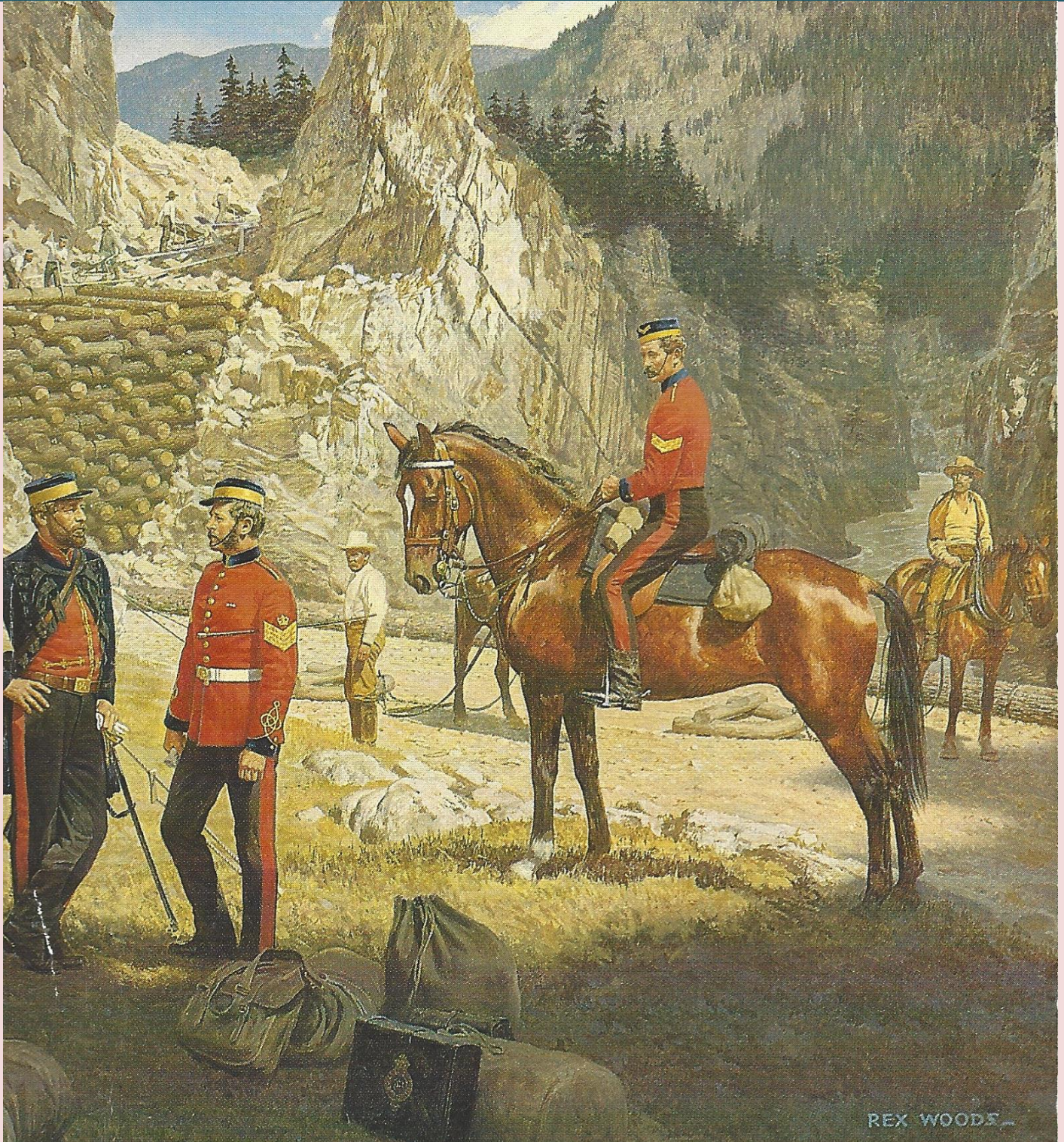




The Military Survey (Geo) Branch

Summer Newsletter 2019 – issue 72



*"Cariboo Road" by Rex Woods
Courtesy of Confederation Life Insurance Company, Toronto, Ontario*

The Royal Engineers and British Columbia

By MAJOR D. VETTCH R.C.E.

(Published in the Royal Engineer Journal June 1958)

INTRODUCTION

In January of this year (1958) a series of commemorative events began in Canada's westerly province, British Columbia, which stretches north along the Pacific Coast and astride the Rockies to the snow-bound vastness of Alaska and the Yukon Territory. These celebrations commemorate British Columbia's centenary and will cover every season of the year and every section of the province. Many of them will have a strong connexion with British Columbia's lifeline, the Fraser River, taking place both along its length and its estuary. And principally because of this connexion with the Fraser of a hundred years ago, this article has been written for *The Royal Engineers Journal*.

For, as in so many other fields, the Corps of Royal Engineers, true to their motto "Ubique" were there, and as in so many other instances were there in the beginning. It was they who assisted in bringing law and order to the infant Colony of British Columbia. It was they who first surveyed and laid out many of the cities and towns of today. And it was they who prepared, amongst other things, the first maps, designed the first churches, the first postage stamps and established the first observatory.

It is in keeping then that in this centennial year we should review their achievements and be proud of their work—the foundations on which the Province of British Columbia was able to grow into such vigorous maturity.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The area that is now the Province of British Columbia was once two separate colonies, that of Vancouver Island formed in 1849 and the mainland, originally known as New Caledonia and later proclaimed in 1858 as the Colony of British Columbia. In August 1866, the two colonies were united under the name of British Columbia and eventually joined the Dominion of Canada on the 20th July, 1871.

It is the intention here to examine particularly the work of the Corps which was carried out on the mainland by Lieut-Colonel Richard Clement Moody, R.E., and his special detachment from 1858 to 1863 with brief reference where possible to others who followed or went before. No mention other than this, will be made of the Royal Engineers who formed part of the Esquimalt garrison on Vancouver Island up to the turn of the century and only passing reference will be made to the achievements of the Royal Engineers on the mainland, who did not form part of Colonel Moody's detachment.

By late autumn of 1857 the world was aware of the existence of gold along the Fraser River. Before the following summer was over, an estimated 25,000 people had flocked to New Caledonia, as it then was, from as far away as Hawaii, Central and South America. This horde of adventurers knew nothing of the land to which they were going, nor did many of them know much of law.

This land to which they were going, the mainland of British Columbia, was at that time merely a vast fur preserve of the Hudson's Bay Company. Inhabited by less than a score of white men scattered among a dozen or so widely separated trading posts of the company, it was a complete wilderness without government, towns, roads, or means of transportation. In brief, save for the few forts and what little agriculture was carried out adjacent to them, the mainland was in a natural state.

Fortunately, the Colony of Vancouver Island was nearby, and even more fortunately its Governor, James Douglas, head of the Hudson's Bay Company on the Pacific coast, was a man not afraid to assume authority or to accept responsibility. Although he had no jurisdiction over the mainland, he took it upon himself, as the nearest Government official, to issue regulations regarding the mining of gold and the terms under which people might enter the country. This action was subsequently approved by Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, and pending action by Parliament, Douglas was offered and accepted, the governorship of the mainland. Simultaneously he was requested to continue the maintenance of order in the gold mines.

Knowing of the unsavoury reputation of many of the incoming adventurers and with his recollection of recent events in California where Vigilance Committees had been formed to combat lawlessness, Douglas was determined that such would not take place under the British flag.

Accordingly, he wrote to Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton asking for soldiers to assist in keeping order in the country. Sir Edward had already anticipated this request and had written to Douglas (the letters crossing) to say that he intended “sending to British Columbia by the earliest opportunity an Officer of the Royal Engineers (probably a field officer, with two or three subalterns) and a Company of a Sappers and Miners (sic) ¹ made up of 150 non-commissioned officers and men”. In setting out their duties, the Colonial Secretary used a very broad brush indeed, for he said, in part “It will devolve upon them to survey those parts of the country which may be considered most suitable for settlement, to mark out allotments of land for public purposes, to suggest a site for the seat of Government, to point out where roads should be made and to render you such assistance as may be in their power. . . This force is sent for scientific and practical purposes and not solely for military object.”

In a later letter, the Secretary of State indicated why he had chosen the Royal Engineers. Describing the quality of the men he was sending out, he said “The superior discipline and intelligence of this force, which afford ground for expecting that they will be far less likely than ordinary soldiers of the line, to yield to the temptation of desertion offered by the goldfields, and their capacity at once to provide for themselves in a country without habitation, appear to me to render them especially suited for this duty; whilst by their services as pioneers in the work of civilization, in opening the resources of the country, by the construction of roads and bridges, in laying the foundation of a future city or seaport, and in carrying out the numerous engineering works which in the earlier stages of colonization are so essential to the progress and welfare of the community they will probably not only be preserved from the idleness which may corrupt the discipline of ordinary soldiers, but establish themselves in the popular goodwill of the emigrants by the civil benefits it will be in the regular nature of their occupation to bestow.”

THE ARRIVAL OF COLONEL MOODY’S DETACHMENT

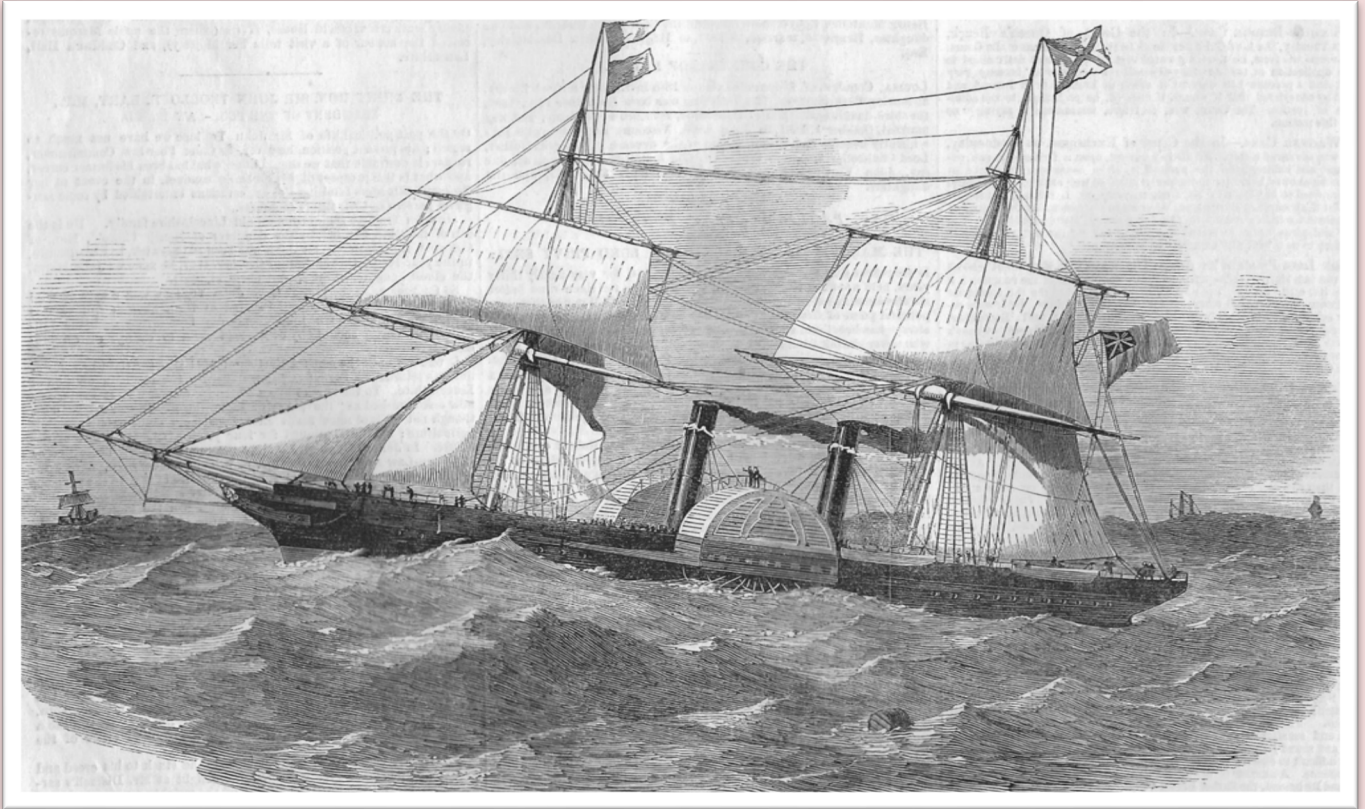
From the large number of volunteers who came forward, attracted, no doubt in part by the opportunity of obtaining thirty acres (later increased to 150) after six years’ service in British Columbia, a picked body of men was chosen. These men were selected with a view to having in their ranks and among their number every trade and calling that might be useful in setting up the framework of the new colony. The detachment was under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Richard Clement Moody, R.E. and was dispatched in three parties. The first section of twenty men under Captain R. M. Parsons, R.E., was mostly surveyors, whilst the second group of twelve under Captain J. M. Grant, R. E. were mostly carpenters. The main body consisted of two subalterns, Lieutenants J Lempriere and Palmer, Staff Assistant Surgeon J. V. Seddall, 118 non-commissioned officers and thirty-one women and thirty-four children under the command of Captain H. R. Luard R E.

