

The Military Survey (Geo) Branch

Autumn Newsletter 2015 – issue 57

CONTENTS

Visit to Wyton

Lt Col Nicky Bell
CO 42 Engr Regt (Geo)
- page 4

Notes on Bahrain and Trucial
Oman 1961-62 - Maurice Friend
- page 5

The day I met King Faisal II of
Iraq – Brian Ford
- page 10

Sappers – Tithes – Railways
- page 12

Obituaries
- page 17



We assembled in the WO & SNCO's Mess at RAF Wyton at about 11:30 hrs, on Tuesday 1 September, having first registered at the guardroom and met our guide for the visit SSgt Liam Asquith RE. Security required that we wear our visitor passes at all time and were guided by Liam to the various venues.



Having had an excellent buffet lunch hosted by the RQMS (The RSM being away on duty) we proceeded to the Skyways Briefing Room where we were welcomed by the CO, Lt Col Nicky Bell RE. We were then given an in depth briefing of the command structure by Major Peter Richardson RE followed by the CO who covered the current and future activities of the regiment.



We then moved on to visit Roy Lines and 14 Geo Sqn. Here we were briefed by the staff and looked at the new equipment and transport, and how it was used in the current tasks.



Next we visited 16 Geo Sp Sqn for a briefing and tour of the facilities. The squadron manning structure is a mixture of military and civilian to enable continuity. Their job is to maintain the equipment and provided technical support to the all the unit's operating in the field worldwide.

On returning to the mess we prepared for pre-dinner drinks and a sit down meal with the officers and senior ranks of the regiment. The RQMS formally welcomed us to the regiment and Angus Cross responded on behalf of the branch thanking all those involved for an excellent visit.



The following morning after a good breakfast and having booked out of the accommodation Liam guided us to the Heritage and Conference Centre. In 2012 as part of a major construction programme of RAF Wyton and the reorganisation of the station from Air Command to the recently formed Joint Forces Command, N Block (ex WAAF accommodation) was handed over to become a Heritage Centre and Pathfinder Museum. In early 2013 the collection moved to its current and hopefully permanent home.

On arrival we were met by the Curator Jim Blackwood who after settling us in the conference centre gave us a presentation on the history of the Pathfinders and how the museum was established and that he planned to set up a display relating to the work of the Regiment. The Pathfinder collection has its origins back in the summer of 1995 when it was suggested that a temporary display was set up for that year's 'Pathfinder Sunday' for the benefit of the Pathfinders and their families. Following overwhelming interest a request was made for a more permanent museum. Thus the collection was born and with the support of successive Station Commanders, Station Workshops and the Photographic and Reprographic departments has developed into a most impressive set of exhibits. We then departed Wyton with thanks all round and some left to challenge the Regiment at golf.

David Griffin commented:

The following day we had the added bonus of the visit to the Heritage Centre with an excellent briefing by Jim Blackwood. We then had the opportunity to visit the excellent displays and exhibits commemorating the history of RAF Wyton, the Pathfinder Force and JARIC. We were also told that there are already plans in place to include and welcome exhibits to commemorate the history of 42

John Croft commented:

The whole visit was well organised and full of interest in the two areas we saw i.e. The Regiment in its new location and set up and the tour around the Heritage Centre on Wed morning with an excellent briefing by the volunteer guide, Jim Blackwood (ex PI) who so generously gave us so much of his time.



The branch took on the Regt at golf after lunch on Tuesday at St Ives Golf Course, however I am forbidden to publish the result! The teams were, on the left (Regt) front to back – Jack Shead, Graham Fairgrieve, Ian Robinson & Stuart Fairmington. On the right (REA), front to back – Andy Kirkaldy (Regt), Mike Vickers, Bev Hill, Rod Siggs, Angus Cross & Mick Perry. (Photograph courtesy of Bev Hill)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL NICKY BELL RE



Lt Col Nicky Bell commissioned into the Corps in 1996. On completion of her officer training, she served as a Tp Comd at 39 Engr Regt in an air support role, which included a deployment to the Falkland Islands. She completed the Army Survey Course in 2000 and spent her first 4 years as an RE (Geo) Officer in Germany; as 2IC 14 Geo Sqn, including a deployment to Kosovo, working as the Engr Int and Geo Officer at Bde level and then at Div level in 1 UK (Armd) Div, Herford. She deployed with the Division to Iraq during the first 7 months of Operation TELIC, where she was awarded the QCVS.

At Major, she served in HQ NI as the Geo Officer within the J2 Branch; including 4 months as the Engineer Search lead. At Sub Unit Command, she commanded 24 Trg Sqn in Chatham and then joined the UK Defence Intelligence Liaison Team in Washington DC, working as a Liaison Officer within the US National Geospatial Intelligence Agency. In this role, she coordinated UK engagement with the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity staff and Army Geospatial Centre and supported the development of the five eyes partnership for Geospatial Intelligence analysis and production. From North America, she deployed to Afghanistan in July 2010, serving with 1 Marine Expeditionary Force as the RC (SW) Chief Geo Officer for 6 months. This was followed by a Joint Capability ISTAR and Information Superiority E2 post within MOD, Whitehall.

At Lt Col, she served in the J3 Operations Division of the Permanent Joint Headquarters for 3 years, responsible to the Chief of Joint Operations for Geo support to deployed operations and contingency planning. This role included Op HERRICK force design, Middle East and North Africa contingency planning and support to disaster relief.

From July 2014, she moved into the SO1 People and Policy role within RHQ RE for 12 months, responsible for people policy, whole life development strategy and recruiting. She then took command of 42 Engr Regt (Geo) at Wyton on 15 June 2015. She is an active rock climbing and indoor climbing instructor, Chairman of the Royal Engineers Mountaineering and Exploration Club and President of Corps Netball. Lt Col Bell is married to Torcail, also a serving officer in the Corps of Royal Engineers.



