



Military Survey (Geographic) Branch

Royal Engineers Association

Winter 2023/4 Newsletter – issue 90

Noel Richard Grimmett

4 Feb 43 – 27 Dec 23



In 1959, at the tender age of 16, Noel took the Queen's shilling and joined the Army as a potential Royal Engineer Apprentice Survey Tradesman. He was sent to the Army Apprentice School, Harrogate, and, along with David "Percy" Kimber and David "Dai" Marchant, formed part of 59c intake. He went through Military Survey's own assessment process and was selected to become either a Trigonometrical Surveyor or Topographical Surveyor. At that time both trades trained initially as Topographic Draughtsmen.

Noel's Apprentice training wasn't straightforward. During his first year Trig and Topo Surveyors were reclassified as Technician Trades, and it was then decided that all 59c survey intake would become Cartographic Technicians – the precursor to Air Survey Technicians. A reorganisation of Apprentice training then led the Survey intake to transfer to the Army Apprentice School at Chepstow! There was no training on the Multiplex Air Survey system available there and so Noel and his fellow Air Surveyors left Boys' Service tradeless. They were posted to the School of Military Survey at Hermitage near Newbury where they finally completed their Technician Class 3 training. They then went to 3 Training Regiment Royal Engineers, Cove, near Aldershot to undertake their basic Sapper training.



Apprentice LCpl Grimmatt – AAS Chepstow 1962

Celebrating Noel's 21st Birthday – Singapore
Barry Humphries, Dave Parsons, ? Alan Gordon and Noel

Having finally completed training as a Class 3 Survey tradesman, Noel, along with Percy, was posted to 84 Field Survey Squadron in Singapore. He was then detached to the Air Survey Liaison Section at RAF Tengah. Throughout his Boys' Service and his time in Singapore, Noel was a talented sprinter. He was of a standard to run for the Army in Singapore and helped 84 Squadron to become Athletics champions of the Engineer Base Group. He raced against Peter Radford who held the world record for the 100 yards.

Noel was one of the very first single soldiers to have his then fiancé, Jan, flown out to Singapore, and they married in the garrison Church there. Percy Kimber was his best man and Dave Jordan was an usher at his wedding. Such is married life in the Forces that Noel was sent back to UK for a course at the School of Military Survey when Jan was pregnant and was still there when she gave birth to Nadine. Maurice Smith recalls taking Jan to the hospital and his wife being Jan's one official visitor during her hospital stay.

After 3 years in Singapore Noel returned to UK for his Class 2 trade course. He then did a short tour at 42 Survey Engineer Regiment in Barton Stacey, before returning to Hermitage for his Class 1 course. From his Class 1, he was promoted to Sgt and posted to the Trade Test Board being responsible for testing all Air Survey Technician tradesmen. He was then posted, on promotion, to the Joint Air Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre – JARIC UK at RAF Brampton.

Whilst there he was promoted to WO2. His next posting was a NATO appointment at HQ AFSouth in Naples, followed by a return to Barton Stacey where he became Sergeant Major in Regimental Headquarters. NATO called once again and he spent 2 years at HQ AFNorth in Oslo. He was posted back to JARIC in 1980 and completed his career with 2 years at the Mapping and Charting Establishment, Feltham. Noel retired from the Army in February 1983 after over 23 years of exemplary service.



The RE element JARIC UK c1972 – Noel: Front row -3rd from the left

After leaving the Army Noel joined Magnet Joinery and managed a number of branches. He moved into financial services and worked for Royal Life and Norwich Union Insurance companies. He eventually joined the Financial Ombudsman Service as an adjudicator reviewing the mis-selling of pension transfers and protection policies. The latter led to him setting up his own Company and he held contracts with Lloyds Bank and HSBC.

Noel was very proud to be a Royal Engineer and even more so to be a member of the Military Survey family. He was one of the first to join Military Survey Geographic Branch of the Royal Engineers Association. Within a few months he had joined the committee and, perhaps linked to his work with SSAFA, the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's Families Association, had taken on the responsibilities of Welfare Member. In 2016 he became editor of the branch newsletter.

In a short CV, Noel commented that one of his interests was researching family history. That isn't that unusual but in Noel's case "family" included Military Survey and he spent many hundreds of hours researching Military Survey units. He had spent so much time there, that it was rumoured that he even had his own seat in The National Archives. But to say that Noel was editor of the newsletter is a vast understatement. He not only edited them, he produced the vast majority of each edition and provided countless articles using the material he had researched. Noel produced 29 quarterly

editions of the newsletter and 2 additional editions during the COVID-19 lockdowns. He also put together our special commemorative edition that remembered Her Majesty the late Queen. Noel worked with Alan Gordon and others on Alan's book about 42 Survey Engineer Regiment. He had also put together a number of pamphlets giving the history of Survey units, and had many more in production. He was so looking forward to the forthcoming 200th anniversaries of 13, 14, 16 and 19 Squadrons.....

Whilst I have spoken of Noel's involvement with the REA, he was also a key member of the Defence Surveyors' Association and one of the regular contributors to their magazine, "The Ranger".

Noel was a quiet, modest, and unassuming man who sought not the limelight. It was only when Richard, Noel's son, came to a committee meal that he began to realise all the Noel had done for us and the high esteem with which he was held. We have received many messages of condolence regarding Noel, and many more have been posted on Facebook. It is a true reflection of the regard with which he was held by the number of members that are here today to say 'Goodbye'. All the messages said what a nice man Noel was, and expressed appreciation for all his work. However, three people used one word that I believe, summed up Noel and his place within the Branch..... "Irreplaceable"

The text above was read at Noel's funeral as our tribute to a man who gave so much to the Branch and its members.

