



# The Military Survey (Geo) Branch

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## HISTORY of the GEOGRAPHICAL SECTION, GENERAL STAFF During WW1 (Military Operations 4 to 1914, now Military Intelligence 4) by Colonel Sir Walter Coote Hedley KBE CB CMG

*Colonel Sir Walter Coote Hedley KBE CB CMG (12 December 1865 – 27 December 1937) was a British Army officer who began his career in the Royal Engineers and later moved into military intelligence.*

*Hedley was commissioned into the Royal Engineers in 1884. He became a surveyor in the 1890s and was attached to the Ordnance Survey. This work was interrupted by service in South Africa throughout the Second Boer War, and from 1906–1908 by his appointment as an advisor to the Survey of India.*

*In 1911 he was appointed to command M.O.4, also known as the Geographical Section of the General Staff. During the First World War this organisation was responsible for producing all the maps required by British Empire forces around the world, and in particular mapping the ever-changing trench system on the Western Front. Following the end of the war, he retired from the army in 1920. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and served on the society's council.*

*He was also a gifted amateur sportsman who played first-class cricket for several County Championship sides and competed to a high level in rackets and golf. Hedley's first-class cricket career began in 1888 with the Gentlemen of England and Kent County Cricket Club. The majority of his county matches were for Somerset County Cricket Club whom he first represented in 1886 in non-first-class games. His first County Championship games for them were in 1892, and he had a regular place in the side from June of that year. Hedley was also a useful rackets player—reaching the final of the amateur championships, held at the Queen's Club, in 1890. In later life he turned to golf, playing off a scratch handicap.*



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1. The Geographical Section of the General Staff (M.O.4 in 1914 now M.I.4) has always been responsible for the supply of all military maps and for the organisation of all survey, map production and map distribution in the field.

2. In August 1914 the staff was as follows: -

- 1 G.S.O.1. – Colonel W.C. Hedley
- 1 “ 2. – Major E.M. Jack
- 4 “ 3. – Captain A.S. Redman, R.E.
- “ E.W. Cox, R.E.
- “ W.V. Nugent, R.A.
- Lieut O.E. Wynne, R.E.

1 Supt. Clerk – W.R. Barwell, R.E.	
3 Engineer Clerks	
1 Map Curator and 1 Assistant	1 Supt. Lithography and 9 assistants
2 Map Storeman	22 Geographical Draughtsmen
2 Photographers	1 Engraver

Of these all the officers left at once for other duties except Col Hedley and Captain Nugent. All the clerks left except Supt. Clerk Barwell. Captain Nugent left on 16.11.1914 and was replaced by Lt-Col P.J. Gordon. The Engineer Clerks were replaced by civilians.

Supt. Clerk Barwell left on 10.3.15 and was replaced by Mr Fawcett, the Map Storekeeper.

Two of the draughtsmen left during the war to serve with Field Survey Battalions. One printer and 5 assistant printers also served. In September 1914 the printer staff was increased by one printer and four assistants.

3. During the war officers were from time to time attached to M.I.4. either to assist or to get some training before going to France or some other theatre of war, but in the main M.I.4. was run during the whole war by Colonel Hedley, with one officer to help him, and the staff given above.

Lt-Col Gordon was eventually replaced by Captain Romer when it became necessary to have an officer familiar by practical experience with the details of equipment of Field Survey Battalions.

4. There were several reasons why it was possible to carry on such a small staff of officers.

- (a) The Expeditionary Force was so well equipped with maps and the arrangements for further supply had been so well thought out that there was no very great pressure of work at first.
- (b) The whole strength of the Ordnance Survey was placed at the disposal of the War Office.
- (c) Much assistance was obtained from the Royal Geographical Society and other voluntary workers.
- (d) All ordinary work such as map compilation ceased

5. The demands for maps from France were continuous and urgent and it was found immediately necessary to establish two regular routes.

- (a) Southampton – Havre – Rouen.
- (b) Southampton – London – Dover – Boulogne.

The maps for both routes were despatched by the Ordnance Survey. Those which came through London were met by M.I.4. and despatched from Victoria or Charing Cross. After the first few months of war the despatch of maps and stores by both routes was a daily occurrence, the consignments through London often amounting to 2 or 3 tons. Those direct from Southampton were heavier. It was very seldom that any maps were lost.

A lorry was specially allotted to M.I.4. for this service. Maps in very large numbers were also despatched to all other theatres of war.

6. In October 1914 the Belgian “Institut Militaire Cartographique” was evacuated from Brussels and its chief, Colonel Jesne, came to the War Office bringing some of his employees and about 60 tons of stores, including all the plates and stones of the Belgian large-scale maps. Some of these Belgians continued to work in the War Office but were of no use for our work. The plates of the large-scale maps were of great use.

7. The first great development in maps began late in 1914 with the commencement of trench warfare, when the need for large scale squared maps became felt. The necessary arrangements were discussed with GHQ the Ordnance Survey and the well-known system of squared maps on the 1/10000, 1/20000 and 1/40000 scales were evolved. The actual work of the production of these maps rested entirely with the Ordnance Survey until about 2 years later the Survey Companies in France were equipped with printing machinery.

8. No Survey Unit accompanied the original Expeditionary Force to France, but it was not long before a survey section was sent out. This section ultimately developed into 5 Field Survey battalions of a total strength of about 4000, consisting of survey, printing, drawing, sound ranging and observation sections. M.I.4. was the section of the War Office responsible for the gradual development of these Survey Units and for supplying all their needs. All correspondence and demands for stores came to M.I.4.

The store demands were usually distributed to F.W.9., C.2 or the Director General of the Ordnance Survey but many stores were purchased and dispatched by M.I.4. All new organisations and establishments were discussed by G.H.Q. and M.I.4. and many officers for Survey, Sound Ranging and printing were found by M.I.4. for service abroad.

9. The situation described in the previous paragraph was peculiar. We have a section of the Intelligence branch responsible for the organisation and supply of Field Units. The reason was that no other branch of the War Office had any knowledge of survey requirements. The need for survey units on this large scale was quite a new thing and all questions connected with it had to be dealt with by the only section which understood them.

10. It may be worthwhile to state here that Colonel Hedley, on a visit to Paris in May 1915, discovered that the French were keenly interested in Sound Ranging. Colonel Hedley reported the fact to G.H.Q. and discovered that Sound Ranging had already been proposed and rejected as impracticable. On his representations however and those of Col Jack the matter was reconsidered with the results that are now well known. Lieut W. L. Bragg joined M.I.4. on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1915 to take charge of the work and went to France on 31.8.15. We were exceptionally fortunate in securing the services of such a brilliant scientist. To him, more than to any other man, its ultimate success was due.

11. Enormous numbers of maps were printed and distributed for Home Defence and training. The operation maps were on the ¼", ½", 1" and 2½" scales. The correspondence and work involved in arranging for the scales of issue and supply of maps to all the new armies was very large. About 200 Artillery training maps on 1/20000 scale were prepared and issued. All maps of Great Britain and Ireland were printed at the Ordnance Survey from instructions by the War Office. The burden of this work fell principally on Lt-Col Gordon.

12. It will be worthwhile to give a short summary of the work in connection with other campaigns.

(a) A survey section for the Dardanelles was first refused and subsequently wired for and sent. The burden of map supply in Gallipoli fell on the Survey of Egypt, but the original supply of maps and the printing plates for all small-scale maps came from the War Office.

(b) The Survey Section from Gallipoli passed to Salonika and ultimately developed into a Field Survey Company under Lt-Col Wood R.E. including Sound ranging Sections and Observation Groups. The original maps were supplied by the War Office. Printing stores were sent out and excellent maps were eventually prepared locally.

(c) A Survey Company, complete with printing, sound ranging, and observation was sent to Italy.

(d) The original maps of Sinai and Syria were supplied by M.I.4. The Survey Company in Egypt was formed from personnel of the Survey of Egypt. Sound Ranging and Observation Groups were sent from France.

(e) A Survey Section was sent to East Africa. All the maps for that campaign were sent from England. This involved the reproduction of the German 1/300000 map. A work which fell to the Ordnance Survey.

(f) Cameroons A few maps were sent from England, but for the most part the forces in that country depended on their own resources.

(g) German S.W. Africa The existing maps were reproduced and sent out.

