, mugs, glasses and even an Anniversary Ale - and by mounting events spread throughout the year. However, the most significant and lasting events of the anniversary were the granting of the Royal accolade to the School of Military Survey and the Corps being given the Freedom of Newbury – both of which are very much still going concerns.

The other outstanding anniversary event was the major reunion that attracted 3,000 former and serving military surveyors from all over the world to stand and share memories on the night of the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 1997. Immediately following this event many that attended asked when the next reunion was to be and, as a result, the Military Survey branch of the REA was formed in 1999 and now ten years on it is still thriving.

Our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated in some style over the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of July when it was combined with the annual Beat Retreat, the Regiment exercising the Freedom of Newbury, a guided tour of the Royal School of Military Survey and a band concert in aid of the Army Benevolent Fund. This newsletter includes reports on all these events.



*The Regiment marching through cheering crowds to the Freedom ceremony.*  
(Photo: Mike Nolan)

**Tenth Anniversary Reunion – Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July  
The Corps Band Beat Retreat**

A warm, humid and sultry afternoon greeted about 60 members and their partners as they registered for the 3-yearly major reunion ably hosted by the WOs' and Sgts' Mess at Denison Barracks, Hermitage in Berkshire. Our arrival was particularly pleasant as the RSM, WO1 Beeton RE, was ever present and bid us all a warm welcome. After a well needed drink, or drinks as the case may be, everybody immediately entered into the party spirit and the delightful business of re-acquaintance of old friendships. Despite the embarrassment of sometimes recognising the face but not the name, or perhaps the other way round, a goodly time was had by all. Word was then passed around, in the typically British subtle way, for us to move out and take our seats to witness the ceremony of 'Beating Retreat'. Here the Branch members were joined by the participants of the Cocktail party hosted by the Officers' Mess.

To the surprise of some, the ceremony was held in front of the Headquarters in the 'sunken' car park that turned out to be an excellent venue with the spectators comfortably accommodated on the higher ground, which provided ideal viewing. There then followed a spectacular display of bandsmanship and counter marching professionally performed the Corps Band led by Drum Major D Barnes RE and directed by Major N P Morgan RE. In common with most aspects of the services, the Corps, surviving various cutbacks, has maintained an outstanding military band of quality if not in quantity! Gone are the days when the band had the luxury of rows of drummers, bugles and fifes and, on reflection, one doubts whether the ceremony could have been performed in that confined area with size of band we 'oldies' used to know.



However after a wonderful performance the Commander, Colonel John Kedar, took the closing salute and the band marched off playing the familiar marches 'The British Grenadiers' and 'Wings'. It was noticed by some that the programme of music did not include the Military Survey March 'Fougasse' – out of curiosity perhaps the question should have been asked... Never the less, a wonderful ceremony in a wonderful setting. We then all drifted back to the Sgts' Mess to continue renewing old acquaintances, lamp swinging and imbibing. The Mess did us proud by serving up a selection of various curries and so the night carried on with some leaving at reasonable civilised hour whilst others considered the early hours of the next day more appropriate. And so on to the next day...

*Peter Wood*

**Tenth Anniversary Reunion – Friday 3rd July  
Exercising the Freedom of Newbury**

**Sapper ‘Windy’ Miller’s Story**

The Freedom of Newbury was granted to the Corps of Royal Engineers in 1997, and has been represented by 42 Engr Regt since then, as we are the towns local Regiment. The ‘Freedom’ gives the Regiment the right to march through the town with bayonets fixed, and a band playing. On Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> of July (after a gruelling week of rehearsal!), the Regiment, consisting of contingents from 13, 14, and 16 Sqn, numbering over 100 soldiers, exercised this right accompanied by the Corps Band.

The rehearsal week began on the Monday, with reminders for all in the basic rifle and foot drill movements. The temperature was beginning to rise and the drill instructors got to grips with some of the more ‘rusty’ members on parade, refining the movements until they were satisfied we could march around without bayoneting the ranks around us!

Day 2 of the rehearsal began similarly, but with the addition of 2’s caps or ‘t?t hats’ and the knowledge of temperatures hitting 30°C plus for the next few days, moral was shaky at best. But watching 14 Sqn de-bus and play catch up on the previous days lessons cheered us up. By the end of the day, the RSM commented on the improvement of all, and first of many ‘run-throughs’ was completed.

Day 3 and 4’s rehearsals brought us all up to scratch, and with a break in the weather (temperatures dropping to the low 20’s) we were ready for the parade.

The day itself began with a coach trip to the British Legion with everyone dressed in full 2’s (except Spr Bennett who left his 2’s hat on camp....winner!). When the order came to form up, the parade fell in on the road, and with the band starting up, we moved off toward the town.

The parade route was crowded on both sides, with a good number of Newbury residents turned out to cheer us, and it was fantastic to see the support given to us by the locals. When we formed up outside the corn exchange, with all four sides of the parade surrounded by civvies and veterans alike, the inspection was followed by a speech from the Mayor of Newbury. We then marched off to sound of cheers and clapping, which was taken up by all as we passed back through the town. Then it was a congratulatory speech from the CO and RSM, followed by drinks in the British Legion!

From my point of view, and certainly from the response we received from the local community, the day was a great success. I think all the soldiers on parade were proud to be there representing the Corps, and the locals were equally proud to witness the Regiment on parade, an aspect of our lives which they rarely see.

Personally, I was very happy to take part in the parade, which by far outdid all of my expectations, and I hope that the next Freedom of Newbury parade receives the same level of commitment from both the Regiment, and the community.