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The Branch was very well represented at Noel's funeral with almost 30 members, including wives, present. Noel's funeral was a true celebration of his life, and his family were very appreciative of the support we gave. Besides the number of members paying their respects, the Branch Standard was given pride of place and Noel's coffin was adorned with the Union Flag together with a Royal Engineers forage cap and stable belt.



Noel's family very kindly asked that donations in memory of Noel be made to the Geo Support Fund, Military Survey Geographic Branch, REA

MILITARY SURVEY (GEO) BRANCH REA REUNION

The Committee wish to extend an invitation to branch members and wives/partners to attend the annual reunion in the Wickens Suite at :

Newbury Rugby Club, Monks Lane, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 7RW

Saturday 20th April 2024 (12:30hrs for 13:00hrs)

Enjoy meeting old friends, with lots of benefits:

- **FREE entry**
- **FREE Curry Buffett for members and first guest.** Non Members (£5 per person) (NB £5 pp cash back if you subsequently join the Branch)
- **FREE Branch lapel badge for first time members that attend** (Existing lapel badge holders are encouraged to wear them!)
- **Easy access, parking and facilities.**
- **The Wickens Suite offers an expansive view over the first team pitch via a full length balcony.**
- **Full disabled access via a lift.**

We only get the chance to meet once a year so please come and join us.

We must vote in officers of the Branch and approve the accounts therefore we are compelled to hold an annual general meeting (AGM). Those interested in attending the AGM should note that this will take place on the same day at the same venue but at an earlier time of 11:00hrs. It will not interfere with the opportunity for members attending the reunion to chew the cud, enjoy great food and of course the good beer.

For those that wish to stay over, there are a number of hotels a short taxi ride away, including a Premier Inn (Newbury South – By Tesco Superstore), around 1mile away.

Please try to attend with wives/partners and support your Branch.

Returns required Not later Than MONDAY 8th APRIL 2024

(Please complete the return on the back page of this newsletter)

Soldiers' Soldier Award
No 58 Military Engineer Geographic Technician Class 0-2 Course

The Branch recently made its Soldiers' Soldier Award to a student on No 58 Military Engineer Geographic Technician 0-2 Course.

Unlike most awards, the Soldiers' Soldier Award isn't made to the student with the best academic achievement, but instead is made to the individual who, as chosen by his/her peers, best epitomised the REA motto of "Service not Self" during the course.

Competition was close, but the winner was Sapper William Jones who was awarded a prize of £25 together with a copy of Alan Gordon's Book "The Regiment that Mapped the World".

The presentation was made by Col (Retd) Mark Burrows, the Branch Chairman, following the end of course discussion.



Sapper George Gibbons receiving his "Soldiers' Soldier" Award

Ex Trig Norge 94 Detachment

Bill 'Paddy' Duncan

Ex Trig Norge was an annual 19 Squadron Field Survey deployment hosted by the Norwegians usually in the Spring/Summer seasons, to support their Defence cold weather training phase and a spot of adventure training, time permitting. Forces in all manner of tasks. In 1994, our task was to co-ordinate a number of points on the ground in and around the main Norwegian Air Station in the town of Rygge, about 45 miles south of Oslo to enable deployment of their recently procured Ground Based Air Defence System.

The detachment, led by Capt Nick Collins, who was seconded from 16 Sqn, and me as the Field Troop Staff Sergeant, was made up of five field teams, a planning team, and a support team comprising of an SQMS, a Signals expert, a Fitter, and the obligatory MT rep. Quite surprisingly and a huge error in hindsight, was that it was decided by the recce team that all meals were to be taken



Back Row L to R: LCpl Pietro 'Fram' Framaliccio, Cfn Jason 'Gilly' Gill (REME) LCpl Justin 'Blakey' Blake, Spr Mark 'Coco' Keiras, Fenrik (2Lt equiv) Bjørnson (Norwegian Air Force), Spr Dale 'Taff' Baker, Spr Keith 'Fritz' Watson, LCpl 'Taff' Edwards, LCpl Simon 'Si' New, Spr Oliver 'Gringo' Gomez, Spr Tony 'Stainless' Steele, Spr Lee 'Duffs' Duff, Spr Mick Cottam

Front Row L to R: Cpl Peter 'Tiny' Simmonds, SSgt Bill 'Paddy' Duncan, Lt Morten Nilsen (Ramberg) (Norwegian Air Force G4 Liaison Officer), Capt Nick Collins (OC), Cpl Rick Clapcott (MT), LCpl Lee Young (Sigs), Kapt Gulestø (Norwegian Air Force), Lt Hans Wernersen (Norwegian Air Force Liaison Officer), WO1 (RSM) Paul Seager (Ski Instructor), SSgt Jeff Perridge (SQMS)

at the Norwegian air station and so there was no need for a chef to deploy. The Recce team spent a day at the air station whereas we were to spend 6 weeks there.