(h) North Russia The 10 verst Russian map was transliterated and reproduced and copies were sent to Murmansk and Archangel. Three survey officers and some draughtsmen were sent out, but no regular survey section was supplied. The lack of such a section was much felt.

(I) South Russia Very large numbers of the Russian 10 verst maps were transliterated and printed and were of great use.

(j) The Caucasus A certain number of maps on the 1/M and 1/250000 scales were supplied. There were also at the War Office old plates of the Russian 5 Verst map prepared in 1885. A supply of these was printed and supplied.

(k) Mesopotamia A number of maps on the 1/M and 1/250000 scales were supplied but for the most part India was responsible for maps in this theatre.

13. The maps actually drawn and reproduced in the section were as follows.

- (a) Six sheets of the 1/250000 N.W. Europe
- (b) Ten new sheets of the 1/100000 France
- (c) Many new sheets on the 1/M scale of Turkey in Asia and of East Africa
- (d) A ½M of German East Africa
- (e) Two sheets of Germany 1/250000
- (f) Reproduction of 22 sheets of the German 1/200000
- (g) Five new sheets Greece 1/100000
- (h) Four sheets Sinai 1/250000

In addition to this there was the continuous work of preparing situation maps of the various theatres of war, and of the preparations of endless diagrams. Skeleton maps, etc. The work of preparing new and up to date editions was also very heavy. The normal hours worked by the printers and draughtsmen were 9.30 to 6.30 but longer were often worked.

14. The new maps prepared for the war are given in the catalogues. Some existing maps are included but for the most part they are new. Except for those enumerated in the previous paragraph and for some which were done in Egypt they were all prepared and printed at the Ordnance Survey under instructions from M.I.4. Indexes to names for all the principal theatres of war were prepared by the Royal Geographical Society at the request of the War Office. The Royal Geographical Society also compiled all the 1/1000000 maps of Europe and Asia, under general instructions from M.I.4.

15. The Map Curator's work was very heavy. Applications for reference maps by officers of the General Staff were continuous. I would like to place on record the invaluable work done by Mr Chilcott in supplying their needs. It is also a testimony to his foresight and care in keeping his collection complete that during the whole war it was rarely indeed that a map was brought to our notice which was not already in stock.

16. Map Store The work was very heavy and great credit is due to Mr Darley and Mr Weaver – They had to cope with a vast increase in the influx and efflux of maps, and on them fall the burden of seeing our own maps and those from Southampton onto the train for Folkestone to France and to other theatres of war. On this duty they were constantly occupied up till late at night. It is worthy of notice that during the whole war scarcely a single package of maps was lost. Mr Darley was assisted by a small staff of "packers". Mr Darley also arranged for the mounting of maps and this work was also very heavy.

17. All the draughtsmen worked very well. The maps drawn by them are enumerated in paragraph 11. The existence of such a staff of first-class draughtsmen was very valuable. It was impossible to spare many of them to the Army – only two were allowed to go.

18. Lithographic Section The output of maps by this comparatively small section was remarkable. Annexe "A" gives details. The section worked admirably. Under its very able superintendent, Mr Crawford, whose knowledge of organization and of all lithographic methods was invaluable. It should be recorded that Mr Crawford visited all the lithographic sections in France and taught them much – Mr Crawford also made the arrangements when it was found necessary to put work out to private firms, as was occasionally the case.

19. Photographic Section Mr Cable and his assistant did admirable work throughout the war. His work was very heavy – Annexe "B" gives details.

20. Clerical Staff Very early in the war Mr Fawcett was transferred from the Map Store to fill the position of Chief Clerk. He was the only man in the office with any previous knowledge of the working of the Section. On him fell the burden of the large correspondence, of making all the arrangements for transmitting maps and stores to France and other theatres of war, and of dealing with the bills for the considerable quantity of stores purchased by M.I.4. The provision of lithographic stores for the Americans especially gave a lot of trouble. Mr Fawcett was also responsible for all the internal economy of the office – When it is remembered that he had to train all his own assistants, it is impossible to speak too highly of the way he carried out his work.

## 21. General conclusions –

- (a) It may fairly be said that the preparations for war for which the G.S.G.S was responsible were excellent – The organisation of the section should continue as it was before the war –
- (b) The importance of the preparation of indexes to names became at once apparent on the outbreak of war – This should not be forgotten in future –
- (c) It is most important that the section should have early warning of any new operations that may be intended – As a rule it is not till the last minute that we were asked for maps – It must be remembered that the supply of maps of a new area takes considerable time –
- (d) A survey and map supply unit should accompany every force of whatever size and should be one of the first units to arrive – This was not always recognised before-hand but the need for such a unit always became immediately apparent on the arrival of a force in a theatre of war, and a wire for a survey unit to be sent was the result.

M.I.4.            W C Hedley  
16/2/1920        GSGS

### ANNEXE A

At the outbreak of War, the printing staff consisted of 10 members, 3 of whom were junior assistants.

In September 1914 an addition of a printer and 4 assistants was made and so continued until well into 1919.

From time to time 6 members of the staff were called up for military duty, their places being fulfilled by women and those over and under military age, these added difficulties to the work.

Maps printed at War Office and those printed by contractors all had to be handled and packed in cases by our staff before despatching either to O.S.O or one of the theatres of war which was a great strain upon so small a staff. Many difficulties presented themselves, but they were always overcome.

The actual number of maps printed between August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1914 and November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918 for war and other purposes was 4,814,500 with an average of 4 printings, of which 1,370,000 was printed by contractors.

### ANNEXE B

#### M.I.4. PHOTOGRAPHIC DEPARTMENT

The department worked at high pressure which steadily increased, reaching its maximum in 1918.

New methods were found to overcome difficulties in the reproduction in monochrome of highly coloured foreign maps.

In the case of the 10 Versts Russian maps means were found which enabled the negatives to be used for obtaining plates from which printed copies could be made by the offset process. Over 130 sheets were reproduced, each sheet covering a 28” x 242 negative.

There was a large increase of reversed negatives for heliozincography.

The average number of largest sized prints (28” x 24”0 before the war was 650. In 1918 over 4,000 of this size were completed, and the increase in smaller sizes was about the same.

(Transcribed by Noel Grimmett on 14/01/2018 from TNA file WO 181/716)

Historical Note: Following the retirement of Colonel Hedley in 1920, the GSGS was led by Colonel E M Jack until Colonel H S L Winterbotham took over in 1922. Colonel Winterbotham was succeeded by Colonel M N MacLeod in 1929 with Colonel P K Boulnois taking over in 1935 and through to the start of WW2. On completion of their tours with the GSGS Colonels Jack, Winterbotham and MacLeod became in turn Director Generals of the Ordnance Survey.

## NELSON TWINS in the ARMY GAME

### National Service for Jeffery & Roland Nelson

In late July 1954 my twin brother Jeffrey received his National Service conscription papers, I still had a deferment so not due my call-up at that time. I enquired about going in with him, I was told if I turned up at the medical with him that would be OK, only to be informed on the day that I couldn't, the only way was to sign on for three years, get a higher pay and join a regiment of our choice, both of us being time served letterpress printers were told we could get into a printing unit, the Army had three all outside the UK in Singapore, Egypt and Germany so we signed on, we preferred the Singapore option.

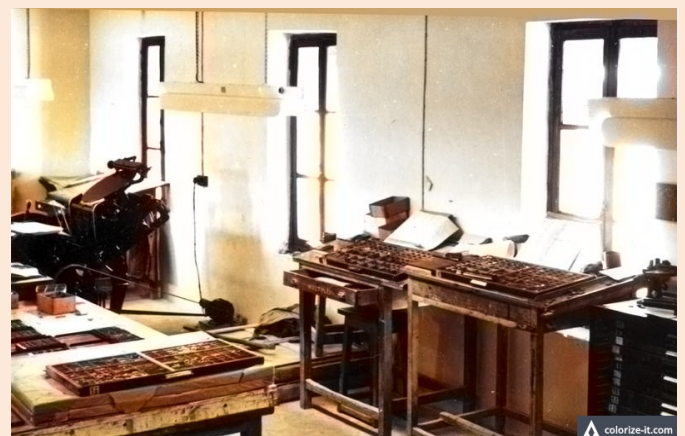
After 8 weeks square bashing and 6 weeks training as Clerks/GD we spent Christmas 1954 at home, then back at the Depot we waited 54 day for a posting it was on the 21st February when we were notified, not Singapore as we hoped, but Egypt and by the 9th March we eventually got to 4 Base Print Unit in Fayid, the unit strength was 82 servicemen plus 2 Officers and 40 civilian staff mostly Egyptians, the Army was leaving Egypt and unit would move to Cyprus with only 28 servicemen and 2 Officers and less equipment.

