



# The Military Survey (Geo) Branch

Winter Newsletter 2016 – issue 62

**MILITARY SURVEY BRANCH REA**

**ITS A**  
**REUNION**

**FREE ENTRY AND FREE CURRY SUPPER**

**SUPER BAR @ MESS PRICES**

**FREE TRANSPORT AFTERWARDS TO LOCAL HOTELS i.e. M4 JUNCTION 13**

**1830hrs for 1900hrs FRIDAY THE 31<sup>st</sup> OF MARCH 2017**

**Location: SGTS MESS - DENISON BARRACKS - HERMITAGE**

Plus; do please note we generally only meet once a year and 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. It will not interfere with the opportunity for members attending the reunion to chew the cud enjoy the food and of course the good cheer.

**THUS OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WILL BE AT 1700 for 1730 ON THE SAME DAY**

**FRIDAY THE 31<sup>st</sup> OF MARCH 2017**

**Please do try to attend both of the above and support your Branch.**

The Committee with the kind permission of Commanding Officer and of course the RSM, the President of the WO & Sgts Mess, extend an invitation to members to attend this reunion and if so desired the earlier AGM in the Sgts Mess Hermitage on Friday night the 31st March 2017.

**FURTHER DETAILS AND THE ENTRY FORM IS ON THE BACK PAGE**

**PLEASE SEND IN YOUR RETURNS NOW**

**BUT NO LATER THAN THE 13<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2017**

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History of No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section RE

Christmas 1943 - Azur Plage, Algeria - Intersection Drill Competition – 27<sup>th</sup> December 1943

FRUSTRATED EVACUATION AT KALAMAI GREECE on 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> April 1941

## 135 Geographic Squadron - 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic)

### Exercise Cockney Paddler 16



Exercise COCKNEY PADDLER 16 saw 14 personnel from 135 Geographic Squadron, 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic), deploy to Canada to kayak the Rideau Canal. The aims of this adventurous training expedition were to introduce squadron personnel to kayaking and refresh previous kayaking skills leading to the award of the K2F qualification in order to prepare personnel for higher award schemes and to provide a challenging trip that will develop leadership, teamwork, physical fitness and moral and physical courage.

At first, the intention of the expedition was to kayak the 202km of the Rideau Canal, from Kingston to Ottawa in Ontario. In so doing, 135 Geographic Squadron would commemorate the work done by Lt Col John By RE as part of the Sapper 300 celebrations. Lt Col By's intuition and skill in the design and construction of the Rideau Canal was heralded a colossal success in Canada as it facilitated the shipment of goods along the canal, through a continuous lock system. Despite this, Lt Col By was given little recognition of his work upon his forced return to the UK.

However, throughout the planning process, we found that more and more were becoming interested in the expedition. This led to 135 Geographic Squadron combining with the Settlers Trail Project, a group of high school students who were recreating the voyage of the Settlers to the area 200 years ago. This culminated in celebrations both at Rideau Ferry and at Perth and our synchronised paddling certainly didn't disappoint.

The majority of the trip was also spent with five of our Canadian Armed Forces counterparts, from the Mapping and Charting Establishment (MCE), led by British Exchange Officer Capt Ryder. At the end of the expedition, the squadron was invited for an insightful tour of the MCE which provided a perfect opportunity for personnel to catch up with those they had been on Operational Tours with.



This expedition was demanding, kayaking up to 35km per day for eight days, with one rest day. Due to the historical nature of our expedition, we were privileged to have been granted the ability to lock through the locks by Parks Canada, for which all squadron personnel were extremely grateful.

Having to portage around locks, in certain instances, was arduous and required squadron personnel to work together. The lock stations provided us with picturesque camp sites and hospitable hosts who doubled up as tour guides of the area.

This expedition certainly pushed squadron personnel out of their comfort zone and required them to work cohesively as a team in order to complete an expedition never previously attempted by a British Army unit. It also provided significant media opportunities through recognition of the work of Lt Col John By and his contribution to the Rideau Canal and the surrounding area. This expedition epitomises the variety of opportunities available and has demonstrated the seamless integration within 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic).

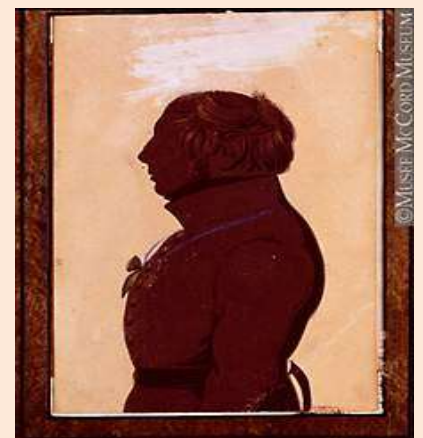
#### **Lt Victoria Earl RE**

### **Lieutenant-Colonel John By RE** (7<sup>th</sup> August 1779 – 1<sup>st</sup> February 1836)

John By was born in Lambeth London on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1779 to George By (of the London Customs House) and Mary Bryan. By went on to study at the Royal Military Academy Woolwich. He entered Officer Training in the army when he was 18 years old and was commissioned in the Royal Artillery on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1799; but transferred to the Royal Engineers on 20<sup>th</sup> December in the same year.

In 1802 he was posted to Canada for the first time, where he worked on the fortification of Quebec City and on improving the navigability of the Saint Lawrence River. During the Napoleonic wars he returned to Europe, where he served in Spain under the Duke of Wellington from 1811 until 1815.

In 1801, he married Elizabeth Johnson Baines. In 1802, he was posted to Québec City (where one of his projects was constructing a detailed 1:300 scale model of Québec City with the help of draftsman Jean-Baptiste Duberger).



The only (believed to be) authentic image of John By is this silhouette

In 1811, he was posted to Portugal. In 1812, he was back in England, placed in charge of the Royal Gunpowder Mills. His wife Elizabeth died in 1814 – there were no children from this marriage.

In 1818, John By remarried, to Esther March (the heiress of John March of Harley Street) and in 1819, they bought Shernfold Park, an estate in Frant, East Sussex, and their first daughter, Esther March By, was born that year. In 1821, By (then a Major) was “retired” and placed on half-pay; their second daughter, Harriet Martha By, was born that same year.

With the end of the war By retired from the military but in April 1826, in view of his engineering experience in Canada, he was recalled and returned to Canada to supervise the construction of the Rideau Canal. Since the canal was to begin in the wild and sparsely populated Ottawa River valley, his first task was the construction of a town to house the men who were to work on the canal, and associated services. The resulting settlement, called Bytown in his honour, would later be renamed Ottawa, ultimately becoming the capital of Canada.

The canal was completed in six years, and was acclaimed as an engineering triumph. The huge cost overruns, however, became a political scandal for the Board of Ordnance. Colonel By was recalled to London to face accusations that he had made a number of unauthorised expenditures. The charges were spurious and a parliamentary committee exonerated him. By petitioned Wellington and other military leaders to review his case, but the damage was done and he never received a formal commendation for his work on the canal.

On a personal level, he certainly thought that he should have received some military honour. In a letter written on February 26, 1833, he noted his desire to be made “a King’s A.D.C., for the sake of the rank.” The King had the power to appoint aides-de-camp and, in the military, it would have conveyed the rank of full Colonel on Lieutenant Colonel By. On July 22, 1833, he wrote to Major General Pilkington, Inspector General of Fortifications, with a request that “I may be honoured with some public distinction as will show that my character as a soldier is without stain, and that I have not lost the confidence or good opinion of my Government

He never got that or any other honour before his death on 1st February 1836. He suffered his first stroke in October 1834, but it was a major stroke on 29th January 1836, that did him in. He died three days later. He was buried in the cemetery of St. Alban’s Church in Frant.

### **By’s Vindication**

It took a long time for Colonel By to be fully vindicated. It really only happened in the 20th Century, as historians and researchers pored over the mountains of documents relating to the construction of the Rideau Canal. As they looked at the actual evidence, it became very clear what a monumental task the building of the Rideau Canal was, and what a significant role was played by Lieutenant Colonel John By, both in designing the works and in managing this huge project. High quality research by eminent historians such as Dr. Robert Legget and Robert Passfield led to the inevitable conclusion that Colonel By was poorly done by, and the records and physical evidence clearly show that Colonel By did a phenomenal job in service both to Britain and to Canada.

This same research also proves that Colonel By did build the Rideau Canal with economy. He didn’t waste government money, he did everything in his power to construct the Rideau Canal as economically as possible, while still meeting full engineering requirements. He followed the orders of his superiors in Ordnance faithfully and did not willfully defy Parliament.

Although he was to encounter criticism in London, John By left the Canada’s to general regret and with widespread tributes to his work. The citizens of Montreal, Brockville, and Kingston were among those who lauded his achievements. A part of the address presented to him by a committee of the Montreal Committee of Trade provides a fitting concluding comment: “An undertaking of great magnitude and importance, the successful accomplishment of which, in so comparatively short a period, notwithstanding the unheard of inestimable difficulties and impediments which had to be encountered and surmounted, in an almost unexplored and uninhabited wilderness . . . evinced on your part a moral courage and an undaunted spirit and combination of science and management equally exciting our admiration and deserving our praise.”