On a mild spring morning, the team set off from Hermitage in convoy for the 300-mile trip to Newcastle Upon Tyne where we would catch the afternoon ferry to Stavanger, arriving sometime after midday some 20 hrs. later, all things being well. The ferry trip was uneventful. Once settled and secure on board, each person was issued with meal vouchers and the guys effectively had free rein to do what they pleased, though mandatory muster parades were pre-scheduled for 10:30pm and 08:00am the following day. That said, sometime afterwards it became known that a few guys took the opportunity to experience a casino for the very first time. I believe the exorbitant cost on board the ferry may also have prohibited any really outrageous behavior, thankfully.

Anyway some 20 hours later, we arrived at Stavanger on the west coast of Norway and disembarked through customs, with the help of a Norwegian Air Force Liaison Officer (LO) who was waiting for us on arrival. The 300-mile journey to Rygge started shortly thereafter with an overnight stay at a conscript camp included. Arriving late at night the LO had called ahead to ensure hot food was available on our arrival. This was the start of food “hell”, boiled potatoes, cod & cauliflower with a cheese sauce, all served on a white plate was somewhat un-inviting. The nearest thing to colour or indeed taste was the Tabasco sauce we brought ourselves, being a staple diet for all “Fieldies” at that time. Having been to Norway a number of times before this deployment, we had always taken a chef to prepare food, normally due to the inhospitable hours we worked, usually using the host nation kitchens. The next day we awoke early and met for breakfast where we enjoyed a choice of boiled eggs, cheese, ham bread, fish, or cereal. Things didn’t improve any further as we then had to make packed lunches for the journey. You guessed it, we had a choice of boiled eggs, cheese, ham bread, fish, or cereal to go!!!!

We set off early Monday morning and finally arrived at Rygge Air Station around 2pm that afternoon. A total journey of some 60 hours with only two breakdowns en-route, both of which were minor and repairable by our trusty fitter, who brought up the rear in his converted fitter’s wagon, as was normal when in convoy. Throughout the journey we maintained comms using the seasoned Clansman without a “lost signal” ever being encountered, not something that could be said about today’s mobile phone technology.

On arrival in Rygge, it started snowing only stopping about three days before we recovered back to



Capt Nick Collins at Rygge Main Air Station on arrival.

The UK. The temperature was bearable though, hovering around zero during the day and dropping down to minus 5-10 at night. We set up the office in a remote learning facility a few miles from the main air station.



Office Accommodation

The SQMS scurried around hunting down codes, keys, passes, fuel cards, secure storage facilities and of course took over, then re-issued our living accommodation within the main air station. The next day we re-checked, calibrated and re-packed Landrovers. Recce teams were despatched with shovels and digging equipment to recover access to a number of local trig stations and plans were drawn up for the evening brief in preparation for the first day's deployment. Thankfully in 1994, all surveys of this type were carried out using GPS and so line of sight nor weather should have played a huge part in success or failure. That is unless visibility is so poor, the road which you happen to be travelling upon merges seamlessly into the surrounding terrain.

The case for one field team who managed to roll their Landrover, and in doing so left a line of debris from the edge of the road some 100m long until the point at which they stopped sliding on the hard packed ice/snow. Thankfully no-one was injured, they were recovered back to base and their vehicle eventually recovered back to the UK some days later. Back to food and the reason I mention it in the first instance. It was so poor throughout the first week or two that the guys eventually chose to buy takeaways rather than endure white death on a daily basis. As many of you will know the cost of breathing in Norway is exorbitant never mind buying food and drink. This is where Capt Nick Collins came up trumps, understanding the cost to the guys financially and the harm it was causing in undermining morale, he contacted the Regiment and had them authorise additional subsistence payments up to the value of about £16 or £17 a day, on provision of receipts. The guys could legitimately stop off at a takeaway or supermarket buy some grub and claim the costs back, up to this value. Not only did this improve morale significantly but it allowed us to extend the working day as we were no longer tied to the Norwegian meal timings. The bonus was that UK PLC didn't lose

out financially either. The MoD only paid for the meals taken in the mess via a system of signing-in. If five people signed-in for a specific meal, the MoD were billed for 5 meals, easily checked by comparing subsistence claims against daily sign-in sheets. A master stroke that basically assures the success of the exercise. Hence the actual job went extremely smoothly with very few technical issues. It provided the perfect opportunity to practice JNCOs in taking the technical lead of the task for a day. Each of the Field survey JNCOs were tasked to plan, brief, oversee then help compute the following days' survey activities on completion. A task they relished and excelled in.



Landrover Crash

Having completed the task a week or so early, RSM Seager descended upon us (in full lycra) to teach everyone how to cross-country ski. We had mandatory lessons in the evening on kit preparation including how to wax our NATO planks, followed by a practice evening of cross-country skiing at the local park. We were then transported to the back end of nowhere in white out conditions and in small groups set off merrily to ski some 25-30 km back to an RV. A few members of the team even gave demonstrations of how to build a snow hole and volunteered rather stupidly to stay out in the hole overnight. A bewildering decision based on the fact the alternative was to overnight in a really superb alpine lodge that came complete with a bar and restaurant. To this day I remain aghast at their stupidity.

In the closing days before recovery back to the UK. the Norwegian Liaison officers very kindly hosted the whole detachment to a trip to Lillehammer, the venue some months before of the 1994 winter Olympics. It was a breathtaking location that each and every one of us enjoyed immensely. The whole day was superb, we were treated with a tour of the runs including the ski jumps, given a lesson by the Norwegian Air Force Officer on how to downhill ski using cross country skis, which also included a jump. A feat I will never forget given the clumsiness of our own attempts on the very same slope. Highlights though included the abject failure of a member of the team attempting to ascend

the slope on the button lift, he was dragged up the slope whilst clinging onto the rope for his dear life. Another member of the team albeit an experienced skier, decided to demonstrate his prowess by copying a member of the Norwegian visitor's team and launching himself off the roof of a chalet. Not a smart idea given he landed on his butt to fits of laughter and then took about 20 minutes to recover his composure.