I settled in alongside my brother he was working one of the typesetting machines, I quickly passed my Army Trade Test for Compositor class AII, and promoted to Corporal, I took charge of the composing room the Sergeant in charge was leaving. In late September the unit started to downsize for the move to Cyprus, most machinery would be sold by auction in Egypt or returned to the UK, the equipment we needed was put in packing cases for storage at 625 Ordnance Depot at Arnica, until new premises were built at Episkopi.



*Jeff and Roland Nelson*

The Print Unit would move in 4 phases, I would be in charge of Phase One, leaving Fayid on the 24th October by plane, my brother could have come with me but he applied for a posting to Singapore, so he remained in Egypt, I would be on six month's detachment along with 3 other RAOC personnel, to 42 Survey (a Royal Engineer map printing unit) based in an old war time military hospital at Zyyi, (pronounced Ziggy) the camp was on the coast between Larnaca and Episkopi, our job was to print the weekly General Orders and other publications required by GHQ we would be working throughout the night on 42's letterpress equipment so has not to interfere with their daytime operation, we were based in 32 Litho Squadron and not subject to any of 42's discipline we were excused guards and other duties, this did not make us popular at the Zyyi. All 4 Base Print personnel wore a white shoulder flash this made us look more like officer cadets.



Major Holdorf the CO of 4 Base Print visited us regularly, but we were left to our own devices, on one occasion he came with his new car, and while showing me around it, I asked him if I would be able to purchase one, to my surprise he said he would look into it for me.

Christmas that year was spent at 625 Ordnance Depot which at Larnaca Airstrip were all the printing equipment was being stored prior to being located to a new building at Episkopi, there I was reunited with my brother his request for posting to Singapore had been rejected, he was on now at 625 without a job so they put him in charge of the canteen.

In March back at 42 Survey the Major took me to Lazarus's Garage in Nicosia all the paper work was ready to complete the purchase of a 1300cc French saloon car, the Simca Aronde Grand Large, costing £999, servicemen could buy them exempt of tax for £555, myself and my brother had £400 in a savings bank at home which my parents eventually sent by Bankers Draft to Cyprus the garage had agreed to accept the balance on monthly payments, I applied for a permit to drive in Cyprus no "L" plates were needed. Most of the roads were just one lane wide with a meter or less of stone and gravel on each side this was the called the bum of the road when driving you were forced onto this when you encountered oncoming traffic. During the next few months I spent most of my spare time driving round the camp and on the lane outside getting used to the car, the only vehicle I had driven before was a tractor when I helped on a farm at weekends.



*The Simca Aronde Grand Large, in Cambridge Blue with White Roof and White-walled tyres a flashy looking car for that period of time*

On the 19th of April, the detachment's six months at Zyyi was completed we were replaced by another four RAOC personnel from 4 Base Print (the units name had now changed to GHQ Press). I was temporarily sent to reside at the Middlesex Regiments base at Delila, and travel each day by truck or the car, to Larnaca this is where I slipped up one day, I had parked the Simca in one of the sheds out of the sun and myself and another Corporal were in the process of polishing it, when the shed doors opened and in walks General Sir Charles F Keighley the GOC Middle East along with all his top brass with their red banded hats, it was the GOC's Annual Inspection.

Later that day we were charged with having a prime mover in a Government Building, it was our fault we hadn't read 625's company orders that day. Two weeks later we were referred to the main depot at Dekhelia to answer the charge, I had a substantive rank, we were admonished just given a warning that was it, I thought. Maybe this incident influenced Major Holdorf in the decision to post my brother and myself to 42 Survey, which he did on 26th June although he maintained it was to keep both my brother and myself together.

Now back at 42 that weekend as we settled into life at Zyyi someone mentioned casually to me "they're out to get you". On the 2nd July Jeff and myself found our names on 42's Regimental Orders our rifles in the armoury were dirty we were to parade behind the Guard after cleaning them, it seems that when we arrived with clean rifles from 625 OD someone had replace them with the rustiest and filthiest rifles they could find and somehow the chit we signed on arrival at the camp had different rifle numbers than those we had handed in, and we had accepted them by signing it, we were never put on a charge for this offence. Anyhow we set about cleaning the rifles and paraded behind the guard first at 1800hrs, not clean enough, then at 2200hrs this went on for more than a week, parading at various times at the whim of the officers never satisfying any one of them, eventually one evening with no officer present a Staff Sergeant took the inspection, he looked us and said "I think this farce has gone on long enough, F-off you two" telling us not to attend again. Sometime during this time, I had written a letter to my MP complaining about my treatment and requesting a posting back to 625 OD along with my brother, all this had been a big humiliation for me especially being a Corporal,

I never saw this happen to any other NCO at 42, I had to forget it all and get on with my job, the RSM had clearly built up a dislike for anything RAOC, I remember back on his morning inspection of the tent lines he would be irritated by the fact that our tent would always battened up and we were lying in bed, he could not get in to inspect us. My brother had never been at the camp before so why punish him?

We were the only soldiers on the camp with a private vehicle none of the officer had any, no one was allowed out of camp without being in uniform and having a weapon, Officers and Senior NCO's were allowed pistols, all other ranks were issued with a rifle, this was not very maneuverable in a car so I eventually purchased by mail order from England a Webley & Scott .38 revolver with 24 rounds of ammunition at a cost of about £36, I picked it up at the Customs at Famagusta Docks. Now we would leave the camp in uniform and quickly change to civilian shirt to look more like tourists.

The following weeks we got more use to 42, I did my first duty as Guard Commander, that was the last I did in the Army, because on the 26th July President Nasser came to my aid he nationalized the Suez Canal this started the Suez Crisis. Although the British Army had been in Egypt for 74 years and the map printing unit had been there since 1946 it seemed they had no up-to-date maps, they were still surveying the area, 42 Survey were now tasked with printing all the maps of Egypt and the Middle East converting US Military maps from 6 colour films down to 4 colour film, to fit our presses, the American name spelling was also different to English, my little



letterpress department would have job of typesetting all these place names this would keep is busy for the next 10 months, 32 Litho's OC Major Sleep put the squadron on a shifts system, I was excused guards and other duties again, this carried on for the next year until I left the Army. We also experimented on printing on thin film with hard drying inks both sides of the surface, so it could be fixed on to the artwork.



*Printing the map place names on a proof press*

Major Sleep gave me permission to build a garage type shack at the rear of the tent lines to keep the car out of the sun, using some wood and an old tent from the stores. Meanwhile I had forgotten about the letter to my MP and on 19<sup>th</sup> October my MP and on 19th October I received a reply with a copy of a letter from the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for War, referencing the Suez crisis and the need for my brother and I to remain at 42 Survey it looked like I had caused the War Office another Crisis. My letter eventually led to my brother and myself being marched in front of the 42's Commanding Officer Col. M H Cobb charged with Mutiny, my brother had put his signature on my letter, it seems that if more than one person signs a letter it's classed as mutiny, that used to be punishable by death by firing squad, if that was to happen we would have asked for their dirtiest rifles to be used, the Colonel said to me "I thought you liked it here Cpl Nelson" before admonishing us with just a telling off

On the 3rd November the Suez invasion started for real, with an Airborne Landing, the maps were dropped a day later, but that didn't matter because by then the invasion force was about to be withdrawn. The month previous the camp had been on lockdown all mail was censored and we were not allowed out. Christmas 1956 came I received my British Cyprus passport in readiness for returning to UK.



On the 28th February 1957 I passed my Army Competence to Drive Test overseen by the MT Officer, this allowed me to apply for a British Driving Licence and to start planning the return journey home. In all life was looking a lot better at “Four Two”

Since purchasing the car my brother and myself had travelled around Cyprus like tourists with the revolver for protection, undeterred by the troubles of EOKA\*, occasionally taking fellow soldiers out for day trips \*The EOKA troubles got worse after we left, and they lasted until 1959 with many soldiers being killed.