Source: Smithers A.J. *Honourable Conquests – The enduring work of the Royal Engineers* Leo Cooper, London 1991  
Watson Ken W. *Bye By-The Story of Lieutenant-Colonel John By, R.E. and his fall from grace.*  
<http://www.rideau-info.com/canal/tales/bye-by> Wikipedia consulted.

**Noel Grimmatt**

## The History of No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section RE

### War Diaries of May 1945 to May 1946 by Maj W H Hore RE

This section was formed and mobilised at the Survey Training Centre (Wynnstay Park, Ruabon), North Wales under W.O.U.M. 79/Mob/6190/46 (AG5 Mob) dated 18 February 1945. The purpose was to supplement the facilities available for obtaining survey photographs in S.E. Asia.

The Section consists of the following personnel:-

Officer Commanding (G.S.O. II) 155898 Major W H Hore RE  
2i/c (G.S.O. III) to be provided in India

2001613	Sgt	Clothier	R J	Draughtsman Topo
1949864	Cpl	Evans	G G	Surveyor Trig
1951462	LCpl	Jean	E H	Draughtsman Topo
14837573	Spr	Cowgill	K	Clerk Field Svy
14712901	Spr	Denford	G H	Draughtsman Topo
14798490	Spr	Fusco	A	Draughtsman Topo
14741933	Dvr	Hastie	J B	Driver L C
1953286	Spr	Larkin	E P	Draughtsman Topo
14803284	Spr	Reynolds	J C	Draughtsman Topo
6108394	Spr	Thornton	J K	Draughtsman Topo



Maj W H Hore RE

Previous to this posting Major Hore had been engaged on similar work in the N W European Theatre, and had been OC No 1 Air (Survey) Liaison Section RE during the past two years. The three NCO's of No 4 Section were all experienced draughtsman posted from No 1 Section.

Complete A F G1098 stores, less steriocomparator were taken with the section. MT was to be provided in India.

The section embarked at Liverpool March 27<sup>th</sup> 1945 and sailed 31<sup>st</sup> March. It reached Bombay in 21<sup>st</sup> April 45 and disembarked on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. The train journey from Bombay to Calcutta lasted from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> April.

The unit is stationed at RAF Station Alipore Calcutta, and at present is working alongside No 11 Indian Air (Survey) Liaison Section RE.

On arrival Major Hore contacted Brigadier Heanie D Survey ALFSEA, Lt Col Harris AD Survey and Major Yearron Administrative Officer. He also visited all the necessary branches at 303 Area Fort William.



*Mosquito PR Mark XVI, NS787 M, of No. 684 Squadron RA F- preparing to take off at Alipore India.*

#### **No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section activities - May 1945.**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Typewriter damaged in transit taken to Bar-Looks repair & servicing agency.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Major King OC No 11 Indian Air (Survey) Liaison Section went on leave.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Major Hore visited Brigadier Heanie and Lt Col Harris to find out latest developments in connection with the section.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Major Hore visited Group Captain Wise and discussed future operations involving the section.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Lt Col Harris visited Major Hore. L/Cpl Jean admitted to hospital.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Lt Col Thackwell GSGS India visited section, operations room, 684 Squadron and viewed Mosquitos and Cameras.
- 11<sup>th</sup> Major Hore arranged new accommodation for section with Group Captain French. Major Hore attended conference of Squadron Commanders called by Group Captain Wise DFC. Future policy discussed.
- 12<sup>th</sup> Major Hore visited PRF Bally. He visited all sections and met Col Kaye CO PRF and also visited D Survey Adv. HQ ALFSEA.
- 13<sup>th</sup> Section moved to another building on airfield.
- 15<sup>th</sup> Major Hore attended Group Captain Wise's conference at PRF. Also visited RE Field Park Depot in order to arrange for manufacture of light tables etc  
Major Hore visited 303 Area – question of provision of transport taken up.  
Information received that Capt Sagar was to be posted to the section and Lt Swallow meanwhile was to be attached to No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section from No 11 Indian Air (Survey) Section.
- 17<sup>th</sup> Major Hore Visited D Survey ALFSEA. Arrangements made for correct amount of transport for section to be obtained.
- 18<sup>th</sup> Capt Sagar posted to section but detached to Survey Dte Adv HQ ALFSEA
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Major Hore visited D Survey ALFSEA. He also visited Group Captain Wise DFC and discussed movement of the section.
- 28<sup>th</sup> Major Hore visited PRF Bally and had conference with Major Hamilton Army Photo Research Branch Ceylon.

#### **Early in the month No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section took over all operational commitments of No 11 Indian Air (Survey) Liaison Section.**

#### **No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section activities - June 1945**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Major Hore visited Ad Survey ALFSEA and collected 1 15 cwt. Ford truck from depot.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Major Hore visited Major Wilson RA APIS 347 Wing. He also visited Major Jelly Survey of India.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Major Hore and Lt Swallow visited Major Michinor 3<sup>rd</sup> Photo Technical Unit, on order to find out progress of mapping in Siam. Authority obtained from OS4 ALFSEA for collection of one 3 ton truck.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Major visited Group Captain Wise DFC 347 Wing RAF and discussed movement. He also visited GSO III Non-area troops, 303 area to expedite provision of WE transport.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Major Hore visited Calcutta Vehicle Depot and arranged to collect all outstanding vehicles on Monday next. Major Hore also visited d Survey Advanced HQ ALFSEA.
- 11<sup>th</sup> 1 m/c Class II and 1 4 x 2 Dodge 3 Tonner collected from Vehicle Depot Calcutta.
- 15<sup>th</sup> 1 15 cwt., Chevrolet 4 x 4 truck collected from Vehicle Depot Calcutta  
Dvr Harris reported to section on attachment
- 17<sup>th</sup> Major Hore attended conference at Adv HQ ALFSEA. Members: Col Collins DD Survey SACSEA, Lt Col Harris MBE AD Survey Adv HQ ALFSEA and Major King OC No 11 Indian Air (Survey) Liaison Section.
- 18<sup>th</sup> Major Hore was interviewed by Group Captain Wise and met Group Captain Beamish the new CO of 347 Wing RAF. Major Hore and 3 OR's took up residence at Bally.
- 19<sup>th</sup> Captain J Sagar joined section. Spr Reynolds proceeded on detachment to No 12 Indian Air (Survey) Liaison Section RE.
- 21<sup>st</sup> Lt Swallow left section on attachment to Indian Air (Survey) Liaison Section RE.
- 25<sup>th</sup> Major Hore proceeded to Ceylon to visit DD Survey SACSEA.  
During the next few days he conferred with the following: - D D Survey SACSEA, OC No 12 Indian Air (Survey) Liaison Section RE, OC No 2 Air (Survey) Liaison Section RE, D D Survey, Survey Production Centre, Secretary, Photographic Reconnaissance Board.  
Future operational commitments were discussed and also certain amendments to the War Establishments of an Air (Survey) Liaison Section RE.

#### **No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section activities - July 1945**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Major Hore returned to unit.
- 10<sup>th</sup> Major visited D D Survey ALFSEA and held discussion with A D Survey Lt Col Harris MBE RE. Signal sent to Priorities Board to expedite authority to fly beach task.
- 12<sup>th</sup> Visited Naval Liaison Officer Eastern Air Command in connection with tidal information. Full details for the beach task handed over to Operations Officer 347 Wing. No Authority to fly task yet received from Priorities Board SACSEA.
- 14<sup>th</sup> Major Hore visited D Survey Adv HQ ALFSEA and discussed provision of extra personnel for section during the flying season. Major Hore visited Major Hawley Map Depot Barrackpore to check on provision of material produced by 3<sup>rd</sup> Photo Technical Unit.
- 17<sup>th</sup> Major Hore discussed with Group Captain Beamish CO 347 Wing question of survey representation on a detachment. Decided that tent's would be required. Request passed on to D Survey Adv HQ ALFSEA for an authority to draw these tents.
- 21<sup>st</sup> Major Hore visited Major Michinor 3<sup>rd</sup> Photo Technical Unit. Stated that all A A F aeronautical charts being produced would be available by 5<sup>th</sup> August
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Captain Sagar went on leave
- 25<sup>th</sup> Major King and No 11 Indian Air (Survey) Liaison Section left Bally
- 31<sup>st</sup> Major Hore took over all mapping material released by 3<sup>rd</sup> Photo Technical Unit

#### **No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section activities - August 1945**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Major Hore visited GSO III (SD) SO3 Area in order to obtain authority to collect the tents required for the detachments. He also visited DADOS 303 Area in order to arrange for issue of green battle dress.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Major Hore visited DADOS 303 Area to hand in indents for green battledress.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Authority to draw tents for detachment received. Arrangements made with DADOS 303 Area to draw same.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Tents for detachment and green battle dresses drawn from ordnance stores.
- 6<sup>th</sup> American Aeronautical Mapping material handed over to D A D Survey B Command.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Sgt Robotham No 11 Indian Air Survey Liaison Section c.t.b.a. to No 4 Air Survey Liaison Section on attachment to: - PLO Detachment B G R Survey Cadre RE 13 Wood Street Calcutta
- 10<sup>th</sup> Additional acetate received from American handed to Major Hurley D A D Survey B Command.
- 11<sup>th</sup> Captain Sagar returned from leave
- 18<sup>th</sup> Sgt Rogers attached to No 4 Air Survey Liaison Section from No 11 Indian Air Survey Liaison section
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Spr Denford admitted to C M Hospital Barrackpore
- 24<sup>th</sup> Cpl Evans admitted to C M Hospital Barrackpore
- 27<sup>th</sup> Major Hore arrived at Adv HQ 347 Wing RAF Rangoon. The section immediately commenced operating from Rangoon
- 28<sup>th</sup> Check made on unit vehicles. 1 m/c 1 Chevrolet 15 cwt., and 1 Dodge 3 ton, arrived in Rangoon 20 August. These vehicles left Calcutta on 11 August. Major Hore visited 12<sup>th</sup> Army
- 29<sup>th</sup> Major Hore made arrangements for mail with OC RAE Post Rangoon and No 7 ABPO.
- 30<sup>th</sup> Major Hore visited D D Survey 12 Army. Lt Swallow re-joined unit on attachment.
- 31<sup>st</sup> Major Hore visited D D Survey 12 Army. Also Staff Captain "A" HQ No 1 Area.