We returned from that trip having had a truly wonderful time and hours later set off on the long road back to the UK.

The whole 1994 Ex Trig Norge detachment had proved to be a great experience, we had successfully completed the task early, critically without injury to anyone. Everyone had learned something, even if it was that skiing is dangerous and we had all thoroughly enjoyed each other's company and had lots of giggles and fun to boot, both socially and professionally.



Team Photo at Lillehammer

Author Bio: Paddy Duncan joined Chepstow as an apprentice tradesman in 1980 as a Field Surveyor and retired in 2019. At various times he served appointments in 13 Sqn, 19 Sqn, 38 Engr Regt (N Ireland), R Mons RE Militia, AAC Chepstow, SHAPE (Belgium), HQ ARRC, NGIA (St Louis, US), 512 STRE (Washington DC), JWC (Norway) and 29 (Corps Support) Engineer Brigade (Aldershot). Deployment highlights included Nepal, Oman, Kenya, Cyprus, Hungary, Senegal, Balkans, Afghanistan, Diego Garcia, Singapore, USA, Germany, Spain, Italy, and Poland. Married with 3 grown up daughters and resides in South Wales.

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Survey Conference - Rome - 5/6 November 1945

A Survey Conference was held by Director of Survey, Middle East (Dir Svy ME) Brig R E Fryer, at Rome on 5-6 November 1945 to deal primarily with recommendations, promotions and postings of WO's and NCO's. The conference was attended by almost all Survey unit Commanders in Central Mediterranean Force (CMF) and British Troops Austria (BTA), and by Dep Dir Svy BTA, Col H A Bagot. As this was probably the last such conference to be held in Italy a photographic record was made. Capt Lumby, OC 20 Army Fd Svy Depot RE and Major Adderley OC 'B' Air Svy Liaison Section RE were the only two unit commanders in CMF not present.



Lt G Seigler, Lt J Topping, Maj F Ratzeburg, Maj S I Newcombe, Maj C A E O'Brien, Maj A Gluck, Lt E Hamlyn, Lt D Landwehr.

Maj S J Hubner, Maj A J Herbert, Maj H J Matthews, Col H A Bagot, Brig R E Fryer, Lt Col J D Newman, Maj C Rostron, Maj J R Hyatt.

Many of the longest serving unit commanders had been repatriated by the time of the conference, some having served up to 4 years in the Middle East. The following leave arrangements were introduced by the War Office: -

"During the war the Army had operated a scheme whereby any man who had served overseas for four years was repatriated. This was known as PYTHON, a reference to the Army eating its own tail. Towards the end of 1944, a new scheme was introduced named LIAP, which letters denoted - Leave In Addition to Python. Under LIAP, any person who would have served overseas three years, before being demobilised, was to be given a short home leave."

It is worth noting the number and type of Military Survey RE units operating in the Middle East during WW2 and beyond. A number of units were manned by Palestinians and usually commanded by British Officers and Warrant Officers.

- Field Survey Companies – British – both Army & Corps supporting Units – 13
– Palestinian Units – 1

Major C A E O'Brien RE

OC 518 Field Survey Company RE from 31 July 1945.
Capt 2 i/c 518 Field Survey Company RE from 7 January 1944.
Lieut 518 Field Survey Company RE from 1 November 1941

Major F H Ratzeburg RE

OC 514 Field Survey Company RE from 10 August 1945.
Capt F H Ratzeburg RE posted to 514 Company from Survey Directorate AFHQ on 25 July 1945.
Capt F H Ratzeburg EAE 524 (Palestinian) Field Survey Company RE from 3 June 1944.
Lieut F H Ratzeburg EAE 514 Field Survey Company from 19 November 1942.

Major C Rostron RE

Deputy Assistant Director Survey, Survey Directorate, GHQ, CMF from

Lieut H G M Hamlyn RE

OC 10 Field Survey (Stores) Depot RE from 15 October 1945

Lieut D Landwehr MBE RE

OC 14 (Palestinian) Field Survey Depot RE from 15 May 1944.
Lieut D Landwehr RE - Awarded MBE on 19 April 1945

Lieut G Seigler RE

OC 16 (Palestinian) Field Survey Depot RE from 25 January 1945.

Lieut J Topping RE

OC 7 Field Survey Depot RE from 25 September 1945. Class 'A' Release December 1945.

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REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY PARADE – St IVES

42 Engineer Regiment Geographic has a close affinity to the town of St Ives in Cambridgeshire. It has been granted the Freedom of the Borough, and the town is always pleased to see the Regiment parading through its streets, not least in the annual Remembrance Sunday Parade, held in the town.

For the 2023 parade, 16 Geographic Support Squadron was tasked to provide the marching contingent, and led the parade through the town to the market square.



16 Sqn leads the parade down Market Hill



CO 42 Engineer Regiment Geographic and rep from the US Air Force lay wreaths at the war memorial



16 Squadron on parade.

After the parade the Squadron and dignitaries were hosted in the Ivy Leaf Club with catering support provided by the Regiment's chefs.