We had hardly taken any leave during our time in the Army so we had about 50 days left to return to the regimental depot at Blackdown, most of our kit was handed in at the Zyyi, the revolver was sold to the Regimental Police Corporal, and on the 10th July 1957 the two of us along with a friend Don MacMeeking a Corporal in 32's squadron office, the three of us said goodbye to Four-Two, we each took £75 in travelers cheques and a bit of Italian money we had obtained from the Ottoman Bank in Limassol that was the maximum amount you were allowed to take out of the country, we were traveling at own expense whilst doing a bit sightseeing, the Army paid no contribution towards our journey.



We sailed from Famagusta on the Italian passenger ship “Messapia” the car was hoisted from the dockside and strapped to the deck at the bow end of the ship, there were no roll-on roll-off ferries in those days. Our first port of call was Piraeus where we stayed for about 8 hours visiting Athens, the ship then passed through the Corinth Canal on the way to Bari in Italy, were we drove by the aid of a personalized planned route by the Automobile Association advising us of

all the cheap pension hostels etc., we then made our way to Naples visiting Pompeii then on to Rome, Pisa, Bologna, Venice through to Vienna, Lintz and Salzburg in Austria, to Munich, Frankfurt, Cologne in Germany, then Rotterdam in Holland on to Ostend in Belgium, catching the ferry to England taking in all 20 days in the Simca Aronde Grand Large, we dropped Don off in Dover then after a few days in Margate with our parents who were holidaying there, we eventually arrived at the Regimental Depot on 21st August for demob, both leaving the Army with unblemished records. By the time we reached home we had travelled over 2000 miles without any incidents, a week later we went to Manchester and someone ran into the rear of the car on a zebra crossing.

In the end I believed my time in the map printing unit was beneficial, I gained more knowledge about the lithographic side of the printing process. At 42 Survey I was offered promotion if I signed on for another four years, the Army were prepared to send me to the London School of Printing for one year, I declined that offer.

I got married in April 1959 and in September that year I started a printing business in partnership with my brother, sadly the Simca was only kept until March 1960 when it was sold for £444 to enable us to purchase a printing machine, the bank would not loan any money for this venture.

### What's in a Name?

This article is not meant to be an academic paper on onomastics (okay ... so I had to Google a clever word for the study of names), but it is intended to be an amusing reminiscence based on the names of those you may have served with or enjoyed a pint or two with. Please take it in that light with no offence meant – we were all so much younger then. As our maps used to say, “Users noting errors or omissions should contact the editor”!

From the moment a boy starts school he is very likely to be called by a diminutive form of his Christian name; Alan's become AL's, any Christopher so carefully named by parents will become a Chris and so on through to Victors becoming Vic. The main exceptions are those luckily given a single syllable name such as Mark and Noel although John frequently ends up being extended to Johnnie. Oddly Barry's can be known as Baz. However, should the grown-up boy sign on to become a soldier he may very well end up with a brand-new name for, of all the social groups it is the Armed Forces that most fervently embraces – nicknames – which in Military Survey ran the full alphabetical gamut from 'Adge' to 'Zoom'. They are no respecter of feelings...'Pigpen'.....but can bestow supreme, if unearned, academic accolades.....'Prof'!

With two people the diminutive form went to the extreme with Kingsley Charles Augustus always referred to as just 'KC' and even more so was 'H' Procter who was branded with only the first letter of his given name, Horace.

At this point it should be noted that there is a distinct difference between the officer and soldier approach to names. Whilst some commissioned personnel are known by diminutive forms of their given name most are almost never shortened with the likes of David, Jonathon, Richard and Peter virtually always remaining untouched and in their pristine form. However, Michael is a special and unique case. Commissioned Michaels all become Mikes whereas soldier Michaels all become Micks!

As Micks move up through the ranks or on leaving the service a few, think Gowlett and Barnes, become Mikes but at least one upon commissioning retained his Mick...as in Perry our perennial reunion organiser. Also, officers do not usually give themselves nicknames albeit Major 'Capbadge' Davies and Major ABDE Clark, known as 'Alphabet', were notable exceptions and some took their soldier nickname with them on elevation to the Officers' Mess – could Captain Gale ever have been anything other than 'Windy'! However, soldiers did, for a select few, apply a nickname with Major Sleep a good example in that he was always referred to as 'Gunk', the fashionable slang at that time for sleep.

For some soldiers this 'second christening', whether they liked it or not, would happen almost the moment they opened their mouth in their first barrack room and displayed one of several regional accents. Immediately they would become Jock, Taff, Paddy, Geordie, Scouse or Brum.

This would undoubtedly be the first time they had ever been so addressed because, after all, it is improbable for example that Ralph Stockley would have been called Jock in his Edinburgh school playground or that Mick Evason was called Taff on his school rugby pitch. These regional names tended to stick throughout their service career although some slowly managed to revert to their given names as they progressed into senior ranks so that a Scouse might eventually return to being a Pete, Paul or Richard or a Geordie regain his Neil, Norman or George.

Another reason for acquiring an instant new name was to have a surname that traditionally attracted a standard epithet hence there would be 'Smudge' Smith, 'Dusty' Miller (although one printer escaped by being called 'Chips' for some reason), 'Nobby' Clark, 'Dinger' Bell, 'Dutch' Holland, 'Rosie' Gardiner and maybe 'Chalky' White – we have all known colleagues 'lumbered' with these names. Soldiers also seem to like forming a nickname from a surname – Military Survey has had many of these in its ranks over the years; 'Tommy' Thompson, 'Hoppy' Hopkins, 'Locky' Lockwood, 'Ozzy' Osbourne, 'Waggy' Wagstaffe, 'Gilly' Gilmour (who knew his real name was Juan), 'Fozzy' Fosdick, 'Wally' Walters and not forgetting 'Jake' Jacobs the amiable photo tech and of course the inimitable – 'Gio'.

An inexplicable change of name is the case where the soldier has a perfectly reasonable first or fore name (the now politically correct versions of a Christian name) given by his parents but his peer group calls him by something completely different. It is perhaps understandable if the first name is common to choose the second for instance, Military Survey was by no means short of Dave's but there was ever only one Percy. But why was Jim Holland called Sid as was Jeremy Wray, neither Willy Whyborn nor Willy West was a William nor Wally's Osbourne and McGowan a Walter, Wilbur Williamson's parents didn't dream up that name and Mr and Mrs Hawkins proudly called their son MacGregor, but his colleagues insisted he was a Harry.

Finally, what is wrong with Stuart as a name – field surveyor Stu Farmington thrives on it - but Stuart Evans lived for over twenty years as Stan! He was also a field surveyor, so it can't be a trade thing!

Television and cinema spawned several new first names for soldiers who inadvertently shared the same surname as a fictional on-screen hero. Westerns were a particularly good source giving us the likes of 'Tim' Holt, 'Bronco' Lane, 'Jim' Hardy, 'Doc' Holliday and sticking with the western theme there were two 'Hanks' – Stevens and Aldiss – and a 'Tex' Dale. The media also gave us 'Dick' Barton (a famous detective on the radio), 'Dickie' Valentine (a pop star of the time), 'George' Harrison (needs no introduction), 'Dixie' Dean (a legendary footballer) and not to be forgotten 'Charlie' Brown of strip cartoon fame and several 'Noddys' (Big Ears Friend). And we cannot leave this subject without saying that anyone called Whittington who joined up would automatically be called 'Dick' for the rest of their service. Air surveyor Mick Gordon bore the mantle of being 'Flash' thus relieving all future Gordon's of the dubious privilege.

Physical characteristics such as stature and hair colour are another regular source of nickname either as a true reflection of a man's build or sometimes exactly the opposite. In any unit there are usually one or two people who on hearing the order "tallest on the right shortest on the left etc, etc" know exactly where to go. Those at the right-hand end of the file were often called 'Lofty'. By sheer height they tended to make their mark – who can ever forget the impressive sight of RSM 'Lofty' Carter striding across the vast parade square at Barton Stacey and 'Lofty' Branson was known to all at a time when 19 Squadron could boast of having not one but two 'lofty' when 'Lofty' Loake arrived. At the other end of scale were the 'titches' although some labelled as such when they were a boy entrant carried the name on through their career regardless of a growth spurt that moved them to right in the sizing line. There were several unique nicknames among these pocket rockets; printer Rodney (few knew that) Hodgson was known universally as 'Tot' and diminutive photo tech 'Jockey' Jenkins was the only holder of that sobriquet.