#### **No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section activities - September 1945**

Report for the month of September 1945 dated 30 September 1945.

1. There has been no survey photography during the month and owing to squadron moves the whole of the outstanding tasks have been cancelled by ACSEA.
2. The month has been one of alarms and excursions, counter-alarms and counter excursions. No technical work has been carried out, the unit having been engaged in re-marking stores, and re-packing according to the variations in progress.
3. The position at present is as follows: -
  - a) Major Hore is at Advanced HQ No 347 Wing Rangoon. He will fly to Saigon in due course.

- b) The main body of the section including Lieut Swallow and Sgt Rogers is with 684 Squadron Detachment for 'Masterdon' and is located in transit in Rangoon. By some means the ship on which they are embarked at Calcutta only proceeded to Rangoon. It is not known when another ship will be available to take this 684 Squadron party to Saigon. Meanwhile all vehicles and stores are en-route in other ships to Saigon.
- c) Captain Sagar and 2 BOR's remain in Calcutta pending moving to Singapore with another 684 detachment. When this move will take place is not yet known, but two months seem to be the most likely bet at the moment.

#### No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section activities - October 1945

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Main body of section left Rangoon by sea for Saigon. Instructions received that Sagar's detachment will proceed to Saigon independently. Sagar himself is to report to ALFSEA as soon as arrangements have been made for the 2 BOR's proceed.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Major Hore left Rangoon en route to Saigon. Spent night at Bangkok
- 6<sup>th</sup> Major Hore arrived in Saigon
- 7<sup>th</sup> Major Hore visited Air Commodore Cheshire, Lt Col Rogers Allied Land Central Commission French Indo China, Group Captain Sturgess OBE CO RAF Saigon and Administrative Officers.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Contacted Major Swainson regarding arrival of section's vehicles.
- 9<sup>th</sup> All arrangements made for arrival of 684 Squadron. Captain Sagar proceeded by rail to HQ SACSEA.
- 11<sup>th</sup> Main body of 684 Squadron, including section personnel arrived in Saigon.
- 13<sup>th</sup> Major Hore visited Lt Col Rogers and discussed trip to Krakor to view Japanese cameras and photographic equipment.
- 14<sup>th</sup> Major Hore visited HQ 555 Sub Area. Arrangements made for section to receive all instructions and orders.
- 16<sup>th</sup> Major Hore visited Staff Captain "Q" 555 area and made arrangement for Sgt Rogers to return to Colombo.
- 17<sup>th</sup> Spr Thornton joined section having flown from Alipore, Calcutta.
- 19<sup>th</sup> Sgt Rogers proceeded to Calcutta by air en route for Colombo on ceasing to be attached to No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section RE.
- 20<sup>th</sup> L/Cpl Jean joined section having flown from Alipore, Calcutta
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Major Hore visited Air Commodore Cheshire Allied Control Commission and discussed conference to be held with Americans on Survey in this theatre. It was decided that Major Hore should not attend the conference. Air Commodore Cheshire was shown full details of flying programme.
- 24<sup>th</sup> Major Hore visited W/Cdr Nottage DSO AFC and arranged for flight Krakor.
- 28<sup>th</sup> Captain Lawrance (179567) joined section
- 29<sup>th</sup> Major Hore and Captain Lawrance visited 555 Sub area
- 30<sup>th</sup> Captain Lawrance visited naval authorities in order to obtain tidal information for beach tasks.

#### No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section activities - November 1945.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Flying programme commenced.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Cpl Salkeld attached to section from Allied Control Commission.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Major Hore visited Krakor, Kompong Chnang and Phnon Penh. Cameras and Survey equipment viewed. Detailed report to be issued shortly.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Major Hore returned from Phnon Penh.
- 26<sup>th</sup> Lt Ghent RE and 8 BOR's joined section ex S S Georgetown.

Nominal role as follows: -

257257	Lt	Ghent	G G
14795745	Spr	Ashman	G R
14776518	Spr	Boyle	B
14865392	Spr	Douglas	M
14573459	Spr	Mason	D L
14864173	Spr	Maxwell	J
14865022	Spr	Miles	D
14865383	Spr	Rose	C W
14415472	Spr	Badman	RF

3 bicycles, 2 m/cs, 3 jeeps also arrived.



29<sup>th</sup> Major Hore attended conference held by Air Commodore Cheshire at Allied Control Commission. Group Captain Sturgess and S/Ldr Newman also attended. The measures required in order to complete our operational commitment in a reasonable time were discussed.

#### No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section activities – December 1945

- 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, S E Asia, visited RAF Station Saigon. Major W H Hore RE had the honour of being introduced to his Excellency.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Major Hore proceeded by air to Singapore. Conference concerning photographic survey programme held with Survey Liaison Officer SACSEA, D Survey ALFSEA and OC No 2 Air (Survey) Liaison Section RE.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Major Hore returned from Singapore.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Sprs Rose and Douglas proceeded by air to No 2 Air (Survey) Liaison Section RE.
- Cpl Evans and Cpl Salkeld promoted to rank of Sgt wef Oct 26 to fill vacancies on new War Establishment. Spr Fusco promoted to rank of Cpl wef 9 December. Spr Denford appointed L/Cpl wef 9 December.
- 11<sup>th</sup> Ceremony of handing over of swords by Japanese Officers to officers attached to RAF Saigon. (See below right)
- 14<sup>th</sup> Lt S Swallow embarked for Singapore and ceases to be attached to No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section RE.
- 16<sup>th</sup> Col Myers AD Intelligence SACSEA visited unit and discussed progress of Photographic Programme.
- 20<sup>th</sup> L/Cpl Foster and Spr Swift joined section, on arrival from Singapore. Each promoted to A/U/Cpl wef 20 December 45.



Lord Louis Mountbatten: Supreme Commander Allied Forces SEAC

#### No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section activities – January 1946

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt Clothier embarked Saigon for Singapore. He is to be attached to Survey Directorate, HQ ALFSEA pending return to UK for release.
- 10<sup>th</sup> Major Hore visited Don Muang airfield Bangkok in order to make arrangements for move of section in the near future.
- 11<sup>th</sup> Major Hore returned to Saigon
- 20<sup>th</sup> Captain Lawrance, 11 BOR's, 4 vehicles and 2 M/C's left by road for Bangkok. Sgt Evans proceeded by air to Bangkok.
- 24<sup>th</sup> 14865441 Spr Stevens joined section from 110 Map Production Company. Cpl Foster and Spr Ashman proceeded by air to Bangkok.
- 26<sup>th</sup> Major Hore proceeded by air to Bangkok. Section HQ established there.
- 27<sup>th</sup> Lt Ghent and 4 BOR's arrived at Bangkok by air.
- 29<sup>th</sup> Major Hore and Captain Lawrance visited British Siam.



Lt I Shinto handing over his ceremonial sword to Major W H Hore RE at a disarming ceremony in Saigon 11<sup>th</sup> December 1945

#### No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section activities – February 1946

- 684 Squadron commenced flying from Bangkok.
- 8<sup>th</sup> All aircraft (Mosquitos) grounded for inspection for spar trouble.
- 14<sup>th</sup> Flying recommenced.
- 15<sup>th</sup> Cpl Fusco, Cpl Foster and L/Cpl Denford struck of strength of section on leaving by air for Rangoon on class 'B' release.
- 17<sup>th</sup> Major J W Tayler RE Survey Liaison Officer SACSEA arrived on a liaison visit to the section.
- 24<sup>th</sup> Major J W Tayler RE returned to Singapore on completion of duty.
- 27<sup>th</sup> Group Captain Butler OC RAF Station Bangkok visited the section.

#### No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section activities – March 1946

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Cpl Morley, Spr Smith and Spr joined the section from HQ ALFSEA to fill existing vacancies.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Air Chief Marshall Sir Arthur Barrett, Inspector General of the RAF visited the section.
- 16<sup>th</sup> Spr Badman admitted 14 CCS.
- 19<sup>th</sup> All Mosquito aircraft grounded.
- 21<sup>st</sup> Major B H Farmer RE OC No 2 Air (Survey) Liaison Section RE visited the section.
- 24<sup>th</sup> Lt G G Ghent left unit for Singapore and ultimate posting to No 2 Air (Survey) Liaison Section RE.
- 29<sup>th</sup> Cpl Swift admitted 53 IGH.
- 30<sup>th</sup> Captain Lawrance and 5 BOR's proceeded to Rest Camp San Cook for one week.