In addition to the personnel at St Ives, the Regiment also sent detachments to Brampton, Ramsey and March.

13 Sqn History

We have received the following message from Ross Thurlow regarding the planned extension to the 13 Squadron history, produced for their 150th anniversary, to celebrate their 200th anniversary - December 2024.

Gents

Unfortunately, we've not received sufficient inputs to make producing anything worthwhile. Despite that, if it is ok with those who have provided input, we will keep hold of them in the event the project is revived in some form or other in the future. Also, with the relevant author's permission, it may be that the REA uses some in the future in their newsletter. If anyone who has provided a contribution does not wish us to hang on to it then, please let me know and I will delete them from my system; note, currently I alone hold all contributions. If this applies to you, please respond by the end of the month (Jan 24) otherwise I shall assume you are happy for me and the REA to keep your input.

Thanks again, and I wish you all the best...

Ross

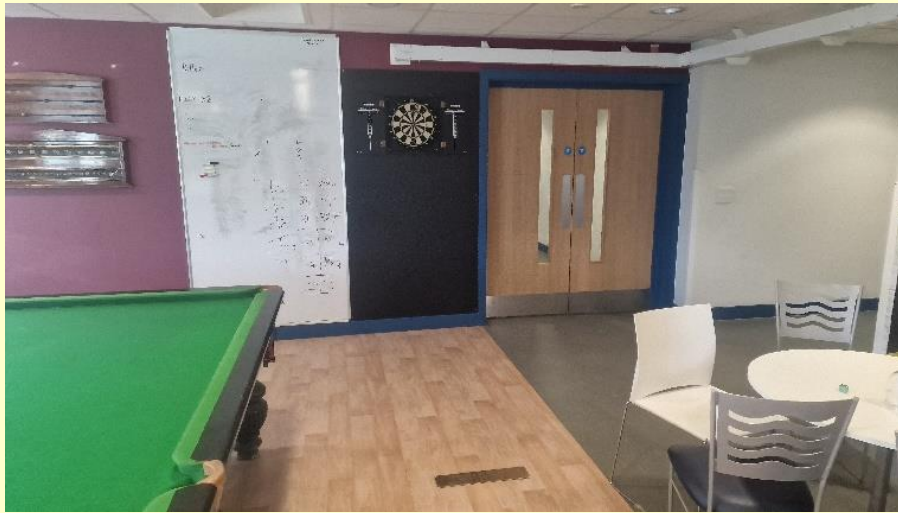
Ross Thurlow OBE, 13 Sqn History Editor

GRANT REQUEST – 42 REGT ECHELON CREW ROOM

In the summer of 2023 the Branch was approached for a Grant toward the refurbishment of a crew room for 42 Regt's Echelon. Their building is located some way from day-time leisure facilities and they planned to provide a decent welfare room with decent facilities to provide for mid-morning and lunch breaks and support some of the training the team undertake.

The committee were pleased to match the Regt PRI contribution with a grant of £500 which helped in the provision of kettles and a toaster, a TV (that is also used with training videos etc) and cleaning equipment. Some pictures of the Crew Room are given below, together with a message of thanks from one of the JNCOs:





To Mil Svy Geo Branch.

Thank you very much for the grant.

It has helped to set up a place for the soldiers to come and relax during breaks and lunch. The money has gone towards a new 65" Tv for them to watch and also help towards briefing and presentations given in the department. We have also acquired a new toaster and panini machine so we can now cook our own foods. Overall it has massively helped motivation in the Echelon department and brought us all closer as a team.

MAKING MAPS "THE NEW WAY" – CIRCA 1945

The following is an extract from Tee Emm, which is believed to be an informal RAF Newsletter for their Navigation Branch. PO (Pilot Officer) Prune was the target of much of the content, which was aimed at informing or educating him. The article is dated December 1945. There was a move at the end of the WW2 to do radar mapping of Indo-China and Thailand where mapping was not good. Mosquito PR XXXIVs of 684 Sqn were deployed to Bangkok and Saigon in the immediate aftermath.

Mike Nolan

MAKING MAPS THE NEW WAY



W. HOOPER.

Prune prefers old methods.

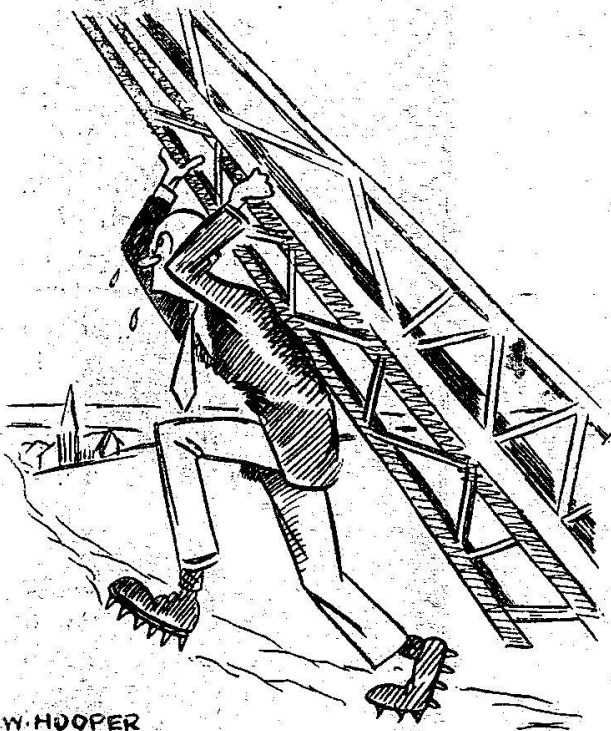
ONCE the war was over and the secrets of Radar were released, we got the impression that about the only thing that Radar couldn't do was win the Derby. (And for all we know the back-room boys may have achieved that too by now.) This impression of ours has only been strengthened by hearing the other day that Radar—now in Civvy Street and working constructively rather than destructively—is actually going to make maps. The whole thing struck us as so interesting that we thought you'd like to hear about it, particularly in view of the fact that practically everyone in the R.A.F. uses maps at some time—even if it is only Prune stepping from the wreckage of his latest and making tracks for the nearest local.