***By Spr ‘Windy’ Miller***

**LCpl Reed’s Story**

42 Engineer Regiment were marched through the High street of Newbury and then on to form up on parade on the Market Square, thus exercising the corps freedom of marching through the town of Newbury with rifles and bayonets fixed. On the other hand it gives the Geo bods such as Cpl Brad ‘Chappers’ Chapman a prime chance to flash their rack of medals acquired over the centuries to the local civvy community.

Preparation for the grand day saw the requirement for numerous kit inspections with people turning up in full or half issued No 2 Swag, ready for the keen eyes of the badge, SSM 'Si' New. The usual points such as gash ties and rubbish boots were picked up and directed to be rectified for the next inspection. Over preceding inspections peoples half issued No 2 gear slowly merged into a full suit and eventually the squadron got the 'thumbs up' from the SSM!

Eventually the week of the parade arrived. On the Monday, the 42 Engineer Regiment less 14 Squadron (en route from Germany) got smashed on drill to get the mind back into the swing of the exciting world of drill. After finally mastering the about turn on the march the Senior Drill Instructors (SDI's) saw fit that rifles should come out. Just to make the week that more worthwhile there was a record high for the temperature (perfect for drill), making it absolutely 'redders' through the week (Or 'red pigs' as some like to say). Rifle drill tuition was carried out, then 13 and 16 had a few laps of camp to see how it worked on the move.

With the arrival of 14 Squadron on Tuesday and a quick drill beasting to whip them into shape, 42 Engineer Regiment was ready to thrash out some more drill. After a good input of drill, a massive sweat fest and getting over embarrassing moments, such as guys with rifles in a completely opposite position and arm to the rest of the regiment (no names mentioned Spr Malyon), it was time to go over the parade day plan of action. This was coordinated by the RSM and took place on the latter part of Tuesday and Wednesday.

On Thursday members of the band appeared and it was time to introduce the beat of the drum to the march. It was this day that I somehow managed to creep to right hand marker, 'nice one'. However on the day we were arranged so that the good looking guys were placed on the front rank for the Major General to inspect, so this saw me front and roughly centre!

The big day arrived on Friday the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2009, the Regiment took position at the Newbury Royal British Legion, with fighting 13 Squadron leading and 16 Squadron trailing to make sure the Regiment is kept in good order. The weather was well planned as it was nowhere near as redders as the rest of the week. The parade set off at 1100 with the RSM leading and each respective SSM leading their Squadron. With the occasional much needed 'change arms' and the step being called, 42 Engineer Regiment marched through the High street of Newbury and on to the Market Square.

This was the second time that I personally have carried out this parade, and the reception of the locals was much more substantial than last time, both down the High Street and in the Market Square. Residents of Newbury lined the pavement cheering and clapping as the parade passed by with the occasional 'Go on lads!' This gave a personal sense of pride that all our hard work and preparation had actually paid off. Flags were waved and civvies both young and old stood back, enjoyed the sight of the parade and the sound of the military band thumping away.

When the parade reached the Market Square, each squadron halted at relevant positions and hundreds of people cheered even more, from both the street and shop windows. Workers even came out of respective shops to view the parade and mustered by the clock tower. The parade commenced which consisted of a fairly quick inspection by the Major General, with the rifles in the shoulder. Then Speeches from the Major General and the Newbury Mayor took place and the light at the end of the tunnel drew closer.

The parade finally came to an end and it was time to march off! This saw the Regiment march back to the Royal British Legion, where a much awaited beer or two was found, and a tasty complimentary buffet set out by the kind members of the Royal British Legion and Newbury town council. The CO finished the parade with a few words of praise and thanks, then 42 Engineer Regiment was 'fell out' and encouraged to smash a few beers.

***LCpl Reed 16 Geo Support Squadron***

### Marching Through Newbury: A Veteran's Viewpoint

It was only after much thought that I volunteered to join the march having not done anything like that since 1974, over thirty five years ago. When the day dawned my thoughts were "Will I be able to manage the march being only a few months away from joining the ranks of septuagenarians?" As it happened I think that I was one of the younger ones.

We boarded the coaches at Denison barracks and were taken to the Royal British Legion club in Newbury where some others who live in Newbury joined us. The weather was kind, refraining from rain but with cloud cover which meant that we would not be baked in the noon day sun.

The time to form up arrived and the march started. It was further than I anticipated but I was amazed when, as we marched past the crowds lining the route, they cheered and applauded, something that I had not experienced before or for that matter never imagined would occur. My shoulders went further back and a lump came to my throat, it felt very special.

We arrived in the Market Place and formed up for an inspection, why I don't know, but this was not something that I realized was to happen. The old instructions came flowing back; wiggle your toes, etc. After the inspection came the speeches by the Mayor and the Inspecting General. I felt very proud to be taking part in this event. We then marched back to the Royal British Legion with, it seemed to me, even more applause and cheering from the crowds lining the route. It was a wonderful experience that I will not forget even if my legs did ache for days afterwards!

#### **Albie Field 1957-1974**



*Branch members were surprised by the cheering crowds.*

*Members passed muster at the inspection!*

Photos: Mike Nolan



**Tenth Anniversary Reunion – Friday 3rd July  
Tour of ‘The School’**

Early afternoon on the Friday and a steady stream of members arrived at the conference room for what turned out to be a fascinating afternoon. Soon old friends were deep in conversation which after the “how are you keeping” question invariably got around to stories of yesteryear. Although numbers were a trifle disappointing, it was good to see so many of our more mature members such as Tom Hartley and Taff Richards had made the effort to come and soon there were sufficient air surveyors present to form a multiplex shift plus a couple extra to run the coffee swindle!