#### No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section activities – April 1946

- 1<sup>st</sup> Lt English RN and Lt Vane RNVR 888 Fleet Air Arm Squadron visited the section.

#### No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section activities – May 1946

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Instructions were received for the disbandment of the unit and preparations were made to move the unit from Bangkok to Singapore. The unit left Bangkok on the 3 June and arrived in Singapore on the 9 June.
- 15<sup>th</sup> The one remaining officer Capt E C Lawrance RE proceeded on LILOP.  
**The unit is attached to 65 Indian Reproduction Group RIE in Singapore pending disbandment.**  
No further war diaries will be submitted.

Signed E C Lawrance Captain RE - A/OC No 4 Air (Survey) Liaison Section RE (SEA)



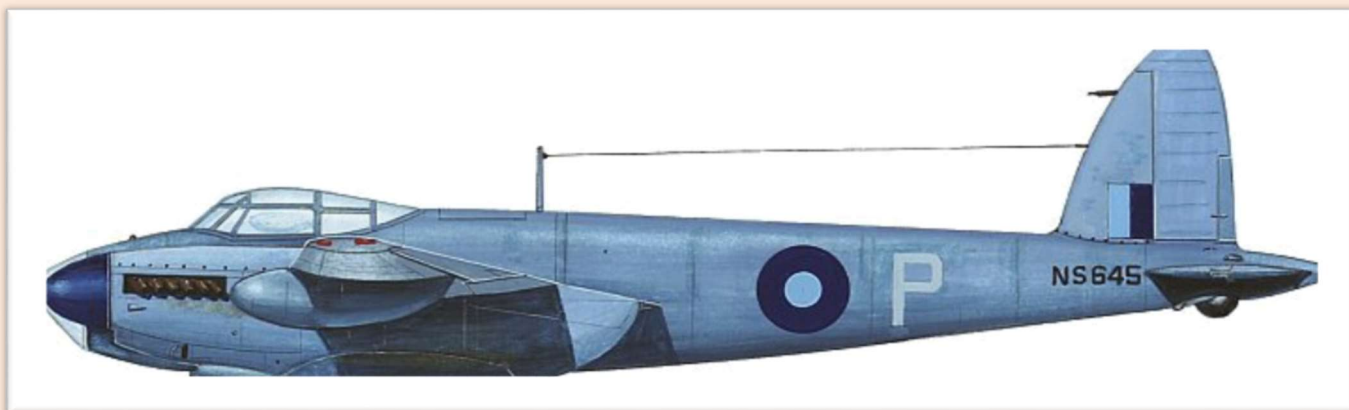
*De Havilland Mosquito PR XVI, NS787 M', of No 684 Squadron, Royal Air Force, based at Alipore. The aircraft, piloted by Flight Lieutenant C G Andrews, a New Zealander, is carrying a 100-gallon auxiliary tank under each wing. The natural metal finish plane has dark blue SEAC bands.*

Noel Grimmett

### No 684 (PR) Sqn RAF

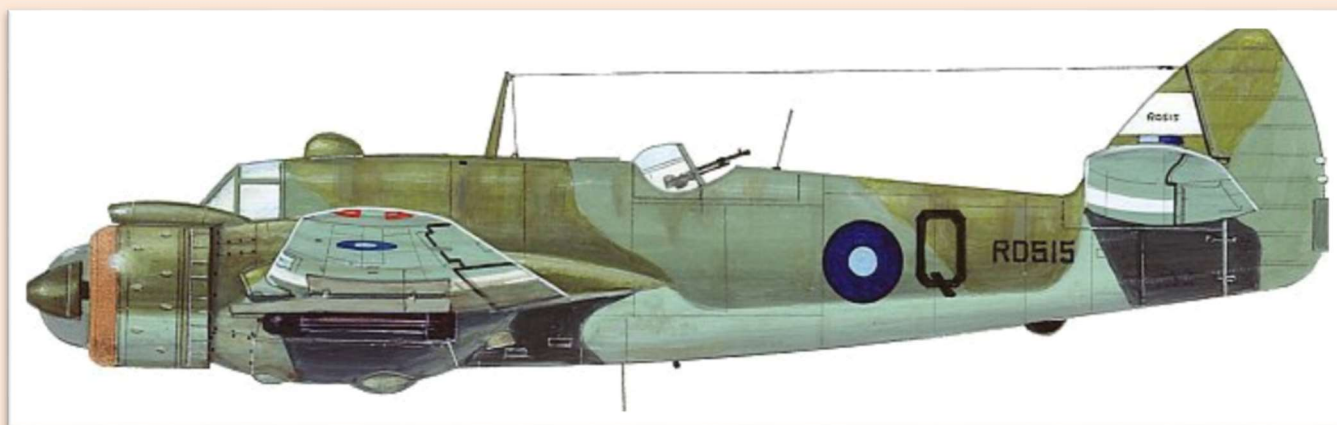
No.684 (PR) Squadron was formed on the 29th September 1943 at Dum Dum airfield West Bengal. It was equipped with Mitchell and Mosquito aircraft from 681 Squadron and put on reconnaissance duties straight away flying over Rangoon and the Andaman Islands. Being equipped with long range aircraft, the Squadron was able to take on tasking as far as Thailand.

In February of 1944 the Squadron was on the move, this time to Calcutta where it was re-equipped with Mosquito PR.IXs and PR.XVIs. In August of this year a detachment was sent to Ceylon to undertake survey and mapping tasking; apart from the Mosquitos a number of Mitchells were sent.



Mosquito PR Mk. XVI of 684 Sq at Alipore in 1945.

In April 1945 the Squadron received a number Beaufighters for courier duties, carrying photographs and other required items. The Squadron sent another detachment to the Coco Islands and later that year, photographic cover was being obtained over French Indo-China, Thailand and the Kia Isthmus. In December 1945 it took charge of a number of Spitfire PR.XIs from No. 681 Squadron.



Bristol Beaufighter

At the end of hostilities, the Squadrons' first task was to transport the film of the Japanese surrenders at Rangoon, Singapore and Penang. In early 1946 the Squadron moved to Bangkok with a detachment sent to Baigachi to undertake a survey task for the Indian Government.

**On 1st September 1946 the Squadron was disbanded and re-named No.81 (PR) Squadron and based at RAF Seletar Singapore.**

**Christmas 1943 - Azur Plage, Algeria**

**516 Corps Field Survey Company RE**

Intersection Drill Competition – 27th December 1943

Judge – Major L J Harris MBE RE

Assist. – Major D I Burnett MBE RE

O i/c Parade – Capt F B Purchas RE

PROGRAMME - Sections will be examined in the following order approximately at the time stated: -

- |    |                                      | <u>Section Commander</u> |
|----|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | 1430 hrs – No 4 Reproduction Section | - Lieut Morgan           |
|    | 1445 hrs – No 3 Drawing Section      | - Lieut Watson           |
|    | 1500 hrs – HQ “B” Section            | - Sergt Bell             |
|    | 1515 hrs – No 5 Reproduction Section | - Lieut James            |
|    | 1530 hrs – No 2 Topo Section         | - Lieut Lawrance         |
|    | 1545 hrs – HQ “A” Section            | - CSM Bowery             |
|    | 1600 hrs – No 1 Topo Section         | - Lieut Wright           |
2. When not on paraded, sections will fall out in places detailed at appendix to this order, and watch the competition.
3. All sections except 4 Section will fall in under their own arrangements in their allotted areas at 1420 hrs. No 4 Section will fall in near the guard tent at 1420 hrs ready to march on Parade Ground at 1430 hrs.

**4. PARADE DETAILS**

(a) Each Section will fall in near guard tent when instructed by O i/c parade.

(b) Parade will be as follows: -

1. March on Parade Ground.
2. Halt in centre of parade ground facing away from the sea.
3. Open order march.
4. Section Commander reports to judge.
5. Examination of turnout and arms (time allocated 3 mins).
6. Arms Drill during which each of the following movements will be carried out at least once.

Slope arms from the order.

Order arms from the slope.

Present arms from the slope.

Slope arms from the present.

Trail arms from the order.

Order arms from the trail.

Salute at the slope.

Time allotted 3 mins

7. Close order Drill during which the following movements will be carried out.

Change Direction - Right and left turns on the March. Right wheel.

Turning at the halt - About turn at the halt.

Diagonal march - Left and Right Inclines.

Saluting on the March - Saluting to the front.

Changing step - Change step.

Time allotted 3 mins

8. Section demonstrations and Section Commanders discretion.

Time allotted 3 mins

9. Section Commander reports to judge for permission to march off.

10. March off and fall out in allocated area.

It is emphasised that during the whole time Sections are on the parade ground, they will be judged on general smartness and efficiency, and on the execution of any movements they may carry out.

D I Burnett Major RE

OC 516 Corps Field Survey Coy RE

**Result:** The drill competition was won by - HQ “B” Section - Sergt Bell

## **REPORT ON FRUSTRATED EVACUATION AT KALAMAI GREECE on 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> April 1941**

**by Lieut J H Nield RE 517 Corps Field Survey Company RE**

(In the previous Newsletter (Issue 61) I included an article - *512 Army Field Survey Company RE - The Mobile Echelon in Greece - March 1941* by Lieut G H H Quiggin RE, which describes his escape from Greece. I have since found another report about this episode written by Lieut J H Nield RE of 517 Corps Field Survey Coy RE, which covers the same situation in greater detail. I have also included photographs taken by 2/Lieut Frank Spaven at the time, plus details of the ships concerned with their escape)

0-0-0-0-0-0-0

On the 25th March I left the company, 517 Corps Field Survey Company RE, with 2/Lieut Spaven RE and two Topo sections under orders to proceed to Amiriya. On 1st April we embarked at Alexandria at 1630 hrs and arrived at Piraeus 1430 on April 3rd. I reported my arrival to No 80 Base Sub-Area HQ.