In the old pre-Radar days the mapping of hitherto unsurveyed territory had to

be done by the building up of a framework, or triangulation, of accurately fixed points. This was a laborious job, particularly in remote uncivilised and even unexplored portions of the earth's surface. Indeed, you'd be surprised to learn how much of the world is still completely unsurveyed and about which the only available information is based on travellers' tales of the "Here be Elephants" type.

But now Radar is going to take a hand and in the near future aircraft under radio control are to be used to provide air photographs from which accurate maps can be made. A modified G-H system will be employed, firstly to guide the aircraft accurately over the area to be surveyed, so that strips of photos with the correct overlap can be taken, and secondly to record the exact position of the aircraft and the moment of each photograph.

Now for the G-H system. In this the aircraft radiates a radar pulse. This is picked up by two ground radar stations and transmitted back to the aircraft, where the "time-interval" of the pulse's breathless journey is measured on a Cathode Ray Tube. From this the position of the aircraft in relation to the earth's surface can be very accurately found. And by photographing the C.R.T. in the aircraft simultaneously with a survey photograph of the ground, the position of the aircraft in space can be related to the topography. Thus the surveyor can compute the position of any object on the ground photograph without having to climb up mountains



W. HOOPER

and build beacons on top.

With the G-H system as modified for survey the aircraft flies at a constant range on a circular arc, the pilot being enabled to do this by keeping to the equisignal area of a dot-dash beam in his ear-phones. Along the arc the photographs are taken by the navigator at pre-computed ranges from the second station, and so you have the correct overlap to the ground pictures without any timing device whatever. When the run is completed the aircraft is turned round and the game starts again on a concentric arc, thus ensuring correct overlap between adjacent runs. Obviously the navigator is kept pretty busy when flying a run, as in each interval between pictures (normally about twenty to thirty seconds) he must re-align his strobe position according to a table, releasing the camera when two pulses coincide. (By the time

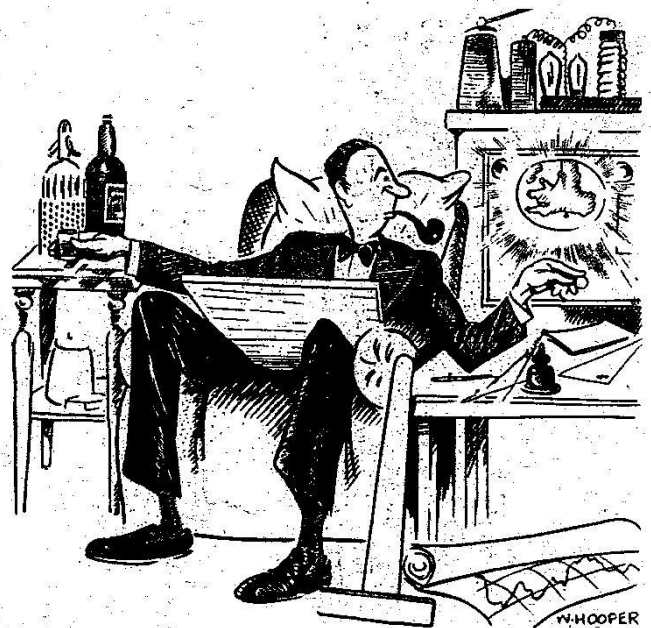
he's finished we should imagine his hair has turned quite white.) The pilot's job is relatively simple, but a considerable amount of skill and practice is required to fly the "curved beam" especially as the aircraft must be in track and level for each photograph.

A Radar-Controlled Air Survey Unit—R.C.A.S.U.—equipped with Mosquito P.R. XXXIV aircraft, has already been formed to work in conjunction with an R.E. Survey team known as a Radar Air Survey Liaison Section—R.A.S.L.S. (If we get many more of these initials, this article is going to sound like water-hammer in a faulty bath pipe.) Very close liaison between the various technical specialists is naturally essential for success. Survey decides the areas to be covered by the photographs, and works out a flying programme of G-H values for the circular tracks, and also the G-H values along the tracks at which the navigator must operate the main camera shutter. From these fixes, the heights of aircraft, and the photographs the Survey team can then dig out all the information necessary for making a map, with no ground control other than the exact fixing of the radar ground stations. And the photographs can be taken so nearly in the required positions that most of the elaborate brain work and water-cooled slide-rule stuff for relating the radar fix accurately to the earth's surface can be done before take-off.

