



# The Military Survey (Geo) Branch

Winter Newsletter 2019 – issue 74

**MILITARY SURVEY BRANCH REA**

**IT'S A REUNION**

**FREE ENTRY AND FREE CURRY SUPPER**

**NON-MEMBERS £10 PER PERSON (NB) £5 pp. cash back if you subsequently join)**

**SUPER BAR OPEN TILL LATE @ MESS PRICES**

**FREE TRANSPORT LATE TO LOCAL HOTELS ONLY - M4 JUNCTION**

**CURRY – 18:30hrs for 19:00hrs FRIDAY THE 3<sup>rd</sup> OF APRIL 2020**

**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' and enjoy the food and of course the good cheer.

**THUS, OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WILL BE AT 17:00 for 17:30 ON THE SAME DAY**

**FRIDAY THE 3<sup>rd</sup> OF APRIL 2020**

**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 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020.

**FURTHER DETAILS AND THE ENTRY FORM ARE AT THE LAST PAGE**

**PLEASE SEND IN YOUR RETURNS ASAP**

**BUT NO LATER THAN THE 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

## The Second Year in the Army in Egypt 1948/9

*(By chance, a former '42 Regt' soldier met Vanessa Lawrence CB (Ex DG of the OS) recently and she asked Col John Kedar if he would kindly drop in for a chat with the ex-sapper. What transpired were Ken Goodearl's recollections of his time serving in Egypt with 42 Survey Regiment RE, during his National Service)*

We embarked on the *Empire Deben* and set sail at 5-30 pm on Sept 14<sup>th</sup>. Off the Isle of Wight, the steering partially failed, and we returned to the quayside for repairs. The floodlit *Queen Elizabeth* was nearby. Off again at 10 am and cruising down the Channel. The next entry while in the Bay of Biscay was "Missed breakfast - rather rough" After that it was dead calm, and I wrote "Sea like silk". We called at Gibraltar for 3 hours and soon after I was detailed for RP duties.

Once I was on the Bridge for 2 hours. We called at Malta for 10 hours overnight.

We disembarked at Port Said at noon on Sept 26<sup>th</sup> and were taken to 156 Transit Camp for 5 days. I think this was necessary to acclimatize us to the heat before posting to our units.

Reveille was at 5:45 am and instead of a bugle a kilted Scotsman went the rounds playing his bagpipe. Since then I can't stand the sound of bagpipes!

Went by Egyptian State Railways to Fayid on Oct 1<sup>st</sup> and then to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Survey Regiment RE. This was a small unit at the edge of the military settlement. We were 4 to a tent. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> day I had found St. Mark's Methodist Church at the end of the approach road and on the 4<sup>th</sup> day had enrolled for an evening photography course at RAF Fayid.

Our working hours were generally 6:30 to 1:30 on account of the heat. My first job lasting nearly 3 months was on producing a map of the local area and we were given passes to give us access to all military and RAF sites in the area. This was useful for NAAFI breaks when out of camp. At a power station we were looking at a large transformer on a railway wagon when a sergeant asked if we had come to take it away. We said "yes" thinking he was pulling our legs, but he was serious. It was due to be moved that day.

Most afternoons were spent relaxing with occasional walks to watch the shipping in the Suez Canal. Once we went shopping in the native village and bought a camel leather grip. It took an hour of haggling. We started at £E2 but the shopkeeper asked £E5. He kept saying Allah wouldn't allow him to sell at such a price as £E2. In the end honour on both sides was satisfied as we agreed a price of £E2.01.



In the evenings there was much letter writing to family and friends. I wrote a basic letter, copied it some 8 times and then added a few personal notes.

There were gramophone recitals at the Education Centre (as at Warminster) and my repertoire of the classics increased considerably. At chapel I was soon playing the organ for services and the piano for Social Hour. Games of Monopoly were frequent.

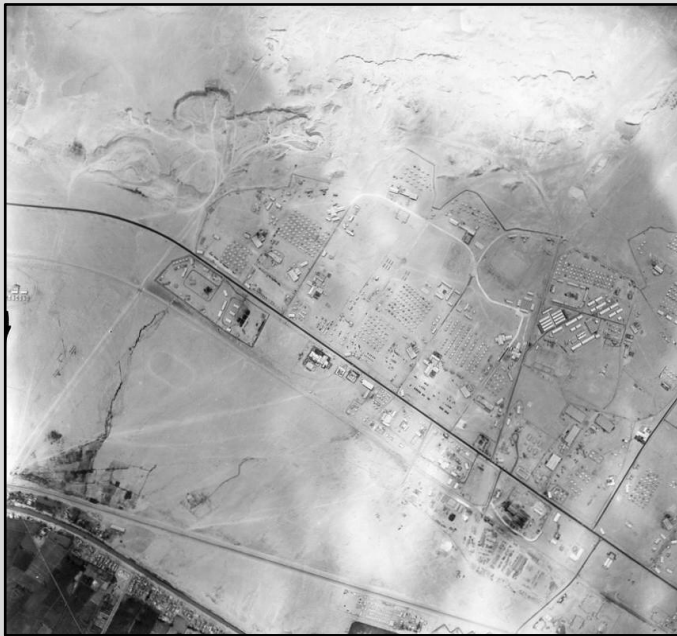
At the RAF Night School, we also went to classes on Architecture and Building Construction. The only hardback book in the tent was Bannister Fletcher's tome on The History of Architecture so I read every word during the year. There were 6 or so RE's present at the school and only one RAF man.



That year we still had a cigarette issue and I swapped mine at the RAF station for cans of 9-inch-wide film which we cut into 2 1/4-inch-wide films in the dark room. Soon we ran out of backing paper and spools, so I got Mum to obtain some from Keens - a Wycombe photo shop - and send them to me. The dark room was in the only stone building in the camp and was refreshingly cool in summer.

As food was still scarce at home, we sent food parcels home every month.

We had a day off to celebrate the birth of Prince Charles. Later I had a touch of dysentery and the entry says "Lying on bed all day when not dashing out" The bogs were semi-communal with small partitions between the seats. Sometimes there would be a draught when an Arab changed the buckets below.



*Aerial photograph of the camp*

Food was reasonable and there were always unripe small green bananas or green water-melons available.

On guard duty one was often on the searchlight towers and one night two of us spent the 2-hour stint flashing Morse messages to each other.

There was only a single light bulb in the tent on the 50-volt system and any use of appliances was strictly verboten. Of course, this was a challenge and we bought a small heater to boil water for shaving and to make toast. We bared the wires on the tent pole and fixed the heater leads to the bare places. The only problem was the tent inspection on Saturday mornings, so we prepared an interesting large photo each week and fixed it over the bare wires to give a topic for conversation.

On Christmas Eve a drunken Glaswegian came into the tent and put his hand on the tent pole over the bare place. The shock sobered him up somewhat.

