



The Military Survey (Geo) Branch

Autumn Newsletter 2020 – issue 77

PROPOSED VIRTUAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1700hrs Friday 23rd October 2020

Our Obligations.

Your Branch is obliged by REA rules to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) every year in order to accept the accounts as presented and elect the three officers of your Branch, namely Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary for the next year.

Proposition/Date.

As we cannot physically meet at the moment, due to Covid 19 restrictions and it is not yet clear when we will be able to, it is proposed that like many other Branches, civilian organisations etc, we hold a ‘virtual’ AGM by using a computer application (app) on Friday 23rd October 2020 at 1700hrs.

Background

Many will have previously used, or will know about, a pioneer of this type of system called ‘Skype’ to keep in touch with family and friends, especially as it was free and could be used anywhere around the World. All that is needed is a PC with a camera and microphone, and the ability to download the software.

Zoom.

During our enforced lockdown many families and organisations have been using Zoom, one of the latest app methods of being able to see and speak to each other and it has become a popular method of video conferencing, enabling many people to virtually access the meeting/conference in recent months, with the basic version free of charge for a limited usage period.

Zoom is also well known for its ease of use, high quality HD video and audio, and has many facilities such as text chat and screen sharing. It is available on all major desktop and mobile operating systems, including Windows, macOS, Android and iOS.

What You Need.

All you need to join our AGM is a PC or laptop fitted with a camera and microphone and have previously downloaded the Zoom App. This can be done by entering “How to download Zoom” into your search engine (Google or whatever search engine you use). Scroll down to the “FAQ about Zoom Meeting Cloud” and when satisfied press “Start” (it is the big green button.) Follow the instructions and you will add the application software to your computer.

Your Intention to Join The AGM.

If you wish to join us for the AGM you must inform me (Rod Siggs – email at rear of Newsletter) as you will not be able to join us unless we have your email, and I need your decision NLT Friday 16th October 2020. Only positive responses are necessary this year. Thanks!

To Join The meeting.

If you have notified me of your intentions to attend the AGM you will receive an email or calendar invite to the meeting; you then need just to click the link it contains to start taking part. You can also click the Join button on the main Zoom screen and enter the Meeting ID or Personal Link Name/Meeting Code that will have been shared with you.

You can choose whether to connect using video, audio, or both, as can anyone else involved in the meeting.

Further or additional meeting instructions will follow such as how to voice an opinion and/or vote etc. nearer the time to those that have indicated to me that they wish to take part.

What Further Action Do I Need to Take?

It is very advisable, if you have not used Zoom before, that you get some practice in before the AGM. Many of us when using this app for the first time fail to press “Start video” or “Audio”. If you can involve some younger members of the family or engage a tech savvy friend that has used zoom, so much the better. (Your Committee had a “Test” prior to a meeting which saved a lot of time and heartache.)

A practice Virtual meeting via ‘Zoom’ will be held at 1700hrs on Tuesday 20th October 2020, for those who would like to test their connections and have notified Rod.

If You Do Not Wish to Join in the AGM

If you do not have a computer but would nonetheless like to raise any point under AOB or wish to volunteer for any of the Officer’s posts or other posts on the Committee, you are of course entitled to let me know by NLT Friday 16th October 2020 and a vote will be made at the virtual meeting accordingly.

All Members Please Note

An agenda for the virtual AGM can be found separately at the back of this edition of the newsletter.

Rod Siggs Branch Hon Sec

For 100 Year’s the Royal Engineers continue ‘to get the message out’ – from Pigeon to ZOOM



WW1 - Mobile Pigeon Lofts

6 omnibuses were converted in late 1916 & a further 6 in 1917. Mobile pigeon lofts were first used in July 1915 and were converted from GS lorries. They were operated by the Royal Engineers under the Director of Signals at GHQ.

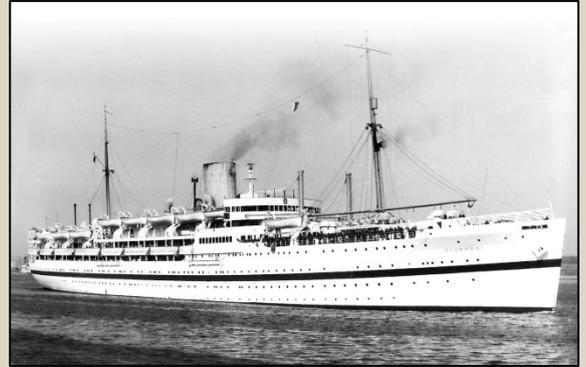
(Posted on FB by Mick Norton / Royal Engineers / Sappers / Ubique Say Anything Group on 24/08/2020)

My First Overseas Tour: September 1957 to September 1960

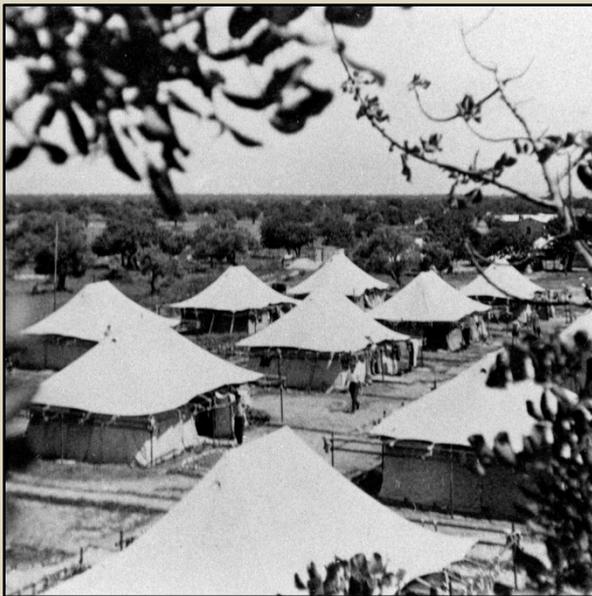
By Colin Price

Cyprus

I was posted to 42 Survey Engineer Regiment at Zyyi, Cyprus, in September of 1957. An early morning 3 tonner drove the party I was to travel with from the guard room at the School of Military Survey down the road to nearby Hermitage Station where, with full kit, we waited for the troop train which came down from Didcot. The train steamed south past Beacon Hill and through the Hampshire countryside directly into the docks at Southampton where we boarded the purpose-built troop ship, *SS Dilwara*, all white with a yellow funnel. We sailed to Cyprus calling in at Gibraltar, Algiers, Valletta, and disembarking at Limassol some 10 days later.



Then to Wayne's Keep Transit Camp which was mostly made up of 'tatty' 180lb tents and marquees with unsecured walls and guy ropes which flapped constantly in the wind on the plain north of Nicosia. Those of us that were destined for Zyyi were collected a couple of days later and then travelled all the way back down the dusty strip of tarmac past Stavrovouni Monastery perched up on its conical mountain and the village of Kofinou (known as Halfway House) to the south coast.



The Carto tent lines at Zyyi

I joined 22 Cartographic Squadron, OC Major Sleep (known as Gonk) and SSM, WO2 (Granny) Fletcher, where I cut my teeth on large slotted template laydowns for various mapping projects. It was then over the road to the Multiplex Section under Corporal Bunny Burrell working on control bridging to plot 1/100,000 K667 series mapping of the Aden Protectorate on night shifts in the darkened booths in between doing guard duties on the camp perimeter wire, a lonely walk in complete darkness. Also, guard duty in the 'dovecot' perched in the centre and high above the MEABS building, the Cable & Wireless run Middle East Arabic Broadcasting Station about a mile east along the coastal track from Zyyi village. The 'dovecot' was a hexagonal lookout post with enough room for about two people to move about in and windows on each face, though manned by only one guard at a time. The sill of the windows had a switch that controlled the security lights on the high perimeter fence which one switched on if a small red light next to each switch was illuminated if movement was detected on the outside of wire in that sector.

My first production field work was with Corporal Vic Cook when we worked out of Polemedia Camp to the north of Limassol to field check a 1/25,000 map of Akrotiri Peninsular produced by the Regiment.

This was the time of the EOKA troubles and I organised volunteers to help swell the small detachment of Royal Artillery Internal Security troops that were stationed in the camp to police the area. We went on 'pussy foot' patrols, cordon and searches and night decoy convoys up the Nicosia road as far as Halfway House police station.

An occasional break in the routines of work and camp life for some was afforded when two or three men would swap rolls with sailors from HMS Leverton, a coastal mine sweeper number M1161 that had a link with the Regiment. However, when it came to be selected for me and two others to go aboard, Leverton was on a courtesy visit to Beirut, so we joined HMS Wilkieston, M1192 on the dock side in Famagusta Harbour. My five days on board had me doing watches at the wheel on patrols round the coast of Cyprus guarding against gun runners and unauthorized craft in the area. I took my A2 Air Svy Trade Test set by Staff Sergeants Peter Timbrell and Taff Jones, doing the various exercises and theory test on the slotted template table in the Compilation Block, and passed it.

Later I was promoted to corporal, and to my surprise I was transferred to 19 Topographic Squadron after it had already left for Aden in May of 1959. The Squadron had moved to Aden after it reformed in the February of that year at the Regiment in Cyprus having been interned in Iraq and repatriated prior to Christmas 1958.