After the welcoming cup of tea and initial chat to friends, John Knight, the Principal of the RSMS gave a short presentation on ‘The School’ as it today. What a profound difference from that which his audience knew! However, although it is now part of the Defence Intelligence and Security Centre and no longer a Royal Engineers unit, the School goes from strength to strength. It now has three wings, Geospatial Information Management and Geospatial Exploitation based at Hermitage and Imagery Intelligence (IMINT) at Chicksands. We were divided into three groups to get briefings from each wing. My group, which enjoyed the benefit of Les Morgan’s ever sharp humour, set off behind a guide into what most of us knew as Litho Wing and is now Geospatial Information Management Wing where we spent five minutes with the newest Geo Tech course who were marking up maps with felt tip pens; thus far we kept up with the technology! Next an interesting briefing on the work of the Wing and then into the press room to view the relics of what is now a bygone age; the serried ranks of Heidelberg presses and their keeper Cyril Wright for, as will be explained in the next newsletter, the RSMS will no longer teach medium format printing and the machines were due to be removed during week beginning 13 July.

It was then back to the conference room where IMINT instructors from Chicksands showed us fascinating imagery ranging from the famous Second World War Peenemunde rocket site photos through to current operational material. By coincidence, one of their exercises that they showed us was 1967 F49 photos of Khormaksar in Aden and Colin Price was able to pinpoint 13 Squadron’s home at that time in Normandy Lines and his married quarter. Finally off to Building 6 and Geospatial Exploitation Wing where it was intriguing to see that all training is based on current operational needs for example, we were talked through an exercise that used GIS to analyse reams of textual data gathered from mobile phone conversations in Afghanistan to then calculate the location of the sender on a map. Lastly we donned special glasses to view a huge stereo model of a very deep quarry that was projected onto the classroom wall – absolutely stunning and a million miles away from anything the old air surveyors in the party had ever seen.

So ended an eye opening visit to the School of today; it bears no resemblance to that known to most branch members but is still the same in that it turns out extremely well trained officers and soldiers. Many thanks to John Knight and his staff, especially those who drove from Chicksands especially for our visit.

*Cyril Wright lamenting the end of the Heidelbergers – machines he considers small fry compared to the Roland Ultras of his youth.*



**Tenth Anniversary Reunion – Friday 3rd July  
The 2009 Annual General Meeting**

On return to the conference room we were joined by more members who had turned up for the AGM – more handshakes and a few more ‘warry’ stories – before sitting down for the official business, ably and swiftly conducted by chairman Angus Cross. Before the formal part we were given an update on what’s happening in JAGO by the Commander, Colonel John Kedar, including a statement on the future of Hermitage which is included later in this newsletter. Then came an eye opening presentation from WO2 Simon Crago on the Regiment’s support to operations over the last year. We heard that the operations in Iraq and the Balkans that had filled so many years were finally over but that Geo involvement on the ground in Afghanistan had continued to grow with Geo representation at all levels down to the Battlegroups where junior Geo soldiers working on their own are excelling.



LCpl Muir, this year’s winner of the Branch award for good fellowship, then gave a presentation on the work of 16 Geo Support Squadron’s Special Support Team which is responsible for providing geo support to UK homeland operations and emergencies working alongside the police and other agencies. Having “sang for his supper”, he was then presented with his award by Branch President John Elder.

*Members more familiar with Borneo, Aden or Cyprus hear about events in Afghanistan.*

With one eye on the clock it was now time to speed through the required elements of the AGM. The salient points were as follows:

- The Branch remains financially healthy.
- The sad loss of several members recently, and an ageing membership, emphasised the need to address the recruitment issue.
- Particular mention was made of the continuing excellent service we received from our Standard Bearers whose attendance at members’ funerals was greatly appreciated by grieving families.
- The Newsletter had continued to be produced to a high standard and distribution problems had now been overcome.
- Albie Field, our Webmaster from inception until now, had less time available and so Dave Johnson has taken over and is currently updating the site
- Chairman made a formal vote of thanks to Albie Field for all his past work.
- The audited accounts for 2008 were accepted.
- Chris Nash was reappointed as auditor.
- Committee members were re-elected.

Angus nipped through the agenda in record time and so it was soon off to the Sgts Mess for more convivial chat before the evening band concert.

*John Elder presenting the award to LCpl Muir.*



**Tenth Anniversary Reunion – Friday 3rd July  
The Band Concert**

After the AGM the members made haste to the Sergeants' Mess to down a well-earned drink prior to the evening concert by the Corps Band. The evening was warm and balmy with a light breeze to provide welcome relief. A finger buffet provided some nourishment but not of the same level of sustenance as we enjoyed at the previous evening's supper after the Beating Retreat. The concert took place on the walled patio of the Mess with approximately one hundred and thirty guests enjoying a wonderful selection of musical entertainment during a two hour period, ending as the sun was about to disappear over the horizon.

The concert opened to a fanfare with the Director of Music Major N P Morgan then setting the scene for the evening's programme. A concert march started the musical extravaganza, followed by the Yeoman of the Guard which provided a good contrast in tempo and probably familiarity. Next was the Shirley Bassey Showcase which provided the band with the opportunity to play with gusto, this was then followed by the first of three vocals by Chris Deeley, the other singers coming on during the second half of the concert. All of the singers gave us three very different songs but all were delivered with passion and high entertainment value.

WO1 Craig Philbin took over the baton part way through the first half, remaining until close to the end of the concert. The trombone solos (why they call it this when there were three of them is another matter) as we know are always enjoyed by audiences, this was no different, even when you know what to expect. There was then a timely selection titled Michael, which had originally been put together to celebrate the planned UK tour by Michael Jackson, but now honoured his musical talent. The first half ended with a rousing fanfare and soliloquy.