*Trucial Oman & Oman
1961-62
19 Topographic Survey Sqn, R.E.*

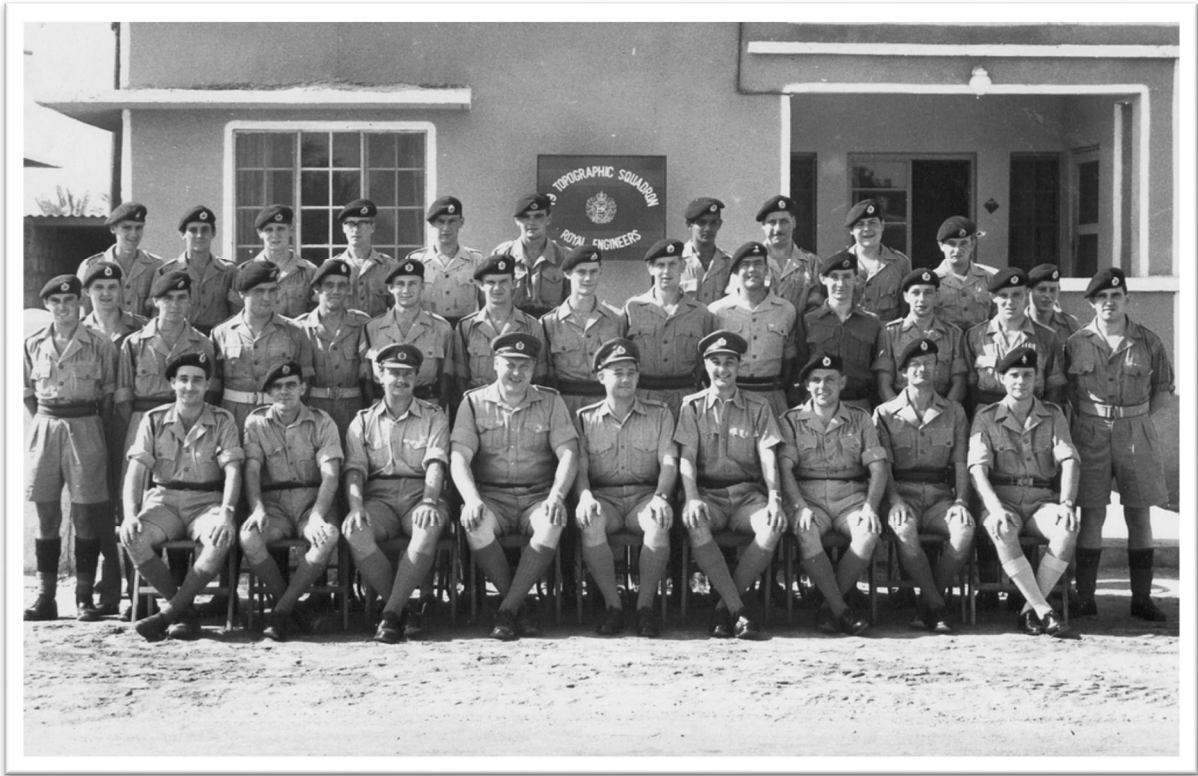
Notes on Bahrain and Trucial Oman 1961-62 by Maurice Friend

My second overseas posting in Feb 1961 was to 19 Topographic Squadron in Bahrain. My passport contained a visa allowing me to visit “the Sheikdoms of the Trucial Oman and Persian Gulf”. At the RE Depot Chatham they said ‘There’s a plane going to Aden tomorrow. That is somewhere near Bahrain, jump on that!’ So I was stuck, along with 3 others, in a transit camp near the Aden RAF Khormaksar base for nearly three weeks waiting for a flight up the Persian Gulf to Bahrain. Eventually I flew in an RAF Beverly transport plane via Salala and Masira Island to Manama the capital of Bahrain Island. Squadron headquarters was a comfortable Public Works Department bungalow site just outside H.M.S. Jufair the naval base. Here I spent 9 months in the small survey office, one of a group of bungalows the army occupied for work and sleeping. We co-ordinated the mapping information sent from the field troops in the Oman and Trucial Oman before sending it on to the regimental headquarters in Cyprus.

It was during this time that Kuwait “Emergency” 1961 took place as documented by Tom Cooper in his book of that name. In June 1961 the Middle East state of Kuwait was released into independence from Britain with the agreement that UK would come to its aid if required. On 25 June Iraq unilaterally declared that Kuwait was to be considered part of Iraqi territory and began sending its troops to the Kuwait border. On 30 June Kuwait officially appealed for help. Under operation “Vantage” British troops were put into action. As our survey squadron was the only permanent British army unit on the island we set up a transit camp at the Muharraq airport on the far end of the causeway linking the main island to the airport. This was for the hundreds of troops who were flown into this island staging post from UK and other parts prior to them catching a few hours’ sleep, grabbing some food, and then being air lifted to the Kuwait desert. Many troops were unaware of where they had landed, thinking they were somewhere near India. I spent one night helping to manually load a naval ship with ammunition for the conflict which fortunately didn't come too much and was soon over.

I was then transferred into the field with 2 Troop located at Manama, a small outpost some 50km inland from Sharjah in the Trucial Oman (now part of United Arab Emirates). 2 Troop had moved to Oman from Aden in December 1960, its initial base being Ibri and later Manama in the Trucial Oman (not to be confused with the capital of Bahrain with the same name) where I spent my next 9 months. Our camp at Manama consisted of two prefabricated huts isolated from the Trucial Oman Scouts encampment and close to the Hajar Mountain range which ran through the country. Entertainment consisted of a record player, dartboard and table tennis with the monthly film show.

19 Topographic Sqn in Bahrain c1961



Centre row from left - 6th - Maurice Friend, 8th - Robin Waller
Front row sitting from right 4th - Major Holden, 7th - Eric Passingham 8th - Pete Timbrell, 9th - Harry Gosling REME

Supplies and mail were collected twice a week from the major RAF camp at Sharjah on the coast some 70 km away through the desert. The area had been roughly mapped previously by an oil company in about 1948. I particularly enjoyed my time in the Trucial Oman desert, and sometimes over the border into the Oman and down the East coast as far as Sohar. Driving to selected points, taking barometer readings for heights, annotating the aerial photos with camel tracks, marking and collecting names of wells from the local Bedouin seemed an adventure. Unfortunately we did not receive any Arabic language instruction but had to pick it up from the more senior soldiers. Their Arabic was often flavoured with their UK accent, be it from Birmingham or Glasgow.

Our usual routine was to prepare over the week-end for up to two weeks on a mapping expedition before setting off on the Monday morning, usually with two Land Rovers loaded to the hilt. We took plenty of fuel, tinned and dry food, small spare vehicle parts and survey equipment. Five personnel usually consisted of two drivers, one being a mechanic, two Topo surveyors and perhaps a general duties man. Surprisingly we had no radio contact whatsoever and the troop officer would say "if you are not back in two weeks I will come and look for you." Although we obviously took water it was not a problem finding wells in the desert where we could top up by dropping a goat skin scoop on a long rope into the well and hauling up a load, just like the Bedouin did. In some places *falages* or underground water channels, said to have been built by the Persians hundreds of years before, would be on the surface near villages.