On Boxing Day, we went climbing in the strictly out-of-bounds hills called Gebel Shabrawit behind the camp and made the word SURVEY in large stones.

The daily weather notes were rather monotonous with only 22 days with any reference to precipitation, all in November to May and often just a single light shower. I had my usual bronchitis in December

## **1949**

Soon after, we started a new project - the mapping of an area of Transjordan from aerial photos. This was one degree of latitude by one of longitude so covered some 5000 square miles. It was known as Beyir. Immediately this project started Robb and I were put in charge and made up to Lance-corporals - the only promotions in the unit the whole time I was there. The extra pay was useful.

We liaised with the RAF to take strips of photos, but a very small area was missed every time. A trigonometric survey unit went out to verify distinctive features such as tracks and wide dried-up stream beds (known as wadis) but I never got out there. One day there was a cheer in the office as someone found a building - the police post called Beyir. Cliff heights could be ascertained fairly precisely by stereoscopic pairs of overlapping photos.

The RAF lectures were then on Greek and Roman history.

I bought my first real camera - a Voigtlander Bessa - which was used frequently later.

We heard on the radio about demobilisation postponement on Jan 18<sup>th</sup>. This meant a full 2 years of service, but I am not sure how long it would have been otherwise.

I adopted a small puppy which was one of several in the camp and had her registered as "Peggy" Sometime later, the sergeant-major had a cull leaving only one elder dog called Scotty. He adopted me for a while and slept on top of my bed at the foot.

After demob restarted Robbie and I had a tent to ourselves which was quite comfortable.

We had had no leave for 5 months so enquired about YMCA sponsored tours arranged by 2 brothers named Fayid of the Upper Nile Valley to Luxor and with an optional extension, to Aswan. 5 of us booked for the full week and set off for Cairo, via Ismailia for the 2:48 pm train to Cairo.

Unfortunately, I was treasurer for the week, and in getting in the train the Egyptian way – through the window – I lost my wallet. It might have been stolen en route for the station. This meant that between us we only had about £E10 so no spending money, although this didn't worry us much as it was an all-in package. The 400-mile over-night journey to Luxor took 11 hours, but the meal in the 1st class restaurant car was most enjoyable after army food.

Three nights in the Savoy Hotel there were followed by one in the Grand Hotel in Aswan. The week was completed by two nights on the train and the final night at the YMCA



*At Fayid - Reading about Luxor in Bannister Fletcher*

In Luxor transport was in horse-drawn gharry's to Karnak Temple – most impressive. The afternoon was spent on donkey-back touring Luxor and was not very comfortable. In the evening we watched the sunset in a trip on the Nile in a dhow.

The next day over the Nile and conveyed by very old Model T Fords to the Valleys of the Kings, Queens and Nobles and visited the underground tombs of Tutankhamen, Ramses III, Seti I and Seti II. Then to the temple of Queen Hatchepsut at Deir el Bahari, Medinet Habu, the Ramesseum and the Colossi of Memnon. A full and very interesting day.

The next day we went to the Luxor Temple and another visit to Karnak. A Sunderland flying boat of BOAC landed on the Nile in front of the hotel. 6 months before I had seen 6 or 7 of them stored in the Solent as they were rapidly being superseded by more modern aircraft. Later I had a phone call saying that Miller, one of our party, was arrested for photographing an ancient railway engine and I had to explain that he was quite harmless before they released him.



*Medinet Habu*



*Ken and friends sightseeing*



*Medinet Habu*



*Medinet Habu*



*Ramses II*



*A Mosque in Cairo*

Up early the next day for the train to Aswan where we went on a felucca trip on the Nile to Kitchener's Garden and Elephantine Island. The next day to the Aswan Dam and to the granite quarry where there was an unfinished obelisk which had cracked before completion. The native bazaar was very interesting and, although we had barely any money, we went twice.

The train journey back to Cairo was quite a marathon as it stopped completely for 7 hours before reaching Luxor. As midnight approached, we decided to commandeer a first-class compartment and make ourselves as comfortable as possible for the night. The train filled up completely after restarting and the corridors were packed solid so in no way could one reach the small room at the end and the window had to be used.

We finally reached Cairo after a 23-hour journey so took the train to Ismailia and stayed overnight in the YMCA. Ismailia (aka Ish) was a very pleasant French-style canal-side town with tree-lined avenues and made a pleasant change from the dusty roads around Fayid.

Absolute routine for the next 5 weeks or so with Beyir work in the morning, printing the Nile trip photos in the afternoon and writing or Monopoly in the evening, with organ and/or piano at chapel on Sundays. The only different occasion was the visit of Ivy Benson's All Girls Band one evening.

When passing through Cairo we saw nothing of the city and only got a distant glimpse of the Pyramids and clearly this had to be rectified. One was only entitled to a free rail ticket for leaves of 72 hours or more, so we applied for a 72-hour pass to Cairo. We stayed at the YMCA in Ish but spent the Saturday March 26<sup>th</sup> going by train to Cairo where we went round the State Railways Museum before lunch at the National Hotel where we found the Fayid Brothers. They took us by car to the National Museum where we saw the ancient treasures including the artefacts from Tutankhamen's tomb.

A very worthwhile visit, which whetted our appetites for more.

Another month of routine, but as demob was on the horizon, I applied for a month at the Middle East College set up to prepare graduates and technicians for the return to civilian life. This was only a short way further down the Canal. There were a few lectures, but the lecturers knew less of my subject than I did, so it was mostly revising with a little field surveying.

Back to camp and summer was coming. It hit 100F on May 23<sup>rd</sup> and 112F, 10 days later when we gave up work after NAAFI break.

Virtually no-one else in the camp had been out of the Canal Zone and as several had shown interest in our expeditions, we sounded out the technical staff of our very small regiment on the possibility of us organising a one-day bus trip to Cairo. The response was encouraging, so off to Ish to see the Fayid Brothers to discuss details. We were told that Robb and I would go free.

We arranged the trip for Whit Sunday and got enough to fill the bus, but within 2 or 3 days the word had spread throughout the military establishment and we ended up with 3 full buses. After an early start we met the Fayids at the National Hotel where they said " The others are only going to the Museum and the Pyramids but

We will take you and one other by car on the 3-day tour of Cairo in one day. This was splendid and we visited the Sultan Hassem Mosque, the Citadel, the Mohammed Ali Mosque, the City of the Dead and the Mousky Bazaar before lunch at the hotel. In the afternoon to Giza for the Sphinx and the Pyramids where we descended to the innermost tomb. After tea to the famous Groppi's ice-cream parlour.

The diary says "A Marvellous Day" I discovered afterwards that some people had climbed to the top of the Great Pyramid - but more of that later!

On Whit Monday a church expedition across the Bitter Lake by an RASC launch for a picnic by the Blue Lagoon.

It was 4 months since we had a full leave and, as we understood that passages to Cyprus were obtainable on troopships, we made enquiries.