The Band Warrant Officer opened the second half of the concert with an amusing short story presented by a recent outgoing Regimental Sergeant Major, which he had seen displayed in the Snooker Room of the Hermitage Mess.

With the sun disappearing behind the band, the temperature had dropped, with some ladies reaching for a wrap, or a chivalrously offered jacket to keep warm. The Director of Music presented one of the Bands CD's to a member of the audience who had last heard the band seventy three years ago, before you ask, it wasn't Mick Perry!

During the last of the three vocals there were two fly-pasts by crows that typically were not flying in formation, it was observed that their timing was poor as the concert ended with a rendition of Wings!

The Post Horn had to be part of the concert, on this occasion it was "Huntsmen" delivered in stereo from off the patio tables. They must have completed a Risk Assessment as they had selected the two lightest members of the band to play the Post Horns. There followed a change of pace with a saxophone solo - the band evidently needed to draw breathe.

We were now into the finale with the light gently fading, when the band played the "Spirit of Pageantry" with gusto. This was preparation for the Corps – Hurrah for the CRE, which is always an excuse for people to burst into song themselves. The evening was rounded off in typical fashion with the Corps March "Wing" - with not a crow to be seen anywhere.

All in all, everyone enjoyed the concert and even the children seemed to be absorbing the atmosphere and listened with rapt attention. As always the Sergeants' Mess was an excellent host, for which we all offer our sincere thanks.

**Chris Cleeton**

**Tenth Anniversary Reunion – Thursday and Friday  
And Finally**

..... a great big thank you must once again go to Colonel John Kedar for the kind invitation to join with JAGO at the celebration of Beating Retreat and again on the parade for the Freedom of Newbury and hosting us at Denison Barracks for our annual AGM. We would also wish to thank the Principle of the RSMS, John Knight, for the opportunity to visit the RSMS to get a better appreciation of modern concepts being adopted by today's "military surveyor" if we may still call them that!

An event like this, as we all know, can never be a success without a lot of effort by many people working in the background. So a personal thanks must first of all go to the RSM, Al Beaton, for all the additional work in which he was involved and in his role as facilitator for the whole event, not forgetting the use of his Sergeants' Mess at a very busy time of the year. In a similar vein we must include Major (Retd) Tony Keeley for his assistance in the organisation of the tour of the RSMS including the refreshments, the preparation of the venue for AGM and the display of photos and all those nice things for us to take away.

Finally, on a more personal note I would like to thank those tasked to work closely with me to make things work before during and after the event. SSgt Martin Brown who sadly was posted to Washington DC a couple of weeks before the AGM and Sgt (to be newly promoted SSgt) Roy Moulding who gallantly took over the reigns and guided us through the last few days and into the AGM itself. Lastly there must be a mention of Mike Navarro, the Mess manager and in particular all his staff for their help in making this year a success - thank you all.

**Mick Perry**

The last words on the subject of the Tenth Anniversary events are to thank Mick Perry on behalf of all Branch members for all his hard work over many months in organising the entire two days.

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**Chairman's Piece**

As you will hear from others we had an extremely enjoyable couple of days at the beginning of July for the branch's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. For those who did not manage to get there I will give you a quick summary of a couple of proposals which the committee have been authorised to take forward in the coming year.

We have felt for a while that our membership numbers are fairly static and that with an ageing population it will inevitably reduce in size if we don't attract new recruits. The committee has an ongoing project to produce a presentation pack that can be delivered to the new recruits into the serving army to make them aware of our existence from day one. This will also serve to give them a bit of the history and story of Military Survey and a better understanding of their heritage. Alan Gordon is putting this together on behalf of the branch.

If we manage to make the serving soldier aware of our existence early on in their career then it makes sense to maintain a visible profile during their service. One way of achieving this is to use some of our excess income to sponsor a unit sports team each year. We calculate, based on present figures, that we can afford about £500 annually and that that is sustainable for the foreseeable future. The intention is to sponsor a different sport each year which will spread our largesse around and increase our exposure to a greater cross section of the Group. It now falls to the unit to propose the first sport and for that team to discuss with us what would be useful.

Clearly having covered the start and during a soldier's career we need to set up a system to fire their enthusiasm as they leave, a difficult task as they are leaving for pastures new and have a lot more important things on their plate. However we will bend our minds to this and perhaps you could too.

If anyone out there has any other thoughts on recruiting to the Branch please let me know; all contributions are welcome and will be considered. The AGM in 2010 is planned to be held sometime in September, the date to be coordinated with the Group without whose support we would find meeting much more difficult.

**Angus Cross**

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### **The Early Days of The Branch – A Personal Reflection**

I was recently asked to write “something” for the Branch Newsletter on the first years of The Branch. What follows is very much a personal view of the early years.

My starting point is that there was really no single event that triggered the formation. As early as 1986 Gerry Gerhard suggested the formation of a branch but the Directorate General staff, on the grounds of management and resources, did not support the initiative. Nick Cheesman, through his initiatives that led to the first reunions and then the dinners were very much catalysts. The huge success of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary reunion party provided the final nudge for the formation of some sort of Military Survey Association and becoming a national branch of the REA seemed the best way forward. A committee was organized with Alan Gordon, Les Morgan and Ron Birch prominent members and initial funding was provided from the profits from the Anniversary project.

I was telephoned by Alan Gordon and asked if I would like to be the Chairman. This was a bit out of the blue because I did not even know that a branch was in existence and at the time was working abroad and continued to do so for the next 5 years. I agreed and we got down to work – the committee got down to work.