The first two groups left England on the 2nd and 17th September, 1858. They travelled via the Isthmus of Panama and arrived in time to take part in the formal launching of the colony; for during their voyage Parliament had passed an Act creating the Colony of British Columbia, to come into force on the Act being promulgated in the country; and that promulgation was made at Fort Langley on the 19th November, 1858. Governor Douglas after being received by a guard of honour commanded by Captain Grant was that day sworn in as the Governor of the Colony of British Columbia; so that now two separate colonies, Vancouver Island and British Columbia were in existence, both with the same Governor.

The main body left Gravesend on the clipper ship, *Thames City* on the 10th October, 1858. They came by way of Cape Horn and in mid-April of the following year, arrived at New Westminster where they were to establish their permanent camp. An account of this voyage, in the form of a weekly news sheet called *The Emigrant Soldiers, Gazette and Cape Horn Chronicle*, has survived and for those who wish to read it, a reprinted copy can be found in the R.E. Corps Library. This weekly paper edited by Corporal Sennett, from “the editor’s office, Starboard Front Cabin, *Thames City*” was written on large sheets of cardboard and read to the assembled company by Captain Luard every Saturday evening.

The officer in command of the detachment, Colonel Moody, who was also to become British Columbia’s first Lieut.-Governor, its first Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works and member of the Governor’s Executive Council, arrived in Victoria on Christmas Day 1858, having travelled separately from his parties via the Panama route.

¹ The Royal Sappers and Miners were incorporated into the corps of Royal Engineers under a warrant dated 17th October 1856.



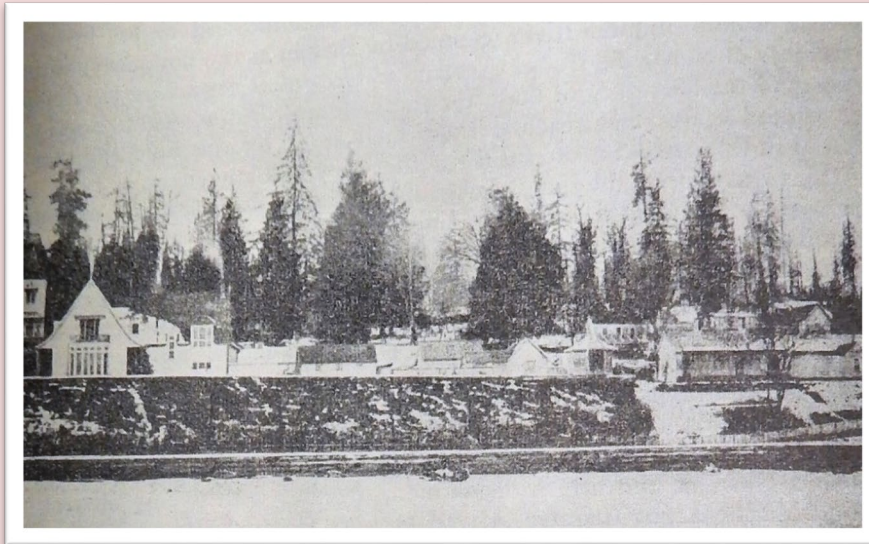
Royal Mail Steam-ship "La Plata" arrived at Vancouver on 14th November 1858 carrying Captain Robert Mann Parsons RE and a party of 20 surveyors

ROYAL ENGINEERS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA PRIOR TO 1858

In dealing with the gold rush and the subsequent arrival of the Engineers, we are concerned with the best-known group of Royal Engineers. But it should not be forgotten that even prior to the coming of this group, other Engineers had been sent to this territory and a quick digression to examine their activities seems appropriate here.

In 1845, because of the heightening tension in the dispute between Great Britain and the United States over the Oregon question, two Engineer officers Lieutenants Vavasour and Warre arrived overland from Canada. They were on a special secret mission to examine and report upon the defence of the Columbia River (claimed by Britain as the boundary) and the possibility of conveying troops overland to Oregon. They submitted detailed reports to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, but as negotiations with the United States had reached their final stage by the time the reports arrived in England, it is doubtful whether they had any effect.

Consequent upon the settlement of the boundary dispute it was, of course necessary to survey the boundary line. The R.E. officers appointed to the Boundary Commission were Colonel Hawkins, Lieutenants Wilson, Darrah and Anderson and with them, under command of Lieutenant Wilson, was a group of fifty-six specially selected non-commissioned officers and men. In addition to their survey work through swamp, the densest forest, and across the grain of the Cascade Mountains, they were also called upon to preserve peace in the Fraser River mines. As a result of trouble between the miners and the Indians, Governor Douglas late in August, 1858 (before even the first of Colonel Moody's special detachment had left England) supported by Colonel Hawkins and fifteen of his men, together with twenty men of the Royal Marine Light Infantry arrived at Fort Hope. Fortunately, the disorder had ended but Douglas' swift action was successful in cementing the peace with the Indians and showing the miners that lawlessness would not be tolerated. To return to the original purpose of the Boundary Commission, the final line, run under their auspices, stretched along the 49th parallel of latitude, from the Pacific coast to the Rocky Mountains, terminating in longitude 114° West.



The Royal Engineers camp

THE WORK OF COLONEL MOODY'S DETACHMENT

In considering the work of this group year by year from 1858 to 1863, one fact must be kept in mind or a false impression of haphazard planning will be gained. As gold petered out in one area new finds were made in other parts of the province, and the population would then rapidly gravitate to this new centre. Since the task of the Engineers was to provide for these changing centres of population, it was inevitable that a certain amount of vacillation should occur. With this reservation in mind let us then look at the achievements of Colonel Moody and his party.

1858

No sooner had Captain Grant dismissed the inaugural guard of honour than they, turning to their respective trades, began to prepare a permanent camp against the arrival of the main body. The site selected by the Governor for the seaport town, or capital, as others regarded it, was old Fort Langley, or Derby about two miles below the existing fort. However, when Colonel Moody arrived, he condemned Derby as being unsuited for defence as well as situated on the wrong side of the Fraser River and recommended New Westminster in its place. All the work done at Derby was thus lost and, in consequence, when the main body of the special detachment arrived in April, 1859, little had been accomplished.

1859

While the Sappers were still at Derby their work was interrupted by a bloodless "war", a trivial incident which occurred in the Yale area and is sometimes referred to as "Ned McGowan's War". A petty squabble between two magistrates, each with their adherents, exaggerated out of all proportions, sent Colonel Moody, Captain Grant and twenty men of the Royal Engineers post haste to the troubled area, closely followed by one hundred sailors and marines from H.M.S. *Satellite*. The nearer the party came to the "war zone" the less excitement there was, and at Yale everything was peaceful. In fact, the day following Colonel Moody's arrival being Sunday, he made use of the court house to hold Yale's first public divine service. Although the Engineers did not fire a shot in this "war" they were again the instruments whereby the Government showed its determination that lawlessness such as had transpired in California would not be countenanced in British Columbia.

After the arrival of the main body in April, all hands turned to the task of clearing the camp site, building the barracks and married quarters, storehouses, offices, a theatre, an observatory and, other necessary structures. The chosen site, Sapperton, was near the new capital of the Colony selected by Colonel Moody, first known as Queensborough, but afterwards named by Queen Victoria, New Westminster.

Coincidental with this, the town sites of New Westminster, Hope, Yale, and Douglas were surveyed and laid out, the plans being lithographed and published; also, books were printed in Sapperton by the Royal Engineers' press.

Road construction by the Engineers, which over the following years is almost beyond detailing, began with a trail from their camp out to Port Moody on Burrard Inlet. Next to avoid the Fraser canyons, Lieutenant. H. Spencer Palmer and one hundred men of the detachment surveyed, relocated and improved the miners' primitive trail from Douglas to Lillooet until it was reasonably passable. In order to reach the Fraser in the canyon Lieutenant A. R Lempriere and a small party, built a trail from Hope up the Coquahalla, along the south branch of the Anderson River through to Boston Bar, and up to Lytton keeping to the easterly side of the Fraser. In that year, also, Lieutenant Palmer with another detachment of Engineers made a complete exploratory survey of the whole country between Hope and the Columbia River.

During the summer of 1859 trouble occurred, between Great Britain and the United States over possession of an island of the Haro Archipelago, San Juan. Again, Colonel Moody, and his detachment were called upon to assist in the preservation of order, but this time he could only take forty-four Marines and fifteen Engineers with him--the remainder of the Sappers being engaged, as we have seen, in the peaceful and more useful occupation of building roads.

1860

In January, 1860, Governor Douglas made a proclamation permitting pre-emption of land. Accordingly, the surveyors of the detachment went to work over the district between Sapperton and Vancouver Harbour on Burrard Inlet and on the south side of the Fraser River establishing a draughting and record office as a natural concomitant of the process. In addition, the town plans of Lillooet and Lytton were completed and printed.

Captain Grant, with eighty men, began a project to control the level of the Harrison River so that freight could be sent from New Westminster to Douglas by steamer direct without being off-loaded and portaged across the river shallows. Driven from thus by a rise in the river, the party then began the first twenty-eight miles of the 1859 trail from Douglas to Lillooet into a road. Later, a party of Engineers under Sergeant-Major Cann relocated the trail from Yale to Spuzzum blasting a pathway suitable for mules through the tremendous shoulders of rock along the Fraser.

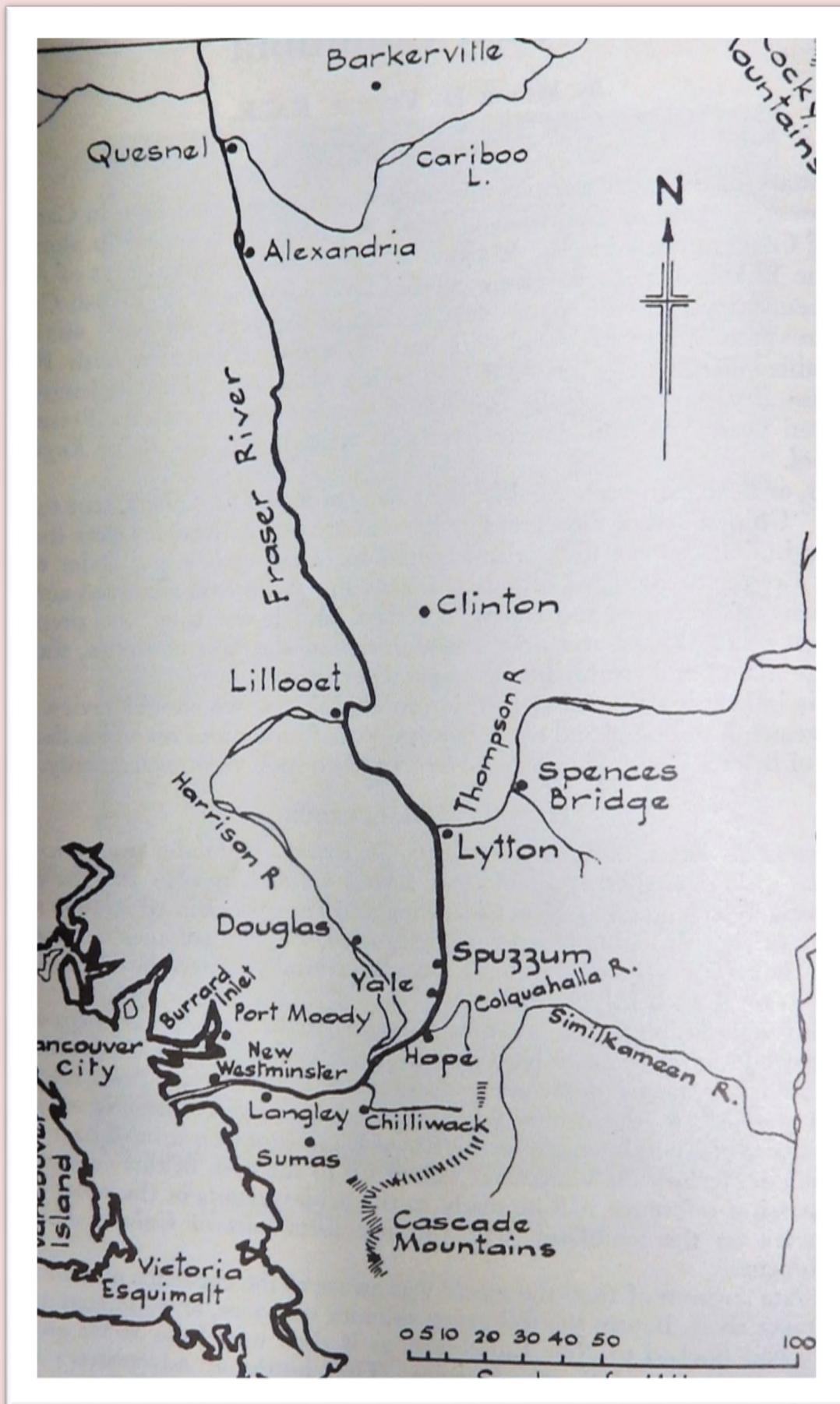
It was in this year that gold was discovered in the Similkameen country to the east across the Cascade Mountains. To enable the miners to get from the Fraser to this new find, Sergeant McColl and his party located and laid out a trail, which started at Hope and climbed 4,000 ft. over the Cascades with never a greater single gradient than one in twelve. This trail, built by Edgar Dewdney, later took his name.