One outstanding advantage of this scheme is that blocks of photographs taken on radar tracks are completely free from gaps. This is a great saving if you recall that during the war P.R. flying for gap-filling occupied probably fifty per cent. of flying time, using ordinary

navigational methods. Another tremendous advantage to the surveyor is that the photographs can be matched up both along and across the strips, enabling him to complete a survey traverse right round a block of photographs. Further, the surveyor's problem of placing points of detail shown on photographs in the right place on the map is vastly simplified by having a "fix" of the camera at the moment of exposure.

Taking it all in all it seems a pretty good show and many a surveyor in days to come will bless radar for cutting out those beacon-building journeys up those steep mountain sides and enabling him to make his maps by remote control from an armchair.



"THE PARSONS" – A WARTIME MAP CATALOGUING SYSTEM

Toward the end of 2023 the branch was contacted to seek permission to use a photograph from the Military Survey Historic Archive. The photograph in question shows the War Office Map Library staff in 1945. The requestor was Dr Martin Davis, Digital Map Curator, Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford. He was writing a paper linked to The Manual of Map Classification and Cataloguing which was devised by Capt Edward J S Parsons RE and hence is often referred to as "The Parsons". Parsons was the inaugural Curator of Maps at the Bodleian Library before the war and returned to the post after.

Crown copyright having expired long ago, the Branch was only too happy to grant permission for its use. In return Dr Davis kindly has provided a link to his paper (see below)



*Photo Right:
The War Office Map Library Staff
– 1945. Capt Parsons centre*

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/15420353.2023.2280847>

Situations Vacant - Newsletter Editor/Compiler and Contributors

With the passing of Noel Grimmer the Branch is in desperate need of someone to take on the role of Newsletter Editor. It is recognised that to step into Noel's shoes would be a very daunting task and the sheer scale of the role would put many people off.

With that in mind we are, instead, looking for a group of people that will help in its production. We need to find someone to take on the lead for the Newsletter – basically putting together the framework of the publication and compiling articles, backed up by a group of people, individuals that will write and submit “copy” : stories, experiences, indeed anything of interest to the Ex-Survey/Geo community. The range of articles can be serious, educational, or light-hearted; present, recent or reminiscent; a few lines, or a few pages. Anything will be welcomed.

The Newsletter is the lifeline of the Branch and it's very important that we – as a Branch – keep it going!

Anyone who could make a contribution, as Editor/Compiler, regular contributor, or one-off subject author is asked to contact the Secretary, Ian Thurgate at REA-MILSVY-SEC@outlook.com or Mob 07952 286 2678

Advance Notice – Branch Accounting – Switch to REA Central Bank

In a move to bring Branch Accounts and Accounting procedures in-line with modern methods, REA HQ have offered Branches the opportunity to have their accounts and banking needs met by a Central Bank Account operated by a qualified Fund Manager, employed by REA HQ and at no cost to Branches.

Branches will still have authority and control over their funds, and will make all decisions on expenditure etc. The Fund Manager will be responsible for producing and distributing bank statements, providing account information for Committee and General Meetings, and Financial Returns to REA HQ. Payments will be made by Bank Transfer, authorised by Branch Treasurers, negating the need for cheques with two signatures (many businesses will now not accept payment by cheque).

As will be appreciated, this will greatly reduce the workload of Treasurers and will streamline accounting for Branches.

The Committee has agreed, unanimously, that the Branch should switch to the REA Central Bank Scheme.

Members should notice no difference to the running of the Branch, BUT subscriptions and other payments into the Branch will have to be made to a different account. To provide plenty of time for members to make changes to the Subscription Standing Orders/Direct Debit /Bank Transfer arrangements, the switch will NOT take place until the middle of 2024 – date TBC. To prevent confusion, the new account details will not be publicised before 20 April 24 (the AGM).

Members with any queries are asked to pass them to the Secretary at REA-MILSVY-SEC@outlook.com.

DEATHS OF OLD COMRADES

The Branch has been saddened to hear of the death of a number of old comrades. Space and short notice has prevented us from giving more details at this time, but we hope to write more on each of these ex-Military Survey/Geographic comrades in our next newsletter.

Peter (Pete) Bryant. Pete died on 5th November 2023

Col JF (Bill) Codd. We have just been informed of the death, on 17th January, of Col JF (Bill) Codd.

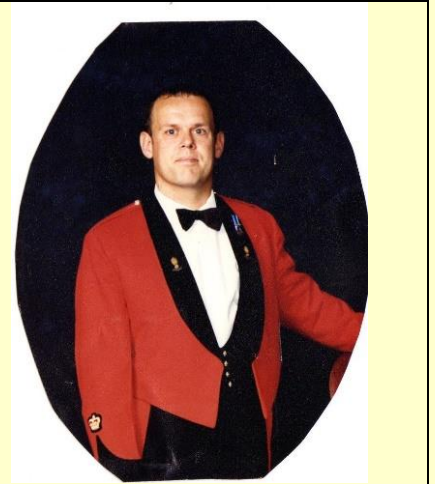
David Baker. We understand that (Maj) David Baker, who served 1958 to 1978, retired and settled in Indiana following his tour with 512 STRE, died from Pancreatic Cancer in August 2023. Very sadly, David's wife, Hilary, predeceased him in December 2022 suffering from Dementia.

Brig AEH (Alex) Matthews Gen (Retd) Roy Wood has informed the Branch that Brig (Retd) AEH (Alex) Matthews has passed away. Alex had been living in a care home for about 3 months and developed pneumonia. He slipped away quietly in the afternoon of 17th January.