Prior to my move to Aden, whilst acting as a Squadron rear party, I had the task of assembling technical items and stores with which to form a new Tech Office that I was to run for the Squadron. The stores consisted of paper, inks, and other drawing materials, all types of expense stores, technical manuals, survey instruments and complete photographic cover of the Aden Protectorate in the form of 1/80,000 scale F49 photography in triplicate which I collected from 47 GHQ Squadron at RAF Episcopi. Six trucks (four Land Rovers and two 3 Tonners), vehicle spares, 5 drivers and myself as I/C Party were all transported by Landing Ship Tank (LST) from Famagusta docks. The trip took two and a half weeks through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, it being the height of summer it was very hot but it did give us time to acclimatize ready for the heat and humidity of Aden. As the only passengers on board it was a chance to have a long break after all the hard work and effort assembling everything and getting it to the docks on time. The voyage was slow due to the fact that the LST was towing a 'Z Craft' on a 500 yard line, which was a lighter - essentially a flat bottomed water tank with power and a wheel house and a two man crew from the RE Port Squadron. It being the slowest vessel in the formed-up convoy it had to drop the tow at Port Said and follow the shipping through the Canal under its own power. This meant a 24 hour wait whilst anchored in Suez Bay until it arrived to then continue the journey under tow.

Aden

At that time the Squadron HQ, with OC Major Ian Hart, had offices on the upper floor of the Command Arabic Language School, a large pale blue and white Villa situated on the Isthmus. I ran the Tech Office for about six months. Later the Sqn moved to the ground floor of Flight House, a large block of flats, used as married families hirings,



The Ma'alah Straight

situated on the south side of Ma'alah Straight, a dual carriageway which was the main accommodation and shopping area for Service families. Soon after this Staff Sergeant Alan McVeigh arrived with his family from Kenya to take over the Tech Office function when 89 Field Survey Squadron was disbanded in 1959 and I was made 2i/c of the Office.

Up Country - Aden Protectorate

Later the Squadron was tasked by HQ Survey Branch at Steamer Point to provide photo control by altimeter heighting up country in the Dhalah area about 100 miles north of Aden (Ad Dali on the atlas), close to the Yemen border. At Dhalah on a slight rise about one mile north of the Town there was a tented British Army camp surrounded by stone walls with sandbag lined sangers for mounting the Bren guns in the event of attack 'A' convoy of fifty military resupply and civilian trucks formed up on gravel plain about thirty miles north of Lahej to make the weekly journey from Aden. It was a two-day trip which meant sleeping in or under the Land Rover, the OC's Rover as it happened, as all others were in use or out of action.

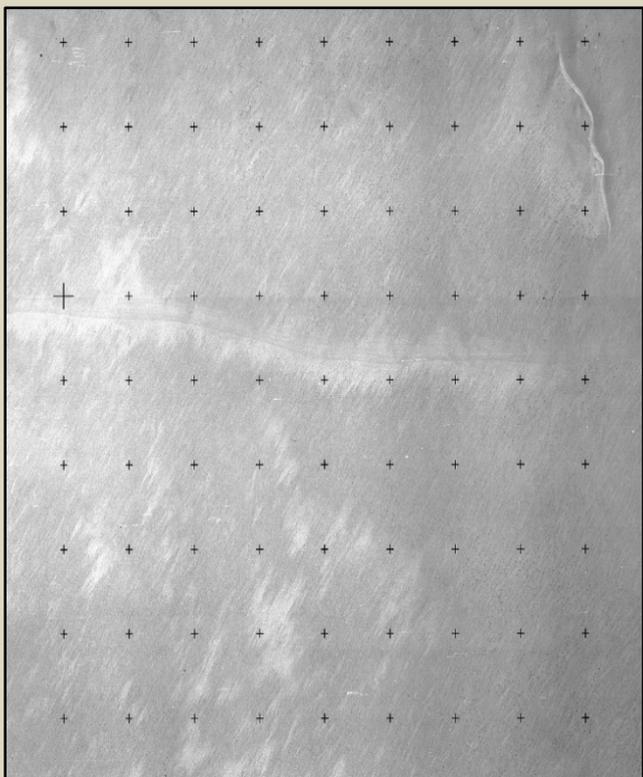
Sergeant Dick Pollard, a Field Troop Sergeant who I had known from Harrogate days, and I plus our driver, Sapper Wesley Quain a Manxman on a 4 to 6 week detachment, were tasked to do the job as we were trained in the sighting of height points for photo control and in altimetry.

For technical reasons (reading the base altimeter) we shared a 180 lb tent and Dick showed that he had a sense of humour once, when one night, I awoke to hear a baboon in our tent. They raided the camp bins regularly at night and occasionally were shot by the guard. I shook Dick and said, "There is a baboon in the tent!" He replied, "If its female, let it stay."- It did not!

Whilst taking turns on the base altimeter wherever we were at the time, we each trekked miles in the mountains including Jebal Jihalf, a big one west of Dhalah, escorted by a couple of APL (Aden Protectorate Levy's - Arab soldiers, - they climbed like mountain goats, and had British Officers and some SNCOs.) Our Kit was carried by camels, also very good in mountains. The APL had fresh walking compo rations called goats, a herd of about ten which

they drove behind the camels! We lived with the local tribesmen and where possible in APL outposts, it being a bit hairy at the time with Yemeni intruders infiltrating the border and skirmishes were frequent at the time.

We both learned a good smattering of Arabic quite fast, enough to get by which helped with communicating with the Arab soldiers.



F49 photography of the desert

At one point I got heat stroke which took the form of worn cartilage in my hip joints due to the climbing, very painful, and had to be stretchered on the back of a camel to a Government rest house at Awabil very close to the border and miles from anywhere. Dick radioed to Aden for advice which was, "Rest and take more Salt". So, we had to rest up for about a week for me to recover and I took on the base altimeter reading job. One skill gained whilst at Dhalah, was when given the chance to drive the Land Rover to and from Dhalah air strip on which Dick gave me some brief driving instructions. Driving up country like that, on and off the roughest of roads, tracks and wadi beds does teach one to control a vehicle in four-wheel drive and high and low ratio. The Air Force gave the camp token support from RAF Khormaksar when a Hawker Hunter (I think from 8 Sqn RAF) buzzed the camp at low level a couple of times a day.

Civilian Detachment - Oman

Later that year I was sent to Oman to carry out a task on a detachment from 1 Troop based at Niswa. It meant that I had to be issued with civilian clothes consisting of grey flannel trousers, long sleeved white shirts and black shoes - and a grey trilby hat offered as part of the issue which I did not sign for.

In the event I wore my suede desert chukka boots as did most of the men at the time. Eventually I travelled from RAF Khormaksar in a Hastings transport as a lone passenger sitting on a large bundle of freight keep nets. Flying at height, destination Bahrain, even over what was the baking Empty Quarter whilst dressed in KD uniform it was freezing and very uncomfortable for the whole journey. My flight was originally meant to be by Beverly, known locally as the RSM Bev Bus (calling at Riyan, Salalah, and Mazirah) which on occasions flew on to Bahrain via Sharjah but for various reasons it never did take off on my scheduled flight. We were called forward to the departure hanger seven mornings running to catch that aircraft, I did emplane once and the aircraft taxied to the west end of the runway, revved up its engines and then taxied back to the hard standing with fuel dripping from one of its wings and a fire tender in close attendance.

After a couple of days in HMS *Jufayr* where the Squadron had a bungalow, I flew by RAF Twin Pioneer to Firq airstrip five miles south of Nizwa, the ancient capital of Oman dominated by the great circular sand coloured fort. I was greeted at the camp just south of the town by 1 Troop's commander, Lieutenant Henry Rogers. I recall that the acting troop Sergeant was Corporal Klon Goldup who was doing the job of running the technical tasks as well looking after the administration and discipline matters. I stayed there a few days whilst preparing my limited equipment and stores to set off south. The camp was situated on rising ground about 100 meters east of the Niswa road with a long high jebel ridge running north/south behind it.

The journey south of about 150 miles by road in a couple Land Rovers to my destination via the Adam Gap took the best part of a day. My task was to replace a Corporal Wilshire, I think was his name, (I never did meet him, due to my delay at Khormaksar,) as a guest of Petroleum Development Oman, (PDO), Survey Party 15, at Uwayfi, an encampment south west of Nizwa on the north bank of the Wadi al Umayri. It consisted of eight to ten American style luxury caravans, one used as the survey and communications office, another as a Medical centre run by a Balochi medic, a mess marquee and a couple of luxury tents, called Swiss Cottages used to house visitors and temporary guests like myself. To service the camp the Company had constructed an airstrip surfaced with hard packed clay about 500 meters north of the camp. Lance Corporal Mervin Baker, a 3 year 'regular' from 1 Troop, was as my driver.

He had the Rover painted grey to tone in with the Oil Company trucks. My task was to annotate 1/80,000 photography with the 'goings' and surface feature information and to use the Oil Company height data to control the photography for photogrammetric plotting.

This data, as I remember it, consisted of dyeline maps of the desert portraying the grid of graded gravel tracks at 5 kilometre spacing. The tracks had been heightened by levelling and marked along them at 1 kilometre intervals by numbered wooden pegs. It was not an easy task to mark most of these points on the photos with any accuracy due to the poor quality F49 photography flown long before the Oil Company had started work in that region but I did my best by raying in from easily identified land marks. The terrain in that region, being mostly gravel and sandy plains, was quite flat interspersed by shallow wadis and spreads and the variation in height of each height point was quite small.

We came across salamanders basking in the sun and small herds of Arabian gazelles that fled at great speed when we approached. 1 Troop were, I believe given permission to hunt and shoot the gazelle by the Sultan's representative interpreter and guide who was domiciled and embedded with the Troop.