However, neither 'Tiny' Crosland nor 'Tiny' Russell were that tiny as anyone facing them on the rugby field would attest to but 'Tank' Martin did have the build similar to that of an RTR Chieftain. 'Slim' Donovan was not overly slim, draughtsman 'Tubs' Taylor did not appear to have a BMI problem, 'Twiggy' Marshall wasn't really stick-like, and it is not known if 'Streak' Hobson earned his 'moniker' from his build or his speed!

Those blessed with russet coloured hair were almost certainly labelled 'Ginge', a title Sapper Lister escaped only to be called 'Red'. 'Blondie' Balfour did in fact sport very fair hair until it started to move backwards and 'Baldy' Longley's was definitely heading in the same direction.

Military Survey had several 'duplicates' where two very different people carried the same nickname. There were two 'Tojo's, Frampton and Cooper, a generation apart but both it would seem bore a passing resemblance to Japanese gentlemen. Likewise, there were two 'Satch'es, Payne and Kennedy, also a generation apart but sharing the same air survey trade – but why 'Satch'? 'Bud' Moon and 'Bud' Bateman appeared to have nothing in common bar the name and two more dissimilar soldiers it is hard to imagine than Paul 'Spanner' Gratton, a field surveyor who later rose to a high level in the civil service and John 'Spanner' Bradley, a litho machine minder who spent his last working days in Tesco's. A rather different duplicate was Michael and Brian Foot – known collectively as the brothers Feet!

A few unfortunates, for no apparent reason, were saddled with female nicknames but – as the old soldiers used to say - "no names, no pack drill"!

And finally, to that elite group of individuals who shared their nickname with nobody else – the unique holders of a one-off moniker (although it's not certain that Mike Payne was all that 'Happy' about his). Having a unique nickname bestowed a certain 'celebrity' on the holder for was there not only ever one 'Gramps' Parr or one 'Flab' Ford not only in Military Survey but almost certainly there was only one of each in the world – a bit like Madonna or Elvis really.

But each one generates the question of why was the exceptional name awarded in the first place? Whilst 'Sticky' Tape is understandable why was a fairly macho machine minder corporal known as 'Bubbles' Kirby and was David Harland really a 'Shady' character, did Neil Copper 'Lurch' about and just how 'Butch' was Ian Batchelor? It's not that long a list but the names are fantastic – Robin 'Fuff' Barrett, 'Mogsie' Bowra, 'Zombie' Kennedy, 'Lob' Sharman, 'Groppy' Lunt, 'Paddle' Pearson, 'Tombstone' Brown, 'Pops' Prior, 'Brig' Bright, 'Zip' Nolan, 'Docker' Deacon, 'Beaker' Longridge, 'Zoom' Mears, 'Jazz' Gould, 'Bunny' Burrell, 'Piggy' Knight and 'Fritz' Crane.

Two of these unique title bearers were indeed such truly 'one-offs' that they deserve a special mention. In the late Sixties a rather gawky young potential air surveyor arrived in 47 Squadron to await his course at Hermitage.

He was employed on the usual trivial tasks in Block 101 and just before one NAAFI break Corporal Brian Garvey detailed him to make the coffee for the troop. The earnest young soldier very carefully listed the orders for coffee and disappeared to complete the job. Quite what actually happened is now lost in the mists of time but shortly before the end of NAAFI break but with still no coffee in sight Brian stomped off to the coffee area then there followed an all mighty eruption from him with much shouting about why was the kettle in pieces and from that moment onwards Ian Scrivenor was known by all who ever met him as ...'Plug'.

Finally, there is one person whose fame spread far beyond the tight-knit family that was Military Survey in which even its major-generals referred to this man by his adopted first name. There were soldiers spread from Hong Kong to Belize and from Port Stanley to Fort George that knew the name of the master of Matric....the one and only 'Boris'.

Anon

PS – that's not my real name!

## 514 (Corps Field Survey) Company RE

Points of possible interest that occurred during 1942:

- From receiving orders to move, to being ready to print, after a move of 100 miles, time taken was about 12 hours, including time for meals etc.
- On occasions, printing started within an hour of reaching new camp.
- During period 24<sup>th</sup> May 1942 – 24<sup>th</sup> June 1943, there were 500,000 machine revs. This period included four moves.
- Company has three Italian ambulances used as Drawing Offices. For these there were only two sets of tyres. These vehicles were brought from Gombut to Tura, a distance of 500 miles, by leaving one behind as each move, returning later with a set of wheels off another ambulance that had reached destination by then.
- The Topo Sections remained in the desert for a while, being employed on erecting and fixing beacons, and the Survey of tracks between El Alamein and the Nile.
- At one time they carried co-operation with the RAF to its limits by camping albeit unwittingly, beside a dummy aerodrome. So successful was this ruse that the enemy mistook the camp for the aerodrome administration tents.

Damage to camp: -                      Two slight casualties  
   Three vehicles holed  
   Five Tents holed  
   One bottle of whisky broken

Damage to genuine aerodrome: - NIL

Thanks received from the RAF

Whiskey being hard to get, the Topo Section moved camp the next day!

- The Topo sections are now working in Transjordan, being employed on Photo – Topo.
- At one time the Drawing Section was pooled with the Topo, and three composite sections produced. The Drawing Section can now do Topo, and the Topo Sections can deal with Air Photos up to the plotting stage.
- To give some idea of the difficulties encountered in Transjordan, one officer had to walk 25 miles one moonless night in order to obtain assistance in the extrication of a vehicle from the mud where it had stuck.
- A minor frontier incident occurred that was given no publicity in the press. Saudi Arabians began removing Survey Cairns en bloc, claiming that they had been erected in Saudi Arabia, though this was denied by our Arab guides. Whatever the political aspect of the case was, it was of no great importance technically to the Topo Sections, as the survey in the area had been completed by them.                      Signed 2/Lt A J Relton