The starting point for the committee was that this was a branch for all associated with Military Survey and a branch of equals within the membership. In reality the early years were comparatively easy for me: a 3 year tenure at most, a very supportive President, General Roy Wood, to be followed later by an equally supportive President, Brigadier Alex Matthews. The principle aim was to bring together serving and retired Military Survey personnel. The membership grew rapidly and initiatives were put in place such as the newsletter, the events at Hermitage and 135 Squadron, the protracted negotiation regarding a standard – which is unique amongst REA standards for reasons not to be disclosed publicly - awards to soldiers and some hearts and minds support to families and soldiers through donations. The members unstintingly supported the Branch initiatives.

As with most organizations members are often reluctant to take on positions and bring fresh ideas and initiatives. During the early years we were lucky and always managed to persuade very good people to step into fill breaches. After my 3 years were finished volunteers were not forthcoming for the post of Chairman and I did a further 2 years as Acting Chairman. With a strong committee and an encouraging membership this was not a burden.

Always at the back of the mind of the Committee was sustainability of the organization. The first flush of enthusiasm established a strong branch but nourishing the membership and their interest was and is a challenge. Changes to meet members’ aspirations were always under review. A glance to the future with potential moves of units, the heavy operational load on units and personnel and an aging membership, but with the opportunity to encourage the serving soldier and civilian member to join, there is every prospect for The Branch to remain robust and serve its members. I must conclude by acknowledging that without the great support from all at Hermitage we would probably not be where we are today – a sound and well-supported Branch.

**Christopher Nash**

## Treasurer's Report Summer 2009

### Audited Accounts - 2008

On 31 December 2008 the Branch was worth £6273.30 or £6923.30 including the standard which is capitalized at £650.

During the year, there was an excess of income over expenditure of £1085.29. Grants included £219.88 from the RE (Geo) Fund to buy equipment for soldiers at Hermitage and in Afghanistan and £500 from the Reserve Account to the REA Benevolent Fund. Members have continued to donate generously to the RE (Geo) Fund and money is available in the Reserve Account for contributions supported by the Committee and by the AGM.

The debtor problem is under control and must be kept that way. Just 3 members did not pay their subscriptions in 2008.

The following are excerpts from the Independent Examiner's comments –

*“The following accounting principles were applied – going concern, consistency, accruals and prudence.....accounts were well presented, easy to understand and accurate.....minor adjustment needed to the AB397 which the Treasurer drew to my attention – no impact on the balances.....likely declining membership.....business development, marketing and recruitment may need a higher profile to secure the longer term future of the Branch.....”.*

This reflects the policy of the Committee. The full audit report is available on the Branch website.

### Worth Of The Branch At 1 July 2009

The current branch worth is £8641. This figure includes pre-payments received for this AGM but none of the costs which will be reconciled later, or expenditure that might be voted at the AGM. A conservative estimate of the working capital, which includes our estimate of expenses for the year, is £6970. The RE (GEO) Support Fund stands at £1009.73. The approximate annual subscription income for the Branch is £2500. One debtor remains for 2008 and 12 members who have previously paid have yet to pay in 2009.

The accounts remain in a healthy state.

**Mike Gowlett**

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### Branch Treasurer

The Branch is looking for a Treasurer. Mike Gowlett has been Hon Treasurer for six years and is happy to step down. The duties involve keeping the books for an account with assets of less than £10,000.

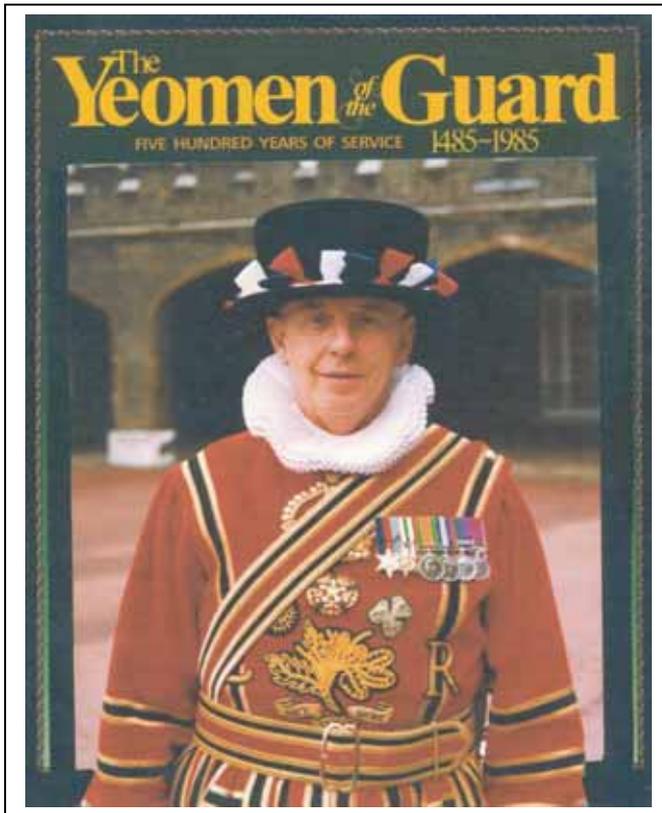
The Branch Committee meets five or six times a year. While the main purpose of our meetings is to propose and manage Branch activities, we keep abreast of what is happening in the Geographic community and enjoy the hospitality at Hermitage. Ideally the Treasurer should live in the Berkshire/ Hampshire area. This is a good opportunity to play an active part in our Branch. If you are interested, please speak to Mike Gowlett or Angus Cross about the post.