This work took us north and east from the camp where the survey and seismic parties were operating in the Natih and Jabal Fahud areas which were in my area of interest. It was in the Natih structure, that we came across one party and we watched seismic charges being detonated. (In geological terms, Natih is a collapsed dome, oval in shape and about ten kilometres in length and four wide, marked by tiny elongated hillocks in the south of no more than a couple of feet high, to sand stone cliff edged ridges on the inner side of the structure, about fifty to sixty feet high in the north marking rim of the dome.)

Working in temperatures of over 100 degrees meant starting off early and without a canopy it was difficult keeping the 9" x 9" photos flat as they curled tightly when exposed to the sun which one had to do when using the hand stereoscope to try to make identifications on them, frustratingly difficult at times. We continued our daily work, and, in the evenings, I was given the height information that I required covering the area for the next day's task that I set myself. This was handed to me by the Chief Surveyor in the office trailer and would I inform him of our direction of travel and proposed destination the next day in case of any problems or breakdown. It was at one of these evening liaisons that I was informed that the Information could no longer be released. No reason was given but strong Chinese whispers advised me that analysis of recent seismic work revealed that oil had been discovered in the area that we were working in. (Note. Major oil wells now exist in the Natih and at Jebal Fahud locations.) I continued working with what information I had in reserve and spent the days annotating the photos with the desert 'goings' information.

Sad News

My stay and the work unfortunately came to an end when I had sad news that my father had died when Lieutenant Rogers with a small party in two Land Rovers arrived quite late in the evening. They had travelled all day and into the night over rough terrain to hand me an MOD signal informing me he died on the 29th of January and I received the news on the 1st February 1960. I will always be grateful to Henry and his men for what they did for me that day. I spent most of that night completing unfinished work and packing clothes in order, to return home.

The Journey Home

The oil company had regular resupply flights by Aden Airways DC-3 (Dakota) into the air strip which luckily was due to arrive at some time during the morning of the next day and would fly me to Muscat. 1 Troop had arranged compassionate leave for me and made all the travel arrangements to get me home to UK. The next day started early with the unusual sound of rain on our tent. During the morning a rumbling, getting ever nearer and louder reached our ears that eventually turned out to be the Wadi al Umayri in spate. Water, six to ten feet high from the mountainous area to the north east was roaring down the water course bringing everything from rocks to scrub, dust, and spume before it.

Doubts were voiced whether the Dak would be able to land when the rain became heavier as the day wore on. My situation however was radioed to the pilot and despite the slippery clay surface on the strip he landed safely. I said my farewells to Lance Corporal Baker and thanked the oil company staff and we took off heading north east flying below the cloud base. On reaching the mountains in the Jebal Akdar area the rain became heavier and the cloud base lower. The route took us along the Sumail Gap, a deep wadi valley through the jebals which carried the treacherous road from Muscat to Izki and Nizwa where many a military and civil vehicle had foundered or blown up by mines.

By this time, we were flying along what seemed like a V shaped tunnel formed by the steep sided jebel walls and the black clouds above. At the water shed there was only about 200 feet clearance to fly through, which was lucky as there was virtually no turning back due to the limited width of the valley at that point. On landing safely at Seeb, the Muscat airstrip, I was taken the HQ SAF (Sultans Armed Forces) for a night stop over and was then flown to Bahrain the next day by RAF Twin Pioneer, the standard runabout in that area at the time.

After a night stop over at the Squadron bungalow, I boarded a BEA Vickers Vanguard at the civil side of RAF Muharraq for the long flight to Blighty. Whilst I waited to board some sort of ceremony was taking place because it was the first time a BOAC De Havilland Comet and a Boeing 707 had arrived on the Airport apron, or that was what I was told at the time. My aircraft had few passengers so I was offered a luxury seat in 1st class which I did not refuse and we took off up the coast of Saudi Arabia for Kuwait which was then a sand strip running parallel to the beach south of the city. Our route took us over the arid desert region following roughly along the north side of the Saudi Iraq border to Damascus Airport which was shared by civil and military aircraft. In the hour or so wait before re boarding the flight, I witnessed Syrian Air force Russian built Mig 15's being towed by tractors to the end of the runway before starting their jet engines prior to take off.

The rest of the flight was via Ankara, Istanbul, Athens, Rome, Munich, and a night stopover in Brussels due to London being fog bound. We were put up in a small hotel in the centre of the city for the night and despite my sorrow it was too much of a temptation not to venture out and see the city landmarks. It was a twin room as I had been teamed up with a Royal Marine who boarded at Munich and was on compassionate leave like myself. On landing at Heathrow the next day, feeling very cold, I made my way home via Waterloo and Portsmouth Harbour Station, the Gosport ferry and arrived home early in the afternoon to find that my father was to have his funeral service the next morning. I had made it.

Return to Duty – Oman



I returned to Aden after my allotted four weeks leave and was ordered to wait for a flight back to 1 Troop in Oman. The flight this time, though uneventful, was by the Bev Bus. I proceeded to Nizwa via the Squadron bungalow and then RAF Twin Pin to my destination at Firq. Lance Corporal Baker had been withdrawn from Awayfi a couple of weeks after I had left in haste five or six weeks earlier and was by this time decivilianised and back driving for the Troop on field tasks.

On occasions, at about sundown, the camp was fired at from palm groves about 800 yards west of the camp over the Nizwa road and a wadi, then the routine was to man the sangers made from kerosene tins filled with sand, positioned to cover the arc.

Nothing unusual I was told. Insurgents at that time were becoming bolder and the troop lost a 3 ton water truck driven by Sapper Jock Robertson when anti-personnel mine took the front offside wheel of his truck whilst crossing the rocky wadi bed on his way to fill up with water from the open falage close to the town. He was uninjured.

My time at Nizwa was firstly taken up by tidying up the work I had done with the Oil Company down in the desert and sending it back to Aden. It was then my roll to use my skills as a topo surveyor doing point identification reports (PIR), names collection and sighting height control points being carried out by the Troop who were working on control for K668 1/100,000 map series at the time.

My driving skills learned down on Dhalah airstrip were put to good use when the OC, Major Hart, made a visit to the Troop and I drove him on a two day tour of the country south of the Adam Gap which took us over some rough ground and steep sided wadis. As a result of that trip I got a 'Pink Slip' from the 2i/c, Captain Lower, on my eventual return to Aden prior to leaving the Middle East.

When requested he consulted the OC about my driving skills he was reported to have said, "That's OK, he was a bit fast when he could have gone slow and a bit slow when he could have gone fast but for beginner was pretty good. I exchanged the Pink Slip for a full license on my return to Blighty in 1960 and as a result have never taken a driving test.

Tour's End

My time with 1 Troop came to a sudden end whilst assisting a party to move its kit up onto Jebal Akhdar. The detachment was air lifted in three or four trips by a RAF Single Pioneer from Firq to a short airstrip at Saiq, 6,300 feet up on the Mountain. I shall never forget the runway for it ended on the edge of a cliff a good 1,000-foot drop, if not more. Whilst unloading the second load a message came through on the aircraft radio that I had been posted and was to return to Bahrain on the same Pioneer we were using. So, a hasty journey had to be made to return to camp at Nizwa, pack and get back to Firq to fly out late that afternoon. The lateness of the hour meant that we had to land at Sharjah, stay the night and proceed to Bahrain the next morning. A chance meeting that evening was when I bumped into an old junior school friend from my childhood days in the form of Captain David Neil, SAF. A pleasant encounter that helped shorten a very hot and sticky evening. The rest of the trip back to Aden passed without incident.

My Next Posting (In Brief)

My posting sounded exciting and vastly different to the desert environment I had been used to for the past year and a half, it was to be - France, which I journeyed to after a few days stay HQ RE at Chatham.

My new posting was HQ Allied Forces Central Europe – AFCENT- based in Fontainebleau in the Cour Henry Quatre (IV), part of the Palace of Fontainebleau that was the original administration area and servants' quarters to the palace. AFCENT and the British Army Camp Support Unit in Cartier Chateau on Rue Saint-Merry in the town could not have been more different to the open-air freedom of the desert. I was to be on a three-year posting in my secondary trade of topographic draughtsman serving in Plans & Police Division. Little did I know that in fact it was a general duties draughtsman's job?

My office was situated in a small room of maximum dimensions ten by eight feet with a semi-circular indent on one wall containing a circular window making it very restricting. It housed a large draughting table, a high stool, and a store cupboard for my inks, drawing instruments and stencils. This small room was positioned in the Main Portico of the Porte du Chateau overlooking the main gate to the HQ from which I was privileged to see most of the visiting dignitaries and the elaborate international guards of honour that formed immediately below me. However, it felt like a prison compared to where I had come from.

Though I enjoyed the international working environment and the detachments to the NATO Conferences at Palais Dauphine/Palais de l'Otan at the west end of the Avenue Foch in Paris, (now the Paris University Dauphine), stenciling name plates for doors and designing conference signs and view graphs was not my forte so at the earliest opportunity I applied to attend the next A1 Topo Surveyor course at Hermitage and was accepted. I was replaced by Corporal Denis Evans (a draughtsman of 54A intake of Harrogate like myself) though I never saw him to hand over the baton, sad to say. I stayed in France for one year and two weeks and then I and my export quota grey Triumph Herald had had enough so we motored home with a sigh of relief and paid the little amount of customs duty that was outstanding.