We usually slept in the open several miles away from the wells as occasionally Bedouin camel trains carrying supplies would pass through at night and we didn't want to get involved with them or woken up when they watered their camels. A serious mechanical problem happened on one trip so we towed the sick Land Rover to the only clump of trees for miles around in order to find the location again. Here, two members of the party were left with food and water whilst the REME mechanic, another surveyor and I drove back to camp by the quickest route taking two days to collect the necessary spare parts to repair the other Land Rover and return to our trees with another Mechanic. Fortunately we found our two mates again after being away for nearly 4 days and were able to fix the problem and return to camp safely.



Bottomed out with Pat Pearson in the background surveying the damage

During that incident I crossed some of the highest sand dunes I have ever seen. Although we weren't in what is known as the *Rub al Khali* or the Empty Quarter, as that started about 300 km south west of our working area, we were in fact in a very inhospitable high dune desert region interspersed with gravel plains. The Land Rovers were fitted with special sand tyres with little tread and ran on very low pressure giving better traction in the sand. Even that was not always sufficient as one of the two vehicles sometimes became stuck and had to be pulled out by the other one.



The Bedouin were usually friendly who offered us thick coffee and camel yoghurt, which put me off yoghurt for life. We swapped tins of army jam, biscuits, boxes of matches or salt tablets for fresh eggs and the occasional goat. They were usually more heavily armed than us with their old long barrelled Martini-Henry rifles. We usually only carried a light machine gun for protection particularly when working over the border in the Oman.

A survey trip up the west coastal plain from Sharjah, through Um al Quain to Ras al Kaima and beyond made a change from the desert terrain. The nearer to the coast you got the more humid it became. This area was more inhabited with numerous wells some padlocked with iron grills for private use and permanent *barusti* palm leaf dwellings occurred. It always amazed me that water from a well only twenty metres from the beach could be sweet to drink yet some wells 50km inland could taste really bad.

Part of our mission was to re-establish an old oil company survey trig point at the sheikh's palace in Ras al Khaima. When we reached the port of Ras al Khaima the tower of the palace was easily found and after explaining our job and seeking the sheikh's permission we were ushered in and offered typical Arab hospitality of thick coffee. We were then escorted by an armed guard up the internal stairs of the white washed building to the top of the tower. I will never forget as we passed anti rooms on our way up, seeing prisoners manacled by their arms out stretched to the walls, something I am not likely to see again.

About 100 km north of Ras al Khaima, at the very tip of the country, a narrow sea passage is formed known as the Strait of Hormuz, which separates the Persian Gulf from the Gulf of Oman with Iran; or Persia as it used to be known, on the other side. Although that northern area was not part of our mapping requirement, as the land was in the Oman, we proceeded towards our work boundary and came across a large village entirely deserted which had some high rocky cliffs behind it. After driving around for a while and looking at the deserted mosque, we found ourselves near the bottom of the cliffs where we heard some rumbling sounds. Looking up to the ridge line we caught a glimpse of some Arabs darting for cover having rolled large boulders down towards our vehicles. No damage was done fortunately so we vacated the area.



Collecting the name of the well

On returning to camp the incident was reported to our troop officer who in turn passed it onto the Trucial Oman Scouts (TOS), whose camp was near to ours at Manama. TOS was a local army with usually British officers in command. I found out some time afterwards that the TOS had sent a patrol to investigate the abandoned village and reported that some local tribe had decided to cut themselves off from the rest and moved away north but had left some guards to protect their old village. On another trip the sand gave way to a garden growing roses and cucumbers at an experimental research station where water was piped into the small area to bring life to the desert.

To keep up with the news back home we received free copies of the English “Daily Mirror” stapled into a heavy booklet covering the whole week. These arrived at our camp a month or so after they were published, so by then it was history. Someone reading it found an article reporting that the Minister of Defence, John Profumo, had stated in London that “there were no British troops in the Oman.” Although our camp was in the Trucial Oman we frequently went over the border into the Oman to carry out our mapping work. As it was nearing Christmas 1961 we sent him a Christmas card from his non-existent troops. To his credit he came to visit our little camp some time afterwards along with his wife, film star Valerie Hobson. The minister spoke to me, asking to explain how I went about making a map. At New Year 1962 a truck from 2 Troop at Manama including myself travelled to the camp of 1 Troop at Tarif on the coast near Abu Dhabi for a social visit.



19 Topo Bahrain 1961
L to R - Tom Griffiths, Maurice Friend, John Stevens & Vic Cook

Towards the end of my tour with 19 Topo Sqn I volunteered to go to Aden to be attached for one month to the Special Air Service (22 SAS) who were conducting a joint ‘training operation’ with the Rhodesian SAS. This operation is mentioned twice in the Fantana Collins book of 1983 “Who dares Wins” The story of the SAS 1950 - 1982 by Tony Geraghty. The squadrons involved during May-June 1962 were D Sqn from Hereford UK, and C Sqn from Rhodesia.



Driver, Eric Passingham & Maurice Friend
Bahrain Airport 1961 “Emergency”

I was with D Sqn and in typical SAS fashion they were very heavily armed and we drove a lot at night and hid up under camouflage during the day. This made it difficult for me to annotate the aerial photographs of the area we were travelling through. The area was very rugged with some “sky scraper” like mud buildings seen as we drove inland along narrow rough mountain roads into the edge of the Hadhramaut region. Here we passed through towns like Ahwar until we reached the coast at Bir Ali about 500 km NE of Aden.

I remember coming into an Arab village early one morning and seeing local prisoners holding huge ball and chain manacles coming down to the well for a drink. It was the first time that British troops had been in the area for over ten years and prior to Aden becoming the independent Communist state of South Yemen in 1967. I haven’t been to any places much worse than the Crater City and surrounds of Aden. Spending a short time with the SAS in a harsh operational environment, without doing any actual fighting, still gave me an insight to their dangerous way of army life which was completely different to that of our mapping units.

After a month in the Aden region I returned to our survey camp at Manama near Sharjah where I only stayed a short while before being posted back to England in Aug 1962. Since then I have enjoyed reading a couple of books of that region, one a factual account “Arabian Sands” by Wilfred Thesiger an explorer of that region in 1946. The other a novel with many factual descriptions by Hammond Innes called “The doomed Oasis” was written about the Buraimi region in 1960, just before I arrived in the Trucial states.