Faced with the possibility that the Fraser might freeze in winter, Governor Douglas then set the Engineers the task of investigating the practicability of a road from Hope down to tidewater. During the summer of 1860, Captain Parsons and a small party explored the entire region between Hope and the tidewater areas as well as doing a reconnaissance survey of the Sumas and Chilliwack country (the present location of the Royal Canadian School of Military Engineering) with a view to protecting it from flooding and subsequently utilizing it as farmland.

1861

Although the Sappers had spent time during the two previous years improving the land portion of the Douglas-Lillooet road and, indeed further improved it in this year, transportation along the route would never be completely satisfactory. The total journey involved four separate trips by land interspersed with three voyages by lake steamer, with a consequent unloading and reloading of freight and usually a delay whilst waiting for the steamers to make the connexion at each point. Now it was the task of the Sappers to find a way through the Fraser canyons, through that terrifying and awesome country between Yale and Lytton. The reconnaissance survey made it clear that the river had to be crossed somewhere and Sergeant McColl and his party were dispatched to find the best site for a bridge. As mute evidence of the worth of his work, one of the piers of today's modern suspension bridge rests exactly on the spot chosen by McColl, and the other is only a few feet away.

In 1861 also, the Engineers transformed the 1850 trail they had constructed from their camp to Port Moody into a road which is still in use, the North Road. Captain Grant with eighty men built a road much along the line of McColl's location of 1860, from Hope as far as Skagit Flats, about twenty-five miles, on the way to the Similkameen. The remainder of the trail was merely widened as a temporary expedient, and before it could be made into a real road, the miners' attention was diverted northwards by the new-found wealth of the Cariboo.



Part of British Columbia

1862

1862 was the year the famed Cariboo wagon road was built. The Royal Engineers have frequently been credited with building this road, but they did not. They built only two short pieces. One, the first six miles out of Yale, was built by Captain Grant and fifty-three Sappers between May and November, 1862, with Lieutenant Palmer and his party constructing nine miles from Spence's Bridge, eastward along the Thompson River, the following year. What the Royal Engineers did do, however, at the risk of their lives, was to find where the road could go. They surveyed and laid out the road superintended its construction by contractors and as mentioned above they, themselves, built the most dangerous and difficult parts along the Fraser and Thompson Rivers.

Lieutenant Palmer was again sent out on reconnaissance, this time to find a shorter route to the Cariboo. He explored the whole country between Bentinck Arm on the coast and Cariboo and concluded that the road then under construction through the canyons was in the best possible location. This region was later explored in connexion with the surveys for the Canadian Pacific Railway, but nothing was found to alter the recommendations of Palmer's report.

1863

The last year of the Royal Engineers' work was 1863. Carrying forward the work on the Cariboo road, Captain Grant and his party located it from Clinton to Alexandria, the actual construction being done by a contractor. Since the existing trail from Quesnel to Barkerville, the current gold town was at too high an elevation for winter travel and it did not suit Governor Douglas. Accordingly, Captain Grant located a new route, and built a trail along it by September, the whole fifty-nine miles being so passable that Grant rode the full distance in one day. Also, in this year, as previously mentioned, Lieutenant Palmer built nine miles of the Cariboo road eastwards out of Spence's Bridge. Lieutenant Palmer was also responsible for testing the new Alexandra suspension bridge built by J. W. Trutch across the Fraser at Spuzzum. The Engineers had drawn the plans for this bridge, supervised its construction and now after careful examination, tested it in a most practical manner by driving across it a four-horse freight wagon loaded with 3-tons of goods. The bridge stood, and the deflection was less than one quarter of an inch.

During 1863, the surveyors were also at work. A party under Lance Corporal George Turner surveyed the original lots that marked the City of Vancouver and made a complete traverse of its shoreline from Hasting Townsite around Stanley Park into English Bay and False Creek. It is due to the Royal Engineers that the people of Vancouver are today blessed with Stanley Park; largest and most beautiful natural-park contiguous to any city in Canada, for the land was reserved by Colonel Moody originally for military purposes.

A survey of the suburban lots adjoining the City of New Westminster was also carried out, and at the direction of the City Council of the day, a space of not less than twenty acres was reserved, to be called "Moody Square" in commemoration of the city's founder.

When one realizes the amount of work accomplished by the Royal Engineers in their four and a half years in British Columbia, one wonders how so few could accomplish so much. Yet it was not a case of all work and no play for the detachment gathered each winter, from November until March, in its camp at Sapperton, and their camp was then the centre of the social life and activity of the community. They had a social club. Their theatre was the scene of all kinds of dances and parties and balls, and all that social life which tends, if properly guarded and looked after, to the betterment of a community. The Engineers had a theatrical troupe and the men of the detachment played comedies, farces and all sorts of dramatic pieces.

Summarizing the work of the Engineers it may be said that they made all the important explorations of the country from the time they came there. They surveyed practically all the towns and the country land; they located and superintended all the trails. They built the North Road, which was originally a trail. They built the Douglas-Lillooet road. They built the Hope-Similkameen road for 25 miles; and portions of the Cariboo road. All the maps of that time they drew lithographed and printed in Sapperton. They formed the Lands and Works Department; they established the Government Printing Office and printed the first British Columbia Gazette. They inaugurated the first building society on the mainland; the first social club on the mainland, the first theatre and theatrical society on the mainland. They designed the first schoolhouse. They designed and built the first Protestant church on the mainland—the church of St. John the Divine—originally at Langley and now at Maple Ridge and they designed other churches—the original Holy Trinity, New Westminster, St. Mary's, Sapperton and probably those at Yale, Hope and Douglas. They designed the first coat of arms of the Colony.

They designed the first postage stamp. They established the first observatory where they kept continuous scientific meteorological observations. Of course, Captain Cook and Captain Vancouver had earlier temporary observatories, but the first permanent one was built by the Engineers with its position fixed as 49° 12' 47" North latitude and 122° 53' 19" West longitude. They had the first private hospital and the first private library, both of which were later to benefit the citizens of New Westminster. And indirectly they built the first Parliament buildings for on 21st January, 1864, the first session of the first Legislative Council of the Colony of British Columbia opened in the then vacant barracks of the Royal Engineers at Sapperton, New Westminster.

These are the material things. But, apart from that, from the Colonel down, these were selected men. They were not an ordinary detachment of the Royal Engineers; they were selected men and always took their share in every good work. In everything that went to the building of the community, as well as in performing their regular duty, Colonel Moody at the head, followed by his officers and men, fully lived up to the mottoes of the Corps "Ubique" and "Quo fas et Gloria ducunt".

THE DETACHMENT DISBANDS

In the summer of 1863 orders were received from England that the detachment of Royal Engineers should be disbanded, and that officers and men should be given the choice of remaining in the Colony as settlers or returning to England. Colonel Moody¹ and the other officers, along with twenty of the men, left for England in October, but the remainder settled down in British Columbia, in civil life as plasterers, plumbers, gardeners, masons, bricklayers, tanners, grocers, blacksmiths, architects, carpenters, photographers, tailors, shoemakers, undertakers, surveyors, book-keepers, hotel proprietors, in fact as men who were active in every walk of life. In 1863 there were 130 of them. Thirty-five years later there were thirty-four. In 1903 there were twenty-five and in 1909 (forty-six years after they were disbanded) there were fourteen. The last survivor, Philip Jackman, died in 1927.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER

Captain W. Driscoll Gossett R.E., also referred to by Governor Douglas as "W. D. Gossett, Major on Seconded List of Royal Engineers" served in British Columbia at the same time as Colonel Moody, although not as a member of the latter's detachment. Gossett was the first treasurer of the Colony of British Columbia, and as was the case with many other officials of that time served as acting Treasurer for the Colony of Vancouver Island, residing at Victoria,

Later he became a permanent resident of New Westminster, establishing the colonial treasury at that place. As treasurer his foremost duties lay with the assay office, the mint and the gold escort, all points on which he differed with the Governor. Under his supervision an assay office operated in New Westminster from August, 1860, until November, 1861, which establishment he was pleased to designate in his correspondence and documents as the "Royal Mint". For this he was officially rebuked by Douglas.

Early in 1862, consequent upon the gold discoveries in Cariboo and the resulting increase of gold dust in circulation, Douglas saw fit to import a coining machine. Gossett at once set to work to establish a mint, despite the fact that the Governor had by now changed his mind on the subject. Seeking permission to style himself "Deputy Master of the Mint" or failing that "Acting Deputy Master of the Mint" he coined £100 worth of \$10 and \$20 gold pieces. Unfortunately, Douglas would neither allow the titles nor the coins to be put into circulation, and shortly thereafter in failing health Gossett applied for, and was granted leave of absence.

In 1861 the year previous to his retirement he assisted Governor Douglas in establishing a gold escort. One of the greatest difficulties the miners in the Cariboo had to face was that of getting their gold dust out of the country. To this end, with a guard of Royal Engineers, an escort was formed, each member well mounted and thoroughly armed. Unfortunately, the Government would not guarantee safe delivery of the dust, and as a result the escort of 1861 was a failure financially and otherwise.

¹ Colonel Moody, later Major-General, died at Bournemouth on the 31st March 1887, and now lies buried, in St. Peter's churchyard there. He was born 18th February 1813, the second son of Colonel Thomas Moody, R.E.

THE ROYAL ENGINEERS PARTICIPATION IN THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS

To mark the pioneer work done by the Royal Engineers during those days which the province is now commemorating the Corps Committee have arranged, at the request of the British Columbia authorities that one officer and five Q.Rs., uniformed and armed as for 1858, will participate various centennial celebrations, in conjunction with a similar party in modern dress from the Corps of Royal Canadian Engineers.

In addition, the Corps is to present to the City of New Westminster, an enlarged replica of the Corps badge of 1858. This plaque will be hung at the entrance to the City Hall and will serve to remind all who pass of the longstanding association between the "Royal City" and the Royal Engineers.

Since the main events take place during the summer months, the party are due to arrive in British Columbia early in May. They will be stationed at the Royal Canadian School of Military Engineering, located in the same Chilliwack country surveyed almost one hundred years ago by Captain Parsons and his small party. From there, joined by a similar detachment from the Corps of Royal Canadian Engineers, but uniformed and armed as for 1958 to emphasize the continuing Sapper tradition, and accompanied by the band of the Royal Canadian Engineers in pre-war scarlet, they will sally forth to take their part in the Province of British Columbia's Centennial.



*The R.E. detachment to attend the British Columbia centenary celebrations in 1858 pattern uniforms.
From left to right: Captain G R Gathercole (in uniform of a lieutenant); WOII W A Foster (25 Field Engr Regt); Sgt D G Tucker (12 SME Regt); Cpl N E Millar (17 Port Trg Regt); L/Cpl M G King (Sch Mil Svy); Sapper K G Thomas (Wks Servicrs)*

By this joint effort it is intended not only to reflect the work of the Royal Engineers in the early days, but to illustrate the fact that although the Corps left the Province some fifty years ago, its work has, and is being perpetuated and carried forward by its offspring, the Corps of Royal Canadian Engineers.

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(Transcribed by Noel Grimmett - February 2019)

K 669: A Project of its Time

By Alan Gordon

Aden and the Aden Protectorate began to feature regularly in the newspaper headlines from late 1963, just as 19 Squadron were leaving the colony and 13 Squadron were about to arrive there. The British government had every intention of granting independence to the Aden Protectorate but only once a stable viable local administration was ready to take over. However, as 1963 drew to a close the territory became increasingly riven with terrorism as two main bodies, the Nasser backed National Liberation Front (NLF) and the Federation for the Liberation of South Yemen (FLOSY), emerged fighting each other for primacy but with both factions fighting the British at the same time. The first major operation took place in early 1964 when local tribesmen connected to the NLF raided and cut the Aden to Dhala road. This escalated into what became known as the Radfan Revolt during which 13 Squadron's surveyors came under fire. The revolt was put down in May that year but unrest continued to simmer throughout the following years with sporadic outbreaks of violence, one of which was a grenade attack on 13 Squadron which left Sapper John 'Brummie' Walton wounded in the neck.