Before we went, I was asked to play the organ for a wedding. Actually, it was only a large type of harmonium which had to be pedalled. I could only find 3 suitable pieces of music to play in the 6 or 7 minutes before the ceremony - all by Handel: March from Scipio, Alceste and Largo. As it was mid-summer the temperature was about 100F and with the pedalling I got hotter and hotter. She was 35 minutes late - a time only equalled twice since - and I struggled through my limited repertoire some 6 times. I must have sweated several pints.

3 days later off to Port Said where we couldn't get army digs and had to book in at a hotel. Then at a cost of 5/- (25p) single aboard the "Empire Test" for the 24-hour voyage to Famagusta. I was ordered to be Fire Team NCO, but when we paraded, I saw that the officer-in-charge was the groom at last Saturday's wedding, so I knew we wouldn't be disturbed. A calm sea so just dozing on deck. To the Golden Sands Army Leave Camp for 2 nights while we got organized. Terrible food, but we hired cycles and went to Salamis and the old walled city which was full of ruined churches.

On the second morning we hitched a lift to Nicosia, booked in at the Garrison Club and set off over the mountains by bus for Kyrenia.

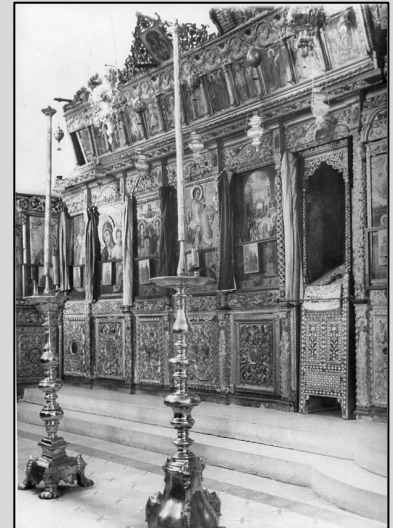
Then to Saint Sophia in Nicosia which was then a mosque. From the top of a minaret we got extensive views of the city. Then to St. Hilarion with its romantic castle and to Bellapais Abbey.

It was very pleasant to sleep on the veranda at the club. A bus took us to Troodos in the western mountains where we climbed to the top of Mount Olympus - the highest in Cyprus. Then to Pedhoulas whence we walked 12 miles along a rough track to Kykko Monastery.

It was a medieval experience as we were welcomed after banging on the door and shown to a small cell with 2 comfortable beds and given evening meal and breakfast. The constituents at both meals were entirely beans - 5 different sorts. The church bells seemed to be ringing for services all through the night. The church was very highly decorated in the Greek Orthodox style. The centrepiece of the altar surround (iconostas) was reputed to be an icon of the Virgin Mary painted by Saint Luke, but we weren't allowed to see it. We put some money in the collection plate before leaving for the 12 miles walk back to Pedhoulas where we stayed at Christy's Palace Hotel for two nights.



*Cyprus Railway*



*Kykko Iconastis*

We discovered later that the monastery was the abode of Archbishop Makarios who caused the ejection of the British and became President of Greek Cyprus after the partition.

After hiring (and repairing) bikes we had an archaeological day visiting Amathus (where I noted nothing but a lemonade stall) Kolossi Castle, Curium with its Roman mosaics and the Temple of Apollo Hyates. Back via the lemonade stall where we were very welcome.



*Peristrona Church*

Then on to Limassol, where we photographed two young girls and sent them a copy of the photo later. Next day hitched a lift back to Nicosia with the island's Schools Inspector who invited us back to tea. Then the night at the Garrison Club again, before taking a bus to the Grand Hotel in Larnaca. When we visited Cyprus again in 1988 an old photo in the hotel corridor was of the Grand Hotel which had been modernized and renamed.

As it was on the sea-front, we spent some time on the promenade and noticed that the local custom in the fine evenings was for separate groups of young girls and boys to stroll up and down the prom. The diary notes 'Beaucoup de femme's belles'.

Next day revisiting the ruined churches in the Old Town. There were dozens of them. Our last night was in St. Andrew's hostel there.

Famagusta Cathedral The return trip was on the inappropriately named "Empire Comfort" a corvette. They charged the extortionate price of 7/6d! There was a stiff breeze and the sea was rough. I spent most of the day lying on the deck and couldn't face going below. I stayed there all night at the edge of the deck and didn't move even when people were leaning over me to be sick. Even the captain succumbed.



*H.M.S. Empire Comfort*

*(Empire Comfort was employed as a convoy rescue ship. In 1948, Empire Comfort was in the Mediterranean where she was working under the control of the Middle East Command. Empire Comfort was used as a troopship between Port Said, Egypt and Famagusta, Cyprus and also between Port Said and Tobruk, Libya. She was used in this role from July 1948 and was in service at least until June 1949. In 1954, Empire Comfort was laid up at Falmouth, Cornwall. In June 1955, Empire Comfort, along with Empire Lifeguard and Empire Peacemaker were offered for sale "as lying at Falmouth". In July 1955, she was sold to Belgian buyers and towed to Antwerp. It was intended that she would be converted for service in the Belgian Congo, but she was scrapped in December 1955 at Ghent.)*

Back to camp and fit for choir practice that evening. It was now July and Robb, being group 115, left on the 15<sup>th</sup> leaving me as sole occupant of the tent. I was still finishing the Beyir map. As August Bank Holiday weekend was imminent (it was still the 1st Monday in August then) we had 2 ½ days off duty, so as I hadn't been to the Pyramids again to climb to the top, I applied for a 72-hour pass to get a free ticket to Cairo. The Colonel shouted "No - you have had more leave than anyone in the Regiment" I said I would come in to work on the Saturday morning - in civvies if necessary - so no work would be lost."



*Mastabas seen from the top of the great Pyramid*



He replied "Oh, here you are and now GET OUT". So, a free Saturday getting very sunburnt outside my tent, then two nights at the YMCA in Ish with the train journey to Cairo on the Sunday. I went straight to the National Hotel for lunch, latched on to a Fayid Brothers party by bus to Giza, and then found a guide to lead me up to the top of the Great Pyramid. The stones are about 4 feet thick, but some at one edge have been cut out so the steps are only of two feet. It took 20 minutes to get to the top in 104F heat, but the views were fantastic. As Noel Coward has it "Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the noonday sun".

Back on a Fayid bus for ice-cream at Groppi's; and then the train to Ish. On getting back to camp I stood-in for someone on guard duty for 4 hours that evening. It was a very relaxed unit. The postscript to this is when next visiting the Pyramids 41 years later I saw a bus labelled "Fayid Travel" so I asked our local guide if it belonged to the family from Ismailia. She replied that it did, but they were both dead. However, she said our party were visiting the usual carpet shop on the way back to Cairo which was owned by a nephew of the Brothers. We were made welcome and given coffee in their back room. Small world!