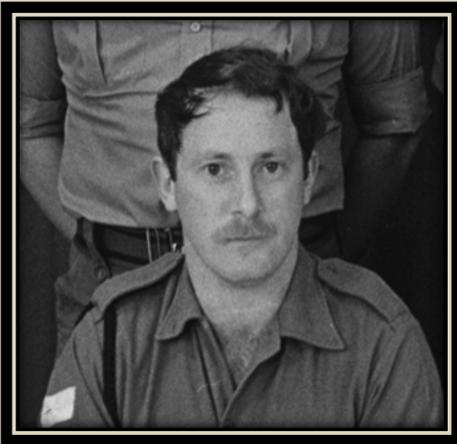
Next stop Hermitage!



Photograph Acknowledgements- Zyyi tent lines: Mick Gowlett, Ma'alah Straight: Peter Wood, Mined truck: Henry Rogers

TAKING TACIPRINT TO THE FALKLANDS

By John Burnett



In late July or early August 1982, Print troop commander Captain Dan Plamondon gathered the troop and asked for a volunteer to go to the Falkland Islands as part of a Taciprint detachment. Corporal Keith Fenton and I promptly volunteered; I was chosen to go. As well as me, the printer, Corporal Pete Mullins was to be the carto draughtsman, the other half of the team. We were also to be accompanied by 13 Map Reproduction Squadron RE 2i/c, Captain Simon Farley RE, he was coming with us to help get us established when we arrived down there, a good idea, I think two corporals arriving on their own would have had a bit of a job on their hands.

Our primary role was to work under Engineer Ops in support of 33 EOD Engineer Regiment by producing mine field clearing maps and record maps. Later we were tasked to produce range maps for the resident infantry units.

The following few days was spent getting ready and being kitted out for the detachment. We were the first Survey soldiers to be issued with the new combat high boots! The plan was to take the box body Taciprint and generator along with enough stores for six months to the Falklands where it was to be located on a hard standing.

The tricky bit was getting it down there. We took the Taciprint and stores to RAF Lyneham where it was detached from the MK truck and then loaded into a RAF Hercules C130. We left the UK in our own C130 on or around August the 13th or 14th, we were the only passengers aboard, apart from a couple of RAF personnel going to Ascension Island. We flew down to Senegal where we refueled at Dakar, my first time in Africa! After a brief stop, we pressed on to Ascension Island. I remember this well, as we were the only passengers aboard the Captain allowed us to sit in the cockpit and watch as we lined up our approach and land at RAF Ascension Wideawake Airfield, all very exciting. No time for sightseeing, as soon as we arrived, we were pointed to a waiting helicopter and told to get on it, which we promptly did. We said goodbye to the Taciprint, this was to sail later, on *HMS Illustrious*, if memory serves me correctly.

The final leg of our journey to Stanley was a ten-day voyage on the MV *Norland* which had already sailed so we had to catch it up. The helicopter pilot was keen for us to get a move on which, I suppose, was understandable as he had to return to Ascension. We landed on the *Norland* where we quickly 'deplaned'.



Once aboard the *Norland* we settled in for our ten-day trip to Stanley. The trip south was pretty uneventful for us as we could not really do anything while other units aboard were training as best, they could. So, we treated it as acclimatization for, the further south we travelled, the colder it became. One day during the trip Captain Farley informed us that Pete Mullins was now promoted to Sergeant. I would have to wait a little longer until we arrived back the following year.

One point to note was that the Captain of the *Norland*, (Donald Ellerby CBE) was the brother of a certain WO1 John 'Tich' Ellerby RE. John Ellerby for those who do not know him was a fellow printer who had recently retired from the Army.

We arrived in Stanley on the 24th of August, the reason I remember the date was because it was the same day, I arrived in 14 Squadron two years later. Captain Farley went ashore first to liaise with Engineer Ops at the HQ British Forces Falkland Islands (BFFI – known as ‘Biffy’) and determine where we were to set ‘up shop’.

The following day Pete and I went ashore in a howling blizzard, we walked along the sea front and made our way past Stanley Cathedral, (famous for the Whale Bone structure) to the Stanley Community Centre or should I say HQ BFFI. We were taken to a boiler room at the back of the building - this was to be home with the Taciprint ‘box’ located outside upon its arrival. The Taciprint was not due to arrive for couple of weeks so we thought - more sitting around! Not so, we were told that we would also be responsible for the ‘Biffy’ map store. The Map Store belonged to 5 Brigade and we were to take it over. We asked, “Where is it?” And someone pointed to some weather beaten MFO and map boxes.

The boxes contained maps, mainly 1:50,000 series, there must have been roughly 20,000 to 30,000 most in pretty good condition but some water damaged, not surprisingly. There were a number of laminated maps and they were probably the most useless things in the boxes. They could not be folded and were very difficult to stack as they kept sliding over each other. We spent a week or so sorting out the maps putting the most used sheets at the top of the ‘piles’, we had no shelves, so we had to pile the boxes on top of each other.



I should say a little about our accommodation situation to give the reader some context of our life in the Falklands. We sailed to Stanley on the North Sea Ferry *Norland*, which was really pretty comfortable, Pete and I shared a two-man cabin, and after ten days sailing south, we had become quite at home on the ship. This was about to change upon our arrival in Stanley. I suppose it was wishful thinking that we would be staying on the *Norland* for our six months tour, and yes, it was ‘wishful thinking’!

On our arrival in Stanley we were told that we would be moving to the *MV St Edmond*, a seconded British Rail Ferry. This ship was a lot smaller than the *Norland* and was to become home for the detachment. We were again given a small two-man cabin which was a lot smaller than we were used to, but it could have been worse. The

ship was anchored in the harbor and was essentially a floating barrack block with accommodation for all ranks, officers, and NCOs.

The daily routine was breakfast on the ship, catch a ferry to the jetty and walk to work, have lunch at work and return in the evening, via one of the three pubs, for evening meal, then more beer in the bar on the ship. The ferries to and from the ship were continuous and were either small landing craft or small motorboats at the not so busy times.

As we had little to do until the Taciprint arrived we spent some time having a look around Stanley, basically it was a mess; the Argentine’s left the place a lot worse than it was when they invaded. The Queens Own Highlanders were the ‘Garrison Battalion’ and it was one of their tasks to clean the place up as I remember. There were piles of weapons literally lying at the side of the road, at that time there were more important things to be done than picking up weapons. RAF Stanley was a quagmire and the RAF personnel were in a state of shock as many of them had been ‘whisked away’ from their comfortable lifestyle in Germany and were living in worse conditions than us, loved it!!

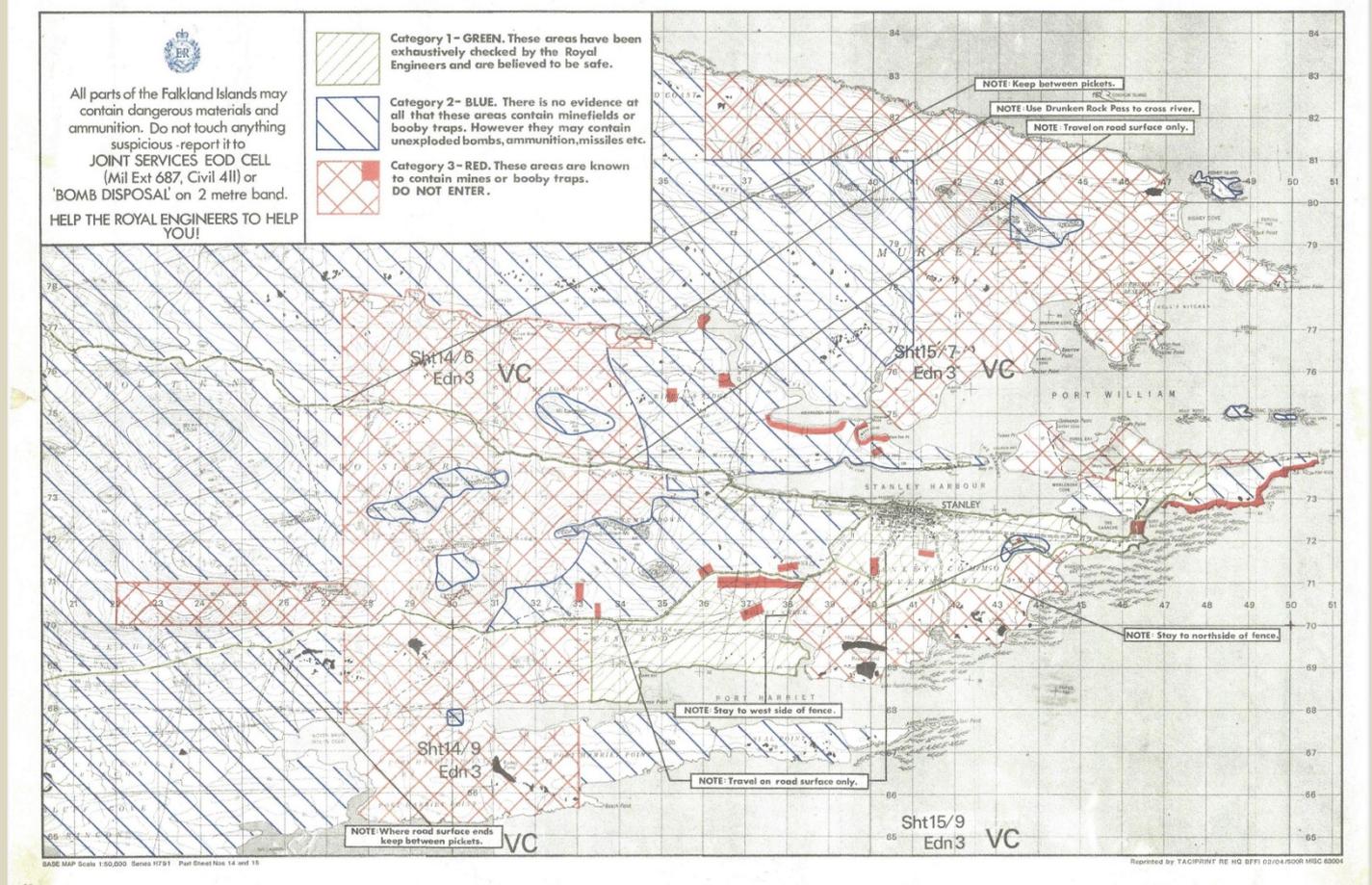
We visited 37 Engineer Regt stationed at the Airfield, it was the largest Engineer Regiment since the WW2 consisting of seven squadrons and Taciprint, I am assuming we were part of the Regiment! The RSM was ‘intrigued’ by us but fortunately we worked at BFFI, so we were pretty well out of his control.