Maurice Friend. 2015

Maurice Friend - Has spent all his working life associated with maps, specialising in Photogrammetry, covering the military, private and education sectors. His first posting as a Topo Surveyor from SMS in 1957 was to 89 Fld Svy Sqn in Nairobi, Kenya (1957-59). Other overseas spells with 19 Topo Sqn in Bahrain, Trucial Oman, Aden (1961-62) and 84 Svy Sqn in Singapore (1964-65) were interspersed with time at Hermitage, Fernhurst, Survey Production Centre Feltham, and Barton Stacey.

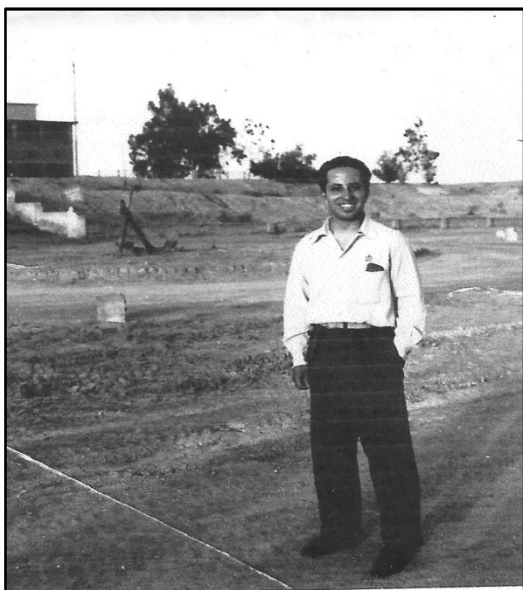
After 9 years in the army Maurice worked at Hunting Surveys, Boreham Wood for 4 years. In 1970 a 2 year contract at Qasco Air Surveys in Brisbane, led to a 45 year stay in Australia. Two spells as relief manager in their Papua New Guinea office added to his experience.

Maurice gained a Certificate in Cartography from Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and worked there as Mapping Sciences Laboratory Manager from 1979 until retirement in 1999. His work included student instruction, satellite 3D image research, terrestrial crash investigations and consultancy. During this period he was a Federal Councillor and State President of Mapping Sciences Institute, Australia. In retirement, he does voluntary work as custodian of the map collection at Queensland Family History Society.

The day I met King Faisal II of Iraq

At the time of meeting King Faisal II, I was not employed on a survey task but was working as MT clerk and storeman at HQ 19 Topo Sqn and at that time was located in RAF Habbaniya. I was when first posted, from ZYYI, to 19 Sqn and employed with one of the Troops in the field working on what I believe was the Iraq/Iran mapping. My time was spent erecting bog standard beacons and the odd wolf hunts in Austin 1 tonner's - the latter being much more fun. I have a feeling the Trig' work related to some error(s) in the original triangulation. When first posted to '42' at Fayid I worked for some time in 47 Cartographic Sqn laying and re-cutting and relaying a slotted template which unfortunately would not lock to one of the observed points on the Iraq/Iran mapping.

There was an RAF leave centre on the edge of Lake Habbaniya(h) which had originally been the control tower for Flying Boats (Imperial Airways - UK to India) which, before 1939 - 1945 were thought to be the airliners of the future.



In the July that year (1956) one of the drivers, Roy Brammer and me booked a week at the centre and as it happened, apart from the first weekend had it virtually to ourselves. We spent the time mostly sunbathing and swimming. One morning however we decided to take a walk along the beach and search for terrapins. (We did find one on another day - it bit Roy who immediately let it go and we didn't bother after that).

Whilst on the beach a large motor boat approached the area. It stopped a short way out and anchored. We saw a dinghy launched which then had 4 large men embark followed by a smaller man and they paddled to the beach where the larger men assisted the smaller man to reach land without wetting his feet. One of the large men, who it was apparent were body guards, approached us and asked if we would speak with the King. It did not occur to us to refuse or to query his identity and he came over to us and asked what we were doing and whether we liked Iraq and some small talk which is now impossible to recall.

He started to say goodbye and we asked for his photo which he let us take. I imagine that we spent about 5/10 minutes with the King before he was helped back in the dinghy and returned to the motor boat which went off back across the lake. Some newspaper pictures I have seen in the past have left little doubt in my mind about his identity.

You will have spotted no doubt that his second cousin was the late King Hussein of Jordan who was married to an English girl (the present king's mother - Toni Gardiner) who came from Bridge, near Canterbury. I have a feeling that her father served in the RE and he kept a Pub in that area. Al Roberts has confirmed that he knew Toni Gardiner although not well and her father a Colonel in the RE's did run the 'Red Lion' in Bridge Kent until 1952.

Brian Ford

History: In the summer of 1958, King Hussein of Jordan asked for Iraqi military assistance during the escalating Lebanon crisis. Units of the Iraqi Army under the command of Abd al-Karim Qasim, *en route* to Jordan chose to march on Baghdad instead, where they mounted a coup d'état on 14 July 1958. During the 14 July Revolution, Faisal II ordered the royal guard to offer no resistance, and Faisal himself surrendered to the insurgents. Around 8 am, Captain Abdul Sattar Sabaa Al-Ibousi, leading the revolutionary assault group at the palace, ordered the King, Prince 'Abd al-Ilah, Princess Hiyam (Abd al-Ilah's wife, Princess Nafeesa ('Abd al-Ilah's mother), Princess Abadiya (Faisal's aunt) and several servants to gather in the palace courtyard. Here they were told to turn towards the wall, where all were immediately machine-gunned by their captors. Faisal, who had not died during the initial fusillade was transported to a hospital, but died en route. (Wikipedia.org). NG



‘Lest we forget how much fun it all was!’
NBC Instructor - Howard Hudson of 13 Sqn on exercise at Sennybridge in 1983 (Mil Svy Image Library).

Sappers – Tithes – Railways

The biblical injunctions to Moses and Jacob to give one-tenth of all the produce of their land for the work of God had become a legal obligation in England by the 8th century. The great tithes of corn and hay, and the small tithes of livestock, wool and non-cereal crops, went to the support of the rector of the parish who in return maintained the chancel of the church and saw to the provision of church worship.

Originally the tithes were payable in kind: the rector or his appointee collected from each farm the tenth sheaf of corn, the tenth cow, sheep or pig, the tenth pail of milk etc. The ill-feeling created by the collection of tithes caused many owners to agree to a money payment. Parliamentary enclosure provided an opportunity for ending strife by allotting land to tithe-owners in lieu of tithe.