On April 11th under orders from Survey Directorate, Athens 2/Lieut Spaven proceeded with one Topo section to Volos and I took the other Topo section to Chalkis on the island of Euboya. The job was the spotting and plotting of positions of mines dropped from enemy aircraft in these harbours. Both officers in charge of sections were ordered to report to Military Commanders at these places and to contact the Naval S.T.O's also. On arrival at Chalkis I discovered that "Military Commander" meant a captain of A.A. Defences who almost immediately left for Thebes and was obviously too occupied to exercise any such function. I reported to Commander Haines, the senior British Naval officer and took over a limited portion of the harbour from the Greek Naval authorities for observation.

On April 16th, 2/Lieut Spaven brought in his section to Chalkis as Volos was being evacuated after intense bombing and mine laying by the enemy. He then left for Athens on the 17th to obtain information, leaving his section with me. 2/Lieut Spaven returned to Chalkis on the 18th with orders to return with his section to Athens, which he did on the 19th. No orders or information was passed from Athens.

On the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Chalkis was heavily bombed by formations of enemy planes. There was no opposition on the 21<sup>st</sup> as by then the A.A. Unit had left Chalkis and Greek units did not go into action. I discovered that the D.I.D had also moved out on the night of the 20<sup>th</sup>.

Commander Nicholls who had replaced Comdr Haines as S.T.O. at Chalkis could give me no information. A Security Officer gave me reassuring information which subsequently proved to be quite wrong. The only other British Unit now left at Chalkis was Palestinian Docker Company RE (No 608, I believe) whose officers I could not find. 2/Lieut Spaven, before he left had told me that Capt Wylie and Lieut Burrows of my Company were in charge of an advanced Map Depot somewhere along the road between Chalkis and Thebes and I determined to contact them for information.

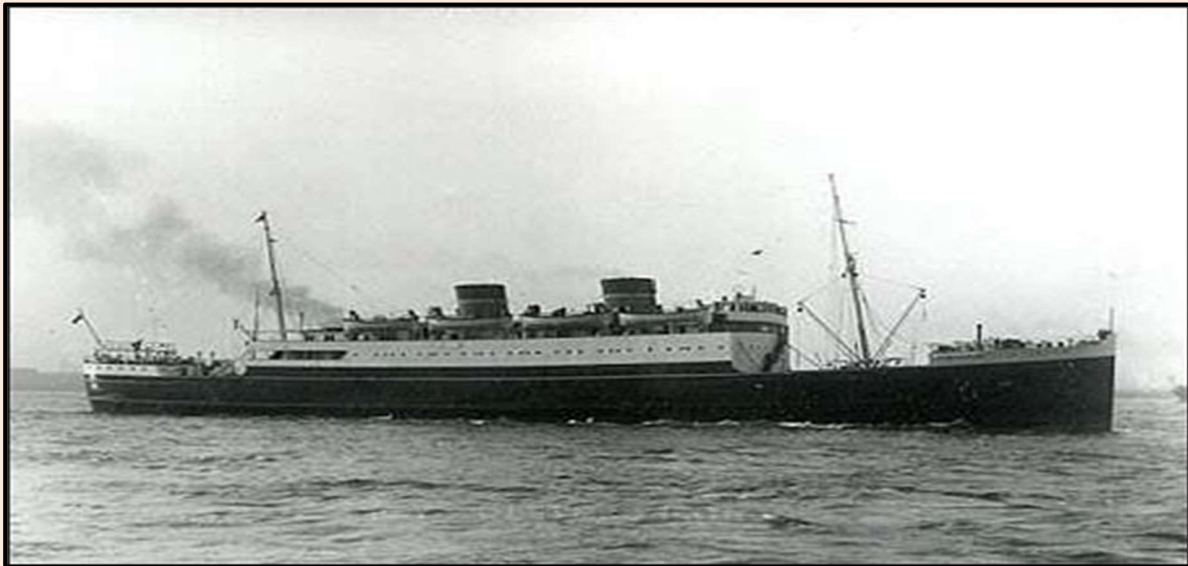
On April 22nd, 2/Lieut Boycott arrived from Athens and took away my valuable equipment such as theodolites and chronometers and passed to me the following comment from Survey Directorate. "If you are doing any good where you are, stay. If not, you can return to Athens". I decided that, as the moon had set and the situation was obviously tricky, to return to Athens.

I contacted Capt Wylie on the evening of the 22<sup>nd</sup> and moved with him and both our sections under his command to Athens on the 23<sup>rd</sup> being machine gunned on the way. I took with me Mr Dawson, the British Council Representative at Chalkis, as he was stranded and he was later very valuable to us and others as an interpreter.

The party arrived at Athens at 1430 hrs and reported to the Survey Directorate, GHQ, where evacuation preparations were in full swing. We were ordered to join Capt Birch and 512 Army Field Survey Company RE at Philothei (Athens) and destroying M.T. and other equipment, prepared to evacuate with minimum of personal gear at 1530 hrs. This was done and the whole party (512 Field Survey Company RE, 517 Field Survey Company RE, three sections and No 9 Map Depot) under Capt Birch, proceeded to a northern suburban station of Athens where we debussed for the train due at 1700 hrs. The train was late and arrived at midnight, moving out at about 0100 hrs on the 24<sup>th</sup>. We arrived at Argos at 1230 hrs 24<sup>th</sup> and were met by the R.T.O. who informed us that there would be no embarkation except from the beach. We were ordered by him to disperse beyond the town area and at night march to the beach.

No other orders were given. The train journey from Athens was continually interrupted during the hours of daylight by the timidity of the Greek drivers and lack of discipline of the Palestinian docker companies who left the train and so invited the attention of enemy aircraft who bombed us on one occasion.

On the evening of the 24<sup>th</sup> after lying up all day we proceeded to the beach north of Nauplion and directly south of Argos station arriving at 2030 hrs. At 2100 hrs two seaplanes alighted in the in the harbour near Nauplion and at 2130 hrs the *Ulster Prince* steamed in in the dusk directly towards us so fast that she went aground and did not get off until 2230 hrs.



*HMS Ulster Prince* was wrecked at Nauplion in Greece in April 1941, whilst trying to evacuate troops. She was destroyed the following day on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1941 by Stuka dive bombers. The ship was built in 1929/30 for the Belfast Steamship Co in Belfast by Harland & Woolf for use on the Belfast - Liverpool Service. She weighed 3756 tons and had a speed of 17knots.

She did not answer any of the light signals made to her and steamed over to Nauplion where we could not see her. She again went aground there and was finally dive-bombed the next day and set on fire and destroyed by the enemy.

At 0300 hrs, roughly, on 25<sup>th</sup> the O.C. Train and our contingent (about 900 Officers and men) decided that no embarkation would take place and we dispersed and slept as far as the drizzle and cold would allow.

At 0800 hrs on the 25<sup>th</sup> a Captain of Indian Remounts (since evacuated at Kalamai) and 2/Lieut Boycott of the 512 Company RE went in to Nauplion and Lieut Burrows and myself of 517 Company R.E. went to Argos to obtain information. On the way to Argos, an R.A. Captain informed me that we should have reported to Nauplion H.Q. the previous day and that there was a conference of O's C at Nauplion at 1000 hrs that morning. Lieut Burrows and I therefore proceeded to Nauplion and with 2/Lt Boycott attended the conference where we handed particulars of strengths to Col White the O.C. Troops.

We were ordered to move to No 3 Dispersal Area east of Nauplion that night and finally arrived by truck there at 0130 hrs 26<sup>th</sup> where the camp Commandant (a Capt of R.A.C.) took me as unit representative to report again to Col White at HQ Nauplion. At 0230 hrs I there received orders from him for the units 512, 517 Coys sections RE and No 9 Map Depot to entrain at Nauplion for Kalamai at 0500 hrs. The units so named under Capt Birch marched to the station and paraded at 0500 hrs, but the train did not arrive.

At daylight 26<sup>th</sup>, orders were given to disperse near the station area and this was promptly carried out. The O.C. train was Major Pemberton of Royal Corps of Signals. At 1000 hrs the train arrived and orders were given for rapid entrainment. Owing to shortness of time and dispersal three sappers of 517 Company and four of 512 Company were left behind. It is believed that they went in search of food in the town. On the orders of Major Pemberton, all troops were kept inside the train with shutters closed throughout the train journey and an officer was placed on the footplate of each of the two engines. Only necessary stops for water were made and although enemy planes were over throughout the journey, no attack was made on the train. No Palestinian Companies were on this train.

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The troop train from Navplion to Kalamata - photograph taken about midday on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1941. The train is about to cross the lattice girder viaduct at Sirtis between Achladokampos and Eleohorion villages. There were Ju 87s overhead at the time but, did not attack. There were about 50 RASC, 517 Topo and Map Depot pers and other L of C troops, plus Greeks on board. A Tank Corps major was on the footplate of the 1st engine. Photograph was taken from a window of rear carriage.