Back to Taciprint, the day finally came when the Taciprint arrived along with the pallets of consumables. It was a busy time for us; the Taciprint ‘box’ and generator were to be positioned behind the boiler room and we had to use our own generator as at that time there was not sufficient mains power for us.

All the consumables had to be manhandled to the boiler room, if memory serves me everything was dumped at the entrance to the main building, hence we had to move it all pretty quickly. I remember it was lunch time and Captain Farley was helping myself and Pete when all of a sudden there were bodies everywhere helping out, no doubt Captain Farley was spotted 'labouring' and the BIFI HQ Admin Sergeant told everyone to get of their a... s and help us out. We spent the next few days checking everything over and testing the press and equipment, everything was fine after its 8,000-mile journey.

Pete had been working with Engineer Ops and 33 Engineer Regiment getting ready for our first Mine Field Situation Map. The initial print run was 250 copies and the map was the standard Taciprint positive map made up of 4/6 map sections and I think it was three colours; black, red which depicted dangerous areas and green for safe. From a printer's perspective I was a little concerned about multi-colour work on a Rotaprint press. I have never met a printer in Military Survey who has a good word to say about Rotaprints, especially in a box body just to make it even more difficult. Having said that, after a few weeks things became easier and towards the end of our detachment the print runs had increased to 1,250 copies, and we were producing four colour maps, something unheard off in the far away world of BAOR!

STANLEY MINEFIELD SITUATION MAP AS AT 07 DEC 82



No scale stated. (1:50,000)

Black, blue, green, red map of the area from approximately grid 20 to 51E & 65 to 84N with 1 km grid and values, 61.5 x 39.5 on 65.5 x 46.5 cms overall.

Category 1 Green – These areas have been exhaustively checked by the Royal Engineers and are believed to be safe.

Category 2 Blue – There is no evidence at all that these areas contain minefields or booby traps. However, they may contain unexploded bombs, ammunition, missiles etc.

Category 3 Red – These areas are known to contain mines or booby traps. Do Not Enter.

All parts of the Falkland Islands may contain dangerous materials and ammunition.

Do not touch anything suspicious – report it to Joint Services EOD Cell (Mil Ext 687, Civil 411) or Bomb Disposal on 2 metre band.

Help the Royal Engineers to help you!

Base Map Scale 1:50,000, Series H791 Part Sheet Nos 14 and 15.

Reprinted by Taciprint RE HQ BFFI 02/04/500R MISC 83004. Map scan from Gurkha Museum. Provided by Mike Nolan

After a while Captain Farley bid us farewell and after a few beers returned to the UK and left us to it. As well as the Minefield Situation Maps and Record Maps, we were also tasked with producing Range Maps for the resident Infantry Battalion. Pete worked with a captain from the Small Arms Corps who used to take us on trips to visit the various ranges; I remember a helicopter ride to Goose Green, nice to get out into the countryside for the day. I remember we had a visit from a junior officer who wanted complete 1:50,000 scale coverage of the Falkland Islands for his office notice board? Pete explained as diplomatically as he could that he was talking b.....ks and gave him the small A4 map of the Islands.



We spent a rather boozy Christmas day in Stanley. We were given the day off which was spent at BFFI HQ watching videos (VHS). The cooks managed to produce a reasonable Christmas dinner washed down with numerous cans of 'McEwans' lager until we had enough and then back to the ship, that was Christmas 1982 over with.

Towards the end of January, I cannot be more precise, we were given the good news we were waiting for and that was our movement order back to the UK. Our replacements were Sergeant Lee Carter and Corporal Graham Smith. I think we had a one-week handover, most of a week showing Graham where all the bars were!

Our trip back to the UK began with a twelve hour flight on a C130 to Ascension Island, I managed to get a comfortable 'seat' on the 'Herc' only to be told by some 'crab' that I had to move so an officer could have it. I ended up sitting two feet away from a Harrier aircraft wing that was being sent back to the UK. On our arrival in Ascension Island we stretched our legs, had a cup of something they called tea and then onto a VC 10 back to Brize Norton.

I was to return to Ascension later in 1988 as a member of 512 STRE (commanded by Major Farley) manning the Satellite tracking station, but that is another story. In summing up my time in the Falklands, I had a great time overall, would not have missed it for anything.

Postscript by Pete Mullins



I prepared the first minefield map and John Burnet printed it. I doubt many people know this, but the first print run had to be destroyed. We were very pleased with it, EOD were pleased with it, and the CRE signed it off for distribution. Within an hour of its distribution, we were frantically calling them all back. Against the norm, we decided to print the overlay in colour, and it seemed sensible to use red for confirmed minefields and green for cleared areas.

Fortunately, one of the first Falkland Islanders to see the map was the local GP unfortunately his first impression was one of horror! He raced up to HQ BFFI to explain our error. Apparently, at that time there was an extremely high incidence of red/green colour blindness within the local community.

Our maps could easily have been the cause of loss of life and limb rather than its prevention. Within a couple of hours, and the use of hachures etc. a revised map was disseminated. A couple of weeks later the CRE told me that copies of the map were selling for £5+ back in Blighty, how they got there I have no idea?

(Images from wikipedia)

Memory Stir

Memory Stir No 5 – John Collins CBE - NE Kenya 1985

‘The Sappers Map a Province’ in the Summer Newsletter certainly stirred my memory of my own time in Kenya’s NE Province in 1985, when I was OC 19 Topographic Squadron from 1985 – 1986.

The task set for ‘Exercise Fourpence’ was to connect lines of North South Control in East Africa by traversing along the Kenyan/Ethiopian Border and down the Kenyan/ Somalia border in the area centred on the ‘triple point’ around Mandera where the three borders met.

It was extremely difficult country, which had precluded early work there, compounded by bandit activity especially across the Kenyan Somali border (the region known as the Ogaden). The only way to achieve the necessary link was by using Bilby towers, 3 of which had been left with the Survey of Kenya after the DoS withdrew. S/Sgt Bill Semple and I set off on the Recce in April 1985 to work out our base camp location, make the necessary Liaisons and check out the Bilby Towers. I was hampered somewhat by the attitude of the then very grumpy Parachute Regiment DA in Nairobi who resented us Sappers very much because we were being allowed into the NE Province when he wasn’t: and had terrible relations with the Kenyan MoD, which he treated very badly. It made things much worse when they were happy to see me and were extremely co-operative. We were warned against working on the Somali Border, but I discovered that the Governor of the Somali Province had been a cadet at Sandhurst, which quickly overcame any issues. Also, the state of the towers in the Survey of Kenya compound was truly appalling and all three were jumbled up in a heap of what looked like scrap metal. The staff were extremely idle and so Bill Semple and I had to set to on our own to sort them out into three individual towers then check them to discover which parts were missing /unserviceable and would have to be purchased in UK and brought out with us. The good news was that we had established contact with the old DoS native tower party who agreed to reform and come up country with us to build the towers. Because of the security risks I decided to establish the base camp inside the Kenyan Army camp in Mandera, and this made it much easier to liaise with the platoon of the Kenyan Army which was going to provide our security detail. I found out that the young 2/Lt Platoon Commander was one Philip Moi – son of the President, so I assumed we would be safe!



Unfortunately, I became very unwell on the Recce and not only caught bacillary dysentery (dining with the locals) but also Hepatitis A in the British Army Training Team compound outside Nairobi, along with a fair proportion of the then UK Battalion on exercise there. I had to be hospitalized in the UK and it took me a fair while to recover properly. I led the main party out later that year and had a furious row with the RAF over emplaning. We had been scrupulous about packing up, including explosives, overseen by the Transport and Movement Regiment in South Cerney, but the Hercules we had been due to fly in from Lyneham was cancelled at the last minute and we had to transfer to Brize Norton to take a VC10. The Air Movements staff were particularly ignorant of what we were going to do and so started throwing everything they thought dangerous out of our freight like thermometers (mercury!) and the explosives. At one stage at about 2.00 am I said that if they did not desist, I would cancel the trip and take the party home as there would be no point in going without our stores. I ended up intercepting everything they threw out and just passing it round the back to be put in again!

We made it up country to Mandera, via Wajir and settled in to begin Survey Ops. It was quickly discovered that trying to use explosives to prepare the bases for the Bilby towers was completely ineffectual and the DoS Tower party showed us a much better way: they lit fires on the rock and then rapidly cooled it by pouring water on it. This caused it to crack and so made it easy to dig out. The tower party were brilliant and had lost none of their skills in erecting towers quickly and efficiently. I think this must have been the last occasion that Bilby Towers were used in anger.