**John Elder**

## Survey's Yeoman: Kenneth Moylan

Kenneth Moylan joined the Ordnance Survey Apprentice Tradesmen Boys at Barton on Sea in December 1941 then trained at Clitheroe and Wynnstay where he met local girl Phyllis George. After training he was posted as a Trig Surveyor to 13 Field Survey Company and served with them in Italy.

When the war in Europe ended he had leave in UK during which he married Phyllis and then returned to 13 Company by then based in Palestine. On completing his three year tour he was posted to the Survey Training Centre at Warminster and whilst there he was 'claimed' by his father who was a major in the Royal Artillery and so Ken served the remainder of his 21 years as a gunnery instructor leaving the service as a WO1.



His second career was as a guided weapons instructor with companies such as BAE Systems working mainly in Saudi Arabia.

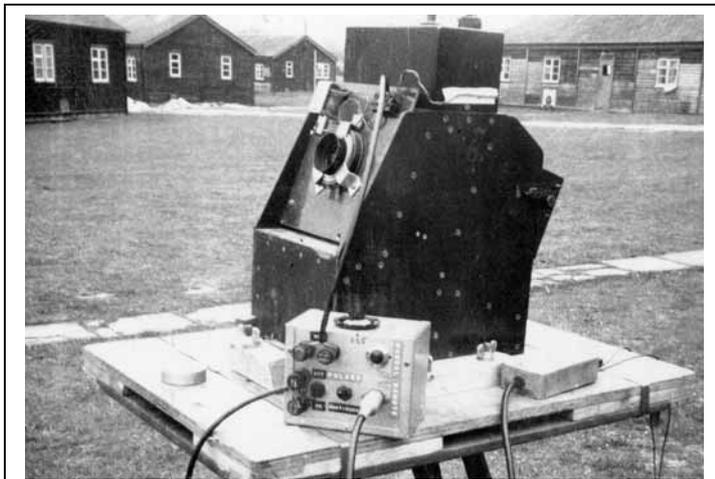
After this Kenneth applied for and was accepted as a Yeoman by the Queen's Body Guard of the Yeomen of the Guard and in this capacity he attended many Royal occasions including the weddings of Charles and Diana and Andrew and Fergie. He and his family were presented to the Queen on the occasion of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Body Guard and he was chosen as the face of the Yeomen in a book published to mark the event.

When Ken retired he and Phyllis moved to Abergele in Wales where he died about four years ago.

**Bill Saunders**

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### Whatever Is It?



Mike Nolan has supplied this photo showing the wonderful hutted accommodation 'enjoyed' by 19 Sqn (and 13 when it briefly held independence in B Camp) at Barton Stacey. 22 and 47 had opted for the brick huts – clever move!

However, the conundrum is...what is the piece of kit in the foreground?

Any ideas please to the editor who will pass them on to Mike.

## THE FUTURE OF HERMITAGE

### Programme to Rationalise and Integrate the DIS Estate (PRIDE)

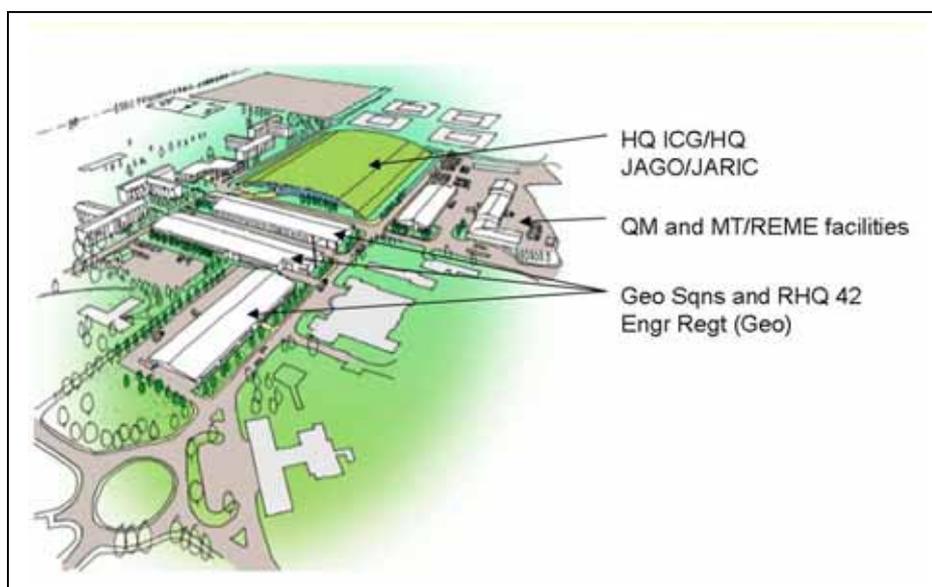
PRIDE is split into two elements with PRIDE (Wyton) encompassing the relocation of HQ Joint Aeronautical and Geospatial Organisation (JAGO), 42 Engr Regt (Geo), (including 14 Geo Sqn from Germany), HQ Intelligence Collection Group (from Feltham) and JARIC to RAF Wyton and PRIDE (DISC) which includes the relocation of RSMS and other elements of Defence Intelligence and Security Centre (DISC).

After years of rumour and uncertainty regarding the future location of HQ JAGO, 42 Engr Regt (Geo) and RSMS as well as the future of the Hermitage site, a major milestone was achieved in April when the PRIDE (Wyton) element of the programme achieved Main Gate approval. In a written statement to Parliament the Armed Forces Minister confirmed that PRIDE (Wyton) is considered to be affordable and value for money and that the funding was available for the programme to proceed. In the same announcement it was also confirmed that SKANSKA plc had been awarded the contract to build the new facility.