By the 1830's both Whigs and Tories accepted the need for reform, and the Church of England fearful of losing its established status, acquiesced in the passing of the Tithes Commutation Act of 1836, whereby tithes were converted into rent charge payments based on the prevailing price of grain.

The bureaucratic structure that was created in 1836 to solve the tithe problem was closely modelled on the Poor Law Commission established in 1834. Between 1836 and 1852 the Tithe Commission quietly brought about major redistribution of English and Welsh property.

The commissioners appointed surveyors to make large-scale maps and schedules. These were drawn up in triplicate: the copy made for the tithe office is now kept at The National Archive; those for the parish clerk and bishop of the diocese are normally kept at an appropriate county or diocese record office.

The maps were not drawn to a uniform scale, but are nevertheless often the earliest surviving large-scale maps for a given area; they make interesting comparison with the first edition of the six-inch Ordnance Survey maps and the census returns of 1841 and 1851. The reference numbers on the tithe maps correspond to those in the accompanying tithe apportionment; in this way individual properties can be identified.

The tithe apportionment lists all land owners and tenants and their fields; and is therefore a principal source for the study of landownership and of field names. Unfortunately, not all surveys were entirely accurate, nor do they provide complete coverage, for some parishes had abolished tithes at the time of parliamentary enclosure. Nevertheless, about 79 per cent of England and Wales is covered by the tithe maps.

In 1838 the government threw the tithe surveys in England into the hands of contractors, whereby the parishes were burdened with an expense of 9d an acre, while survey executed by the Ordnance cost less than half that amount. The higher price thus paid to contractors, enabled them to attract to their employment civil assistants trained by the Ordnance, to do their work.

The result of this was that many superior surveyors and draughtsman resigned, which led to a large portion of survey work not being completed. To guard against this happening again a warrant dated 2nd July 1839 was issued authorising an augmentation of two sergeants, two corporals, two second-corporals, and ten privates to each survey company, which, for the three companies gave an increase of 48 men.

This made the total sapper establishment on the survey amount to: -

Col-Sgts	Sergts	Corporals	2 nd Corporals	Buglers	Privates	Total
3	15	18	18	6	255	315

With this augmentation, the corps was raised from a total of 1,152 to 1,200.

During this period the survey companies were generally employed on confidential duties and dispersed over the country. Most of the non-commissioned officers and many of the privates were in charge of parties, which required the exercise of great judgement and discretion. The additional permanent rank was granted to invest the non-commissioned officers with more weight and authority among their parties.

The same reason which diminished the civil strength of the national survey induced some of the best soldiers of the corps to purchase their discharge. Several left the corps during the tithe survey 'mania' and the vacancies in the three companies by this and other means required inducements in order to influence them to continue in the service.

Colonel Colby (Director of the Ordnance Survey) obtained the power on 16 August 1839 to award working pay to the royal sappers and miners under his command to the maximum of 3s a-day, according to individual merit and exertion, in addition to their regimental pay and allowances.



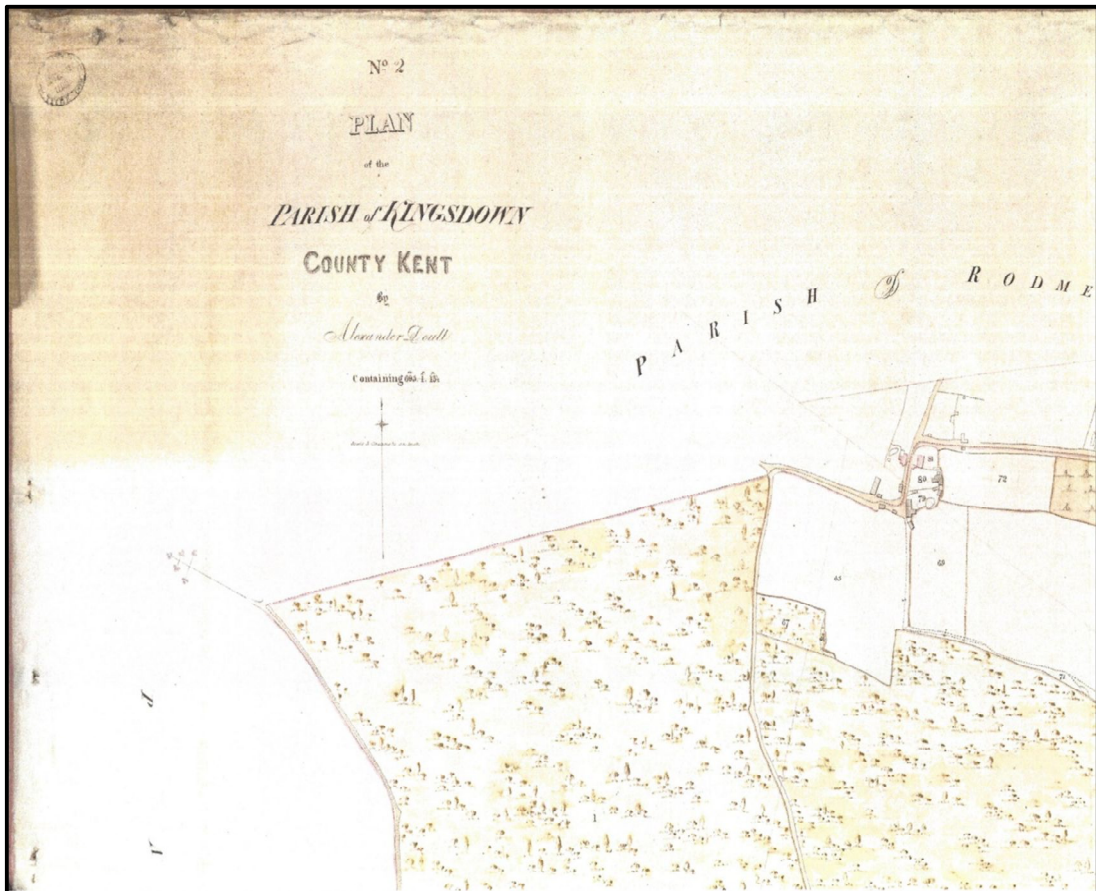
MAJOR-GENERAL THOMAS COLBY,
R.E., LL.D., F.R.S., &c.
1784—1852.
Director of the Ordnance Survey,
1820—1846.