Having left the main party to get on with the job and set out to return home, the Kenyan Airforce offered me a lift down to their base at Eastleigh, Nairobi, in a De Havilland Buffalo. I noticed on boarding the plane that the floor was very wet and was horrified to see an AVTUR pump in the front of the plane leaking fuel all over it. The pilot explained we would need to fly low-level to avoid attack from bandits and that we would have to refuel from drums in a prepositioned fuel dump in the bush – hence the AVTUR pump. The smell of fuel in the plane was horrible and what with the low level flying I was feeling somewhat ill soon after take-off. Thinking I was about to be sick I turned my head to the side to try and get a whiff of fresh air, only to come up against a goat tied up in a sack that had been placed on the jump seat next to me. Projectile vomiting across to the other side of the aircraft immediately ensued!

All in all, field surveying at its best!

Memory Stir No 6 – Alan Gordon - Celebrating Ukrainian Christmas Day – 1964

(A request for details about his father was received from Danny Considine. Alan recalls - I remember Scouse Considine quite well – as the attached tells – I spent 5 weeks working under him in the coal yard at Barton Stacey in January 1964. He was a typical ‘Scouse’ with a cracking dry sense of humour. Also, to me as a young Sapper he was quite a ‘worldly wise’ well-travelled corporal with what seemed then to be quite long service and a wealth of good stories of far flung places. He was a very good ‘boss’ - working in the coal yard was dirty and hard work but he made it bearable even fun at times and looked after his team – we were always first in the lunch and tea queues at the cookhouse – he knew what mattered. Fond memories - the story was first published in the Newsletter in 2014)

In 1964 the Coal Yard at Barton Stacey was a very important place as every accommodation block and almost all offices were heated by small solid fuel stoves and the fuel came from the Coal Yard. However, the name was a misnomer as it held hardly any coal, very little kindling wood but mountains of coke and working there was considered the worst of the numerous Regimental duties, even worse than washing greasy pans in the Tin Room in the Cookhouse which was at least warm.

Monday the 6th of January 1964 saw the Regiment back from Christmas block leave and me starting a week-long stint in the Coal Yard along with a sapper from each of the other two squadrons and a driver from RHQ Troop. In charge of the Coal Yard was Cpl Scouse Considine, one of several non-Survey NCOs on the Regiment’s strength and a great character. After lunch on the Tuesday we set about shoveling coke into the round metal tubs and lifting them onto the back of our 3-tonner and then set off on our delivery round which included the transit hut in 19 Squadron lines.

At that time, a party of Ukrainian ‘Displaced Persons’ was employed under a SSgt from Chatham in carrying out a clearance of the ranges at nearby Moody Down and they were housed in the transit block. We turned up at the block to be greeted by the SSgt who asked us inside where we found all the Ukrainians dressed in ill-fitting suits around a long table loaded with plates of ‘odd’ looking food, some Christmas decorations and bottles of clear liquid with twigs inside. The SSgt explained that the Ukrainians celebrated Christmas according to the old Julian calendar and that today was their Christmas Day and that anyone crossing their threshold had to receive a hospitable welcome at which we were all

offered a glass of the clear liquid – which, needless to say was pure genuine Russian vodka, very exotic at the time and an unknown taste to us ‘coalmen’ but very warming on a cold January day.

We were told that the acting CO, Major Sexton, and the RSM, Terry Membury, were expected very shortly but if we could return after they’d gone and donate an extra couple of bins of coke, which was rationed at the time, it would be a very nice Christmas present and they would show their appreciation. We duly returned and started on the road to oblivion. Vodka toast followed vodka toast then they sang a Ukrainian song and Scouse sang “Maggie May” and on it carried - song for song and drink for drink.

The next thing I knew was being roughly shaken by the 2i/c of the guard. I sat up and crashed my head into a steel girder someone appeared to have built across my bed for I was on top of it still dressed in coke dusty denims (the ones that had detachable buttons fixed on by split rings – why!!) I was told it was ten o’clock at night and I was to get to the guardroom immediately as the Orderly Sergeant wanted me. I staggered up there and met the other Coal Yard Sappers en route. We were called to attention and the irate Sergeant demanded to know the whereabouts of Cpl Considine. We all had no idea but slowly told the story of the vodka-fueled afternoon. It turned out that when it got to nine o’clock and Scouse had not arrived home a very concerned Mrs Considine contacted the guardroom. Once we had told of the Ukrainian Christmas festivities a member of the guard was sent off towards the transit block and 19 Squadron lines and returned to say that he had found the abandoned Coal Yard 3-tonner and curled up in the back was a comatose Cpl Considine.

Wednesday morning found the very hungover Coal Yard crew paraded before the RSM. After having the error of our ways explained to us very, very clearly, we Sappers then learnt that our one weeklong sojourn in the Coal Yard was now extended to four – carry on shoveling! The Corporal was, I seem recall, given a reprimand by the OC RHQ Troop but his status as a Regimental character was very greatly enhanced. I have never ever touched a drop of vodka since!

Memory Stir No 7 – Albie Field - A few thoughts from the very beginning

My earliest memories are from during the war, World War II that is, not one living in Tottenham North London and seeing the results of bombing raids, V1s and V2s. The V1 is particularly memorable from watching doodlebugs flying across the sky and knowing when the noise stopped was about to come down. The nearest bomb fell just across the street and demolished three houses. One of the two came down less than a mile away and flattened the whole area, which after the war was replaced with some high-rise flats. I started school just before the end of the war but can recall having to go into the shelters while at school.

Skipping forward a few years to 1951 when having passed the 11+ I went to Tottenham County High school a co-educational grammar school where the only subject I loved and excelled in was mathematics in particular trigonometry. School was not the happiest time of my life and in 1956 I took the decision to leave school after just starting in the sixth form. I decided that I wanted to join the army and be a surveyor. I was too old to join the apprentice scheme and too young to go in as a man entrant. The next six months I worked with Middlesex county council engineer’s department in Westminster. The journey to work involved a bus three tubes and a little walk across Parliament Square to Great George Street. I now knew what it was like to feel like a sardine! As soon as I was old enough, I went along to the recruiting office in Kentish Town and signed on, the date was 5th May 1957.

Shortly afterwards I received a letter telling me to report to No 1 Training Regiment Royal Engineers at Norton Barracks near Malvern. This initial posting was only to be for a couple of weeks mostly spent polishing and polishing, floors, brass, you name it and learning how to march. I do recall some national service NCOs bellowing at us and threatening to ‘tare off our arms and beat us around the head with the soggy end’. Luckily for us this brought us into June and a summer break.

We now moved to No 9 Training Regiment Royal Engineers at Southwood Camp in Cove, Hampshire, with more polishing and drill. After a couple of weeks, we went to the ranges at Ash and went through weapons training and were tested on the number four rifle and the Bren gun. After qualification those of us who were classified as M tradesmen stayed behind at the ranges as a rear party for a few days before returning to Southwood camp. After passing out three of us – me, Eric Goff and Danny Sutherland were posted to the School of Military Survey at Hermitage in Berkshire.

Next came some aptitude tests and I recall part of that test was to prove the sine rule, another was testing stereoscopic vision. After the tests I was accepted for training as a trigonometrical surveyor. Alas we now had to wait for a course to start and are involved in what was termed Pool.

This involved various jobs one I recall was working in the coke yard and delivering coke to the individual barrack rooms, other work was in the officer's mess kitchen and the sergeants mess kitchen.

The guardroom during the day was looked after by civilian officials and regimental policemen. At night a guard was mounted and the first time we were involved the military training sergeant "Buller Kent" was horrified to find that we had not been taught any rifle drill, it appears that at the time the rifle drill was taught we were on the rear party at the ranges.

Eventually the time for our trade training came round, I cannot remember many names, but Pete Atwood, John Boyd, Tim Walker and Scotsman Jeff Dunbar were amongst those on my course. My instructor was Staff Sgt George Whalley who spent many years at the school and in fact was involved in my upgrading courses to Tech 2 and Tech 1.

After qualifying as A3 surveyors the course were posted around the world, some to the Far East some to the Middle East one to Kenya. I and some others were posted to 13 Field Survey Squadron at Fernhurst in Sussex.

Fernhurst was a delightful camp situated between Aldershot and Midhurst. Opposite the camp was the Kings Arms pub with another pub a short walk down a lane to the Duke of Cumberland, I think? The OC was Major Covington and the SSM was WO2 Zom Kennedy the 2i/c was a Capt Bazeley and the Troop officer in field survey was Lt Woodley. I can recall during my time their other field surveyors were Les Morgan, Brian Beale, Alf Isherwood, all corporals at the time.

On the square were parked the print vehicles and generators, most of the vehicles were Leyland Hippos but I think there was one semitrailer which had to be towed by a separate tractor. After morning parades, the first job was to start the generators most of which were Lister diesel engines.

The method of starting them involved a rope tied to the starting handle the three or four men on each side who got it turning and someone closed the valves and it went if you were lucky. Stuck in my memory is the time that I was painting the inside of one the Leyland print vehicles with the sides extended when the side collapsed on me luckily the tin of paint took a lot of the force and I just bruised my shoulder.

The next day was PE tests which were held in the wooded area at the bottom the sports field one of these tests involved climbing a rope moving across a rope slide and down. When my turn came Lt Woodley said to me are you okay, we want you for the cricket season to which I replied, 'yes sir.' But halfway across my arm gave way and I dropped down landing on my wrist which, was now dislocated.

It so happened that there was an ambulance on the camp to take someone to hospital with an upset stomach they took me off to see our M.O. His attitude was that he wished he had been there as he could have corrected the dislocation straightaway, still it is not too late, lie down. He told the driver to hold me down, whereupon he took hold and pulled and pulled with no success. The M.O. was most disappointed that had he could not manipulate my wrist. I was then taken to Aldershot military hospital where they manipulated my wrist under anesthetic the next day.