*Officers of 514 Corps Field Survey Company RE*

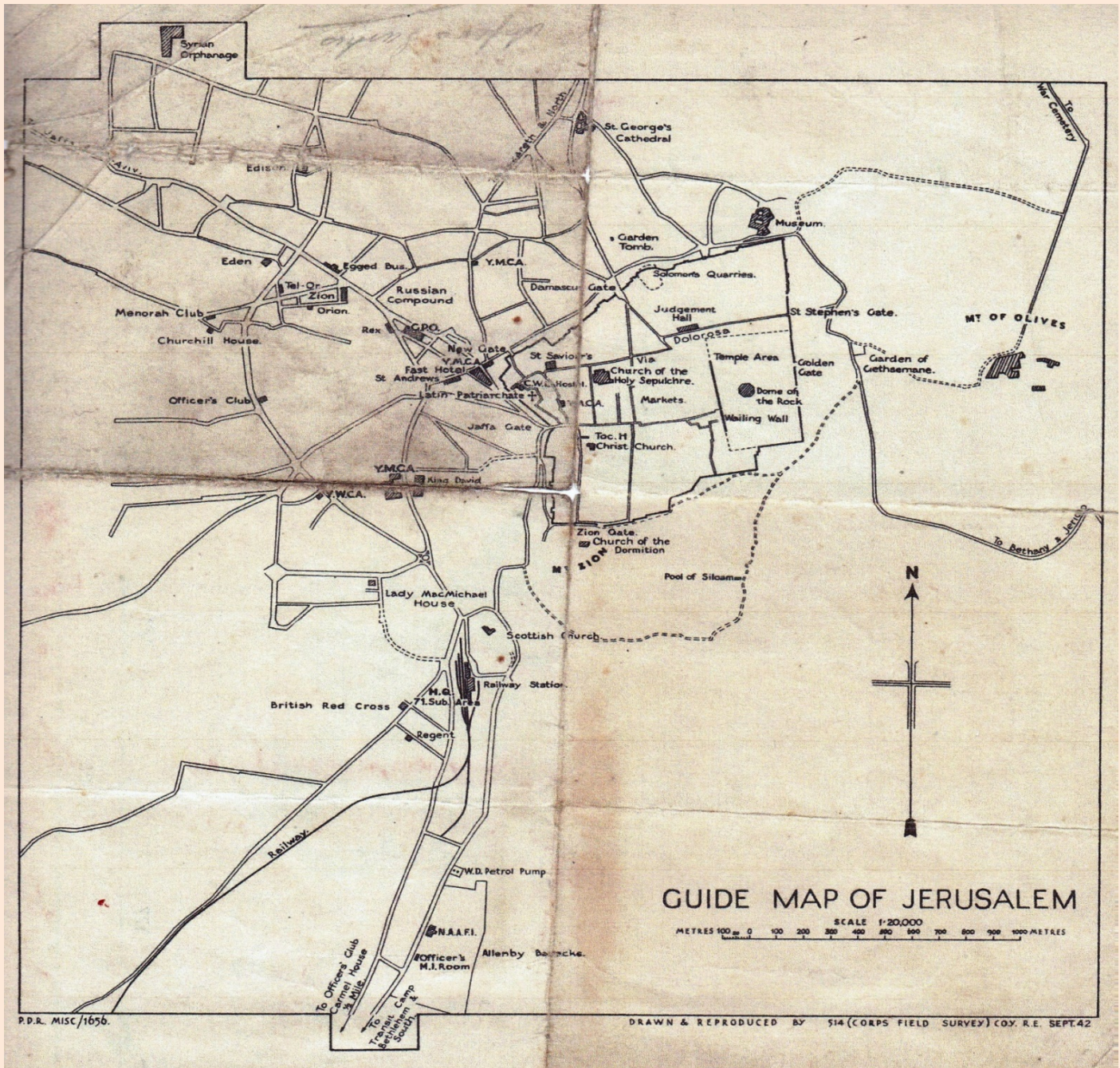


*2/Lt Cowan 2/Lt Relton 2/Lt Read Lieut Clutterbuck  
Capt Lloyd Major Francis Lieut Barr*

## GUIDE MAP OF JERUSALEM

Drawn and Reproduced by 514 (Corps Field Survey) Company RE - September 1942

(This map was found in the archive of Tangmere Museum by Mike Nolan. Branch member Roger (Prof) Jones (Tangmere Museum Support Officer) kindly made a copy available for publication)



In September 1942, 514 (Corps Field Survey) Company RE were based at Beit Allar, Jerusalem Palestine under Survey Directorate, (DD Svy - Colonel A Prain) Rear HQ, Ninth Army. The 514 Topo Sections (based in Abbassia Egypt) were employed under Assistant Director Survey, British Troops Egypt.

## THE 19 SQUADRON TOPO TROOP ANIMALS IN ADEN – 1963

As best recalled by Phillip Robinson

When 19 Topographic Squadron, commanded by Joe Holden, moved from Bahrain in February 1963 they arrived in Aden with several animals. 1 Topo Troop under Dennis Martin cosseted a goat mascot, whilst 2 Topo Troop, to which I was consigned, somehow contrived to ship a donkey and two 'pi' dogs, Maverick & Cooney. Perhaps because of their separate roles, and isolation from each other on survey operations, there was an intense rivalry between the two Troops on a 'neer the twain shall meet basis' even when occasionally they came together at Falaise base. Hijacking each other's pets was a feature and at one point 1 Troop sequestered 2 Troops' donkey at which a raiding party from the latter stole the goat and, if memory serves correctly, supplemented their rations. Later 1 Troop purloined Maverick and Cooney. This was serious as the dogs had a useful guard function. No Arab could approach the troop boundary at night without arousing the dogs, albeit this sometimes posed difficulties when working in conjunction with Federal Regular Army or Federal National Guard escorts. In that event intervention was sought from the then officer commanding, Dennis Rushworth, one of the dogs returned and a truce established.

It was found that conveying the donkey on survey detachments was unduly complicated (have any readers tried to load a donkey into a Bedford 3 tonner?) and it was left at Falaise camp under modest supervision. It quickly developed a taste for beer and with a well-honed sense of timing, toured the messes and canteens at lunch time and in the evening. It became skilled at sneaking up on any pint mug left unattended, and gripping the mug with its lips, could tip it back to swallow the contents in one go. So far as I recall the Camp Commandant became averse to having a dipsomaniacal donkey wandering the lines and it was bequeathed elsewhere, probably to an Arab trader.



WAP - One of the Troop Pi dogs

I cannot speak for 1 Troop, but other creatures sometimes appeared in 2 Troop. I think it was LCpl Smith, the cook, who acquired a large lizard or salamander that accompanied him for some time. Shorter lived were Cpl Baker's cockerels. On their first detachment up country they concluded it was dawn around one in the morning, awakening not only the camp but probably every slumbering insurgent for many miles. Another supplement to the rations!

The animals that have however provoked the most comment in the years since were 2 Topo Troops' baboons. At this point it should be declared that these were un-intended additions to the troop orbat.



The 9<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> Lancers stationed in Little Aden were due home posting. I was asked by a cavalry friend whether we might take care of a full grown female baboon that would be orphaned by their departure. Imprudently I agreed and shortly after a large cage encompassing one baboon was deposited in the Troop lines. Sapper Robbo as she was insulting christened, was not an attractive creature and only semi tame. She was also something of an escape artist and despite various precautions from time to time would investigate the world outside of her cage. Nevertheless, despite occasional rampages, she provided some amusement for the members of the Troop, who at the time were engaged in somewhat tedious survey work around Aden itself.

The subject of a periodically rampaging baboon came to a head at the end of August just before the Troop was due to deploy to the Western end of the Protectorates.

Falaise camp was being treated to a CES show (CES being the equivalent of the former ENSA) in one of the large tank hangers. Spr Robbo, hearing the multitude gathering, decided of her own volition to join the audience. Arriving unaccompanied at the show she made her way down the central aisle and found herself an empty seat in the front row amongst the more senior of the camp denizens. This caused a minor disturbance at which she disappeared, as happens backstage. A short while later, one of the ladies from the theatrical troupe came onto the floor off stage singing those songs of home that are guaranteed to bring tears to the eyes of soldiers in distant places.

Unexpectedly, instead of tearful reflections she was greeted with ripples of laughter. Faltering, she turned to see the cause to find Spr Robbo on the stage immediately behind, gazing at her with rapturous eyes. She screamed, dropped her microphone and ran off. Fortunately, a couple of the bolder members of the Troop then managed to detain the errant baboon, and the show continued. I'd not attended the show as I was engaged in final preparations for departure on the morrow.

Rousted out of bed by Chris Thompson, the Squadron 2IC, I was advised that it would be prudent to bring forward the Troops' departure to be well on the way into the desert, accompanied by Spr Robbo, before the Camp Commandants' office opened. Accordingly, Sgt Maunder went around the Troop billet proclaiming that for urgent operational reasons first parade would be at 05:30 and the Troop ready to roll by 06:30.

On detachment Robbo was past taming and frequently a pest. She became something of an artist at untying her lengthy tether or failing that chewing through it. On the loose she indulged her curiosity by pilfering then nimbly evading pursuit. Pens were a favorite, but on occasion she sampled air photos and observation papers, putting hard won survey material at risk. Sometimes also inclined to tease the dogs who otherwise distained her presence. Matters came to a head in late October at which point the Troop had acquired a baby baboon, of which more below. She tormented the little one and bit Salem the troop interpreter. It was decided she had to go. At the time the Troop were working near Batis and it was decided she should be posted out to join a baboon troop frequenting that area.



That didn't prove quite as simple as expected. Dispatched with an annotation party under LCpl Workshop, she was released in the vicinity of the wild baboons. However, as soon as the Landrovers moved off she pursued them and whilst attempting to board one, bit a Federal Guard gendarme. Incensed he chased her off at which she was captured by a group of locals who asked that they might keep her. The offer was promptly accepted but as LCpl Workshop drove away he observed that she had escaped their clutches and was last seen rushing across a banana plantation pursued by a large party of locals.

As mentioned above, the Troop had acquired yet another baboon, this though, for humanitarian reasons. A few days before Spr Robbo was 'posted' out, one of the survey parties had called on a Federal Guard fort. They were greeted by the spectacle of a baby baboon, attached on a short lease in the centre of the courtyard, and to the entertainment of the Arab Guardsman squealing in fear as a large hawk hovered over it. Sapper Brown remonstrated, and after some bargaining purchased the baby. Gutsy as he came to be named, having an almost insatiable appetite was young enough to become well tamed and despite periodic depredations, regarded with reasonable affection by the Troop. He returned that affection becoming one of the boys, often sitting with them, and apart from eating enjoyed nothing better than a good cuddle or scratch.