OBITUARY GARY MERRITT

WO2 Gary James Merritt was born at Shoreham-by-Sea in West Sussex on the 21 Feb 1960. His Mum and Dad both served in the RAF and actively encouraged Gary and his brother Andy to join the Army.

Gary joined the Royal Engineers on the 13 Sep 1976 at Southampton and was posted to the Army Apprentice College, Chepstow where he successfully completed training as a Survey Print Technician. After his basic Combat Engineer training he served in 13 Map Production Squadron at Barton Stacey; 1st Armoured Division in Germany; as a Permanent Staff member at the Army Apprentice College, in 135 Independent Topographic Squadron at Ewell, in 16 Geographic Squadron at Hermitage, and he undertook field training exercises in Kenya and Norway.



Gary as SSM 16 Geo Sp Sqn

Gary was an excellent lithographic printer and was renowned for always producing high quality work. He did however have a clear aptitude for teaching and coaching the lithographic print trade and military skills to young soldiers who benefited from his superb trade expertise and military knowledge.



1984 Gary (Front 6th from right) with Print Troop, 13 Map Prod Sqn at Barton Stacey



1998 Army Minor Unit Cup played at Aldershot

He was always calm and extremely approachable. He was immensely proud that he was the Sergeant Major for 16 Survey Support Squadron and was a superb mentor and example to his peers and juniors. He was an excellent communicator and this clearly helped later in life with the employment role he held. Gary will be especially remembered for captaining the Regimental Hockey team to success in many competitions including the Army Cup, Sapper Cup and District League.

During his time in the Army Gary was married to Alison and they had three children, Hollie, Lyle and Curtis.

Gary had a keen sense of humour and was very quick witted. He was always an optimist and would try to show the lighter side of life when things got tough. He was a true role model for all those who served with him. Gary loved the Army and was passionate about his Service. He retired from the Army on the 20 Feb 2000 after serving for over 23 years with the Royal Engineers. He was awarded the NATO Medal for serving on Op Resolute in the Former Yugoslavia.

After leaving the Army, Gary moved to South Devon and, whilst there, realised one of his lifelong dreams by purchasing a vintage VW Beetle. He enjoyed many trips around Cornwall and North Devon so he could fulfil his passion for surfing. He later moved to Brighton and worked for A4E (Action for Employment) under a government contract as a Senior Employment Consultant, helping long term unemployed people. In 2009 he met Céline, a French lady, who was also living in Brighton They married on the 18 April 2012 and had twin daughters, Elise and Nine, in August 2012. In 2015 they moved to Mimizan on the Atlantic coast of France. In 2018 they moved the family to Sauveterre de Béarn, in the department of the Pyrénées Atlantiques



The Merritt house at Arthez d'Asson



Gary cycling in Le Col du Tourmalet in the Hautes-Pyrénées

Gary was very determined to live a full and enjoyable life in France and eagerly pursued his passion for cycling. Gary had learned about gardening, keeping chickens and building fences via You Tube and learned to play the guitar. He was a wonderful man, husband, father, friend and brilliant storyteller who was dearly loved by everyone who met him and especially those in the small community where they lived. He was always helping and giving advice particularly if someone was a bit low.

On the 9 September 2023 Gary decided to climb the Col du Soulor on his bike. As he was cycling downhill, he was involved in a head on collision with two motorcyclists which lead to him being air lifted, by helicopter, to the hospital in Pau. Gary survived for five weeks in hospital where he received visits and was comforted by Céline, Elise, Nine, Hollie and his sister, Julia. Céline is sure these visits helped Gary to know he was not on his own. Céline, Elise, and Nine will all keep smiling because they want to make Gary proud and they all know he loved them madly.

Gary's obituary will be published in full on the REA Military Survey (Geographic) Facebook site.

MILITARY SURVEY (GEO) BRANCH REA REUNION – RETURN

To be held at Newbury Rugby Club (in the Wickens Suite), Monks Lane,
Newbury, Berkshire RG14 7RW

Saturday 20th April 2024 (12:30hrs till 7pm)
PRECEDED BY AN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING to be held at 11:00hrs

Timings. 10:30hrs Tea/Coffee served
 11:00hrs AGM starts
 12:30hrs Reunion starts / Bar opens
 13:00hrs Lunch (Curry)

Accommodation. Unfortunately, accommodation is no longer available at Hermitage. However, there are numerous hotels in and around Newbury, closest being the **Premier Inn**, Pinchington Lane, Newbury, RG14 7HL

Dress. Smart casual or better if you wish!

It is vital to establish firm attendance figures early and so once again we would request that you **return this form as soon as possible** to Mark Kieras or email the details requested in the form to: rea-milsvy-functions@outlook.com. If you have any special dietary needs, do not eat curry, or require disabled access, please detail these below and every attempt will be made to accommodate them.

Cost: Members and first guest: - Free. Additional guests and Non-members: £5

RETURNS MUST BE RECEIVED BY MONDAY 8TH APRIL - LATEST

I am a member – YES / NO
From: Forename: Surname:
Tel No: - E-mail:
Guest 1:
Guest 2:
Guest 3:
Dietary / Special requirements:
.....

DO PLEASE REMEMBER THE GEO SOLDIERS' SUPPORT FUND

Payment:

Account Name: Military Survey Branch REA
Sort code: 60-01-17
Account no: 81148119
Reference: Reunion or Soldiers Fund

Or enclose a cheque payable to "Military Survey Branch REA"