For the next few weeks, I worked in the squadron office on the telephone switchboard until my cast was removed. I was then moved on to *Operation Emily*.

Memory Stir No 8 – Jack Crompton - Paddy and the Leach

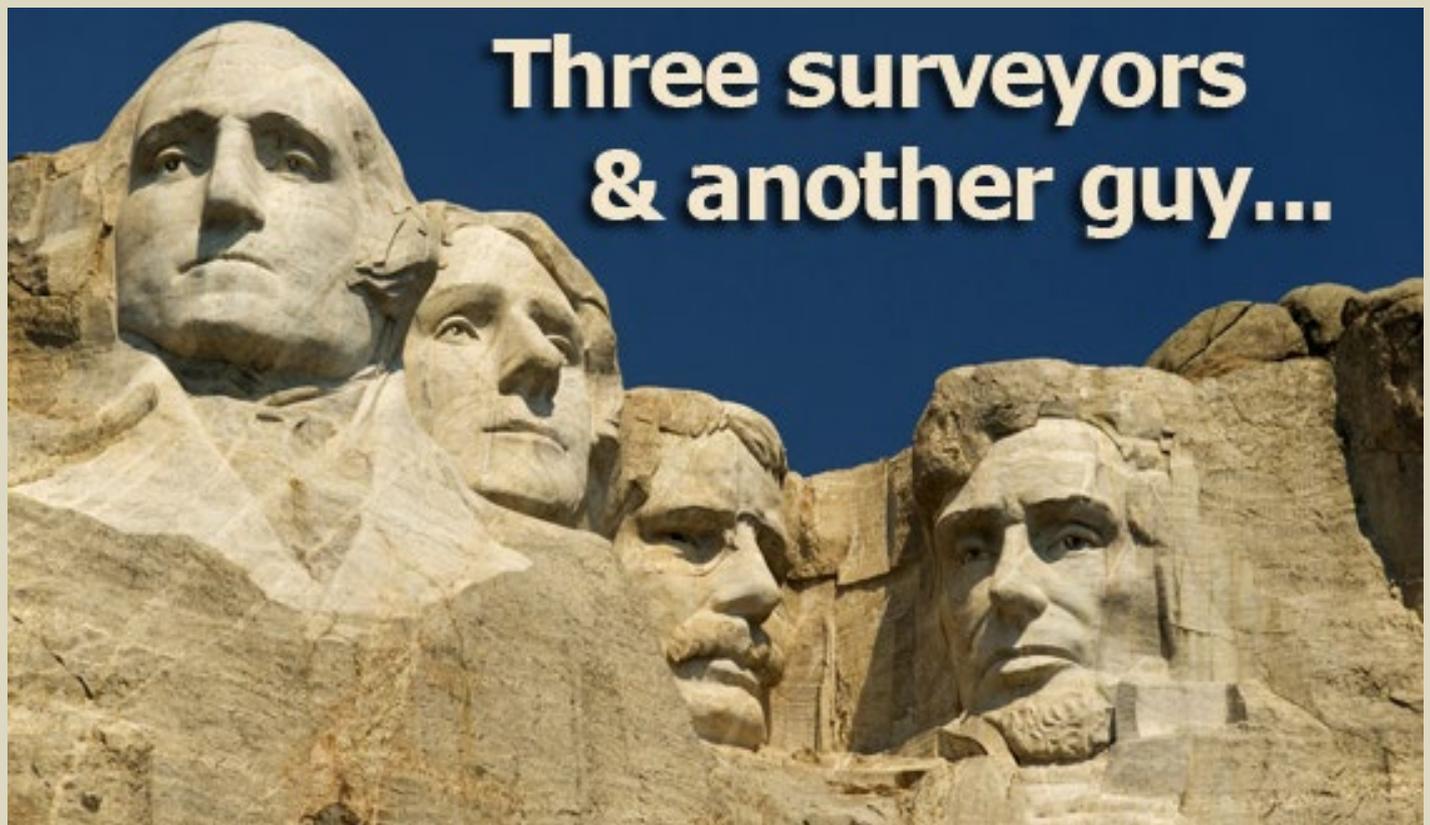
We were surveying and marking the boundaries of the Ulutiram Jungle ranges in Jahor Baru, West Malaysia in 1967. There were three of us at that time. Willy West, Paddy Macaulay, and myself. We carried the theodolite tripod and the rest of our equipment, food, and water, from the nearest point on the road to where we left off the previous day. We only had on shorts and flip flops at most. Sometimes swimming trunks and flip flops only?

Leaches and Mosquitoes were a nuisance. The mosquitoes could be headed off to a certain extent with good old army insect repellent, which was powerful stuff, but it wore off quickly. It was enough to get you well into the jungle and the further you were in, the less you seemed to be bothered. Leaches were less of a problem. As we were mainly skin, and not clothing, you or your mates would tell you if you had a leach on your body. You would, normally, not feel them because they injected a local anesthetic to numb the skin and an anticoagulant and then proceed to put their heads into your body and suck the blood.

When full they drop off and you are left with a bleeding hole that may take a few hours to heal. There are several ways to get a leach off, not all are a good idea - cigarettes, salt, hair shampoo and insect repellent. All of which will work but may cause the animal to regurgitate and that could cause an infection, although the bleeding mostly flushes the wound out. The best way we found out from our local aboriginal cutters was to pull the leaches out in the same direction they had entered the body but not too fast.

The point here is that they numb the skin and you rarely feel them until it is too late. We were walking in one morning and had just crossed a shallow stream when Paddy felt something at his privates between his legs. He stopped put his kit down and took his shorts and underwear down and inspected himself. Sure, enough there was a leach attached to one of his dangly bits. The reason that he had felt it when they normally numbed the area was that this was an exceedingly sensitive area of the body. Paddy was an amiable chap normally but could be exuberant and on this occasion his language was quite colourful at the audacity of the leach. Without thinking about it he took the plastic bottle of insect repellent and squirted it all over the leach and that area.

Well I have said that it was a sensitive area of the body and using insect repellent in the quantity he had squeezed on himself was a bit of a shock. It is like aftershave only a couple magnitudes stronger. The colourful language extended to the full rainbow and he ran to the stream and jumped in, clothing still round his knees, trying to wash off the repellent to alleviate the stinging. Needless to say - Willy and I were killing ourselves laughing!!



Most people had no idea Abraham Lincoln, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were all land surveyors. The "other guy" being the president who made this park and thousands of others federal nature preserves?

Mount Rushmore National Memorial is centered on a sculpture carved into the granite face of Mount Rushmore in the Black Hills in Keystone, South Dakota, United States. Sculptor Gutzon Borglum created the sculpture's design and oversaw the project's execution from 1927 to 1941 with the help of his son Lincoln Borglum.

The sculpture features the 60-foot (18 m) heads of Presidents George Washington (1732–1799), Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919), and Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865).

South Dakota historian Doane Robinson is credited with conceiving the idea of carving the likenesses of noted figures into the mountains of the Black Hills of South Dakota to promote tourism in the region. His initial idea was to sculpt the Needles; however, Gutzon Borglum rejected the Needles because of the poor quality of the granite and strong opposition from the Lakota (Sioux), who consider the Black Hills to be sacred ground; it was originally included in the Great Sioux Reservation. The United States broke up the territory after gold was discovered in the Black Hills.

The sculptor and tribal representatives settled on Mount Rushmore, which also has the advantage of facing southeast for maximum sun exposure. Robinson wanted it to feature American West heroes, such as Lewis and Clark, Oglala Lakota chief Red Cloud, Buffalo Bill Cody, Lewis and Clark expedition guide Sacagawea, and Oglala Lakota chief Crazy Horse. Borglum believed that the sculpture should have broader appeal and chose the four presidents.

Peter Norbeck, the US Senator from South Dakota, sponsored the project and secured federal funding. Construction began in 1927, and the presidents' faces were completed between 1934 and 1939. After Gutzon Borglum died in March 1941, his son Lincoln took over as leader of the construction project. Each president was originally to be depicted from head to waist, but lack of funding forced construction to end on October 31, 1941.

Because of its fame as a monument, Mount Rushmore has been depicted in multiple places in popular culture. It is often depicted as a cover for a secret location; shown with faces removed or modified (as in 1980's *Superman II*) or added; or parodied. Trey Parker and Matt Stone used the location as the headquarters for their 2004 film *Team America: World Police*. National Treasure: *Book of Secrets* (2007) also depicts this location as a secret cover for a fictional gold city. The memorial was also famously used as the location of the climactic chase scene in Alfred Hitchcock's 1959 film *North by Northwest*. Deep Purple's 1970 album *In Rock* parodies the sculpture. From the second season of the CBS Saturday-morning children's program *Pee-wee's Playhouse*, Mount Rushmore is seen when Pee-wee is flying out on his scooter.

Source: Pinterest & Wikipedia

Monopoly – I did not know this!

You will never look at the game the same way again!

Starting in 1941, an increasing number of British Airmen found themselves as the involuntary guests of the Third Reich, and the Crown was casting about for ways and means to facilitate their escape...

Now obviously, one of the most helpful aids to that end is useful and accurate map, one showing not only where stuff was, but also showing the locations of 'safe houses' where a POW on-the-lam could go for food and shelter.

Paper maps had some real drawbacks – they make a lot of noise when you open and fold them, they wear out rapidly, and if they get wet, they turn into mush.