*The Sphinx*



*Luxor Temple*

Just a fortnight before the start of the journey home, and demob. I had bad headaches followed by sweating and shivering etc. The MO didn't know what to do but gave me salt-water to drink every 2 hours. After 6 days I was sent to the British Medical Hospital with suspected malaria. I was confined to bed for 4 days but managed to get back to camp to pack. I had a few treasures such as books and maps which I had buried in an ammunition box in the desert sand, but had to leave some behind as being rather fragile I couldn't

Back to 156 Transit Camp and its bagpipes on August 29<sup>th</sup> before embarking on SS "Oxfordshire" on Sept 4<sup>th</sup>. A very pleasant cruise through the Mediterranean with no duties, but it was a little rougher in the Atlantic. On the Sunday I played the piano for morning service. I noticed it was firmly screwed down to the deck. We didn't know our destination but turned left at the Scilly Islands and ended up at Liverpool. Up very early the next day and off to Aldershot by a very devious route which was of great interest to me as a rail enthusiast. We went up the LNWR to Stafford, and then turned off to Birmingham. Thence on the Midland, via Lickey to Worcester and the GWR to Oxford and Reading and then SR to Aldershot for the demob proceedings.

I then had a major problem. The free final rail ticket was a single only, so I had to balance going to somewhere interesting against the cost of returning. As I hadn't been to Devon I decided on Teignmouth and used my ticket for the last time on the unorthodox route via Marylebone and the 12:15 LNER Manchester express to Wycombe and HOME.

## **Careys Force – Second Battle of the Somme March 1918** **5<sup>th</sup> Field Survey Company Royal Engineers**

When the Germans launched their tremendous offensive of March 21<sup>st</sup> 1918, American Engineers provided a great aid to the British by laying out and constructing lines of trenches. On March 25<sup>th</sup>, the staff of the Fifth Army hastily gathered together a composite force made up of various details, engineers, training school staff and the American engineers. It was taken over by Major-General G G S Carey CB (who was on his way to take over command of the 20<sup>th</sup> Division) and given the name - **Carey's Force**.

The collection of men that later became known as 'Carey's Force' came into being at the explicit direction of General Gough. On that day Gough had moved his Headquarters to Dury, south of Amiens. As the Germans continued to advance rapidly and successfully, he looked to the Amiens Defence Line as an essential backstop. He scraped together as many men as he could find from his headquarters and from the rear areas to work on and garrison this line. The force he put together comprised a motley collection of men – 'anyone who could hold a rifle' – taken from a variety of regiments and units. It included "...electrical and mechanical engineers, surveyors, 500 men of the US Engineers tunnellers and miners, Army, Corps and Sniping Schools, and signallers." The Army Signal School provided communications, nine grooms acted as mounted orderlies, there were odd stragglers of infantry, the staff of a machine gun school, clerks, technical engineer units the 144<sup>th</sup>, 213<sup>th</sup>, 216<sup>th</sup> and 217<sup>th</sup> Army Troop Companies, 243<sup>rd</sup> Tunnelling Company, 253<sup>rd</sup> Electrical and Mechanical Company, No 4 Workshops Company, **5<sup>th</sup> Field Survey Company RE**, two companies (some 500 men) of 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment US railway engineers, (none of whom had any military experience), 400 officers and men of 2nd Battalion Canadian railway engineers, a 10-gun battery of newly arrived reinforcements for the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade, and a detachment of Fifth Army Signals. In total it was equipped with 16 Vickers and 76 Lewis guns, and some wagons and horses to provide transport.

This group acted as Infantry and created a front-line trench bridging a dangerous gap between the Fifth and Third British Armies at Hamel and Bangard Wood. For three days they held the gap, namely at the Battle of Rosieres: 26<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> March 1918 until Carey's Force Brigade was withdrawn from the line to make room for American troops. .

By the time Carey's Force was relieved the Canadians had acquired further machine guns manned by scratch British crews, bringing their total up to 32 weapons. (Note: the original Canadian machine gun unit in Carey's Force was replaced on March 29<sup>th</sup> by the Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade's 'D' Eaton and 'E' Yukon batteries.) Officers in the Force came from a variety of sources. Gough 'scooped up' all his officers returning from leave. The total strength came to well over 2000 men, some references say up to 3000. General Gough wrote: 'I put General P G Grant, who was my Chief Engineer, in command, and gave him two officers of our Army Staff to assist him. When General Carey came home from leave on Tuesday afternoon (26th March), I directed him to take command to set General Grant free to attend to his proper functions.'

The Brigade then moved to Fouilloy & Aubigny to billets. The incident was taken up by the British Press who celebrated the Victory at the time.

Included in this force were members of the 5<sup>th</sup> Field Survey Company Royal Engineers. It is unusual for survey sappers to be employed in an infantry capacity and unfortunately on this occasion they suffered a number of casualties. The War Diaries 5<sup>th</sup> Field Survey Company Royal Engineers recorded the following: -

- 25<sup>th</sup> Mar 1918 Groups and Sections moved from Lauenple to Demuin & Hangard. Started at 2.30 pm
- 26<sup>th</sup> Mar 1918 Completed as to 3.0 pm. 1.30 am 26<sup>th</sup> warned by GSO Colonel to be ready to proceed to Caix and reinforce 24<sup>th</sup> Division Colonel LEGH 5<sup>th</sup> Army. 7.30 am 30 Lorries are from XVIII Corps to take us to Caix. 8.0 under from 5<sup>th</sup> Army that we were under CE 5<sup>th</sup> Army for digging trenches straight 45 officers 657 OR's including two American Officers and two NCO's. 4.45 pm Capt MEW & 103 OR's left for HQ Dury. Capt BESLY arrived at Denvin & proceeded to organize those left into two companies A & B under command of himself and Capt HODGKINSON. The whole of this party were included in **Careys force**
- 27<sup>th</sup> Mar 1918 Lieut's MILLWARD & KING with 62 OR's volunteered to man the trenches & posts at 09.30 pm for Villers Brettoneaux & were also incorporated in "**Careys**" Force.