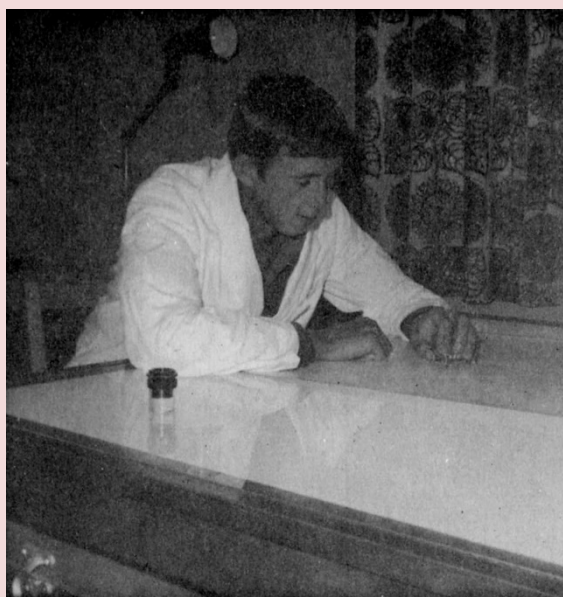
Up-to-date accurate maps of Aden and the Protectorate were urgently needed and so the production of new 1:100,000 scale mapping, series K 669, was authorised with a high priority. 13 Squadron's field surveyors started work on putting in the ground control but such was the priority of the work that in early 1965 the Regiment was tasked to provide field survey support to the in-theatre squadron.

By January 1965 the field survey work for the Aden Protectorate series K 669 had progressed sufficiently for the map production phase to commence and 42 Regiment was tasked with the production of a block of 22 sheets. This was the Regiment's first major map production tasking since arriving in the UK and, as it included several innovative and ground breaking new techniques, the production process is described in some detail.

However, only three months into the project and it was already seriously behind schedule and beset with technical problems. By chance two Staff Sergeants then arrived at Barton Stacey; Dave Herriot took over air survey and Geoff Keeffe became 47 Squadron Technical Control Officer (STCO). The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Stanley Ireland, immediately ordered the new STCO to get the project back onto schedule. The two newly arrived SNCOs found that the current production plan was based on carrying out the air survey and cartographic work at the final map publication scale. This was a fundamental error leading to immense problems at all stages and it was obvious that the work would never meet the specified standards for publication. Their recommendation to the CO was to scrap the work done so far and to start the project again working this time at a scale of 1:40,000. Geoff Keeffe was given 48 hours to produce a plan that would achieve the now even tighter completion date. Two very long day's work produced a plan that was accepted by the Colonel Ireland and the new plan was immediately put into practise.

Air Survey's very large slotted template table was repainted and then gridded at the new production scale and work started on Multiplex bridging by the two-projector method to increase the control to be sufficient to set up each individual model to plot the detail and contours. The bridging procedure is described at Appendix A. The final plan control points were produced using stereo templates laid on the newly painted template table and height control generated by the graphical correction technique using splines. Only the most experienced Multiplex operators were employed on the bridging process as it needed accurate stereo acuity and deep concentration as one lapse leading to a slip in the precise, complex procedure would render the bridge observations unusable and waste hours of effort as the entire strip would have to be re-observed. Base sheets were then produced for each model and the plotting of the plan detail and contours of the pilot sheet, entitled 'Lahej', commenced using the new Mark 2 Multiplex equipment that had recently replaced the old Mark 1 instruments.

Once the plots had passed the shift supervisor's rigid checks they were passed to Carto Troop to compile into the map sheet. This was achieved by tracing onto the compilation sheet using Rotring pens of a size two and a half times larger than the final production scale line gauge. The compilation went to the photographic studio where it was reduced two and a half times to the publication scale of 1:100,000 and the blue image scribing sheets produced. Red, black and green plates were scribed in the usual manner and type and symbols added. The brown and blue plates, respectively contours and drainage – that is 'wadis' in this case – were a different matter. Trying to scribe would be virtually impossible as in steep jebel areas contours would run into each other and also only one person would be able to work on the sheet at a time, hence the deadline would be a near impossible target. The solution was to use colour separation.

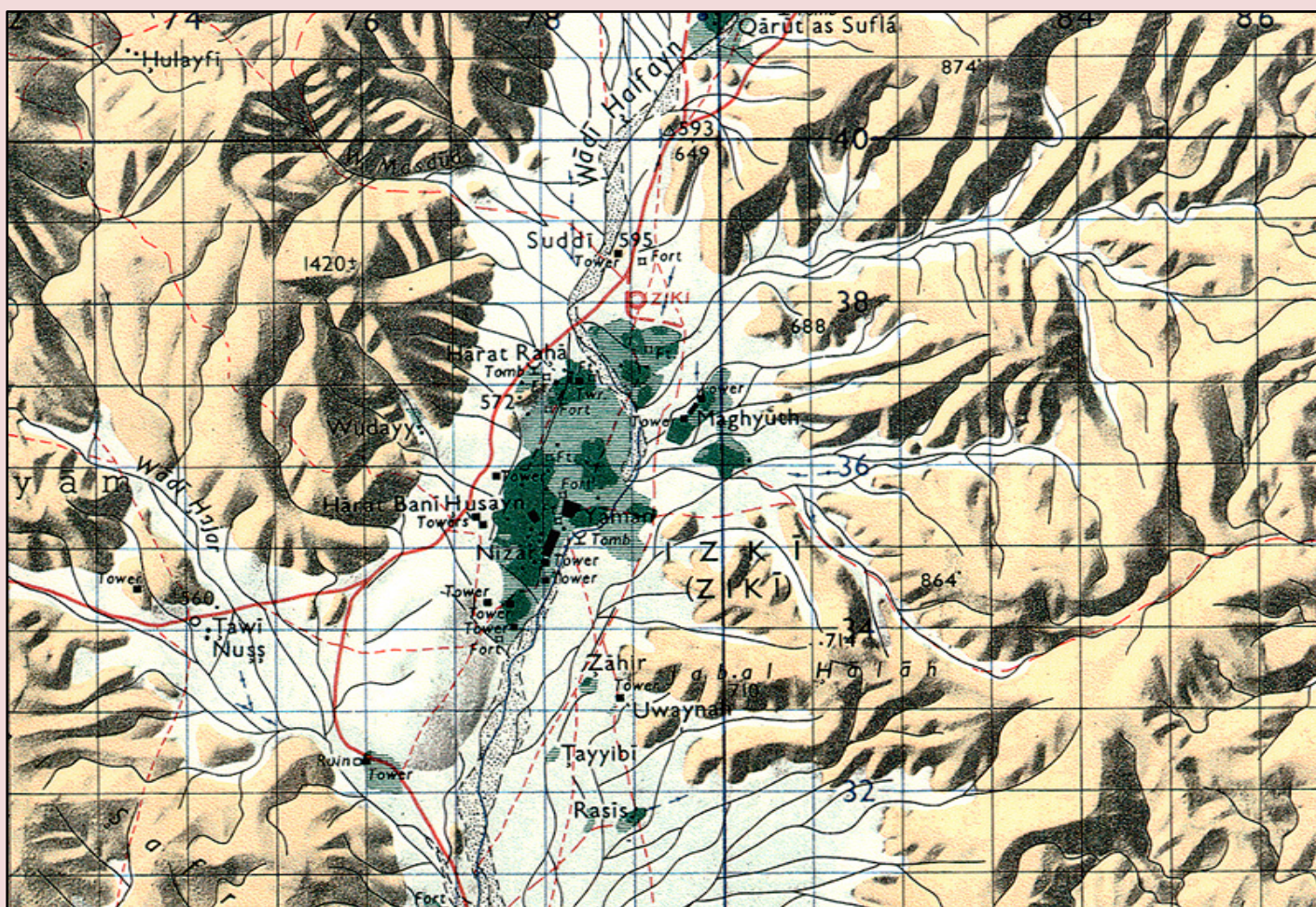


Spr Rackham scribing the contours for one of the map sheets.

While reducing the compilation sheet to production scale, in the process losing, or rendering marginal, any imperfections in the line work, other colours were filtered out leaving only the contours, a positive then produced and contour values added and the brown and blue plates were done in a matter of a few days.

The specification was in several ways a radical break from Military Survey's traditional style as it included hill shading to highlight relief. This was to be produced by the cartographically challenging method of three dimensional terrain models. A plastic sheet was produced with the contours and drainage pattern printed on it. With the printed image as a guide, cartographers eased and pressed out the plastic using leatherworker and lino cutting tools to form a model of the terrain. The model was then sprayed with a pale grey matt paint which was photographed from an oblique angle to produce the hill shadow effect.

A plastic proof of the pilot sheet presented for inspection looked good but unfortunately there were areas of concern when studied closely. The plastic model could not be controlled scalewise hence there were areas where the contours did not fit the model, severe and sharp areas on the tops of jebels were particularly obvious. Attempts were made to retouch a continuous tone copy, another technique new to the cartographers, but it proved very time consuming and did not produce a satisfactory result. Staff Sergeant Keeffe then spent a day at Feltham where the head of the photographic department experimented until the problem was solved. The settings were recorded and used by the SPC photographers to produce all the sheets in the series.

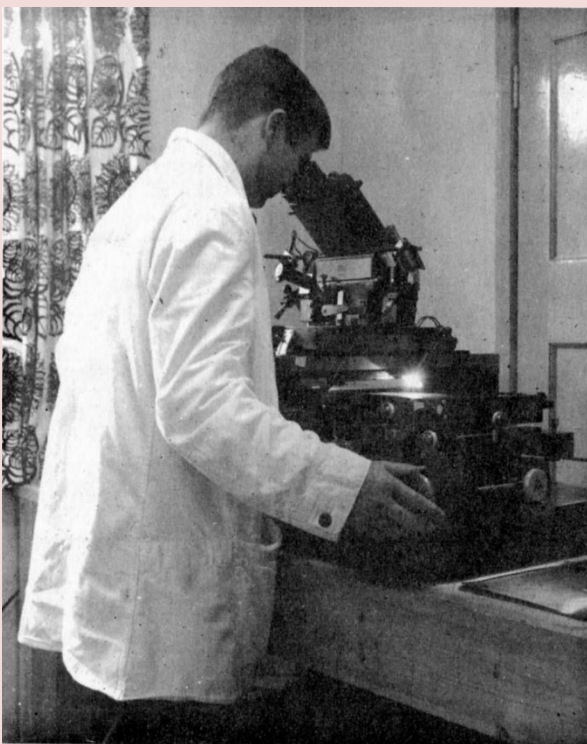


Hill shading produced by the plastic model method

In October a progressive set of proofs plus the finished sheet which included last minute changes to the specification made by the 47 Squadron STCO, were laid out on a bench in 22 Squadron for inspection by not only representatives from the Directorate and SPC but also, as an indication of the importance of the K 669 task, by the Director himself, Brigadier B St G. Irwin. They approved the pilot sheet which was immediately despatched to Aden for review in theatre by the potential users. It met with complete approval with the RAF especially strongly recommending the specification due to its ease of use.

It was now 'all systems go' to produce the remaining 21 sheets on schedule. Such was the pressure to meet the firm completion date of 31 July 1967 that the Squadron immediately went onto a permanent two-shift system, on occasions extended to three. 47 Squadron, whose technical tasking since arriving in the UK had been only sporadic and not particularly challenging, now buzzed with a vibrant atmosphere. As the task progressed so various means were adopted to increase particularly the output of the plotting section. The long bar 7-projector Multiplex had an old printing plate fixed across the middle of the table thus allowing two operators to plot at the same time. Several air surveyors were sent from the Survey Liaison Section (UK) at RAF Wyton to bolster operator numbers and all new class three technicians arriving in the Regiment went straight onto production work instead of spending their first few weeks engaged in menial tasks as pool labour. One such was Pete Fassam who was one of a party of four newly qualified 'ex-boys'. He was shocked to be immediately put onto shift work, not something ever mentioned as a possibility at Chepstow, and then having to work with challenging images of wadis and jebels after the relatively easy imagery of the English countryside that he had very recently trained on at Chepstow. He, and other 'tech 3s' were very much, 'thrown in at the deep end'.