Someone in MI-5 (similar to America's OSS) got the idea of printing escape maps on silk. It is durable, can be scrunched-up into tiny wads and unfolded as many times as needed, and makes no noise whatsoever.

At that time, there was only one manufacturer in Great Britain that had perfected the technology of printing on silk, and that was John Waddington, Ltd. When approached by the government, the firm was only too happy to do its bit for the war effort.

By pure coincidence, Waddington was also the U.K. Licensee for the popular American board game, Monopoly. As it happened, 'games and pastimes' was a category of item qualified for insertion into 'CARE packages', dispatched by the International Red Cross to prisoners of war.



Under the strictest of secrecy, in a securely guarded and inaccessible old workshop on the grounds of Waddington's, a group of sworn-to-secrecy employees began mass-producing escape maps, keyed to each region of Germany or Italy where Allied POW camps were regional system). When processed, these maps could be folded into such tiny dots that they would actually fit inside a Monopoly playing piece.

If they were at it, the clever workmen at Waddington's also managed to add:

1. A playing token, containing a small magnetic compass
2. A two-part metal file that could easily be screwed together
3. Useful amounts of genuine high-denomination German, Italian, and French currency, hidden within the piles of Monopoly money!

British and American air crews were advised, before taking off on their first mission, how to identify a 'rigged' Monopoly set -- by means of a tiny red dot, one cleverly rigged to look like an ordinary printing glitch, located in the corner of the Free Parking square.

Of the estimated 35,000 Allied POWS who successfully escaped, an estimated one-third were aided in their flight by the rigged Monopoly sets. Everyone who did so was sworn to secrecy indefinitely, since the British Government might want to use this remarkably successful ruse in still another, future war.

The story was not declassified until 2007, when the surviving craftsmen from Waddington's, as well as the firm itself, were finally honoured in a public ceremony.

It is always nice when you can play that 'Get Out of Jail Free' card!

I realize most of you are (probably) too young to have any personal connection to WWII (Sept '39 to Aug. '45), but this is still interesting.

Normandy landings veteran awarded France's highest honour

BBC News Channel - 7 July 2017



A veteran of the Normandy landings has been awarded France's highest honour for his role in helping to liberate the country from German occupation.

Irvine Rae, 93, was due to be presented with the National Order of the Legion of Honour at Edinburgh Castle in January with nine other men who took part in the D-Day landings in France. However, the Fife veteran was unable to attend due to a broken hip.

So, the French Consulate rearranged a special presentation ceremony for him, and he received the honour at Leuchars military base in Fife on Thursday. Emmanuel Cocher, the French consul general in Scotland, presented Mr Rae with the award.

Mr Rae, who lives in Tayport, said: "Despite what I did in France in the Royal Engineers, I still can't quite understand why I'm getting this - to me it was just normal work in the course of military service for my country.

"Of course, I'm very pleased about it - it's a wonderful gift and a great honour."

Mr Rae was called up in 1942 at the age of 18, when he was an apprentice lithographer with John Avery Printers in Aberdeen and was assigned to the Royal Engineers. He joined 514 Field Survey Company, 15 Map Reproduction Section.

In the lead-up to Operation Overlord, he was involved in survey planning, production of every map likely to be required in northern France, organisation and preparation of equipment and the planning and training for their landing.

On June 7 1944, D Day +1, aged 20, Sgt Rae sailed from Portsmouth with three men as his section's advance party on board HMS *Glenroy*, carrying all their maps and equipment.



They then transferred onto craft for their landing on the Normandy beach known as Sword and over several days advanced inland, safely reaching the farm where they were to set up and wait for the rest of their section to join them.

Collecting information from Army Field Survey, RAF, resistance groups and the local French people, Sgt Rae redrew the frontline positions on the maps and printed off copies, which he was involved in delivering to the front line.

As the war progressed, with 15 Map Reproduction Section, Sgt Rae advanced through northern France, Belgium and into Germany, continuing to support the front line with updated maps.

Mr Rae, who has recovered well from his broken hip, said: "The French people were very, very nice - very helpful. "My spoken French wasn't very-good, but they helped me out - it maybe took half an hour sometimes, but we got there in the end. "They were very amenable to what we were doing there to help them."

Later, Sgt Rae was redeployed to Italy, Palestine, Egypt, and Greece.

The Legion d'Honneur was established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte in recognition of both military and civilian merit.

Membership of the Legion is technically restricted to French nationals but foreign nationals who have served France or the ideals it upholds may also receive the award.



Mosquito of 544 Sqn PR.XVI in flight courtesy of the IWM Public Collection (CH 14264).

We look back to some challenges faced by 544 PR Sqn on this day 3rd July in 1944. This is in support of Operation Jericho 2020, which offers supporters the chance to add their name to the story of the Mosquito.

4 crews took off from RAF Benson on the morning of July 2nd to carry out photoreconnaissance of railway and other targets in Central & Southern France. Weather conditions at base meant all crews had to divert to other airfields on their return.

W/Cdr Clayton and F/S Richards in PR. IX LR425 had photographed targets in the Marseilles area and were running low on fuel on the return flight. They also had radio problems and put out a May Day call before landing at Christchurch.

The objectives for F/O Burfield and F/S Barron in MM240 had included Vierzon, Limoges and Clermont Ferrand. They were diverted to Bassingbourne, where they landed at 16.10. They took off again at 18.25 and flew to Bradwell Bay.

Two other crews were also diverted to Bradwell Bay. F/L Hampson and P/O Newby in MM242 landed there at 16.15, having photographed targets in the area of Geneva, Dijon, Lyon, and Grenoble.

W/Cdr Steventon and F/O Askew landed at 16.40 in LR417. Their objectives had included Lyon, Nimes, Montpellier, Toulouse, and Bordeaux.

The camera films were taken by road to Benson that evening. All 4 crews returned the following day.

*The People's Mosquito has a simple vision: to restore a de Havilland DH.98 Mosquito to British skies.
A Registered Charity - No. 1165903- (www.peoplesmosquito.org.uk/campaigns).*

Soldiers in troopship Queen Elizabeth returning home after the war



This is troopship *Queen Elizabeth*. The *Queen Elizabeth* and *Queen Mary* were used as troop transports during WW2. Their high speeds allowed them to outrun hazards, principally German U-boats, usually allowing them to travel without a convoy. Her carrying capacity was over 15,000 troops plus, 900 crew. During, her war service as a troopship Queen Elizabeth carried more than 750,000 troops and sailed some 500,000 miles (800,000 km).

The voyage would take about 5-7 days on average to go from the East Coast of the US to the British Isles while bringing troops to Europe. It looks crowded because everyone is on deck as it is pulling into harbour. According to Eisenhower's memoir some troops were complaining to the press about the slow rate at which they were being returned to the States. He got wind of this and asked a big gathering of troops at an event he was attending whether they wanted to continue filling the ships at normal capacity or be crammed the hell into them to get home as soon as possible. They overwhelmingly applauded the latter option. *Source: FB WWII Pictures*

Notices of Death

Dave Morton Lloyd

We have been informed by Ferg Brazier that Dave Morton Lloyd (Air Svy) died suddenly in mid-August aged 61. It is thought that Dave left the Army about 1986. Ferg had served with him in 14 Topo, Op Banner tour of NI and at Brampton & Wyton. No further information is currently available.

Michael Hinton

Mick Perry informed us that one of his Chepstow group (61c) namely Michael Hinton died recently. Mick said that Michael (known also as Mick) was a 'fieldy' but he had left the Army very suddenly circa 1965. He then seemed to have disappeared until he and Bob Avenell searched him out, not long prior to Bob's sad demise. But there will be a few who will remember him fondly, he had been a good friend before his unexplained disappearance. Michael's funeral was held at the Bournemouth Crematorium and a memorial service will take place later.

Brian Ekers

Mick Perry has also informed us that his very good friend, and ex DGC work colleague, Brian Ekers has died on 29th August aged 84. Mick and Brian met up and attended most DGC FGSSA reunions together and frequently met up for a beer and catch up but earlier this year Brian had the terrible news that he had only a short while to live. Despite this he remained positive and outlived the prediction by double the amount accorded him. The cremation service took place at St Faiths Crematorium Norfolk on Thursday, 17th September

Donald Procter

Jane Williams the daughter of Donald Procter reports his death, and was one of our long-standing members aged 92, who unfortunately had to rescind his membership due to severe illness. Don had been in a care home for some time, but his illness has deteriorated beyond a level for him to enjoy membership and the newsletters. Jane was interested to read our latest newsletter that had been re-directed to her. She was especially interested to read about the cover article on mapping in Kenya as she knew her Dad was posted to Kenya in October 1957 to work on the mapping project in the north of the country and stayed there until about July 1958, so would certainly have been involved in the work.

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Military Survey (Geographic) Branch

A member of the
Royal Engineers Association



WILL HOLD THE VIRTUAL

**21st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING on Friday 23rd October 2020
at 1700hrs**

AGENDA

Chairman's Opening Remarks

Minutes of the 20th AGM – will be circulated prior to the virtual meeting. Secretary

Annual Reports on 2019/20 – will be circulated prior to the virtual meeting. Chairman

Financial Status & Audited Accounts 2019/20
– will be circulated prior to the virtual meeting Treasurer

Election of Auditors for 2020/21 Chairman

Election of Committee Officers Chairman

Any Other Business* Chairman

Date of Next AGM Chairman

Closing Remarks Chairman

NB.
The Military Update will be given by our President, Lt Col AJ Harris RE Commanding Officer 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic).

* Items to be considered under AOB **should be submitted to the Branch Secretary prior** to the AGM but may still be considered by the Chairman if time permits.