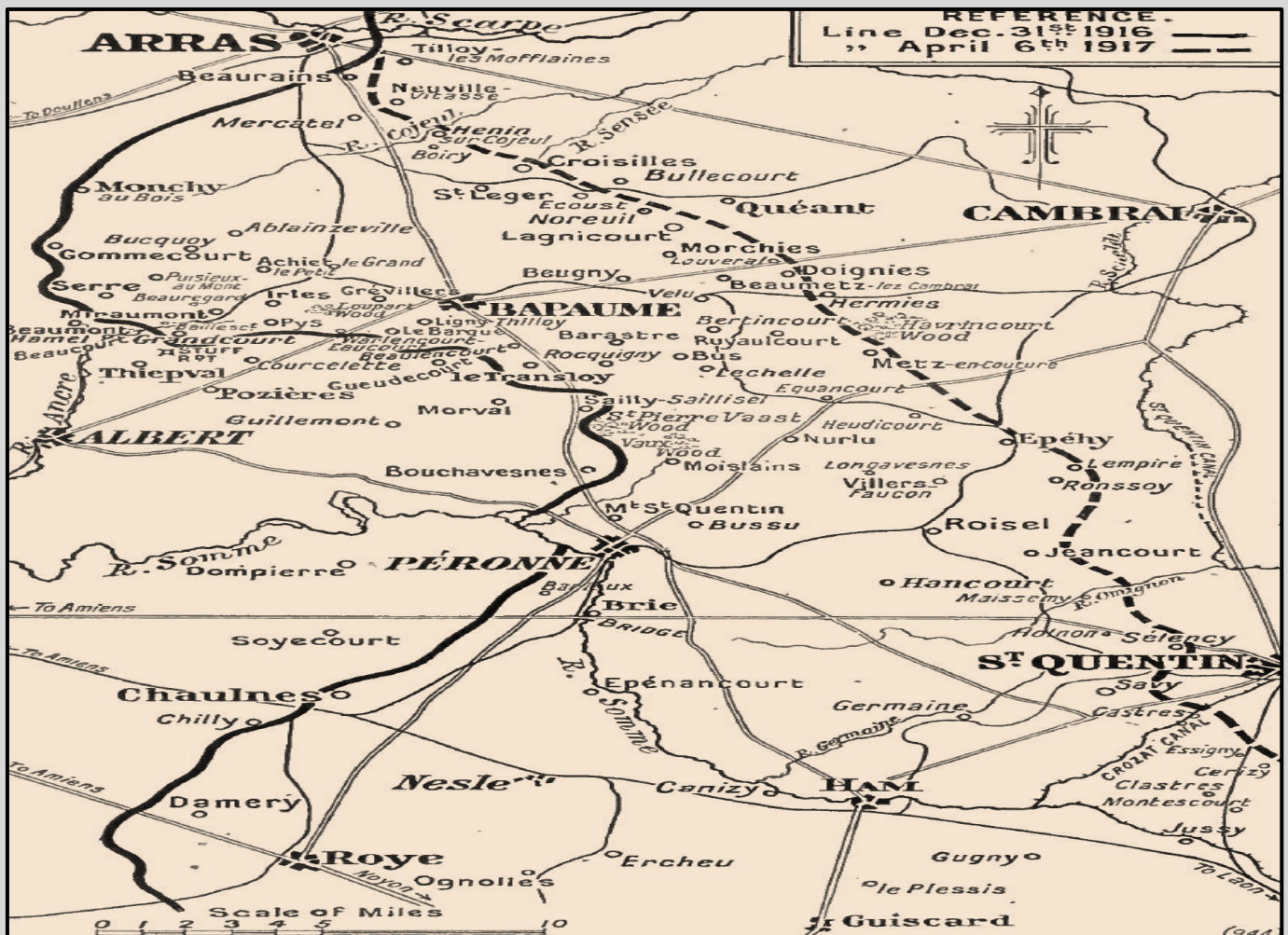
Capt GRAVES & Lieut ALDOUS left for Lesport and Vaux respectively 28<sup>th</sup> Mar 1918 Packed up ready to move. 10.30 pm paraded to start. 11.00 pm move cancelled. A & B Coys removed to Hailles

29<sup>th</sup> Mar 1918 Paraded at 6.30 am again at 7.00 am dis at 8.00, move deferred until further orders. D.R. sent to collect all Acquaintance Rolls and outstanding books from Groups and Sections in the line. Disposal of lev of the line with Careys force 47 officers 616 OR's HQ Dury 12.0 & 123 OR Vaux 1.0 & 22 OR school 9 men APM Abbeville 1.0 v 105 OR.

**Those, whose whereabouts are unknown, included 89 unaccounted for wounded or missing and gassed 43.** On leaving M T and Dispatch Riders 14 Draughtsmen at B. I. Sections 5 unaccounted for 89 Litho and Sapper Printers Photographers & Americans 2 officer and 2 other ranks Total 65 officers 1,046 other ranks does not include Corps Topo Sections

30<sup>th</sup> Mar 1918 Lieut's CROWE & HITCHING with 27 Drivers, 5 other ranks, 20 horses, 10 mules and 22 carts left at 09.30 am for Flixecourt. Capt HODGKINSON wounded. Sapper LAINSTON from 19 Observation Group reported from Obs base suffering from shell shock sent back on Ralton Lorry with Lieut BANES – CUNDY 3.00 pm. Lieut WALLOWER A E F arrived from the line. 3.30 Lieut BANES-CUNDY arrived and was sent back to Boyes. 3.45 pm Capt MARSDEN NZE arrived & he WALLOWER was sent officers and men belonging to 5<sup>th</sup> Field Survey Coy RE attached to Careys Force taken out of the line. Capt BESLY, Lieut BORASTON, Lieut SINCLAIR & Lieut JENNINGS missing Lieut's THOMAS, JONAS, SHINNER, ROTHWELL, Capt PEACHE, and Lieut OWEN & BISHOP wounded. Capt JAMES & Lieut E'AOTE sick. 7 men killed, 56 wounded, 73 missing & 21 reposted sick.

31<sup>st</sup> Mar 1918 1200 – Lieut STEVENS arrived from Boyes with HT of A & B Companies 5<sup>th</sup> Field Survey Coy RE. 1230 – 28 Officers and 437 men arrived back from the line being carried on Lorries belonging to the Company.



Listed below are all those members of the 5<sup>th</sup> Field Survey Company RE that were killed during the battle and were initially classed as missing. Their names were subsequently listed on the Pozieres Memorial. There are two sappers listed from the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Field Survey Companies, presumed attached to the 5<sup>th</sup> at the time of the battle.

Commemorated at POZIERES MEMORIAL

Name	Number	Rank	Unit	Date of Death	Age	Location
Atkins, Robert Maxwell	358217	Sapper	5th Fd Svy Coy RE	30/03/1918	20	Somme France
Bradley, Thomas John	313267	Sapper	5th Fd Svy Coy RE	30/03/1918	36	Somme France
Brocksopp, George Henry	423983	Sapper	5th Fd Svy Coy RE	30/03/1918	25	Somme France
Cowen, Benjamin	246402	Sapper	5th Fd Svy Coy RE	30/03/1918	21	Somme France
Davidson, William	422236	Sapper	5th Fd Svy Coy RE	30/03/1918	26	Somme France
Drew, Thomas Albert MM	244894	Sapper	5th Fd Svy Coy RE	30/03/1918	24	Somme France
Goffe, Reginald Charles	413915	Sapper	3rd Fd Svy Coy RE	30/03/1918	37	Somme France
Hamilton, Thomas	245503	Sapper	5th Fd Svy Coy RE	29/03/1918	47	Somme France
Harvey, Horace Ellis	358232	Sapper	5th Fd Svy Coy RE	30/03/1918	21	Somme France
Hewett, John Henry	246403	Sapper	5th Fd Svy Coy RE	31/03/1918	23	Somme France
Jones, Frederick	244755	Pioneer	5th Fd Svy Coy RE	30/03/1918	34	Somme France
Malbon, Charles Frederick	357805	Sapper	4th Fd Svy Coy RE	30/03/1918	38	Somme France
Meade, James Frederick	549630	Sapper	5th Fd Svy Coy RE	30/03/1918	19	Somme France
Sharpen, Victor Percy	310808	Lance Corporal	5th Fd Svy Coy RE	31/03/1918	20	Somme France
Simister, Robert	503941	Sapper	5th Fd Svy Coy RE	30/03/1918	32	Somme France
Wood, Leon	311982	Lance Corporal	5th Fd Svy Coy RE	29/03/1918	32	Somme France

244755 Pioneer Frederick Jones RE

Sample of correspondence from Frederick Jones RE Military Records.