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We arrived at Kalamai at 2000 hrs on the 26<sup>th</sup> and were informed by R.T.C. that no embarkation would take place that night and we were to march out and disperse to the east of the town which we did at 2130 hrs. Embarkation did in fact take place and when the troops heard of it, this being the second time it contributed to the unease and loss of morale and made disciplined action difficult.

Capt Birch and Lieut Burrows attended a conference at 1100 hrs on 27<sup>th</sup> at which the troops (approx 7,000 men) were divided in forces of about 1,000 men each. Major Pemberton was O.C. of the first force in order of embarkation and 512, 517 and other Survey Units under Capt Birch were placed about fourth in this force. A force Conference at 1600 hrs 27<sup>th</sup> arranged this detail and we marched to Kalamai dock approaches at 2000 hrs and the whole body of troops were assembled along the approaches in correct sequence and in good order and discipline by 2130 hrs where rations were issued for half a day.

At 0200hrs on the 28<sup>th</sup> we were informed that no embarkation would take place and that we were to disperse in the foothills to the north of Kalamai as we had been heavily bombed and machine gunned throughout daylight on the 27<sup>th</sup> by the enemy with no means of reply except small arm fire. Incidentally Discipline in Survey Units was excellent under these trials and no casualties were suffered as was the case in other units.

A conference for O's C Units was ordered for 1400 hrs 28<sup>th</sup> but I did not hear of any orders for a picquet on the road to warn of the arrival of the enemy. Our information as to the position of the enemy was very poor and I gathered that a very small force of A.F.V's (part of a Hussar Regt) were attempting a delaying action at Magalopolis to the enemy advancing from Patras and Corinth. Throughout the 28<sup>th</sup> there was a little bombing activity by the enemy in spite of our complete inability to reply effectively the previous day but all day long there was a continuation of mysterious rifle shots all over the area until dusk.

Although some of our troops may have been partly responsible I believe that the enemy had odd sharp-shooters dotted about the hills trying to create a panic or at any rate upset discipline. Capt Birch and Capt Wylie returned from the Conference at about 1600 hrs with orders to repeat the previous night's routine. No information or orders with regard to any possible enemy action was given. I saw no written orders at any time in the retreat from Athens.

During this day the officers of the Survey units including myself, had visualised the possibility that we would be left to the tender mercies of the enemy and had discussed a plan in the event of being surrounded without a possibility of embarkation at this last port. I had considered this at Chalkis where in the event of the bridge going I should have been isolated. This plan we finally carried out successfully with some modifications.



Rest during Withdrawal – Hillside above Kalamata (Kalamai) 28 April 41  
Dawson (Brit Council) Tony Boycott, Peter Nield, Capt W Birch (Map Depot) POW, Capt Colin Wylie (POW 29th)

At 1930 hrs we marched out to Kalamai. By this time bursts of machine gun fire could be heard in the vicinity of the dock area. On our way in we passed large numbers of disorganised troops of all kinds who had lost their units in the general streaming back in the dark the previous night. Some of these shouted that to go on was useless as the enemy held the town.

We proceeded to the first control point to the accompaniment of increasing machine gun fire arriving at about 2030 hrs. As tracer bullets were flying in all directions, here we halted and took cover made more efficient by the sudden discharge over our heads of a large shell and mortar bombs.

As none seemed to know what was happening I went forward to the junction with the main dock road about one mile from pier head and found a Major of Australians (or N.Z.) who told me that Col Howland of the A.I.F. was taking charge and that a small force of the enemy with two or three A.F.V's, machine guns, mortars and a 60 pounder gun, held the pier head. He said that a N.Z. Company with three heavy machine guns had gone forward to engage the enemy and that disciplined armed troops and automatic rifles were urgently required.

I returned and reported to Capt Wylie the situation and called for volunteers to take forward our two Brens which were unfortunately without magazines or ammo destroyed the previous evening. Magazines were found with the Australians and the guns went forward and assisted in dislodging the enemy. It was dark by now (2115 hrs) and Capt Wylie and other Survey Officers had moved sections in support. I was unable to discover them in the dark and moved the remaining section of 517 Company R.E. (my own section) up to join Capt Gray of the 19<sup>th</sup> Australian Brigade H.Q. who had 80 men and I placed myself under his orders in this body of support troops.



By 2300 hrs all was quiet and Capt Gray and a small section of 6 men went up to the pier head and patrolled to find out if the enemy still held out anywhere. About 100 prisoners were taken and parked on the beach under a guard. Lights could now be seen at sea and a number of cars began to move about along the beach roads. Some of these were ambulances containing wounded, some staff cars with officers carrying orders and two large lorries containing officers looking for the embarkation point. Liaison with the Navy was apparently difficult and was upset by the very early capture of the Naval S.T.O at Kalamai by the enemy.

Contradictory orders were by now flying about concerning the point of embarkation and although there was some semblance of order, bodies of troops were moving in opposite directions and in some places there was chaos. There was some mutual suspicion and general determination to get away thus upsetting the previous night's arrangements. I saw an officer signalling to the destroyers at sea from the beach east of Kalamai and boats here took off wounded and I believe about 30 others of all ranks.

After hanging about in various places on the beach east of Kalamai during which time the lights at sea disappeared, the O.C., Brigadier Parrington, came along the beach from unit to unit at about 0200 hrs saying that the Navy had been called away to fight the Italians and that we should have to wait half an hour for further news.

At 0315 hrs news drifted through that the Navy had sent news that they could not embark troops for another 48 hours and that in the light of this the Commanding Officer had sent one of the German prisoners as an envoy to the German Military Authorities asking for an Armistice and offering unconditional surrender. This, I understand was because we were short of food, medical supplies and ammunition and exhausted from lack of food and sleep over the previous seven days.

This was a terrible blow to the officers and men who after the enemy had been overcome confidently expected to be taken off. The orders which were passed about verbally were to the effect that all troops were to disperse as before in case the enemy airforce should be in ignorance of the surrender and parade the following morning under their respective O's C. units to surrender.

Under Capt Birch, the Survey units marched silently back to our previous dispersal area east of Kalamai. Further orders had been given that officer's other than O's. C. units could attempt to escape if they wished. It seemed that the time for "every man for himself" had come and on arrival at the dispersal area I informed Capt Wylie that I intended to make a break for it and Lieut Burrows, Lieut Quiggin, 2/Lt Boycott, 2/Lt Spaven, Mr Dawson wished to go also.

We therefore seized a derelict lorry (3-ton) and stocked it with petrol and such food as we had and joined by Dvr Bennington of my section and a 512 Company driver, Cooper, proceeded with all haste to get away down the road southwards as it was now about 0530 hrs and nearly light.

Capt Birch, Capt Wylie and Lieut Mansbridge elected to stay and we said goodbye. The troops were by this quite dispirited, dejected and wearily resigned to their fate generally. The road rapidly deteriorated and it was with considerable difficulty that we reached the road head at Kardamili owing to the size of our truck and the narrowness of the road which wound up through the hills. We arrived at Kardamili at 0750 hrs where we found many discarded W.D. vehicles of all descriptions stripped to the bone by the local inhabitants.

The greed of these villagers and their lightning like rapacity had to be seen to be believed. In turning my back for less than a second, I lost my travelling rug which was filched by one of the old crones standing near. Examination of boats in the harbour proved fruitless. Apparently some officers who had arrived the previous day had cleared the place out. The track from here on was terrible but we attempted to get a staff car over the rocks at imminent risk of falling over the cliffs into the sea. This attempt was abandoned and throwing away everything but sheer necessities we started but to march southwards along the coast.

This was no easy task owing to the rugged and heavily indented nature of this coast line. In some places it was necessary to remove the shoes and socks and with gear sling around our necks creep barefoot along the cliffs which here fell sheer to the sea. At a small inlet about four miles south of Kardamili we saw a caique of about 60 tons burthen on which a number of soldiers were moving about. Mr Dawson and two officers went aboard to enquire what was happening. A Major, some officers and a mixed bag of troops were attempting to get the engines running. We decided that the Boche was too close to be healthy and marched on.

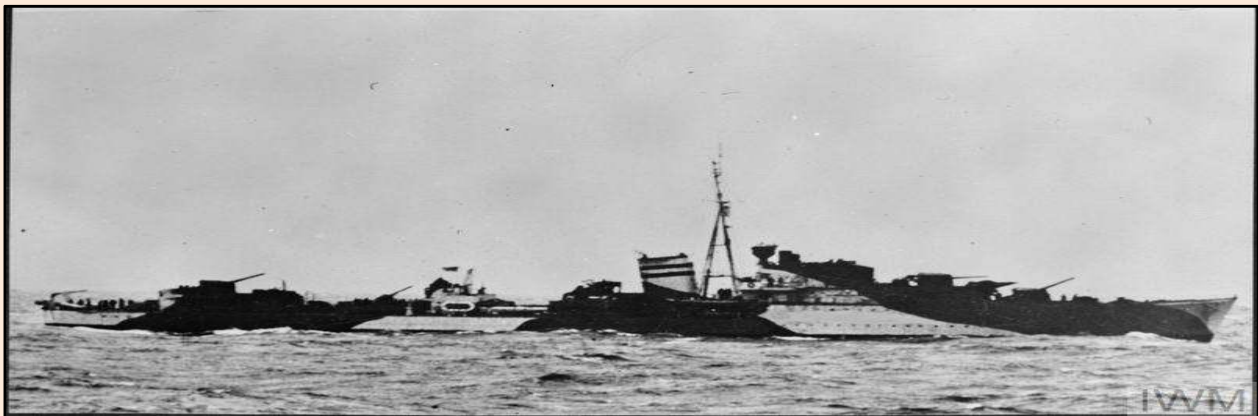
Enquires at villages on our route met with the invariable reply that there were boats further on; always the light of hope danced ever enticingly ahead. The Greek villages wished only to see our embarrassing backs. About 10 miles from Kardamili at Selini we were shown a mysterious message in pencil on a message sheet purporting to be from a naval officer to a Captain Vial indicating that troops would be taken off by destroyer in this vicinity. We were very suspicious of this and no officers responsible for this were ever found.