Preparation of the Wyton site has already begun with demolition of old unused buildings in full flow. The site plan has been agreed (see illustration) and HQ JAGO will be co-located with HQ Intelligence Collection Group while the Regimental Headquarters and each of the Squadrons will be housed in their own purpose built accommodation. The support facilities within the Regiment will also be a state of the art facility. Undoubtedly the main benefits for the move lie in the improved technical accommodation the programme will provide. Each Squadron area will include environmentally controlled garaging areas for the vehicle fleet with each troop having vehicle bays and a balance of technical and administrative office and storage areas. Another major advance will be the networking infrastructure installed in the building allowing for both a technical and administrative network to be in operation; the technical network will enable the networking in barracks of deployable systems leading to a much improved day to day training facility for soldiers. The current plan in the PRIDE (Wyton) programme is that HQ JAGO and 42 Engr Regt (Geo) will move from Hermitage and Mönchengladbach to Wyton in August 2013.

The PRIDE (DISC) project is not at the same stage as PRIDE (Wyton) with Main Gate approval not expected until October 2010. Only after the PRIDE (DISC) Main Gate approval has been achieved and it is confirmed that RSMS will be moving from Denison Barracks will the future of the Hermitage site be decided.

### Colonel John Kedar, Commander JAGO



*Artist's impression of the new facility at Wyton.*

**WO1 (RSM) Nick 'Lofty' Carter  
1926 - 2009**

Nick was born in rural Suffolk and at the age of 14 left school and started work on a farm. In 1940 a family of evacuees were billeted with Nick's family and among them was the woman who in 1946 was to become his wife for 44 years. As farming was a restricted trade he was not conscripted into the Forces but as soon as the restriction was lifted in 1946 Nick joined the Suffolk Regiment. In July 1947, whilst awaiting a posting to join a battalion, Nick was in a party that was seconded to 8 Army Field Survey Depot to help move the unit from Hanwell to Ascot. Nick apparently enjoyed the work so much that the following year he transferred into Military Survey.

After training as a Storeman Survey he returned to 8 Depot until 1950 when he was posted to Hermitage for the first time. His career progressed with a tour in 3 Depot in Germany and then 2 Depot in Egypt. In May 1955 he was sent to Cyprus in charge of a small advance party to organise the move of the Depot's 5 million maps from the Suez Canal Zone to Larnaca. The Depot moved successfully and then Nick was posted to 47 Squadron across the island at Episkopi. Two years later and Nick and the family moved back to Hermitage and then in 1961 he was promoted and became the RQMS at 135 Regiment. 1963 saw Nick start a three-year tour as SSM of 14 Squadron after which he was promoted to WO1 and appointed RSM of 42 Regiment at Barton Stacey. 'Lofty' Carter was a greatly respected and well-liked RSM who retired from the service in 1968.



RSM Lofty Carter enters into the pantomime spirit by inspecting the cast for the Regimental show.

Nick then joined the head office of the Midland Bank where he stayed for the next 18 years until retirement in 1986 by which time he was head of the Documentary Credits Section. In 1993 he moved back to Saxmundham, not 500 yards from where he was born. He was a keen member of the Branch being the original regional member for East Anglia and recently provided considerable input to the project to write the story of Military Survey. Nick died suddenly on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2009.

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**John Wheeler**

John died on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May.

He was a field surveyor in the mid Sixties serving in 14 and 84 Squadrons. After leaving the service he joined the survey firm Longdin and Browning and rose to become a director.

He is sadly missed by wife Janis and daughters Amanda and Kate.

**Chris Martin**

Chris passed away in June.

He joined Military Survey as a field surveyor in 1965 serving first in 84 Squadron and then with 13 Squadron at Barton Stacey before a tour with 512 STRE. Next he was posted to MCE and then to 19 Squadron followed by a second tour with 512 and then back to Barton Stacey with 19 again. Chris finished his service at the School in 1987.

**Ron Takel**

Ron was called up in 1942 and trained at the Survey Training Centre and was then posted to the newly formed 2 General Survey Section at Addlestone where he worked on the Benson Project that produced the mapping for D Day.

The following year the unit commenced field survey training for the unit's role of providing control for the Royal Artillery. Ron landed on Gold Beach at Le Hamel on D+5 and carried out field surveys near the front line throughout the Normandy Campaign. The Section was then disbanded and Ron joined 521 Field Survey Company and then 3 Field Survey Depot where he remained until the end of the war in Europe.

He was then given leave pending posting to the Far East but the war ended and he was sent instead to Egypt where he finished his service with 512 Field Survey Company.

Ron died on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August.

**Tony Simpson**

Tony died suddenly on the 28<sup>th</sup> of August. He joined Boy's service at Harrogate with Intake 53A and served a full career as a cartographer.

After Field Engineering training he was posted to the Regiment, then at Zygi in Cyprus, and after a three-year tour he attended an upgrading course at the School followed by a move to 13 Squadron at Fernhurst. In 1961 he returned to Zygi and stayed with the Regiment when it moved to Barton Stacey in 1963.

Tours in Germany, first with 14 Squadron and then with 3 Map Depot, followed before a final posting back to Hermitage. Tony left the service as a WO2 in 1973.

**Vic Wyatt**

Vic was a field surveyor who started his career at Chepstow, served in the Regiment at Barton Stacey and left the service in 1972. He died on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August.

### Major Nathan Arnison RE

Nathan Arnison died suddenly on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2009 aged 38. He is survived by his widow Laura and children Charlie (3) and Nicholas (1). He had only the day before handed over command of 13 Squadron.