About half way through the task two innovative techniques were introduced into the air survey process. The first was the use of airborne profile recorder data, flown and collected under contract by Hunting Aerosurveys Ltd, to augment the altimeter heighting produced in the field by 13 and 19 Squadrons. An instrument in the aircraft 'bounced' a radio signal off the ground as it flew along pre-planned flight Lines which produced a printed linear strip profile of the terrain. After applying various corrections, heights could be generated for identifiable points on the ground using 35 mm spotting photography that was exposed at set intervals along the line. The height of which was identified on the ground trace by a distinctive spike. The height points were then transferred onto the RAF photography using a stereoscope.



Cpl Redfern using the stereo-comparator to measure points on the air photographs. The data is subsequently processed in a Pegasus computer to produce additional control points.

The second innovation was the first use of analytical aerial triangulation. Four senior corporals formed a team that observed the minor control points, not on the Multiplex but on the pre-war Cambridge Stereocomparator. Bizarrely they had to wear long white laboratory coats when observing – presumably to add to the 'scientific' nature of the task! Their observations were sent to SPC and fed into the Pegasus mainframe computer. The models were formed mathematically, then joined to form the strips which in turn were joined together to form a block. Finally the computer program adjusted the block of stereo models to fit to the ground control points and generated a printout of the coordinates of the control and minor control points. The resulting values were then sent to 47 Squadron for the production of the plotting base sheets. A neat marriage of the old and new!

The last of the twenty two sheets was cleared off the press, passed catch and released on the 28th of July 1967, three days before the deadline. Series K669 was a very major task which introduced innovative techniques and its map sheets, particularly in the mountainous jebel areas of the hinterland, were cartographical very attractive. Once the final Multiplex plot had been compiled it was returned to Air Survey Troop where Corporal Geoff Eddy used his calligraphy skills to embellish it with the names of all those who had worked on the series. The plot was framed, hung on the Troop office wall until the Regiment left Barton Stacey when it was taken to Hermitage and hung in the Air Survey Department of the School.

IN MEMORANDUM.

Here ends the last multiplex plot for the K669 mapping series. This plaque is in memory of all those who laid down their pencil points in the past two and a half years.

April 1967

47 CARTOGRAPHIC SQN. R.E.

**AIR SURVEY TROOP
1446 C**



- D. Attfield
- J.S. Baker
- D.J. Barraclough
- R. Barrett
- S.J. Bateman
- R.K. Billett
- K. Brown
- R. Brown
- R.H. Copeman
- D.W.R. Dewhurst
- S.C. Eddy
- D. Eveleigh
- A.A. Sordon
- N.R. Grimmitt
- M. Hamilton
- R.F. Hemming
- P. Horton
- S. Johnson
- A.J. Jones
- D.P. Kimber
- D.J. Laurie
- I. Lindsey
- J.J. Little
- D.J. Marchant
- D.J. Mead
- M.K. Moore
- A.W.S. Neal
- P. Norris
- J.E. Quinell
- P. Redfern
- P.H. Robinson
- R. Stockley
- J.L. Walton
- D.H. Whyborn
- S.R. Williams

Work shall not weary them nor their plots condemn. At the going down of the platten and in the absolute We shall remember them.

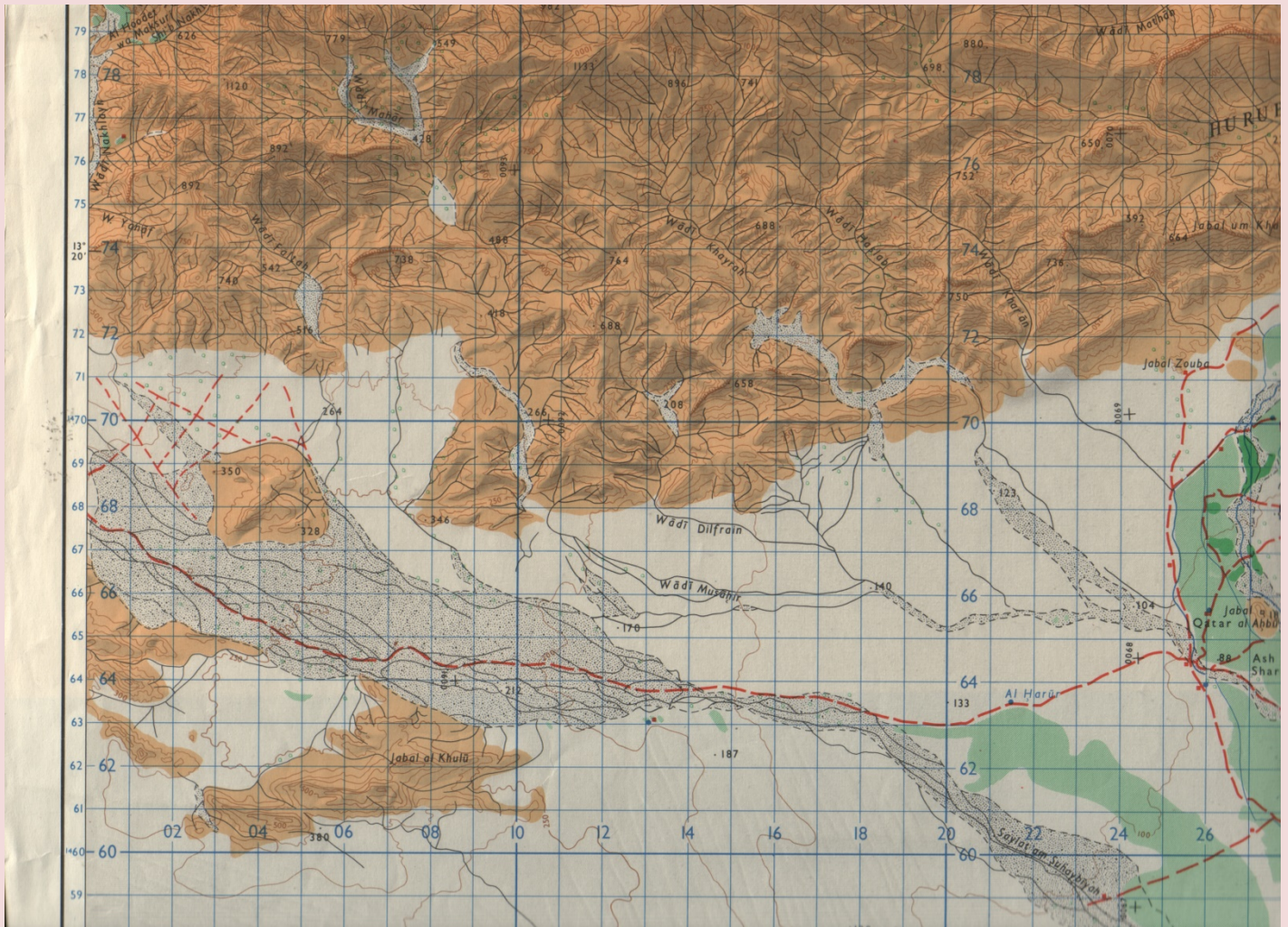
MMM

1449/0027-0028 CHECKED	
DATE	BY
14/04/67	J.S. Baker
15/04/67	J.S. Baker
16/04/67	J.S. Baker
17/04/67	J.S. Baker
18/04/67	J.S. Baker
19/04/67	J.S. Baker
20/04/67	J.S. Baker
21/04/67	J.S. Baker
22/04/67	J.S. Baker
23/04/67	J.S. Baker
24/04/67	J.S. Baker
25/04/67	J.S. Baker
26/04/67	J.S. Baker
27/04/67	J.S. Baker
28/04/67	J.S. Baker
29/04/67	J.S. Baker
30/04/67	J.S. Baker

1449/0029-0029		CHECKED	
ABSOLUTE	BY	DATE	BY
1449/53/1	J.S. Baker	14/04/67	J.S. Baker
1449/53/2	J.S. Baker	15/04/67	J.S. Baker
1449/53/3	J.S. Baker	16/04/67	J.S. Baker
1449/53/4	J.S. Baker	17/04/67	J.S. Baker
1449/53/5	J.S. Baker	18/04/67	J.S. Baker
1449/53/6	J.S. Baker	19/04/67	J.S. Baker
1449/53/7	J.S. Baker	20/04/67	J.S. Baker
1449/53/8	J.S. Baker	21/04/67	J.S. Baker
1449/53/9	J.S. Baker	22/04/67	J.S. Baker
1449/53/10	J.S. Baker	23/04/67	J.S. Baker
1449/53/11	J.S. Baker	24/04/67	J.S. Baker
1449/53/12	J.S. Baker	25/04/67	J.S. Baker
1449/53/13	J.S. Baker	26/04/67	J.S. Baker
1449/53/14	J.S. Baker	27/04/67	J.S. Baker
1449/53/15	J.S. Baker	28/04/67	J.S. Baker
1449/53/16	J.S. Baker	29/04/67	J.S. Baker
1449/53/17	J.S. Baker	30/04/67	J.S. Baker

During the period of 47 Squadron's eighteen months on shift work, the cookhouse couldn't seem to think of anything more than sausage, egg and chips for the evening shift's 9 o'clock meal. On hearing of this, the landlady of The George pub a few hundred yard down the A303, offered freshly cooked meals to be ordered one day and ready at 9 pm the next – a fairly innovative idea in the days when few pubs offered much more than crisps in the way of food. The service became an instant hit and from then on the evening break was usually taken by all in the pub.

Staff Sergeant Geoff Keeffe had been instrumental in designing the production process to meet the complex specification and tight operational deadline and then had the responsibility of implementing it. For almost the entire project he 'progress chased' and 'quality controlled' every component as well as carrying out essential liaison with the Regimental Technical Control Office and SPC. In recognition of his very considerable achievement of managing the task and bringing it in on time and to specification he was awarded the BEM in the Queen's Birthday Honours of 1967.



Extract from sheet 1345C showing the attractive use of colouring and hill shading.

An ironic footnote to the K669 Series story is that the decision was made to withdraw from Aden earlier than planned and the last British troops left Aden on the 29th of December 1967. Hence few if any of the map sheets were used operationally, the vast majority sat on the shelves of 8 Map and Air Chart Depot at Guildford for many years, slowly gathering dust.

This article is based on an extract from the latest draft of 'The Regiment That Helped Put The World On The Map', a proposed book telling the story of 42 Survey Engineer Regiment. The main sources for this extract were; the prodigious memories of Geoff Keeffe BEM and Colin Price, a Sapper magazine article November 1967, 'Crossing the Digital Threshold' an article published in Ranger magazine volume 4 number 3, Directorate of Military Survey annual reports obtained from TNA by Noel Grimmett and 42 Regiment's annual unit historical record reports.

(The two photographs with captions are from a Sapper Magazine article November 1967)

A letter to the Editor from branch member Ron Birch: -

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Earl Shilton
Leicester LE9 7EA

01455 845149
r.birch457@btinternet.com

World War Memories

Passchendaele – Victoria Cross

It is hard to imagine what it must have been like to be isolated in the midst of a raging battle when all your Officers and NCOs had been killed. What was going through their minds when imminent death seemed inevitable?

This was the situation in which my Father, alongside a mere handful of private soldiers found themselves. However in those few minutes courage took over from fear, chance of possible life and success rather than death and failure.

Little did they know, or even think about, that their heroic action would result in the award of the Country's highest award – the Victoria Cross – to one of their tiny group.

That action, as recounted on numerous occasions by my Dad will linger long in my memory, but to him it was just another deed in a continuous list of battles in which many of his Warwickshire friends would not return.

Perhaps the full story could only be known by someone who was there someone who played an important part in that heroic act - my Dad was such a person.

His story; and that of his life-long buddy, Private (later Corporal) Arthur Hutt VC is attached.

World War One – Passchendaele

The Story of an Infantry Soldier

My Father, Albert Birch, was born in Coventry and served as an Infantry Private in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment throughout the entire First World War. Having enlisted at the age of 17 he was soon in action alongside his life-long buddy Arthur Hutt, spending their teenage years surviving the horrors of Ypres and the Somme.

As the war progressed their unit advanced towards the town of Poelcappelle in Belgium at the start of the devastating Passchendaele campaign. The Company suffered tremendous casualties with just a small group of private soldiers left standing, not one Officer or NCO survived.

Now held down by constant machine gun fire directed at their position Albert and his close friend Arthur Hutt, alongside a few of their only remaining living comrades, considered their plight between living or imminent death from those machine guns.

Their conversation which took place, recounted many times by my Father, shows their thoughts at that moment.

“We’re on our own now; they’ve got us pinned down. If we stay here we’re done for and if we try to get back we’ll probably be shot as cowards. So if we’re going to die we may as well take some of them with us.” Considering this the best course of action they fixed bayonets and clambered out of their shell crater to face the enemy.