Gutsy nevertheless did have to be constrained as his curiosity would lead him to acquiring and chewing objects of interest his favorite's being toothbrushes but on one occasion a newly acquired HP 35 calculator, priced then around a couple of hundred pounds. As it seemed unkind to keep an animal continuously on a tether a solution was found through adopting the ball and chain principle.

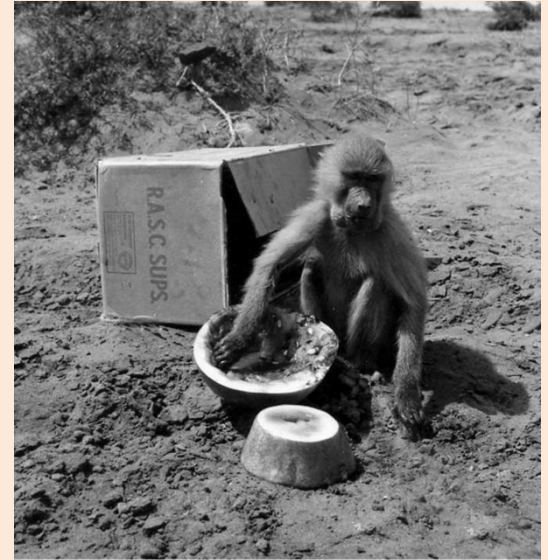


He was equipped with a loosely attached mash hammer, allowing him to perambulate at will, but enabling easy recapture when engaged in any mischief. It didn't take him long to find that by carrying the hammer over his shoulder he could move around easily.

In early 1964, admittedly after transfer to 13 Fd Svy Sqn, the Troop were engaged in making a connection from the south west corner of the Aden Protectorates to a US Army Survey party in Somaliland. The AD Survey at Middle East HQ (Jim Williams), accompanied by an American Colonel and the OC (David Wilson), flew down to the Troop field base.

Treating guests was a matter of some pride to the Troop and having had warning a goodly luncheon was laid on (a posh nosh in the surveyors' vernacular) even including some cooled wine. It was hot, and the guests were seated in relative coolness in a penthouse, the American Colonel as guest of honour at the end of the table and facing out. Suddenly he started half out of his chair, gasped and sat back. There was immediate concern. Was he taken unwell, was it the heat? Mopping his brow, he shook his head and stuttered "Gee, Ah could have sworn I saw a monkey go' in past carrying a hammer".

Speaking of senior officers there was another occasion when the Troop, then on Perim Island, were visited by the CRE smartly accoutered in No 3 dresses. Gutsy, who had been roaming free, had just paddled through a pool of oil at the desalinization plant. He decided the well-dressed officer merited a good cuddle and leapt into his arms. The CRE must have been a good sport as the Squadron didn't receive a bill for the dry cleaning.



**Gutsy demolishing a water melon**



**Gutsy viewing the sea from LCT**

Gutsy lived up to his name. On one occasion the Troop cook experimented unsuccessfully with making dumplings. In protest the men heaped the stodgy fare around Gutsy. The following morning all were gone, and the monkey was stretched out with a distended stomach. There are other tales that can be told.

Gutsy had an unfortunate but swift end. Left in the care of SHQ when the Troop were deployed to Radfan, whilst roaming free he was allegedly mistaken by a team engaged in shooting stray dogs around Falaise camp. Unlike his predecessor Robbo he was missed.

Perhaps in concluding I should add that just because I adopted a baby Pig Tailed Macaque in Singapore (another rescue job) and befriended a Gibbon in Sarawak, it does not imply a special affinity to our simian relatives. They just seemed to come my way. That is my story and I'm sticking to it.

Phillip Robinson  
16 June 2018

## The Soldier Who Almost Vanished

Sapper John Graham Plumridge, soldier son of a serving officer, is a man who almost vanished. But frontier police with a dog caught him less than half a mile from the Iron Curtain and now he is back in this country awaiting confirmation of a sentence for desertion.

The story was told at a court-martial at Aldershot where Plumridge, aged 22, of the Royal Engineers (42 Svy Engr Regt, Sobraon Camp, Egypt), was sentenced to one year's goal and discharged with ignominy from H. M. Forces. He pleaded guilty to a charge that he deserted in that, at Tilbury on July 7, while on leave he embarked for Sweden and went to Finland "where he was apprehended when attempting to cross the frontier into Soviet Russia"

It was an emotional moment for Plumridge when he heard his sentence but more so far, his father. Major Albert Plumridge M.B.E., with 41 years' service in the Royal Artillery. Both father and son joined the Army at the age of 14. The only time Major Plumridge was in court was when he gave evidence on his son's behalf. He was told of the sentence outside the building. With the squared shoulders of an old soldier, he watched his son march to an Army vehicle to be taken to the Royal Engineers depot at Barton Stacey camp to await confirmation of the court-martial proceedings.

### Learned Russian

Major L.D. Lipson, prosecuting, said Plumridge joined the Army in 1946. In April 1951 he was posted to the Middle East. Between then and June 1953, he became a Communist, learned Russian and had every intention of going behind the Iron Curtain. He was given leave from the Middle East in June and paid for his own passage home. After staying with his parents, he collected a passport and booked a passage to Sweden.

On July 6 he visited his brother also a serving soldier but did not tell him either of his intentions or of his political opinions. The next day he embarked at Tilbury. By July 10, Major Lipson went on; Plumridge reached a Finnish town near the Russian border. Early next morning he made a determined effort to cross the border into Russia but was captured.

### Letter to Friend

Major Lipson read a letter which he alleged Plumridge wrote from Helsinki police-station to a friend in the Middle East, Cpl T. Thomas. This letter read:

*I never really thought I would get this far with my plan.  
Luck has really been against me as I got to within half a mile of  
The Russian border before they got me.  
They came after me with a dog and two armed men.  
So, I slung it in when they were five yards behind me.  
Naturally I am a Red.*

Major Plumridge told the court that he reported his son missing. The boy had concussion at the age of 13, and he thought he might have lost his memory. He was a model son, very quiet, and always willing to help. "He was studious, and he expressed no political opinions when at home," the major added. Mr Roger Brooks, defending solicitor, described Plumridge as a "serious-minded young man in search of the truth."

*(Transcribed from a News of the World newspaper article (1953) kindly provided by branch member Alan James)*

## 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) is awarded the freedom of St Ives Cambridgeshire

The freedom of St Ives Cambridgeshire has been granted to 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) after a parade and march past in the town on 30 June 2018.



Thousands of spectators came to watch the troops march on a circuit of the town centre before the freedom scroll was presented to them on Armed Forces Day. There was also a presentation of ceremonial swords - with the one handed over by the engineers being kept at the town hall. Town clerk Alison Benfield said: "It went fantastically well. It was just a brilliant day all the way around, with no problems."



*The presentation of the ceremonial sword*

Mayor, Councillor Tim Drye said: “It is our privilege to award the freedom of the town to such an historic regiment.” Freedom of the town was awarded by the town council and enables the regiment, part of the Royal Engineers, to parade through the town centre. The ceremony helped mark longstanding links between the town and the armed forces based at nearby RAF Wyton.

Celebrations to mark Armed Forces Day took place during the day with various entertainments together with service-related charities raising awareness of support they provide to troops both past and present. In the afternoon there was a chance to visit the 42 Engineer base at Wyton where they put on a family day with displays and demonstrations of their work.



42 Engineer Regiment moved to RAF Wyton in 2014 when it became part of the Joint Forces Intelligent Group. Its roots go back to August 1948 when it was formed in Egypt to provide geographic services to the forces, a role which now includes Geospacial intelligence. RAF Wyton is now a Joint Forces Command station which includes the Joint Forces Intelligence Group and the National centre for Geospacial Intelligence.

Source – The Hunts Post newspaper and 42 Engineer Regiment

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**Notification of Deaths**

**WO1 Ian Batt RE  
7 January 1941 – 4 July 2018**



*Photo Troop 1976 – WO2 Ian Batt RE standing on the right*

Ian sadly passed away on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2018. Ian was born in Kirkham, Lancashire although grew up in Folkestone Kent. He attended Dover Grammar School and then Art College. At seventeen and a half he joined the Army and trained as a Photographic Technician at SMS Hermitage. Ian married Joyce in Liverpool, in November 1965. The wedding had to be changed by a week because Arsenal were playing on the first date that they had chosen to marry, and her Dad had told them quite simply: 'I don't know what time I'll be free on that date'. They had two children Helen and Jason.