Several of those that left _____ obtained ready employment on these surveys, and there maps in all cases were first class. Mr Chadwick, in his report to the Poor-Law Commissioners, compared the non-efficiency of persons appointed to make surveys under the Tithe Commutation and Parochial Assessment Acts, with those executed by the sappers and miners. Of the 1,700 first-class maps produced not more than half displayed qualifications for the execution of public surveys, without superintendence.

Amongst the most satisfactory were those executed by **Alexander Doull** a retired sergeant of the corps, in the County of Kent - (British Almanac and Companion, 1843).

Alexander Doull enlisted in 1813. After serving in the West Indies he moved to Chatham. Then on the plan of 'Cobbett's Grammar' he commenced publishing letters to his son on "Geometry", but after the second number appeared, he relinquished the undertaking. In 1825 he joined the survey companies, and was the chief non-commissioned officer at the base of Magilligan*. He was a superior mathematical surveyor and draughtsman and his advice in difficult survey questions was frequently followed and never without success.

*Magilligan served as the base line for triangulation for the mapping of Ireland in the 19th century. Colonel Thomas Colby chose Magilligan due to the flatness of the strand and its proximity to Scotland which, along with the rest of Britain, had been accurately mapped in previous decades. A straight line precisely 30,533 feet (9,306 m) was measured from North Station to Ballykelly in 1828 from which all other references were measured. The survey finished in 1846 when County Kerry was mapped.



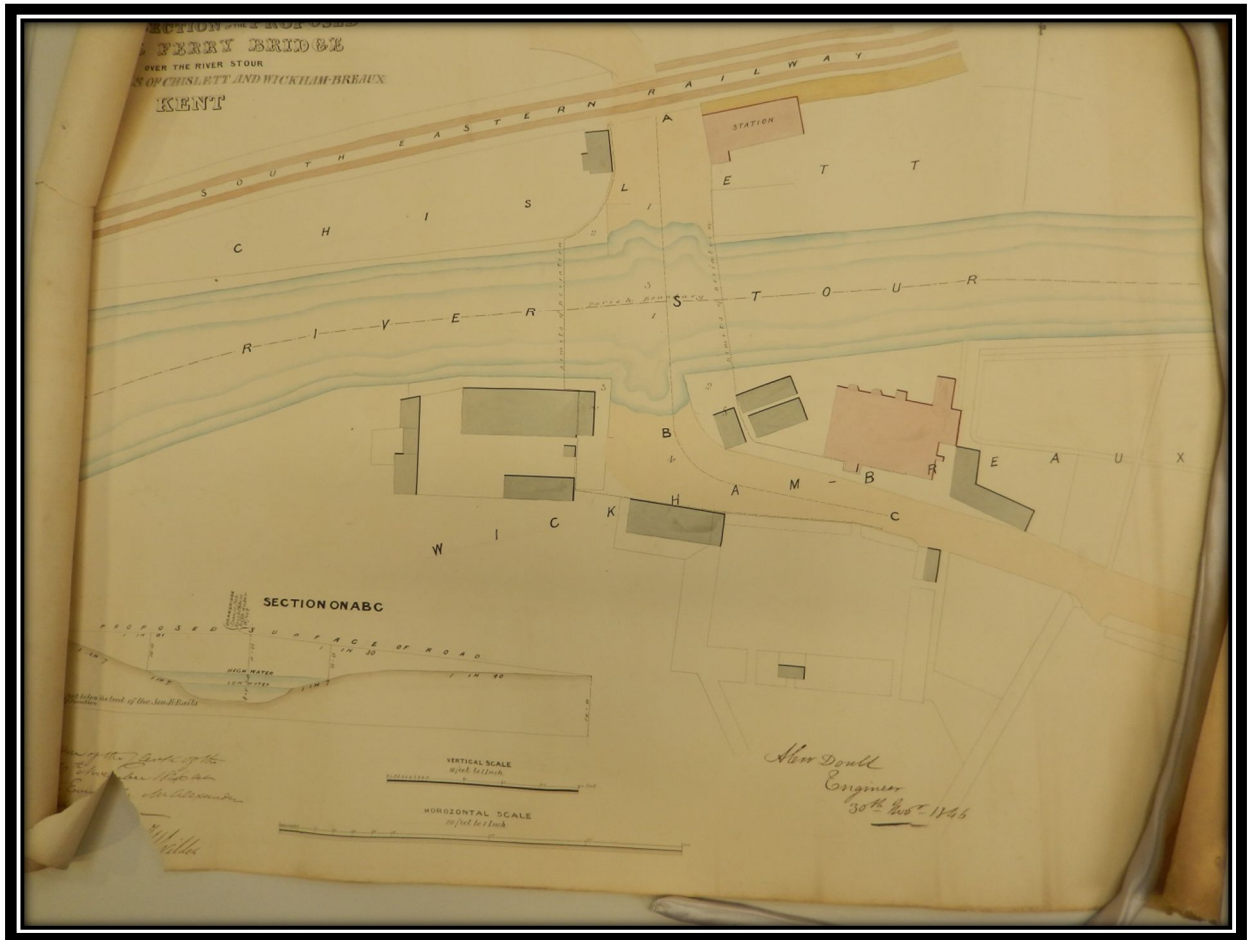
Between 1828 and 1833 he had charge of a 12" theodolite, observing secondary and minor triangulation of one of the districts, and was the first non-commissioned officer of sappers it is believed who used the instrument. In July 1834, employed in the revision of the work in the neighbourhood of Rathmelton, he introduced a system of surveying similar to traverse-sailing in navigation which effected a considerable saving of time in the progress of the work, and elicited the approbation of Colonel Colby. While on duty he invented a plotting scale, and subsequently a reflecting instrument both of simple and ingenious construction. After service of twenty-three years he was discharged in January 1838.

When the tithe commutation survey was thrown into the hands of contractors, Doull got portions of the work to perform, and his maps were referred to in terms of high commendation by Edwin Chadwick esq. Among several towns he surveyed one was Woolwich, the map of which was dedicated to Lord Bloomfield (private secretary to George IV) and published in 1843.



This is a portion of Doull's map of Woolwich showing the Royal Artillery Barracks and is taken from an 1845 published copy held at the London Metropolitan Archive in Farringdon, City of London.