With that they charged over open ground towards the machine guns. Incredibly only three or four of them were hit and went down whilst the others reached and knocked out the machine gun post. The machine gun post, now silenced, enabled other Infantry Companies to advance saving many lives.

Subsequent questioning by a senior officer revealed that those taking part in that daring frontal attack were all only Private Soldiers.

Arthur Hutt, having joined the Army earliest, was adjudged the most senior of that remaining tiny group.

Some weeks later Arthur Hutt was informed that he had been awarded the Nation's highest honour- the Victoria Cross for this action.

The official Citation perhaps does not tell the full story but nevertheless pays tribute to the heroism of that small band. It reads "The award of the Victoria Cross to Private Arthur Hutt 1/7th Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment, at Terriers Farm in Belgium on 4th October 1917.

At Terriers Farm, South East of Poelcapelle, Belgium when all officers and NCOs of No.1 Platoon had become casualties and the unit now held by a strong enemy post, Private Hutt took command of the platoon of the few remaining private soldiers and ran forward and shot three officers and three other men in the post. Between 40 and 50 men surrendered.

Later, having pushed too far, he withdrew his party covering them by sniping at the enemy and carried a wounded man to shelter. After consolidating the position he went out and carried four more wounded men under heavy fire."

After the war Albert and Arthur remained close friends for many years but unfortunately lost contact during the November 1940 Coventry Blitz when Albert's family home was destroyed by enemy bombing and he and his family were evacuated to Barwell in Leicestershire.

When asked to talk about that heroic event and the award of the Victoria Cross to his best mate my Father's reply was simply "That medal was the only good thing to come out of that terrible war"

In 1965, almost fifty years after this battle, a Cornish Granit memorial to Arthur Hutt VC was erected in Coventry's Memorial Gardens

On death Arthur Hutt was cremated at Canley Crematorium whilst Albert Birch was buried in Barwell Cemetery.



Arthur Hutt VC (12 February 1889 – 14 April 1954) was an English recipient of the Victoria Cross, the highest and most prestigious award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces. He was 28 years old, and a private in the 1/7th Battalion of The Royal Warwickshire Regiment, British Army during the First World War when the following deed took place at the battle of Passchendaele for which he was awarded the VC.

The London Gazette on 26th November 1917

For most conspicuous bravery and initiative in attack, when all the officers and non-commissioned officers of No. 2 platoon, having become casualties, Pte Hutt took command of and led forward the platoon. He was held up by a strong post on his right, but immediately ran forward alone in front of the platoon and shot the officer and three men in the post, causing between forty and fifty others to surrender.

Later, realizing that he had pushed too far, he withdrew his party. He personally covered the withdrawal by sniping the enemy, killing a number and then carried back a badly wounded man and put him under shelter. Pte Hutt then organized and consolidated his position, and learning that some wounded men were lying out and likely to become prisoners if left there, no stretcher bearers being available, he went out and carried in four wounded men under heavy fire.

One of Hutt's officers wrote: 'But for the courage and resource of this soldier...it would have gone hard not only with the Warwick's, but with the whole of the troops operating in that region.' The same officer claimed that Hutt's actions had even won the admiration of the Germans, who were stung into making special efforts to stop him:

'One of the German officers who saw Hutt's handling of the men said that he was a born leader, and ought to have been an officer- Another prisoner we caught said that when Hutt was first noticed from the German lines their officer offered a reward to the German soldier who brought him down, and all through the subsequent operations he was the subject of all the enemy operations.'



Military Survey (Geographic) Branch
A member of the Royal Engineers Association



MINUTES OF THE 20th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
held at the
WOs' & Sgts' Mess, Denison Barracks, Hermitage
on
Friday 12th April 2019, at 1700hrs

In Attendance:

Chairman:	Mark Burrows
Secretary:	Rod Siggs
Treasurer:	Ted Davies
Military Representative:	SSgt Ase Delailomaloma RE
Function Co-ordinator:	Mick Perry
Editor:	Noel Grimmett
Webmaster	Dave Johnson

A further 34 Members were present (and 12 wives accompanied them).

A full list of attendees is attached.

ITEM 1 – CHAIRMAN’S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed the members attending and following Mick’s few administration points for the afternoon and evening said he would try and maintain the recent traditions of keeping the meeting as brief as possible.

Mark then outlined the purpose of the AGM and the compliance with REA rules to:-

- a. Hold a General Meeting at least once a year.
- b. Hold Elections for the Officers of the Branch – namely the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary who must retire annually. More on this later.

He then declared the 20th Annual General meeting open.

ITEM 2 – APOLOGIES

Names of members tendering their apologies were listed on the notice board, which are *attached to these minutes*.

ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF THE 19th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) 2018

Matters arising from the previous AGM - The minutes had been included in the newsletter, on the website and were posted on the noticeboard prior to the meeting and there were no action points arising. The Chairman therefore asked if there were any comments, errors or omissions from the minutes that the floor wished to raise and as there were none, he asked for a proposer that they be accepted as a true record of that meeting.

Proposed: Dave Johnson

Seconded by Alan Beeston

Carried unanimously.

ITEM 4 – ANNUAL REPORT ON 2017/2018

The Chairman, Mark, reported on the following:

- a. **Deceased** - The names of members, friends and colleagues that had died since the previous AGM were on the notice board for information although Mark asked members if they knew of others that had died to please inform Rod, and to remember to do so throughout the year as this was often the only way we had to hear of someone passing away.
- b. Mark spoke about the continuing good financial health of the Branch and the ability this gives us to support the serving soldiers by making awards such as the **Graduation Awards** the Branch makes to the “Soldier’s Soldier” of each Class two technician’s course at RSMS. Each recipient of the award gets a £50 Sapper Shop voucher at the graduation, thus ensuring another group of young Geo soldiers are aware of our presence. This year we also sponsored the **Class One Awards** to the sum of **£50.00** to each successful student but this will be recorded in next year’s financial summary.

We also granted **£500.00** to *Ex Freefall Fougasse 18*, a freefall parachute exercise in Madrid for 16 regular and reserve Geo soldiers. And here at the AGM the Branch's **Annual Award of £150.00** all contribute to our Branch's exposure to our serving Geo soldiers.

c. Mark spoke of the continued support of Mike Payne, our **Branch Standard Bearer** and explained that Mike wished to stand down from this commitment, but he had kindly volunteered to extend for one more year in order to allow time to train a successor. The Standard Bearer's Report *is attached to these minutes*.

d. The Chairman then spoke of the continuing success of the **website**, which is as popular as ever, and asked Dave Johnson to give an update. Dave said that there were nearly 9000 photos on the website now, with a further 500 about to be added, although there was still work to be done regarding the attributes to each.

e. Dave then talked about the **History of 42 Survey Regiment** that he was helping Alan Gordon to produce in a book format. This led to Roy Wood asking about the proof reading, and offered to help undertake this, as there were some possibly contentious areas in the recent past. Dave said that at the moment he thought Chris Nash was undertaking this function. *Afternote:- Chris has contacted the Chairman and Roy Wood, outlining the current situation and what is expected to happen in the near future.*

f. The Chairman spoke of the continuing success of the **Newsletters** and thanked Noel, our editor, for his hard work in producing these. He also spoke about the success of the **facebook group** and asked Rod (on behalf of Colin Gardiner) to give the report. Rod said Colin had informed him that the "hit" rate was still good although having slowed a bit. He remarked that the desired effect of the **facebook group** was to gain new, and possibly younger, members for the Branch and this had materialised in a few cases. Colin had new hopes of gaining fresh and current items from the Regiment, which he felt would widen interest in the group.

g. The Chairman then took a point from Roy Wood who spoke of the **Defence Surveyors Association (DSA)**: its function, procedures and events but also of the dwindling membership. He invited all to join and attend the open seminars which were often held in Newbury and were a really good day. He hoped that our Branch might appreciate the benefits of a closer relationship with the DSA. It was agreed that we would advertise the event on 28th June, in our next newsletter

h. Mike Nolan then **proposed a vote of thanks** to Dave Johnson and Alan Gordon for their hard work in producing the historical photos archive and said all can help this work by submitting photos of their Military Survey service.

ITEM 5 – FINANCIAL STATUS

The Treasurer, Ted Davies, having managed and presented the accounts for the 3rd year, said the **Audited** version of which, by Tony Keeley and Mike Gowlett, together with their comments, were on the NB. He gave the overview as follows: -

- a. Income:
 - i. 252 members paid subs in 2018.
 - ii. Donations - £114 for Branch & £380 for Geo Fund
 - iii. Ties – **16** sold in 2018 (**1** now in 2019). Stock are down to **9** now (having just sold that one) of these rare, collector's items.
- b. Expenditure:
 - i. Newsletter – now in monochrome so reduced expenditure ~£200 per issue
 - ii. Awards
 - (a) Annual Award £150
 - (b) 0-2 Course award – Sapper Shop voucher £50 – 3 cases per year
 - iii. Donations:
 - (a) Regt competing in St Neots Dragon Boat Festival £50
 - (b) Ex Freefall Fougasse £500

There were no questions regarding his report or the status of accounts, so they were proposed as being an accurate reflection of the accounts.

Proposed by: Peter Wood
Seconded by: Chris Cleeton

Carried unanimously

ITEM 6 - ELECTION OF INDEPENDENT AUDITORS/EXAMINERS 2019

The Chairman thanked Ted and the two independent examiners of the Branch's accounts, Tony Keeley and Mike Gowlett and said that they were still both willing to undertake that role for FY 2019 He therefore asked that they be proposed to continue their role.

Proposed by: Dave Johnson
Seconded by: Harold Gregory

Carried unanimously

ITEM 7 – ELECTION OF COMMITTEE OFFICERS

The Chairman informed the meeting of the REA necessity for the Branch Committee Officers to stand down each year, those being in the posts of Chairman; Secretary and Treasurer. So, if there were any nominations or volunteers from the floor, for any post, they should stand for election. Mark spoke of the need for fresh blood occasionally to freshen up the Committee but as there were no other volunteers or nominations, and all current holders of the posts had agreed to continue, he took the proposals for election as follows: -.

Chairman

Proposed by: Mike Payne
Seconded by: Mike Perry

Carried unanimously

Treasurer

Proposed by: Peter Wood
Seconded by: Stewart Roy

Carried unanimously

Secretary

Proposed by: Angus Cross
Seconded by: Ian Parr

Carried unanimously

The Chairman then asked if there were any volunteers to replace Mick as our **Function Coordinator** as he had been in the role, apart from a small break, since the formation of the Branch. There was no volunteer so Mick said he would serve just another year but wished to handover to someone at the next Reunion/AGM. Mark thanked Mick for the planning and organisation of this Reunion and AGM and asked for a vote of thanks be recorded to Mick.

ITEM 8 – AOB

- a. **Mike Payne** addressed the members on a number of points:-
 - i. The restructuring of the REA Group and Branch Administration - as at 1st May 2019, our National Branch would be administered through 42 Engineer Regiment Geographic. The purpose of the restructuring was to strengthen links between the REA and serving units.
 - ii. The rededication of the Corps Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA), Staffordshire, on the 28th May 2019. He was organising a coach, leaving the Newbury area about 0800hs on the 28th, the cost being approximately £10.00pp return. He said there was still time to bid for the official lunch tickets, that were in short supply and at one pair per branch, at a cost of £5.00 each.
 - iii. Mike then spoke about the £250,000 that the Corps was making available from the welfare grant to the REA this year, and also for the next four years. Branches could bid for money to support projects or events etc they had planned to spend money on over this period. The Gibraltar Weekend had won approval to be sponsored by REA this year to offset costs.
- b. At this point, **Angus Cross** questioned how the “42 Regiment Historic Book” was being funded. There was not a decisive answer given.
- c. **SSgt Ase Delailomaloma** was then introduced and briefed members upon the **Sapper Servicewomen’s Network (SSN)**. This was formed 2 years ago with the intention to bring in all females of the Corps (soldiers, officers and reserves) to encourage and inspire each other. She said that as a Corps, we are failing to recruit and retain females (only 65 in the Corps, 22 of which are in Geo) and the last 2 conferences held on this subject had identified challenges that may be limiting the Corps to increasing female numbers. Significant members of the Corps had been invited to the conferences so that they might understand the situation better, and they had found them very useful by both attendees and member of RE (HQ).
SSgt D, said that this year, she was co-chairing the 3rd event, along with Lt Col Dzisiewska (CO of 35 Engrs), and that she was also the lead for the admin of the event which it was hoped would be held at 42 Engr Regt Geo at RAF Wyton. The event involved a day of briefs; workshops, (including a working lunch) culminating in an evening event with a 3-course dinner at the WOs’ & Sgts’ Mess.
This is where funding is required, she said, and as most of the attendees will be females from the Geo Community, starting from Col Nicki Bell down to Sapper level – (6 officers, 3 SNCOs & 13 JNCOs) she was hoping that the Branch might be able to help sponsor the event.

d. It was mentioned by a member that this sounded an excellent project for the recently announced £250K transfer from the Corps Welfare Grant towards the REA but it was pointed out that the event was for serving servicewomen and should be funded accordingly. **The Chairman** thanked SSgt Delailomaloma for her presentation and said the Committee would consider this request outside the meeting. [Afternote:- The Committee have agreed to sponsor the event to the sum of £300.00.](#)

ITEM 9 - DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

No date or venue had been fixed now for the next A.G.M. but Mark said that it is expected to take place again in spring, 2020.