Nathan had a Military Funeral on the 14<sup>th</sup> of August at St Joseph's Church, Wroughton near Swindon. His coffin was draped with the union flag, beret and medals and carried by soldiers from 42 Engineer Regiment. A bugler from the Corps band played the last post. The Corps was represented by COS EinC(A). After the private family cremation a wake was held at the Defence Academy.

## News From The Military Front

### RSM's Column

No doubt many of you will be aware of the extremely sad passing of Major Nathan "Arnie" Arnison. The shocking news transpired on the very first day of the Regimental summer leave period, and the wheels were set in motion to provide the initial support to his wife and family and indeed begin the funeral preparations. Much has been said and written already, but I would like to state in this column that from my perspective as the senior soldier in the regiment, he was an extremely popular officer who, it was clear led his men and women with character, charisma and enthusiasm. The soldiers in his squadron seemed very proud to serve under him and were very loyal to him as a result. With the help of his SSM, Arnie seemed to strive to ensure that the soldiers had an interesting and where appropriate, a fun time in his Sqn and therefore morale amongst his soldiers was generally very good, something I for one appreciated.

From the WOs' and Sgts' Mess perspective, Arnie was well known for his razor sharp wit and sense of humour. He was held in high regard and commanded respect for his straight talking, his approachability and his apparent ease leading his soldiers in the right way. He certainly had a reputation as an officer that the mess members would always be happy to work for and with.

Suffice to say Arnie will be missed by all on Hermitage Station and is a great loss to the Corps and the Army. The turnout of officers and soldiers at his funeral from this and other units is testament to this and I believe the standard of drill and bearing carried out by the pall bearers under the new SSM from 13 Sqn provided a fitting send off. I am confident that I speak for all here at Hermitage Station when I say that he will be sorely missed and we wish his family all the very best for the future.

### Operations and Training

With regards to our support to operations, one significant change from the last newsletter is that we now have no personnel in Iraq or Kuwait in support of Op Telic. The return of Capt Girling and LCpl Gardner in recent weeks marked the end of a number of years of Geographic support to that particular operation. Of course our support to Op Herrick in Afghanistan is ongoing and we continue to have approximately 25 personnel from the Regiment in theatre at any given time. You will no doubt have seen in the news and read about the ever increasing threat posed to our troops by the use of improvised explosive devices. The army has recognised the need to beef up the counter IED capability and there is the possibility that this may require further Geo support. Some non-Geo personnel from 14 Squadron have recently returned to Germany having supported Op BAM (the winterisation of camps throughout Afghanistan)

On the training front, 14 Squadron ran with Pre – Deployment Training in Germany back in May which ensured personnel due to deploy in the near future were brought up to speed with serials

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over and above that which is taught on the standard compulsory pre deployment training package. The summer months witnessed a hectic but fruitful time for the Sqns, all of them getting out on Sqn exercises at some point. 13 Sqn exercised in France in June, 14 Squadron exercising in Belgium at the same time and 16 Sqn executed a range camp in July. They all managed to squeeze in some fantastic adventure training packages as well, still a very important aspect of military life and invaluable for team cohesion, pin – pointing leadership qualities and not least morale.

## Freedom of Newbury Parade

Probably the highlight of my time in this appointment so far was to organise and ensure the smooth running of the Freedom of Newbury Parade on Fri 3<sup>rd</sup> July. I was very pleased with the turnout and bearing, and the standard of drill on the day. Getting to that standard was not without its “emotional” moments (hours on the drill square!) however the end result made it all worthwhile.

The conditions during the days leading up to the parade were particularly challenging with the temperature hitting over 30 degrees Celsius on each of the drill practice days from the Monday to the Thursday. The sweaty dress rehearsal on the Wednesday was unforgettable and will live in the memory for a long time! With the old army saying “Train hard, fight easy” in mind, I knew that if the troops could survive that one, then everything would be OK on the day. This proved to be the case, and we were lucky that the temperature on the day of the parade registered at a mere 25 degrees!

It was a fantastic experience for all in the Regiment, from CO down to junior Spr to witness the reception we received from the gathered masses. It was really warming to know that the public appreciate their local unit and we were certainly proud to represent the Corps and the Army. There was a real buzz around the RBL afterwards as the guys were enjoying a few hard earned beers after the parade and I believe the day will live in the memory of all who paraded for a long time.

The other events surrounding the parade including the Beating Retreat and the ABF band concert were first class and very enjoyable, and all contributed to a fantastic, highly memorable couple of days. I do hope that all of you who attended any or all of the events enjoyed it too; I will say that I’m glad we don’t do it every month though!!

On that note, I will sign off here and I look forward to reporting next time on the Regimental Exercise, the Regimental Cadre and Remembrance Sunday to name but a few events coming up.

***‘Once a Sapper, always a Sapper!’***

***Al Beeton***

WO1 (RSM) RE, Hermitage

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## Diary Dates

18 – 20 September	Corps Memorial weekend, Chatham
10 October	REA AGM and Annual Dinner
11 October	Sapper Sunday, Royal Hospital, Chelsea
5 November	Field of Remembrance, Westminster
8 November	Remembrance Sunday
Early November	Autumn Newsletter Published

**Apologies**

Many apologies for the lateness of the summer newsletter but a number of factors conspired to delay this issue. Think of it as an Indian summer edition! I promise to try harder next time!

**Editor**

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**Reader...you could have filled this Space!**

The newsletter is only as good as its content.

You all have anecdotes to tell..... put fingers to keyboard or pen to paper and share them through the newsletter.

The branch website (<http://survey-branch-rea.co.uk>) has a superb and growing collection of photos that would interest readers.

However, not all members are online so why not send the editor a few photos for publication in the newsletter.