Royal Engineers Record Office,  
CHATHAM.  
27. August, 1918.  
Sir,  
Re No. 244755 Pnr. F. Jones, R.E.  
Reference attached postcard.  
The above named man serving in the 5th Field Survey Coy., is recorded in this office as Wounded and Missing 27-3-18.  
Yours faithfully,  
*MCF*  
Lieut. R.E.  
for Colonel i/c R. E. Records.  
Secretary,  
Enquiry Department for Wounded & Missing,  
18, Carlton House Terrace,  
S.W.1.

Form D.P.  
WAR OFFICE,  
Finsbury Court,  
Finsbury Pavement,  
LONDON, E.C.2  
26th April 1919.  
To  
The Officer in Charge of Records,  
R.E. Record Office, Chatham.  
The Army Council has decided that the following soldiers are to be regarded, for official purposes, as having died on or since the dates quoted against their names.  
The next-of-kin should be notified accordingly on Army Form B.104-82a, and the usual papers prepared, if this has not already been done.  
(Sd) B. Grindle.  
ROYAL ENGINEERS.  

Reg'l No.	Rank and Name.	Battalion.	Died on or since.	Reference Number.
244755	Spr. Jones, F.	5 Fld. Surv. Co.	30-3-18.	S/710667/1.

(28006) Wt. 22710/951. 50,000(4). 3/18. R. & L., Ltd. Widows—Form 3.

Any further communication on this subject should be addressed to:—  
 The Secretary,  
 Ministry of Pensions  
 (Widows and Dependants Branch),  
 45, Grosvenor Road,  
 London, S.W. 1.  
 and the following number quoted

MINISTRY OF PENSIONS  
 (Widows & Dependants Branch),  
 45, GROSVENOR ROAD,  
 LONDON, S.W. 1.

No. 6023 P.C.

7-11-1918  
 RECEIVED  
 11 NOV 1918

SIR,

I am directed by the Minister of Pensions to inform you that the widow of No. 244755  
P. J. Fredrick Jones  
52 Field Sur. Coy. Royal Engineers  
 has been awarded a Pension of 33/6 a week,  
 for herself and four children, with effect from the 25-11-18.

The Officer issuing Separation Allowance has been informed of the award.

The Pension will be paid from the Pension Issue Office.

The certificates received in support of the application have been returned to the widow.

I am, SIR,  
 Your obedient Servant,

*rept. missing*  
*14*  
*13-11-18*

Matthew Chatham  
 The Officer in charge of Records, Secretary.

W15053—H3574 250,000 4/17 HWV(P1616/3) Army Form B. 104—126.

Any further letter on this subject should be addressed to:  
 Officer i/c R.E. Records,  
14/10/18  
 and the following No. quoted.

From Miss M. Jones  
105 Kenlan St  
Denbigh, N. Wales.  
 Station Chatham Date 5.8.19.

Place Denbigh  
 Date 7 8 19

SIR,

I have to acknowledge receipt of the articles as stated opposite.

Yours faithfully,  
30-3-18  
 (Sign here) Mary Jones  
 P.E.  
 The Officer i/c Records,  
 Station Chatham

Sir or MADAM,

I am directed to forward the undermentioned articles of private property of the late No. 244755 Rank Pioneer  
 Name P. Jones Regt. Royal Engineers  
 and would ask that you will kindly acknowledge receipt of the same on the form opposite:—

Woolen scarf / Pair of socks /

These are the only articles at present forthcoming, but should any further articles be received at any time they will be duly forwarded.

Yours faithfully,  
 Communications should be Addressed to:  
 COLONEL i/c R.E. RECORDS, CHATHAM.  
 and not to an individual by name.  
Chatham  
 Officer in Charge of Records.

Sources:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)

TNA War Diary 5 Fd Svy Coy RE from January 1917 to April 1919 - File WO 95/492/4

Ancestry.com – Military Records

## Sapperton British Columbia Canada



METRO VANCOUVER -- Beau Jarvis was looking for a way to get people talking about Wesgroup's new Brewery District development in New Westminster. And he had the perfect spot to make a statement — a long construction hoarding near the corner of Brunette and Columbia.

"I really wanted to utilize that, (but) with something other than 'condos for sale,' or 'live, work, play,'" he said.

The site is in historic Sapperton, so Jarvis and colleagues David Wesik and Cam Good decided to play up the history. Sapperton is named after the **Sappers**, the nickname of the **Royal Engineers** that came to New Westminster in late 1858 to survey the boundary between British North America and the United States. The Sappers also surveyed New Westminster, which was briefly the capital of colonial British Columbia, but lost out to Victoria when the mainland and Vancouver Island colonies were combined.

So, Jarvis came up with a bit of historic graffiti, a neon sign that reads "The Sappers Were Here."

"I've been really into neon lately. We have a big neon sign in our office," said Jarvis.

"So, I said let's put something in neon there. Something really, really big that gets talked about, à la the big East Van sign in East Vancouver."

It is, in fact, really, really big. The sign is 2.5 metres tall and 40 metres long, and at night can probably be seen from space.

The sign was designed by Neon Works in Coquitlam. It consists of 33 1.2-metre panels that were stitched into seven sections, with a big wooden frame to hold it all together. During the day, the sign will feature yellow neon letters with a white shadow on top of a black background. But it'll come alive at night, when the neon glow will really stand out.

"It's sort of a retro-style font, and a retro look," said Rob Shantz of Neon Works.

"Just a single line of neon down the middle, that's going to glow backwards onto the yellow font. At night you won't see the white so much, the background will just disappear."

The yellow used is called pineapple, and the glass to encase the neon was specially imported from Europe.

"The glass we're using is very strong, and lead-free," said Shantz. "So, it's environmentally friendly, for the neon bender himself and also for the environment." The "neon bender" is the artist who bends (blows) the glass into shape, in this case Carlos Bravo. Retired sapper Jim Harris is excited by the project.