In the proposed North Kent Railway, Mr Doull was assistant engineer to Mr Charles Vignoles and he planned a bridge of three arches, having a roadway at one side and double track on the other, with an ornamental screen passage between, to span the Medway where a new bridge is now, to connect Strood and Rochester. However had the proposed railway not been superseded by a rival line it would have secured an enduring fame for the designer in the opinion of Mr Vignoles and Sir Charles Pasley.



Later when competing companies were preparing their respective projects, Mr Doull represented the engineering on the opposing scheme in a pamphlet under the signature of "Calculus." In this his military knowledge and experience were well exhibited, inasmuch as he showed how the fortifications at Chatham would be injured by the adoption of that line; and the railway consequently on account of this and other influences did not proceed beyond the Medway at Strood. Doull went on to practice as a Civil Engineer with offices in Greenwich, Holborn and Euston Square.

Sources

Connolly, TWJ Quartermaster-Sergeant *The History of the Corps of Royal Sappers and Miners*. Longman London 1855
 Hey, David, Professor Editor *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History*. Oxford University Press 1996
 Tithe maps of Sittingbourne & Kingsdown are held at the Kent History & Library Centre Maidstone

Noel Grimmett

Obituaries

Alf Isherwood

Branch Treasurer 2011- 2015



Alf's Army career started in 1952 when at 15½ he joined as an apprentice field surveyor at the Army Apprentice School, Harrogate. After three years it was into the Royal Engineers and down to Cove for 6 months Engineer training before moving on to Hermitage for a short introduction to multiplex.

A posting to Singapore was the next move at the formation of 84 Field Survey Squadron. There followed three years of many and varied tasks around Malaya with advancement to Cpl.

From Malaya he was posted to 13 Squadron at Fernhurst for a short period as orderly corporal. In 1959 he moved to SMS as an instructor and promoted to Sgt. In 1960 he married to Diana and was immediately posted to SHAPE in Paris in temporary charge of map procurement and distribution. During his time in Paris his daughter Sarah was born.

After 14 months in France he was posted to 14 Squadron in Germany as Troop Sgt and had a spell as stand in Chief Clerk. In 1965 another move, this time back to 84 Squadron serving in Sarawak for a short spell and then on to Sabah with promotion to S/Sgt. The last year of the tour was back in Singapore with a short spell in north Malaya during the Thai border survey.

1968 saw Alf back at Hermitage on the field survey teaching staff until 1972 when he was on the move again, this time to Cyprus as WO2 in charge of the Map Depot. Two years later he was back in UK joining 19 Squadron, 42 Regiment at Barton Stacey; but after a year he was promoted to WO1 and for his last posting as Depot Manager with 8 Map & Air Chart Depot in Guildford.

Alf retired in December 1977 and two months later joined Seiko, the Japanese watch company; where he stayed until 1996 when he took early retirement. However it wasn't long before he had a call from the company asking if he would do some holiday cover; this he continued to do until 2011.

Alf has been involved for some years with Reading & District Fuchsia Society serving in several positions on the committee. While serving as Chairman he offered, with the assistance of a team of volunteers, the societies help in maintaining one of the small gardens at the Royal Berkshire Hospital which has now been running for seven years.

Mick Guise comments – *'Alf Isherwood was another lively chirpy character. I was with him on the 1964 Field Survey Tech 1 course at Hermitage - George Whalley (long since departed) was the main instructor. It was the first Tech 1 course to be held, when the trades were reclassified from A to Tech, therefore it was tough, as it was a prototype. I remember Alf's good humour and infectious way of speaking, and his laughter when we were on the verge of despair'*.

Alf died at the Beech Hall Nursing Centre Reading on Saturday 22 August 2015. He was laid to rest at the Clayton Wood Natural Burial Ground West Sussex on Friday 18th September.

He was attended by many close family and friends and a group of ex-surveyors who spoke about their fond memories of working with Alf in different parts of the world.

Colin Price has let us have his thoughts on Alf's funeral - *My thanks for the advance warning regarding the style of the proceedings today. As intimated below, it was not the norm by a long chalk.*

The burial Ground is in a wonderful spot just north of the South Downs behind Brighton and facing the slope of the grass covered hill ridge on which two windmills, Jack and Jill dominate the sky line. It is green in all directions with trees in the foreground at the bottom of the sloping ground and to make it even more of a spectacle the weather was superb with the sun beating down on us, it was lovely. The only thing that will maybe disturb dear Alf in his grave will be the sound of the Brighton train in the cutting off to the left, and the wind in the trees or rain and thunder in inclement weather. The graves are only recognisable by the occasional wooden carved name plates in the grass between the mown paths that meander between the irregular shaped plots with young ornamental trees planted about the area. The Burial Ground was opened in 2008.

I arrived at about 1.30 and a few people were already there including the standard bearer Nick Ward (REA Brighton Branch) and Prof Jones, and I was closely followed by Noel Grimmett. I had a quick word with Nick and thanked him for standing in for us, a very nice chap and smart with it. He did a fine job! There was no hearse. Prof pointed out to me that Alf was in the back of a white estate car, the coffin covered by a sheet of some kind. We hung about in little groups chatting and at about 2'ish, Alf's plain wood coffin was lifted out of the car by friends and Sara's son using the six rope carrying handles and lifted into the small barn like hall that looked out through open glass doors across the scene I describe above.

Nick stood outside on the wooden decking patio with flag erect while Sara standing alongside the coffin which had been placed on low wooden trestles and had just previously had dried flowers and foliage arranged randomly on top. She spoke a few loving unscripted words. Others including Noel spoke for us, and also Brian Beale who was in the same term, 52A, at Harrogate AAS, all said their peace. It was all very informal, and though very sincere, no sentimentality and all very natural. Almost uncanny if that's the right word.

We all wandered to the left along the grass pathway and round to his last resting place, very neatly dug. No piles of earth to be seen and the edges covered with imitation grass material. They lowered Alf's coffin by the strops and the standard was lowered, Sara having touched it for the last time, and those who wished to, like myself, took earth in a trowel from prepared box of dry earth and scattered it on the flowers, for that was all we could see in the depths by then. Alf's name was on a small square of paper adhered to the foot end of the coffin, for in the Natural Burial way there is to be no metal work buried in the ground. It all lasted about 25 minutes.



We all then returned to the patio where the ladies laid out a table cloth on the decking and placed china plates and cups and saucers together with cake, bread plates and ham slices. Tea was offered and we all sat round in the hot sun and chatted to the friends and old colleagues as you do.