ITEM 10 – CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman then thanked the following: -

- a. WO1 (RSM) William Russell (Snr Member of the Mess) for the continued support and cooperation for the use of the mess for our both our regular Committee meetings and this main annual event.
- b. The CI of RSMS – Lt Col Alan McGrath for his support and the provision of a Military Liaison member to our Committee.
- c. WO2 Kevin Wright for acting as the Mil Liaison and for his hard work for the Branch Committee, Mark also congratulated him on his promotion to WO1.
- d. All members and partners for attending and hoped they would all enjoy the Geo update from Maj Pete Richardson and then their reunion and curry buffet.

The meeting closed at approximately 1800 hrs.

[Rod Siggs](#)

Honorary Secretary
Military Survey (Geographic) Branch

The presentation of the **Branch’s Annual Award** was then made by the Chairman to **Cpl J. Whelan RE** (*A separate report with the citation will be contained in a future Newsletter.*)

The annual presentation of the **Military Geographic update** was given by **Major Peter Richardson RE** which covered an informal overview of current activities; support to Ops and major Ex; major sporting achievements throughout the last year and the preparations for the RE Games to be held at Wyton (with even a 42 Regt bridge building team entered) in June; Promotions – there are now going to be 4 x Lt Col LE’s in Geo; and finally he covered the likely move date of Defence Geographic Centre (DGC) to Wyton and the still pending move of RSMS which was still dependent upon Govt finances being made available.

**ATTENDANCE AT THE
MILITARY SURVEY BRANCH REUNION AND AGM
In The Sgts Mess Friday 12 April 2019**

<u>Members</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Guest</u>
Abernethy JG	Graeme	w/Sally
Beeston A	Alan	w/Sue
Bohan C	Colin	
Bowery D	David	
Braybrooke	Ricky	
Burrows M	Mark	
Cheesman NJ	Nick	w/Christine
Cleeton CR	Chris	w/Zoe
Croft JAN	John	
Cross AP	Angus	
Davis E	Ted	
Ford BJ	Brian (Flab)	
George	Steve	
Gowlett MJ	Mike	w/Pauline

Gregory H	Harold	
Griffin D J	Dave	
Grimmett NR	Noel	
Hambling J	John	
Hill BG	Bev	w/Frances
Hindle K	Kevin	
Hughes BJ	John	w/Pat
Hughes B	Barry	w/Renate
Jackson T	Tom	
Johnson D	Dave	
Johnstone F	Frank	w/Marilyn
Little JJ	Jimmy	w/Marion
Nolan M	Mike	
Parr IL	Ian	w/Christine
Payne MJC	Mike	
Perry M	Mick	w/Pat
Phillips M	Michael	
Price CR	Collin	
Roy S	Stewart	
Sach JR	John	
Siggs RB	Rod	
Stanbridge MJ	Mike	
Vickers MH	Mike	
Walton J	John	
Webb A	Tony	
Wood R	Roy	


REGRETS

MILITARY SURVEY (GEO) BRANCH REA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING


Friday 12 April 2019

Benkjer T	Tom
Birch R	Ron
Blewett W	Pat
Dunn JR	Ray
Evason M	Mike
Field A	Albie
Gardiner C	Colin
Gordon AA	Alan
Guthrie	Rick
Hemming R	Taff
Hurst G	Geoff
Johnstone A	Alex
Marks CJ	Charles
Mitchell G L	
Morgan L	





Citation of the 2019 Annual Award of the
Military Survey (Geographic) Branch
 A member of the
 Royal Engineers Association
To
CORPORAL J. WHELAN ROYAL ENGINEERS
"Spirit of Good Fellowship Beyond Normal Expectations"



Corporal Jack Whelan is recognised for his exceptional JNCO performance. During his time in 14 . Geographic Squadron, 42 Engineer Regiment, he has excelled both as a junior leader and during his high-profile overseas deployments in support of the Lead Commando Group (LCG). His unquestionable professionalism and genuine passion for his trade are evident in every task he undertakes, regardless of whether he is 'on ship', in the Squadron, or in the classroom.

An excellent role model and ambassador for the Geographic Technician trade, he is highly proactive, confident and looked up to by all who work alongside him. Deployed at sea with minimal Geographic Chain of Command oversight, his industrious nature and communication skills were key to providing highly effective products and analysis, which were used to inform decision-making. Deployed on Ex SAIF SAREEA 3, he consistently and willingly went the extra mile. Without prompting, he took bathymetric data in proprietary format, and established the necessary liaison links to reach back to the UK, to enable the conversion of unprocessed data into an interpretable format. To accomplish this whilst aboard ship is testament to the reach of his professional competence. This new technique has increased the scope of products that can be requested by units operating in the littoral zone and, which enables the LCG to determine optimal Lines of Approach for their amphibious assaults. He has proven to be a true force-multiplier for the LCG and is trusted implicitly, garnering the respect of both the Squadron and Commando forces alike. Outside of routine work, he has also seized the initiative to become involved in the ESRI Geographic Mentoring Scheme. Part of a small team, he delivered lessons to AS and A-Level students at Comberton Village College. His excellent planning and presentation skills ensured an array of engaging and interesting lessons, which focussed on the use of ArcGIS Online, and how it could be best utilised by the Sixth Form students to support their studies. His realistic examples of geographic support to humanitarian disasters such as Hurricane Irma, were captivating and inspiring for both the students and the college staff.

Overall, Corporal Whelan is an exceptional individual, who has been constantly surpassing what was either asked or expected of him. He has frequently put the needs of others before his own, as evidenced with his unrelenting efforts whilst deployed with the LCG and in undertaking ESRI mentoring, Corporal Whelan has undoubtedly made a significant positive impact beyond his Squadron and Regiment. In doing so, he has played an important part in promoting the opportunities that can be found within the Royal Engineers and inspiring the next generation. His performance has been extraordinary, and he is wholly deserving of this nomination for the Royal Engineers Association award.

The Branch Award is presented annually, to the individual who has given outstanding and loyal support to the Regiment; whilst participating and contributing in a variety of activities throughout the training year. The fact that Cpl Whelan has been selected for this honour, demonstrates the significance of his outstanding contribution to unit life, during this period.

Notification of Deaths

Peter McMaster C.B. F.R.I.C.S.

(1931 – 2019)



No 25 ASC - 21 March 1960 to 23 May 1961

We have been advised that Peter McMaster died suddenly at home some time over the weekend of the 12th-13th May. The funeral service will take place at 13.30 hrs. on Monday 17th June at St John's Church, St John's Street, Winchester.

The service will be immediately followed by a reception at Chesil House, in Chesil Street, a short walk away at which we would be delighted to see you. There will be flowers from family members only, but if you would like to make a donation to Dementia UK, you would be supporting a cause close to our heart at this time.

Peter McMaster was Director General and Chief Executive of the Ordnance Survey from 1985–1991, and appointed C.B. on 15th June 1991. Member of Lord Chancellor's Panel of Independent Inspectors 1991-2001.

Commissioned into Royal Engineers, 1952; served Middle East and Far East; retired (major).
Called to the bar, Middle Temple, 1969.

1970; joined Civil Service, 1970; W Midland Region Ordnance Survey, 1970-72; Caribbean Region, Directorate of Overseas Survey, 1972-74; Headquarters, 1974-91, Director General Ordnance Survey 1985-91.

Visiting Professor Kingston Polytechnic, subsequently Kingston University, 1901-93.

Member of Council: BCS 1983-92; RGS 1990-93; FIIM 1990.

(WHO'S WHO 2003)

Anthony Jan Borkowski



No 4 Primary Surveyor Trig Course 1965

John Hughes: -

The world is a sadder place without Boris his smiling face and jovial countenance will be missed by many.

During middle age he was a great cyclist and put many of his friends to shame while he grew leaner his colleagues put on weight. Boris was better known in survey circles than his name sake Boris Johnson.

Boris completed his A3 Field Survey training at the School of Military Survey in the spring of 1965 and later the same year was posted to 13 Field Survey Squadron in Aden. It was there while surveying the desert of the Rub al Khali and the wadis of the Hadramawt that he formed life-long friendships with many of his fellow surveyors. He returned to the UK with 13 Sqn in 1967.

Boris served many years at Hermitage his first tour as an assistant instructor in 1972.

Boris was a family man, and this did not sit easy with life as a military field surveyor. However, in 1976 while serving with 512 Specialist Team based in Washington, he successfully arranged for his wife Sue and Oliver their young son to join him for a month or two in the USA.

DSA Prizewinner 2009 - Royal School of Military Survey

Mr Jan Borkowski (known affectionately throughout the British Army as, 'Boris') is employed as a Higher Instructional Officer (HIO) in the Geospatial Information Management Wing of the Royal School of Military Survey (RSMS) at Hermitage. He is the subject matter lead for the All Arms Map Reading Instructor Course (MAPRIC) and contributes to the teaching of hand-held GPS and advanced navigation techniques to All Arms courses. In this capacity he represents the RSMS at the Army Training Directorate Working Group as the Mandatory Army Training Test (MATT) advisor and subject matter expert for all Army Map Reading and Navigation training and testing.

Land navigation, map reading, and survival navigation techniques are key components of the training which the Field Army now requires as part of the enduring requirement for operations in Afghanistan under Operation Entirety. In this context, Boris was recently approached by the Land Warfare Centre to re-write the 'Survival Navigation Techniques' element of the Electronic Battle Box for Unit Commanders. The narrative he provided has now been published in the new 2010 edition. In addition, Boris is the technical author for the Manual of Map Reading and Land Navigation which is widely adopted as the pan-Army 'bible' for all matters regarding map reading and navigation. Indeed, the MAPRIC

office phone number is regularly used by deployed instructors in all theatres of Operations, as the 'Map Reading and Navigation' helpline.

These are by no means isolated examples of how Boris' subject matter knowledge has been called upon over the years. In 1990 he led a small team to deliver specialist desert navigation training to units deploying on Op Granby (1st Gulf War). In 2001 he and his team developed a new desert navigation instructor's pack for Op Telic (Desert Storm). He has continued to act as the SME of choice to the Special Forces community and provides the map reading and navigation element for the Special Forces selection aide memoire. His technical knowledge has also allowed him to provide advice for procurement of the new generation of in-service light weight compasses and roamers.

In terms of anecdotal approbation, the Army Rumour Service (ARSE) website (an e-forum where Service personal swap opinions and experiences regarding all military matters) contains numerous comments and citations regarding the extremely high regard in which Boris and the MAPRIC course is held. An example of a typical comment reads:

"Ahhh! Boris.....

Spending 3 mins trying frantically to work out your position post blindfold, only to queue up with the answer and have your pride demolished by Boris, "Close, try again".....The worst part was the "Nav Ex" through that horrible little wood, with nothing but a compass and a sheet of A4 with just contour lines on it.....Great course and pub lunches..... Boris - that guy knows his stuff" Army SNCO - ARSE website, accessed May 2010

Since he started as a MAPRIC instructor in January 1984, Boris has trained in the region of 6,000 MAPRIC instructors for the Field Army and delivered the MAPRIC course as far afield as Hong Kong, Cyprus and the Gulf under operational and peace time conditions. In short, there isn't a single unit in the British Army that hasn't benefited from his subject matter knowledge and expertise in delivering the very highest quality of map reading and navigation instructors. Boris retires in early 2011 and the DSA prize will be a fitting recognition of his significant contribution to the advancement of map reading and land navigation. (*The Ranger- Summer 2010 Vol 3, No 1*)

Some personal memories of 'Boris' from friends and colleagues:

Mick Perry: -

Difficult one: I was at SMS (as it was then!) with Boris in 1973 and he was a great help as I was buying and moving into our house in Newbury. He was brilliant at sanding the horrible floorboards and setting up the tea chest armchairs that we all had in the good old days!!!! But I moved on to ETB within a year and not much more can be said... except Boris was a real nice guy and great colleague and he was always willing to give a helping hand if you had a problem.