"I think it's a fantastic idea," said Harris.

“The contribution the Royal Engineers gave to New Westminster has been overshadowed, and this will bring great attention to it.” If the Sappers hadn’t been dispatched from Britain to colonial British Columbia, B.C. might never have become part of Canada. “At that time there was a threat the U.S. would try and take over B.C.,” said Wright.

It was the time of the Fraser River “gold rush, and there were all kinds of problems with Americans coming up through here. Part of the engineers acted as a military force to help with any problems.” The Royal Engineers wound up surveying the Cariboo Trail, which many miners used to travel to the Interior. They also mapped out North Road between New West and Port Moody, but for military purposes. “They had moored their ships in Port Moody and built North Road with the idea that if they had to beat a hasty retreat (from an American invasion force) they could jump in their ships and escape,” said Harris.

Sapperton got its name because that’s where the Sappers’ barracks used to be. Unfortunately, most traces of the engineers are gone, save for a cairn honouring them on the former Oakalla prison site. But now everybody who drives by Brunette and Columbia will know their name, thanks to a neon sign.

[jmackie@vancouver.sun.com](mailto:jmackie@vancouver.sun.com)

Posted by Ed Wadleigh on FaceBook Group - *Once a Sapper always a Sapper* – 31/08/2019

\*\*\*\*\*

## News from The Regiment

### St Neots Charity Dragon Boat Festival

From: Staff Sergeant Charlie Milne RE



**42 ENGINEER REGIMENT (GEOGRAPHIC)**  
RAF Wyton, HUNTINGDON, Cambridgeshire, PE28 2EA

Telephone Military: Wyton 94231 Ext 7328  
Telephone Civilian: 01480 52451 Ext 7328  
Email: 42ENGR-16SqFSSSgt@mod.uk



12 Sep 2019

Sir,

The Team and I would like to extend our sincere thanks to you for the donation the Military Survey Royal Engineers Association, very generously made, which enabled us to enter the recent St Neots Charity Dragon Boat Festival.

You'll be pleased to hear the Wyton Warriors team, which consisted of current and former Sappers from the Regiment won all three heats, setting the fastest time of the day in our first race with a time of 57.69 seconds for the 200m course. We qualified second fastest from the heats which meant we had the best lane for what turned out to be the closest and most exciting race of the day. We were up against Gainz Gym, the team that beat us in the final last year. This year the outcome was different and we beat Gainz Gym by .20 of a second. However this then meant we had the worst lane draw for the final which we won by almost a second, finishing top of 19 crews.

Almost all of the team members brought their families along who had a fantastic day which was one of the reasons I wanted to enter. Everybody raced at least twice and enjoyed themselves once, they had caught their breath. We are awaiting the final total but have raised in excess of £600 for the St Neots Rotary Club charities which, without your help would not have been possible.

Thank you.

Regards,

*C Milne*

CW Milne  
Staff Sergeant  
Royal Engineers





## Freefall Fougasse

A short report of the first few days of the 42 led Corps expedition to Arizona for a skydiving AT package.

The expedition has landed in the USA and all students have safely completed their first few jumps into the world of skydiving. Amazing weather and the tight bonds already cemented between the students has allowed them to conquer their nerves and leap from an aircraft 13000ft above the ground. Their focus now solely rests on developing their skills to a point where they can jump without an instructor and safely descend to the ground.





Can I please ask that the REA (mil svy) Branch is tagged in the various social media posts and thanked for their contributions to the expedition?

Cpl Lee Clarke RE [leeclarke16@googlemail.com](mailto:leeclarke16@googlemail.com)

## 135 Geographic Squadron RE

The Squadron recently held a Combat Engineer weekend. From bridging and demolitions to Land Rover recovery, a great weekend of training. Ubique!



Source: 135 Geo Sqn FaceBook Group 22/11/2019

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## Special Announcement

### Branch Lapel Badges

All members attending the Reunion/AGM on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020 will be given (free) one of the new Branch lapel badges as pictured here:



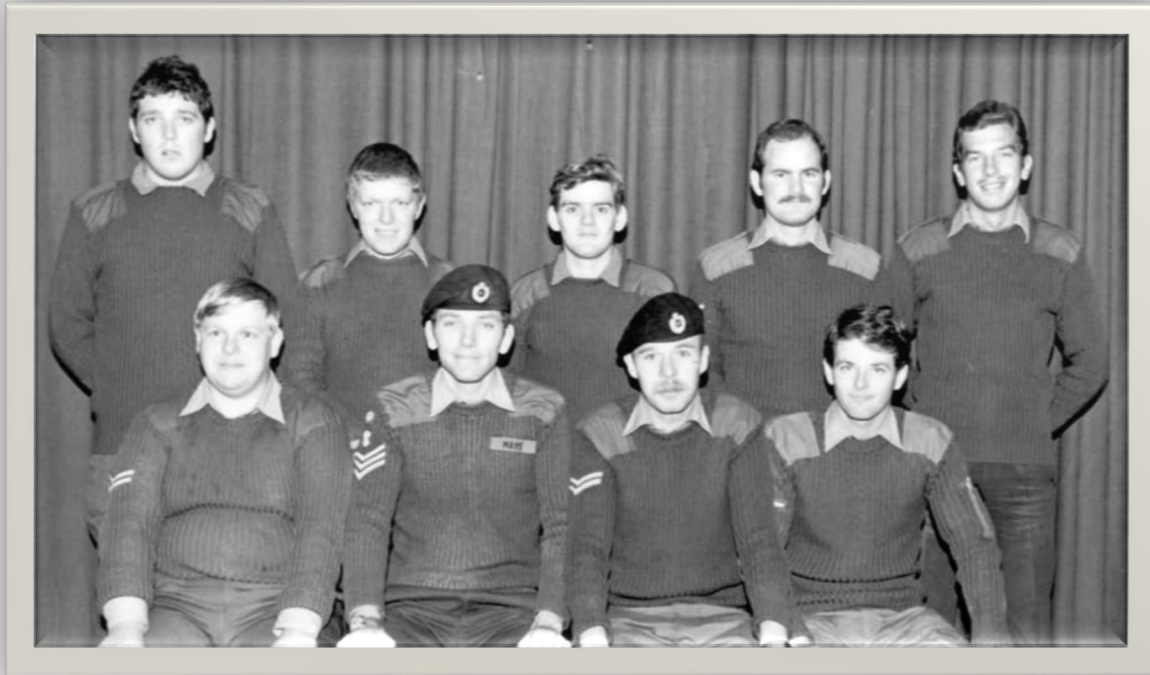
Members not able to attend the Reunion/AGM can if they wish obtain a Branch lapel badge by writing to the Branch Secretary, Rod Siggs, giving their name and address and enclosing £2.00 to cover the cost of P & P.