About 1330 hrs dive-bombers appeared and we took cover. The caique we had left behind was bombed and set on fire. I heard later from the people aboard her that three or four were killed and a number badly wounded. At 1500 hrs we were overtaken by Lt Col Renton who was, I believe, in charge of the Palestinian troops in Greece. In spite of having been bombed and nearly drowned in one attempted embarkation and obviously seriously exhausted, with the aid of a staff, a donkey, various helpers and his own weary legs, he eventually reached Trachila even passing the goat track across the cliffs. I would like to pay tribute as did we all to the cheerful courage and pertinacity of this officer.

As a result of confirmed reports of three caiques at Trachila we struggled on to this point arriving near sunset in a sorry state. We found on arrival that there were three caiques but that none was keen to tackle them after the fate of the other one was known. We were told that Col Bower of a Rajput Regt, in civilian clothes, was in the village trying to induce the villagers to assist us. Mr Dawson, in spite of his exhaustion, went on to the village and spent many hours with Col Bower trying to persuade the villagers to lend or hire or sell us a boat. He was confident the Navy would turn up some time.

We heard here that the Boche was in Areopolis, or a little further down and that he had also visited Selini behind us. Here, at Trachila, we were joined by stragglers and the wounded and almost naked crew of the first caique which had been bombed. These were all soon lying down either eating or sleeping in the orchards above the harbour and village. I counted them roughly and made us about 90 strong all ranks in Trachila.

At 1100 hrs Mr Dawson was able to conclude the sale to us of a clumsy but sound four-oared dinghy and we decided to put to sea and try and pick up the Navy. The crew consisted of Col Bower, Capt Walton (Northampton Yeomanry) Mr Dawson, Lieut Burrows, Lieut Quiggin, 2/Lieut Boycott, 2/Lieut Spaven, Dvr Bennington, who is a native of the Isle of Wight, and knowledgeable about boats, and myself. We were unable to make much headway owing to our lack of skill and our exhaustion but at about 0230 hrs on the 30<sup>th</sup> we saw a light to sea, having by then travelled about five miles and being about one mile of shore. We signalled S.O.S by torch and rowed frantically towards the light. The sound of a motor boat was presently heard and continuing periodic light signals we were eventually hailed by the motor boat of *H.M.S. Kimberley* which took us in tow.



HMS Kimberley was ordered from the yards of John Thornycroft & Co, Woolston, Hampshire under the 1937 Programme. She was laid down on 17 January 1938 as Yard No 1179. She was launched on 1 June 1939 and commissioned on 21 December. She had a standard displacement of 1,690 tons and a speed of 36 knots. Her armament was – 3 twin 4.7inch guns, 1 quad 2-pounder AA gun, 2 Quad 0.5 inch AA machine guns, 2 quin torpedo tubes and 20 depth charges. She survived the war and was de-commissioned and sold for scrap in March 1949.

By this time Mr Dawson, who had little protection from the weather, was slightly delirious with the cold and exhaustion and we were taken aboard the motor boat and finally went aboard the destroyer at 0315 hrs. As they were already late they could not return to rescue the others and the Navy proceeded with all speed to Crete where we arrived shortly after day-break.



Escapes: 517 Coy - Those that got away 30<sup>th</sup> April 1941. Back left - Tony Boycott, back 4 from left Peter Nield back far right Jack Burrows  
Front - Bennington, Spaven, Dawson (Brit Council). On HMS Kimberley 1<sup>st</sup> May between Crete and Alexandria

Col Renton, Col Bower and ourselves then gave our estimates of the numbers still in hiding along the beaches. As a result of our information the three destroyers *Isis*, *Hero* and *Kimberley* were ordered back to the Peloponesian coast the following night and senior officers taken aboard for Alexandria were disembarked again. We put out to sea at about 1930 hrs 30<sup>th</sup> April. Volunteers were called for to guide in the motor boat and Dawson and myself were selected.

At 2400 hrs we were awakened and went on the bridge to report to the Captain. We went aboard the motor boat off Trachila at 0100 hrs and put into the harbour. The entrance is rocky and dangerous and we were slow on getting in. At my suggestion the whaler in tow was unleashed and rowed in and embarkation began. Two signal personnel on the cliffs were contacted throughout. About 80 all ranks were taken off here and some 40 from caves further south.

The total evacuated this and the previous night was I believe about 200 souls. We discovered that the party we had left had found our boat empty and riddled with machine gun bullets and concluding hope was gone had offered surrender to the enemy. Happily we arrived in time. They were left alone undoubtedly on account of the inaccessibility of these beaches.

We left the vicinity at 0500 hrs abandoning the motor boat which went on to the rocks. We arrived at Alexandria as an air raid was in progress and put to sea arriving at Port Said at 1630 hrs on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 41. Here we disembarked at 1830 hrs after expressing our heartfelt thanks to the officers and crew of *H.M.S. Kimberley* and saying goodbyes. I reported to O.C. 512 Company at Abbassia, Cairo on 3<sup>rd</sup> May and on orders from Survey Directorate remained there to gather kit and energy.

7/5/41

J H Nield  
Lieut R.E.

#### Sources:

War Diaries for 517 Corps Field Survey Company RE - TNA Folder WO 169/1905

Ship details and photographs – Wikipedia

Photographs kindly donated by Frank Spaven – Historic Archive (Greece) on Military Survey Branch REA Website

Noel Grimmett

## Obituaries

### Brian Houldershaw

11<sup>th</sup> November 1941 to 27<sup>th</sup> October 2016



L – R: - Brian Houldershaw, Andy Thomas, June Houldershaw, Norma Lees, Jim Butterworth, Tim and Ada Holt, Margaret Thomas, Bill Lees, Margaret Butterworth, Neil and Norma McQueen. Hotel Mirage at Riva Del Garda Italy – 6<sup>th</sup> May 2006

Brian was born at Heckmondwike, just outside Leeds or as they say ‘Leeds is just outside Heckmondwike’.

He joined the Army in January 1959, signing on for 9 years, at Penny Pot Lane, Harrogate-- Army Apprentice School. I first met Brian in September 1959 after our basic training and summer leave. It was the start of our survey career. There were nine of us on the course. Brian (the eldest), then Cliff Greensitt (born January 1942), JJ (Jazz) Gould (February 1942), RA (Bob) Pomroy (September 1942), me R (Prof) Jones (October 1942), Ken Sampson (December 1942), Dave Nunley (February 1943), AA (Al) Claxton (October 1943), and our youngest GG (Grant) Ward November 1943). As you see Brian was looked up to by all as our big brother and he kept us on the straight and narrow (well most of the time). In Easter 1961 we were transferred to Army Apprentice College, Chepstow where we finished our basic survey course.

In Easter 1962 we were posted to Cove, Hampshire for Combat Engineer training a must for all Royal Engineers. We came out qualified to dig holes and blow up bridges. Of the 9 - 5 of us were posted to Singapore and 4 to Aden. We were very lucky that we left in early October 1962 for Singapore, missing that terrible 1962/63 winter, the Aden lot due to mid-November were delayed until the following April.

We arrived in Singapore, 5 young lads, no idea what to do and there wasn't anyone to meet us. So we were sent to a transit camp to await collection. After five days we thought we had better do something. So looking through the Military telephone directory we found a Survey Unit (84 Survey Squadron), phoned them and were told they were expecting us, but did not know when - a very good start to our posting. After getting to the Unit we were sent straight back to the transit camp to start a Malay language course for six weeks. Every evening we were told to go out and practice Malay (the best places were the bars). At the end of the six weeks we were all quite proficient at Malay. In January 1963 we were posted to Lands and Surveys, Kuching, Sarawak. Jazz and I flew out Malay Airways. Brian with Bob and Scouse went by boat, Strait Steamship “Rajah Brooke” (a local tramp steamer that plied up and down the coast of Borneo). I believe that had quite a rough crossing. Poor Al Claxton drew the short straw and came by Royal Navy minesweeper; he will never forget that journey.

On arrival at Kuching we were given an upgrading exam, Brian managed to pass it. We then proceeded to carry out numerous short trips into the jungle to re-establish survey control, as most had been destroyed before the Japanese arrived only 20 years before. Some very nice trips like six weeks along the beaches checking the local vilages for information. In September 1963 I was posted to North Borneo and Brian stayed in Kuching, later moving to Sibiu and way up country to Naga Gaat.