Ian had postings to Andover, Hermitage, Barton Stacey, Germany and also Australia for two years. During their stay in Australia they were literally in the eye of the storm when *Cyclone Tracy* hit Darwin in the Northern Territories on Christmas Eve 1974. Ian retired from the Army in 1982 and having gained a certificate in Management worked as a printer in Aldershot, until he officially retired.

Ian was also a keen golfer and was Chairman of the Cricketers Golf Society, another good reason to meet with friends at the pub. As a Life Member of REA and an initial member of the Branch, he was proud of his army career and his achievements, and a keen follower of 42 Survey Regiment activities. (Ian retired as a WO1 Photo Tech).

Ian's funeral was held on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> July at 11.45am at Woking Crematorium, Hermitage Road, Woking GU21 8TJ. The service was followed by a get together at the Star Inn, Quarry Street, Guildford GU1 3TY. Ian expressed a wish that he would prefer charitable donations rather than flowers and The British Lung Foundation and Marie Curie are the chosen charities. Donations can be sent with a note of Ian's name, to Robert Ayling Funeral Service, The Post Office, 107, Aldershot Road, Guildford GU2 8BE.

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**WO2 Lancelot Allan (Geordie) King RE**  
**29<sup>th</sup> April 1938 ~ 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018**



*Allan is standing on the right (No 1 Primary Draughtsman Topographic Course - 1963)*

Allan (Geordie) King sadly passed away on 1<sup>st</sup> July. His funeral was held at 1100 hrs on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2018 at the Basingstoke Crematorium. The family wishes donations in Allan's memory to be made to Alzheimer's UK - c/o Halcrow & Sons 6a Bridge Street Andover SP10 1BH.

Allan was a Cartographic Draughtsman by trade and although not a member of our Branch was still well known to many as he had a full career after which he settled in the Andover area with his wife Moyra and family.

Allan was posted to Hermitage in 1964, Moyra and the children moved south to join him in Newtown Common, before being allocated a quarter first in Hermitage and then in Roberts Road, Barton Stacey. The family had been staying with Moyra's parents in Sunderland until Allan had completed his training, when they were posted to Singapore.

Having completed his three years in Singapore, the family moved back to RAF Wyton in Huntingdon where he joined 1 ASLS. In late 1970 Allan was posted to Dusseldorf in Germany, where the family lived until October 1973. This was followed by a posting to RSMS Hermitage as an instructor in the Carto School. From RSMS he went to the Army Boys College at Chepstow, where he remained as an Instructor until he completed his 22 years' service. Allan retired from the Army as a Warrant Officer Class 2.

Comments from colleagues posted on FaceBook: -

**Bryan Osborne** - RIP Comrade!

**Pete Mullins** - How very sad, I have many very fond memories of Geordie. I was extremely lucky when I first joined Carto troop 22 Map Prod Sqn from training in 1973. The seniors all were top men, Dave Harries, Shady Harland, Phil Cox and Bill Chapman, but none more-so.

**Dave Wilson** - RIP

**Larry Greenaway** - Very sad. A true Gent. R.I.P

**Andrew Samuel** - Great bloke, was my instructor at Chepstow 1980 and could easily be distracted by offering him sweats Lol. He also let us watch Coe v Ovett in the Olympics in the draughtsman's office. Such a laid back lovely chap. RESpect Geordie 😊😔

**Neil Coppard** - A lovely bloke, really missed

**Bev Hill** - A really nice guy. A true Carto man

**David Claringbull** - R.I.P. to a real gent and a kindly person. My condolences to all



**Bryan Osborne** - Great You Guys!

**Lesley Connor** - R.I.P

**Pete Fassam** - R.I.P. 'Geordie'. Condolences to all your family

**Dusty Miller** - RIP Geordie. Sincere condolences to all your loved ones. Total REspect

**David Claringbull** - I'm sorry that I couldn't make it. R.I.P "Geordie

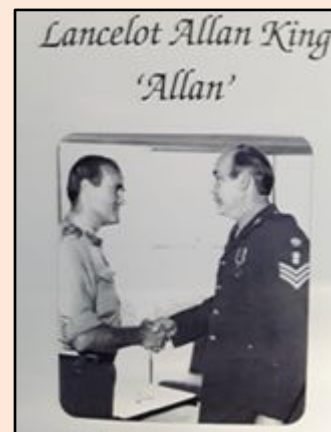
**Bryan Tidy** - Another example of brotherhood in Survey trades. Well done gentlemen. R.I.P. Allan though I don't remember you REspect.

**Ian Parr** – For those that can't remember Allan see photograph on the right

**John RH Hullah** - R † P

**Roger Wilson** - This is very sad for me. I knew (Cpl King as he then was) as a young Sapper in 1971 in 14 Sqn. I was 'learning the ropes' as it were & he kind of took me under his wing & got me out of a couple of scrapes when he was running the drawing office, to which I am eternally grateful. A real gent - RIP

**Kevin Hindle** - Great guy met him at 14 when I got there in 72 and later at 42 Regt



### **Derek Pomeroy**



Derek Pomeroy passed away on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August after a short illness. Derek was an ex-Chepstow Army Apprentice of 62A group where he became a Print Technician.

After Combat Engineer training he was posted to the Survey Regiment at Barton Stacey. He progressed and became a Survey Print Technician, Class 1 with experience on a variety of Litho Presses. He served in a number of survey units, one being 84 Squadron in Singapore where he served two years. Promoted to Sergeant, he returned to the Army Apprentice College, as an instructor in the survey department, until he retired from the Army in July 1972.

Following his departure he joined Charles Openshaw & Sons, suppliers to the printing industry, where his hard work saw him achieve the position of Area Manager, until 1981. He left the Company to start his own business with his wife Heather. Pomeroy Pressroom Products Ltd was hugely successful within the industry, employing up to 45 employees until their retirement in 2014.

Derek also served with great distinction as President of the Lydney Rugby Football Club, since 2005.

His funeral was held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> September at St Mary the Virgin Church, Church Road, Lydney, Gloucestershire, GL15 5TL at 1200 hrs and afterwards at The Lydney Rugby Club. His widow Heather has requested that she would like as many of his colleagues who are able to attend to do so but no flowers please, although donations are always welcome for the Masonic Fund.

### **Jon Murdoch**

We are advised that Jon Murdoch has died but have no further information. Jon was a Sgt and had served in Military Survey between 1944 and 1953 but in what capacity or trade is not recorded. Jon's last address was at Ebford nr Exeter in Devon. If any member is able to furnish further information we would be grateful.

### **Conrad Stuart Rowberry**

Branch Member, Tony Webb, has also informed us of the death of Conrad Stuart Rowberry. He was an ex-Sapper but was not a member of our Branch or of the Malvern & District Branch. Tony wondered if anyone knew him and gave me his (Conrad's) believed army number - 19112154. Conrad's funeral was held at Himbleton Church, Worcestershire on Weekday, 15<sup>th</sup> August.

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Alan Gordon is writing the history of 42 Survey Engineer Regiment and plans to include the following *Dedication*. If any branch member knows of any military surveyor missing from the list below please contact Alan at email: [alan.gordon67@btinternet.com](mailto:alan.gordon67@btinternet.com)

### Dedication

This book is dedicated to the following military surveyors who served with 42 Survey Engineer Regiment but remain "in some foreign field".

Second Lieutenant Michael Dixon – Amman, Jordan – November 1950 - RTA  
Corporal Peter Zadek – Zyyi, Cyprus – 4 September 1952 - RTA  
Sapper George Taylor – Fayid, Canal Zone, Egypt – 21 May 1953 – Terrorist Attack  
Sapper Danny Shepherd – Zyyi, Cyprus – 4 December 1956 - RTA  
Sergeant Arnold 'Busty' Longford, Habbaniya, Iraq - 4 August 1957 - Heart Attack  
Sapper Keith Wooton – Habbaniya, Iraq – 27 April 1958 – RTA  
Sapper Dougal MacDougal – Oman – 21 February 1961 – Terrorist Mine

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

The Branch FaceBook Group membership has now reached 256 but I am sure that there are many ex-survey/geo colleagues out there who need to be reminded that they are most welcome to join!!