Roger Jones, Nick Ward (REA Brighton), Colin Price, Brian Kinnear, Tony Rickard, Brian Beale, Noel Grimmett

I talked for some time to Brian Kinnear and his friend Tony Rickard (Both served with Alf in Malaya). Dave Bowery was also there. At about 3.20 I said my farewells to my friends, gave Sara a hug who was very sweet and was very appreciative of we who turned out to be with Alf on his last journey and made my way home passing the scene of the Hunter crash on the A27, all now shielded by a metal curtain wall, on my way. It makes you think and the heart misses a beat to think of what happened there only a short time ago”

All the Best, Colin.

BRIG Mike Silberrad MBE



We have been informed by Tony Keeley that Brig Mike died in Yeovil Hospital on 22 August 2015.

Chris Everett



Chris passed away in Nanaimo General Hospital, British Columbia on Thursday, August 6th 2015, after a lengthy battle with cancer and a stroke which left him paralysed on his left hand side. Dave Mead informed me that he was letting us know at the request of Chris's wife, Christine. There was to be a celebration of Chris' life at his home in Nanaimo, Canada. Chris was not a Branch member, but he did serve in several arenas including SMS as an instructor, MELF, Aden, and Sharjah from 1952 until his retirement at the end of an exchange posting to Canada in 1967 and I am sure many retired field surveyors will remember him.

Mick Guise comments – *‘Chris Everett was a lively entertaining character - good fun to be with, at work or play. He was our SSgt instructor on the 1962 Field Survey Tech 2 course at Hermitage. He was an excellent instructor and I think we all passed with flying colours. Then the following year he headed up one of those mysterious Cold War detachments to Scotland that took place during the 60's. There were five of us, but I only remember Vic Moncrieff as one of the others. We travelled a lot on that job both on the mainland and island hopping, living in various levels of accommodation and Chris was in good form as our leader’.*

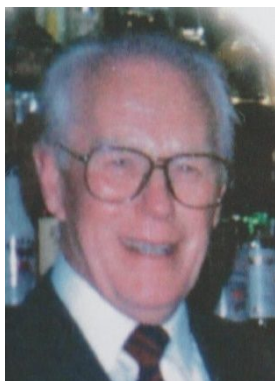
Robert “Charlie” Brown



Field Surveyor – Chepstow 64B, A Coy – Robert had been ill for some time and since the groups 50th anniversary reunion last year had spent several periods (sometimes lengthy ones) in hospital. He had a great care package and was being cared for at home by NHS and his wife Mo, but Charlie had a heart attack and passed away on the morning of Monday 10th August 2015.

“Gramps” Ian Parr comments - *With great sadness and heavy heart the passing of Charlie. He said that he had already informed his old ex 64B A Coy group pals and thought that many of those in the Branch will have also known 'Charlie' at some point in their military career and will remember Charlie with great affection and the 'larger than life' character that he was.*

Major Alan Keith Butt



Alan Keith Butt was born in Croydon in 1928 where he lived with his parents and went to school. He began his military career as an Apprentice Tradesman with the Royal Engineers at Harrogate in 1944, learning the skills of a Photographic Technician in the map making profession, before being posted to Military Survey, an arm of the RE's, where he served for the next 37 years.

His first overseas posting was to Egypt in 1948, at age 20. This was after he had met Brenda at a Saturday night hop in the local parish hall. Despite the distance, they kept in touch and married in 1951.

Subsequent postings took both Brenda and Keith to Egypt, Cyprus, Germany and Aden – where Stephen was born, just a few weeks before they were hurriedly evacuated due to the rising tension. Keith received a recommendation from the Governor of Aden for his services.

Safer postings included Newbury, Harrogate and Chepstow as an instructor, then Feltham and finally Guildford where he was the OC for 8 Map & Air Chart Depot. He retired in 1983 as Major but kept up his contacts with the military through the Military Survey Branch of the Royal Engineer Association. Keith was a staunch member of the Branch and a Life Member of the DSA.

On leaving the army Keith spent 10 years as office manager for Ready Mixed Concrete in West Byfleet. Following a car accident in 2000 he never drove again. With the onset of dementia he moved to the Queen Elizabeth Park care Home in 2013, where he received excellent care. Keith died on Tuesday, 16th June 2015, aged 87 years, after a short illness contracted originally from a hospital virus. He is survived by his wife, Brenda and family.

Veterans In Action

Charity details



Registered address

The Old Grain Store Redenham Park Farm, Redenham Park Andover, Hampshire SP11 9AQ

Telephone: 01264 771 658 **Out of Hours: 07889400830** **Email: info@veteransinaction.org.uk**

Charity number 1128026

Veterans In Action (VIA) is a UK based charity specialising in the social reintegration of socially excluded HM Forces Veterans.

The overriding aim of this organisation is to develop a national Veteran support framework centering on the principles of Outreach Work and Adventurous Activities, in support of the UK's Veteran community.

Therein VIA organise and staff outreach projects designed to maximise opportunities to firstly identify, then offer support to Veterans within a regional and national context.

After a veteran has been identified as an individual who might benefit from our services, we offer a range of support packages designed to encourage social participation and to a degree challenge the individual via a range of meaningful activities from fundraising to the more physical challenges engendered in Adventure Training.

As suggested our services can be divided broadly into two distinctly separate agenda, on the one hand centering on Outreach Work, whilst the other focuses specifically on Adventurous Activities.

The ALIVE Program is a three stage process that has been developed by Veterans In Action to work on the personal development of Armed Forces veterans, some of whom have been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and others who find it difficult to adjust to civilian life.

<http://www.v-i-a.co.uk/>

Contact Details

Secretary

Rod Siggs
11, Merlin Way,
Southwood
Farnborough, GU14 0PF
email: rod.siggs@ntlworld.com
Telephone: 01252 660144

Treasurer

Ted Davies
email: davies.ted@rsms.ac.uk
Work Telephone: 01635 204412
Home Telephone: 01635 582892

Webmaster

Dave Johnson
Auchen
Hermitage Road
Cold Ash
Thatcham RG18 9JH
email: webmaster@militarysurvey.org.uk

Newsletter

Noel Grimmett
5 Canford Close
Shedfield
SO32 2HZ
email: noel@burwells1.demon.co.uk
Telephone: 01329 830153 or 07817 683299

Visit www.militarysurvey.org

Preview – Christmas Issue – 2015

- Report on SOUTH KOREA (DMZ) Survey task – 2015
- Formation of No 1 Air Survey Liaison Section (RE) – 1942
- Royal Engineers Survey Detachment - British Columbia – 1858