But sadly, I am not able to add much more at all, I know a young lady who, as a young girl, used to live next to them (civilian not military) who says she can add a little bit from those days - bit of humour maybe. She remains an old family friend and is reasonably close to Sue and is great pals with my daughter, and she's doing something, I will pass it on, so be nice and give it a little space...!

I know that Phil Wright (Cyril I assume Rod?) informed Rod of the demise of Boris having been informed by Sue straight after he died! So maybe they were close having served a long time together at Hermitage.

I used to frighten him off his bike on my way back from Feltham - long hoot on horn as he was coming up old Newtown road and I down it....

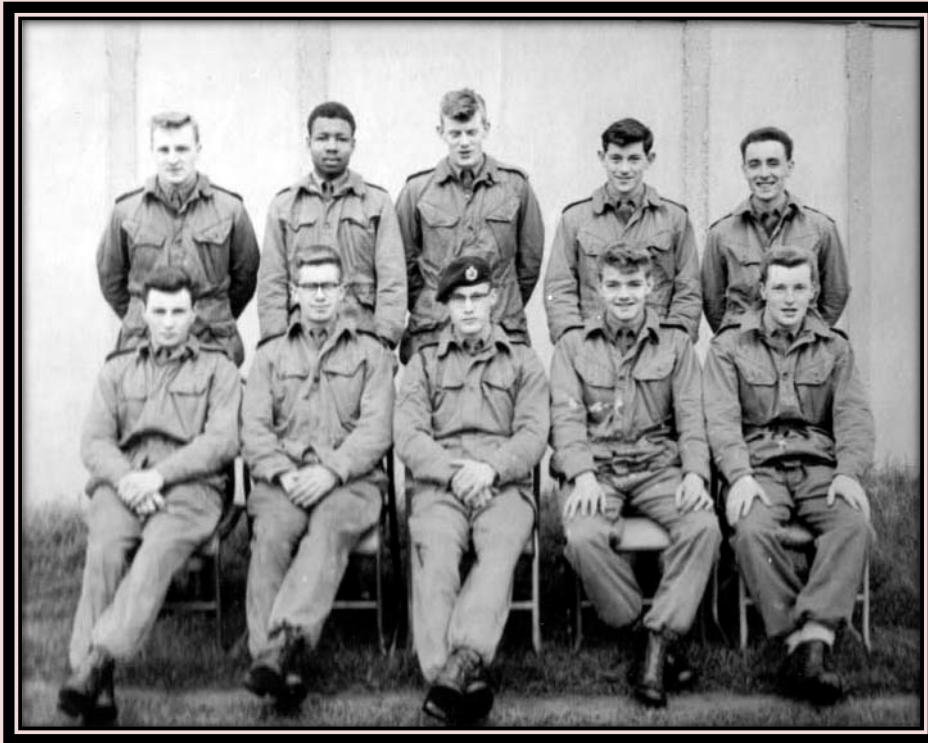
Deborah Foster – Dear Mick (Perry), Thank you very much for asking me to write this for Tony, means a great deal to me: -

I have known Tony since I was 6 (44 years) when Tony, Sue & Oliver moved in next door, My first memory is running in saying the new people next door are very poor cooking in the garden – I had never seen a BBQ!!!

We became great friends with the Borkowski's, with the parents sharing many Chinese takeaway nights, whilst the kids shared their love of Swap Shop. When I was 12 the Borkowski's with an added addition of Tom were posted to Canada, and invited us to visit, we had never been abroad before, but ended up going for a month, an amazing experience which quite literally changed our lives.

Tony was larger than life, loads of fun, full of stories & cheeky comments. I will always remember him with love and laughter. He will be greatly missed by all. With love to Sue, Oliver & Tom

Ralph (Jock) Stockley



Ralph standing on the right

After his initial sapper training, Ralph began his air survey training in 1963 at Hermitage on No2 Primary Surveyor Topographic course. On completion of the course he was posted to Barton Stacey joining 47 Sqn soon after its return from the Middle East.

As Ralph's career progressed he was appointed SQMS of 19 Sqn in 1975. While at the 42 he was involved in the Firemen's Strike and also one of the Carto Norge exercises.

He attended No 5 Survey Staff Specialist course in 1977 and later posted to SMS in 1979 as senior instructor taking the advanced air survey courses No 24 and No 25.

Ralph passed away after a short illness in Nottingham Hospital. Ralf was not a member of the Branch. His funeral was held on 14th May, at Gedling Crematorium, Nottingham, NG4 4QH.

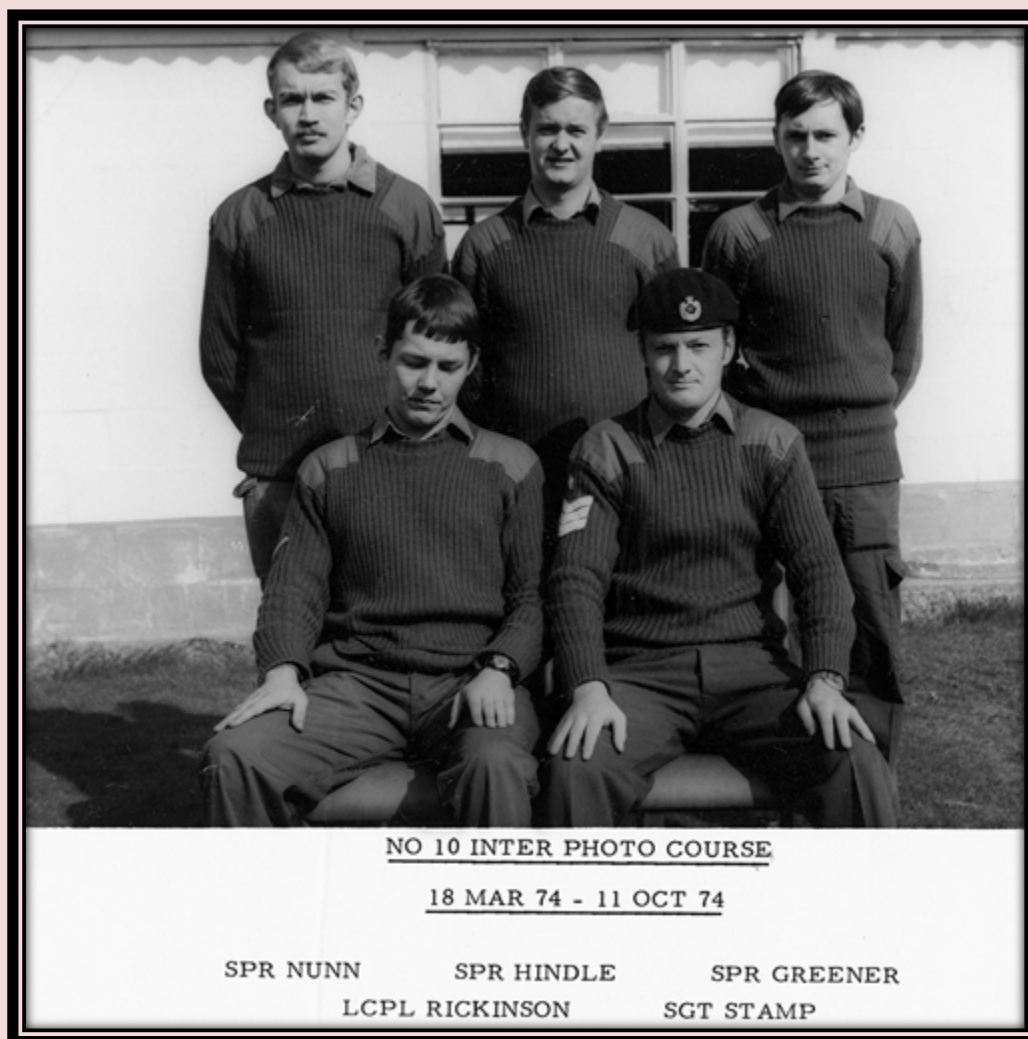
John Wawman

We have been informed by HQ REA that John Wawman who joined our Branch in 2011, sadly passed away in April. John was approaching his 85th birthday and had served as a Cpl Field Surveyor from 1952 to 1956. John lived in Buxton, Norfolk.

John Swinden

Enlisted in the Royal Engineers in 1943. Landed in Normandy on the afternoon of D-Day and arrived in Bad Oyenhausen in May 1945. Posted to Egypt in January 1946, and demobed in March 1947. He had met Gwen at BAOR Headquarters in September 1945, and they were married in April 1947. Married life began in Coventry in June 1947 for basic training for the OS. He finally retired in 1984. After a long and happy retirement, he died peacefully at the age of 95 at a care home in Cheltenham.

Peter Nunn



It is with a sad and heavy heart to inform you of the sad death of Pete Nunn ex Photo Tech. I received a message from Jeni Nunn his wife, informing me that Pete was killed in a car crash on the 30th November 2018. He was riding his motorcycle to a yoga lesson at 6 am and crashed, police think he might have swerved to avoid an animal and lost control.

It has taken 6 months of grieving for Jeni to relay this sad news to his friends in the UK. They had set up a new life in Tasmania Australia running a retreat.
(Message from Mike Evason)



“MAPS & SURVEYS 2019”

THE DEFENCE SURVEYORS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL SEMINAR FRIDAY 28 JUNE 2019

The 13th annual “Maps & Surveys” Seminar on historical & current hydrographic and military surveying, charting and mapping will take place at the Arlington Arts Centre, Donnington, Nr Newbury, Berks, RG14 3BQ, on Friday 28 Jun 19. There is ample parking space available at the Arlington Arts Centre. A location diagram for the Arlington Arts Centre [Tel: (01635) 244266], can be found on its website. <http://www.arlingtonarts.co.uk/pages/planVisit.php>.

Limited space should be available for the display of historical military mapping, charting or other “Survey” memorabilia in the Centre. Attendees who wish to display such material should arrange for display space, in advance, with Tony Keeley.

The cost of attendance is £25, which include lunch, and tea & coffee breaks. Drinks are available at the Arlington Arts Centre bar at their usual prices.

The programme for the day is: -

- 1015 – 1100 **Arrival, Registration, Tea/Coffee/Danish Pastries.**
- 1100 – 1145 **Jean Smith – ‘The role of Human Geography as a Defence Enabler: The development of Human Geography in supporting Operations, 2006 to date.’**
- 1145 – 1230 **Arthur Creighton – Personal experiences as a Radar Reconnaissance Navigator in Bomber Command in the 1960s. .**
- 1230 – 1330 **Hot Buffet Lunch/Fruit Salad/Cash Bar.**
- 1330 – 1415 **Lt Col P Hammett RE, CO 42 Engr Regt (Geo) - Deployable Geoint**
- 1415 – 1500 **Christopher Nash, Past Chairman of the DSA – ‘This year is the 80th Anniversary of the start of the Second World War in 1939 and the next six years will herald the 80th Anniversaries in the War. This presentation is an introduction to Military Survey in the War.’**
- 1500 – 1530 **Afternoon Tea/Coffee/Biscuits.**
- 1530 – 1600 **Gary Barnett, National GeoInt Officer (NGO) – ‘Geo-Int support to decision making, the work of the Geospatial Analysis Mission Team (GAMT).’**
- 1600 – 1630 **Lt Cdr Rich Watsham RN – ‘The geospatial challenges as the Geospatial lead in HMS Queen Elizabeth.’**
- 1630 – 1645 **Final Questions, Discussion and Closing Comments by President DSA.**

BOOKING FORM – Defence Surveyors' Association Seminar

ARLINGTON ARTS CENTRE 28 JUNE 2018

Return hard or soft copy (preferred) with payment to the Secretary as appropriate below
(If you have any admin queries contact the Secretary)

Administrative Details

1. Name (s) Contact Tel No email address/address as appropriate

Dietary requirements. If you have specific dietary requirements, please indicate.

2. **Display space.** Contact Tony Keeley – Details below
3. **Transport.** It may be possible to arrange pick up/return to Newbury Station for those travelling by train i.e. from other delegates. Contact the Secretary.

Payment - £25 per person. Receipts will be acknowledged by email/Tel No as appropriate. (Refunds on necessary cancellation will be made if received at least one week prior the event)

Payment may be made by bank transfer (preferred) or by cheque.

If by bank transfer, details below, please ensure that identification is made as follows: "DSA Seminar - Name". Please send an advisory email to the secretary at the email address below, copying to the treasurer when the transfer is made. If your payment covers more than one person then indicate in your email.

Bank details for UK payers

HSBC. Sort Code **40 36 16**

Account No **10344184**

Account in Name of **Defence Surveyors' Association**

Secretary a.keeley288@binternet.com Treasurer Phil.Wildman47@gmail.com

Cheques to be made out to "Defence Surveyors Association". Please set out on the back of the cheque the names of the people covered by the cheque and send to:

Hon Sec DSA
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Tel 01635 578 506 Mobile 07899842456

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