Cheques should be made payable to Military Survey Branch REA.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Notification of Deaths

#### Steve Lightowler



*No 21 Intermediate Field Survey Course 1983. Steve Lightowler standing second on the left*

We are notified of the death of Steve Lightowler after suffering a heart attack. Steve served with 42 as a field surveyor.

## Steve (Taff) Wright



*No 17 Intermediate Survey Print Technician Course 1980  
Steve (Taff) Wright standing on the right*

I was informed, by Carol Winship (wife of Dave), of the death of Steve (Taff) Wright, a well-known character and printer. He died after a short illness from cancer on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

The following message was posted on FaceBook from Dafydd: -

*Thank you so much for all the messages of love and support, following our sad announcement that Steve passed away last week, after a short battle with cancer. Dad's ethos was one of practical simplicity – he wasn't one for fuss and certainly not one for pomp or ceremony! As such, dad has opted for a direct cremation service, following in the footsteps of his musical icon David Bowie, and many others, who prefer a means to continue their journey without, as he would say, "creating a fuss".*

*We know many of you have asked about details of a service for Dad, but a direct cremation means there will not be a formal gathering as per his wishes. If asked what he would want from each of us to remember him by, he would simply say. "To buy an extra poppy or two, come Remembrance Day each year, and to raise your next glass and think of a happy time you shared together".*

### **22971713 L/Cpl Ralph Capper**

Ralph Capper died on May 14<sup>th</sup> 2018. Ralph joined the Royal Engineers in 1953 and began his army career at SMS Hermitage Newbury. During his time in the army he was posted to Fayid, Egypt joining 32 Litho Squadron, 42 Survey Regt Royal Engineers during the Suez Crisis. He later moved to Zygi Cyprus during the unrest. He returned to Civvy Street in 1957.

## Stuart (Taff) Jones



*Stuart (Taff) Jones standing on the right*

Stuart (Taff) Jones passed away on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019 he is described as one of the old school photo techs! The funeral was held at Boxgrove Priory Church (near Chichester) at 11am on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November. He was not a member of our REA association but thought it worth recording and publishing in the newsletter. (Notification by Clive Ingram via Ian Parr)

### Letter to the Hon Secretary

#### A timely reminder

It has been confirmed that the **Association of Harrogate Apprentices** will close and cease, during 2020 - various reasons given, but mainly smaller numbers, no volunteers for committee positions, virtually no new members from recent years etc., etc.

The Association started in 1952 and was temporarily disbanded on change of title (School to College) in 1996. It was re-established in 1999s and has been going a long time.

Many older members of our RE Branch were members but appreciated that many more were Chepstow Apprentices after the Harrogate College became Royal Signals only. The RE trades moved from Harrogate to Chepstow in April 1961.

*(Ron Birch)*



Mr Ian Spencer  
Deputy Head NCGI-F / Director DGC

**Joint Forces Intelligence Group**

Defence Geographic Centre,  
Hotine Building,  
MOD Feltham, Elmwood Avenue,  
Feltham, Middlesex,  
TW13 7AH



Military Network: 94641 4906  
Telephone: 020 8618 2906  
Email: [Ian.Spencer852@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Ian.Spencer852@mod.gov.uk)

Colonel (Ret'd) Mark Burrows  
Conifer House, Rivar Road  
Shaibourne  
Marlborough  
Wiltshire  
SN8 3RR

19 November 2019

*Dear Mark,*

**ROYAL ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION MILITARY SURVEY BRANCH STANDARD AT DEFENCE GEOGRAPHIC CENTRE ACT OF REMEMBRANCE 11 NOVEMBER 2019**

I wanted to write to you to thank you for allowing Mr Mike Payne to parade your Branch Standard at our recent Act of Remembrance on 11 November.

Mike represented your Branch and the wider Royal Engineers Association admirably, and both he and the Standard added to the occasion enormously. The ceremony itself was an indoor affair attended by 200+ Defence Geographic Centre personnel, with just the right degree of pageantry against which to frame the proceedings. The Last Post and Reveille were played and provided exactly the right atmospherics for the '2 Minute Silence', and for the Standard to have its full ceremonial impact as it was paraded, lowered and then raised.

I and the staff who organised the event have already received numerous notes of thanks for staging this opportunity to pay our collective respects to the fallen. Most of those notes have mentioned the significance of having Mike and the Standard with us, and the impact of their presence. Defence Geographic Centre Staff feel a close affinity with the men and women of the Armed Forces, and they buy into what it is they do on behalf of the United Kingdom. This opportunity to reflect, in an appropriate fashion on those that have made the ultimate sacrifice has been appreciated.

Could I ask that my deep gratitude and that of my staff is passed to Mike for his enthusiastic support, and for contributing to what was a very successful and symbolic Act of Remembrance. It was fabulous to have the Standard with us, and it added to the occasion significantly. Upon accepting our request for assistance, Mike informed us that this year would be the final opportunity for him to fulfil the role of Standard Bearer due to retirement from his current branch role. We therefore took the opportunity to thank him for his assistance over recent years by presenting him with a gift from all personnel at Defence Geographic Centre as a token of our appreciation. Mike's professionalism, bearing and contribution were, and always have been, first rate. I ask that he is commended for his invaluable contribution over recent years. Additionally, I hope that your branch will be able to continue to support Defence Geographic Centre in the coming years.

Yours sincerely,

I R Spencer  
Dir DGC

### Committee Contact Details

#### Secretary

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11, Merlin Way,  
Southwood  
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**THE MILITARY SURVEY BRANCH OF THE REA**

**IT'S A REUNION**

**FREE ENTRY AND FREE CURRY SUPPER**

**NON-MEMBERS £10 PER PERSON or £5 pp. cash back if you subsequently join)**

**CURRY – 18:30hrs FOR 19:00hrs FRIDAY THE 3<sup>rd</sup> OF APRIL 2020**

**PRECEDED BY AN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1700hrs FRIDAY THE 3<sup>rd</sup> OF APRIL 2020**

**Please note that the bar will be open during the AGM. Food will be served after 1900hrs.**

**Accommodation:** A small number of **SINGLE** rooms might be available but do note that as the barracks are no longer under the command of RSMS this may not be possible – **If you require this then you must contact me EARLY**. Hotel facilities are available at junction 13 of the M4 motorway and at Chieveley too; we will provide transport **free back** to these locations late in the evening.

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

**WARNING: - Hermitage has become a high security Barracks.**

**ENTRY WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED to those who have returned this entry form with their details.**

**IDENTITY CHECKS WILL 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 as soon as you can:**

**SO PLEASE SEND RETURNS BEFORE THE 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 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:..... **I am a member – YES//NO**  
**Non-members £10 pp. cheque please**

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

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

**I \*shall/\*shall not** be attending the Reunion on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020.

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

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

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

**I enclose a cheque 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. Please note - Military units do not cater for severely disabled conditions (for obvious reasons) and we apologies in advance for any shortcomings that might cause individual inconvenience.