I next met Brian in Singapore in October 1965 as both of had spent our entire three year tour in Borneo. We were both posted to Barton Stacey and on arrival after our disembarkation leave we were put into a Geodetic Troop to carry out trials on new equipment. In May, putting experience to use, Brian was posted to Northern Ireland, I followed shortly after and we stayed at Kelly's Guest House. Mrs Kelly was a fantastic cook. Our task was carrying Geodetic Astronomy and our hours of work were 7pm to 5am. Looking back at the report in the 7 months we were in Ireland we averaged 5 nights per month working. BUT we had to stay nocturnal in case the next night was clear. Luckily the Guest House had a lovely daughter (June) who showed us the local night life when we couldn't work. In August Brian went back to England for a short break and we moved to Cork. Brian then returned and stayed to the end of the task in December 1966. In the meantime Brian had popped up to Dublin and got engaged to that lovely daughter from Kelly's Guest House (June).

Brian had decided that marriage and being a surveyor in the army wasn't compatible and his 9 years was due up in November 1968. I was posted back to Borneo, and in December 1967 Brian turned to carry out some geodetic work for our troop. Whilst Brian was staying with me we were catching up with what we had been doing and suddenly my wife approached us and asked what we wanted for breakfast, we had been talking all night. In between times Brian had been on various detachments, throughout UK and Europe and Africa. Returning to UK in March 1968, he got married to June and then left the Army and moved to Whitley Bay. In due course Brian and June had a daughter Siobhan and son Bernard.

Over the following years we met up and had a good chin wag, lasting many hours. Two weeks ago I came up see Brian and say cheerio. As soon as he heard my voice he asked to be sat up and asked Siobhan to find a particular toy double decker bus (red and cream), West Yorkshire, we found it and insisted that I keep it. It was the bus we used to catch at Harrogate camp to go to town on Saturday nights in 1959. On the front of the bus was "Penny Pot Lane". It now has the pride and place in my front room.

Before attending the funeral I contacted a number people that knew Brian and I got the same response - "*One of the good guys, always reliable, honest, trustworthy and hardworking*". I did not receive a single negative reply.

Brian, a brother as well as my best friend - Rest in Peace (Berehat dengan Amon)

**Roger (Prof) Jones** (Gave the eulogy at Brian's funeral)

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**Kenneth Browning**

27<sup>th</sup> July 1943 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016



23784699 Warrant Officer Class 2 RE and Detective Constable B 815, Sussex Constabulary – and also Seaford Bowling Club Champion 2004, 2011 & 2013

Dad joined the Army with the Royal Engineers when he was 16 and one of his pals he joined with was Frank Johnson, is here today. He also met and fell in love with Mum (Val) at this time. When my brother Dave was born Dad was posted to Borneo and served alongside the Malaysian Army leaving his wife and 12 day old son in Hastings.

Mum & Dave followed Dad out to Singapore 9 months later and returned to England after two years with me on the way, he was met off the plane by his mate Barry Hughes who helped carry the bags, Barry is also here today.

A couple of months later I was born and Dad was posted to Germany when I was only 8 weeks old. This time Mum, Dave and I followed and returned a couple of years later when my sister Jo was born. We followed Dad to various places to live and this created a bond that we all still share today.

Most kids had their holidays at the seaside or camping, Dad took us to Australia for a couple of years when he was posted on a secondment to the Australian Army. We had such great times as kids, our childhood was a real adventure and it is a testament to mum and dad that we are still a close family today. We never worried as kids as we knew Mum and Dad were always there, he always made us feel secure and has supported us all through the tough times and shared our joy in the good times.

I'm going to need an hour to do Dad justice as he lead such a full and active life, his professional life was dedicated to public service and his private life to his family, well us, and the bowls club. After 23 years' service in the Army they realised that if they now put Dad in charge of a war he would probably offer the enemy one of his American hard gums and want to sit down for a chat and a cup of tea and ask what all the fuss was about.

Dad joined Sussex Police and was only a rookie copper new to the beat when the IRA bombed Maggie Thatcher at the Grand Hotel in Brighton. Working in the aftermath and not one to miss an opportunity he managed to slip a Grand Hotel tea cup in his pocket as a souvenir. It is still in the cabinet at home.

He had great times in both the Police and the Army. Dad showed us a newspaper clipping once from the local rag - it read:

*A man had jumped ship before clearing customs at Newhaven port and was on the run. The man came across a jogger along the seafront and asked for directions and help to the station. The jogger disarmed him with his gentle nature and warm smile and said he would happily take him to the station as he was going that way. The jogger led the fugitive to the station but neglected to mention he meant the Police station. Yes, you guessed it Dad was the jogger the poor bloke didn't stand a chance with dad smiling away probably giving a local history lesson as they trundled along.*

Despite having a false titanium knee and being banned from running by Mum and every knee specialist on the planet he still ran the Hastings Half marathon this year for the umpteenth time, racing to the line against my cousin Lee's wife Kym with the commentator egging them on over the loud speaker towards the finishing line.

He swore to mum he wasn't running anymore but when I picked up the contents of his locker from Newhaven Police Station last week where he still volunteered every Monday, I was handed a sack of well-worn trainers, shorts, vests and socks. In the emails of condolences from his police colleagues many of you mentioned how he would go for a run at lunch times. *Dad you have been grassed up and busted!*

Mum & Dad also loved to dance. Mum would gracefully float like a feather cascading down a gentle stream and dad would, well, dad would count. Dancing by numbers mum would say but they did look good on the dance floor and somehow their styles blended together and they had great fun together doing the tango, rhumba and 'cha cha cha', with their pals.

No one had a bad word to say about dad, well I say that? People would often groan when yet again they lost to him in a quiz down the con club, or were runner up in yet another bowls final. I bet there isn't a person here who hasn't groaned at Dad without realising it, when you have been stuck in a queue of traffic behind a silver fiesta doing 25 miles an hour on the A259 between Seaford and Eastbourne. He was probably whinging in his coffin today that the hearse was going too fast!!

Dad was a *gentleman*, but also had a wicked sense of fun, he really enjoyed his life and I know he had no regrets and was genuinely happy.

The funeral took place at Hastings Crematorium and the Chapel was full of family and friends. Mike Payne was in attendance with the Branch Standard.

**Barry Browning** (Gave the eulogy at Ken's funeral)

## Post Script – ABERFAN

Following on from Ron Birch's article on his involvement in the ABERFAN disaster I can report that other survey personnel also had an involvement in support of the subsequent enquiry: -

**Tom Farmer** – *From Bill Codd's knowledge – 'Tom Farmer was serving at Ordnance Survey(O.S.) at the time and shortly afterwards was charged with the historical research of the O.S. Maps around the area with emphasis on the stream running through the valley and the gradual build- up of mining waste on the stream. He was then called as an expert witness at the enquiry'.*

**Maurice Friend** – *'I was at the other end of the sad event, out of the army by then and working at Hunting Surveys in their aerial triangulation section, one of the biggest Aerial Survey companies in England, now gone. We had the job of collating all the air photos over the site going back in time, for the Government enquiry. I remember plotting the same pile of pit props on the slag heaps over the previous years and finding them slowly sliding down. Not apparent to the naked eye'.*

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**Will members please inform the Secretary of any changes to their contact details and in particular their e-mail address! Thank you**

**Visit [www.militarysurvey.org.uk](http://www.militarysurvey.org.uk)**

**Members Please Note - The 'SMS Course and Historical Photographs' have now been uploaded to the website and are available to view - click the link 'Historic Archive'.**

**THE MILITARY SURVEY BRANCH OF THE REA**

**REUNION**

**1830hrs FOR 1900hrs FRIDAY THE 31<sup>ST</sup> OF MARCH 2017**

**PRECEDED BY AN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**1700hrs FRIDAY THE 31<sup>ST</sup> OF MARCH 2017**

Please note that the bar will be open from 1830hrs. Food will be served at about 2000hrs.

**Accommodation:** A small number of rooms might possibly be available but members have to note that as the barracks are no longer under the command of RSMS that this may prove to be too difficult. Hotel facilities are available at junction 13 of the M4 motorway and locally at Chievely too and remember we will provide transport to these locations at the close of the evening.

**Dress:** Smart casual or better if you wish!

**WARNING: - Hermitage has become a high security Barracks and entry will only be permitted to those who have returned this entry form with their details; identity checks may well be required to gain access to the camp.**

It is vital to establish firm attendance figures early and so once again we would request that you return this form ASAP:

**SO PLEASE SEND RETURNS BEFORE THE 13<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2017 TO:**

M. Perry, 101 Craven Road, Newbury, Berks, RG14 5NL

Problems? [Then contact me on] [mandpdperry@sky.com](mailto:mandpdperry@sky.com) or Tel; 01635 37510

From: Forename:..... Surname:.....

Address: - Tel No: - .....  
E-mail: - .....

Type & Make of transport:.....Registration No .....

**I \*shall/\*shall not be attending the Reunion on Friday 31 March 2017.**

**I \*wish to/\*will be unable to: - attend the AGM beforehand.**

**Guests: Wives/partners are welcome 1 ..... 2.....**

**PLEASE - REMEMBER THE SOLDIERS GEO SUPPORT FUND**

**I enclose a cheque to support this for £..... payable to “Military Survey Branch REA”**

If you have any special dietary needs or require **disabled access** please detail these below and every attempt will be made to accommodate them.

NB: Military units do not cater for severely disabled conditions (for obvious reasons) and we apologise in advance for any shortcomings that might cause individual inconvenience.