The Military Survey (Geo) Branch

Spring Newsletter 2020 – issue 75

CORONA VIRUS – COVID 19

THE MILITARY SURVEY BRANCH REA

REUNION & AGM

PLANNED FOR FRIDAY THE 3rd OF APRIL 2020

IS POSTPONED

IT IS TO BE RESCHEDULED TO THE AUTUMN

DATE TO BE NOTIFIED

Dear members; we are very sorry to cancel the event but your committee had to make a decision and with the continuing spread of the Corona Virus - Covid 19 we feel that this and other associated risks justify the decision to move the reunion/AGM to a new date later in the year. Be assured that it was not a decision that was made lightly and given the fact that the membership is primarily elderly and arriving from all corners of the country we felt it was the right thing to do.

It is very likely that, in the near future, there will be a government edict restricting gatherings of people. In addition, the Garrison Commander might at any point be forced to restrict access to the barracks. Lastly, and very shortly we have to put in a final order for food to the Sgt's Mess Contractor which we would have to pay for (Eaten or not) only to find that many members feel unable to attend at the last minute because of the spread of this damn virus; indeed, as said, the government could force that upon us anyway as might the Commanding Officer.

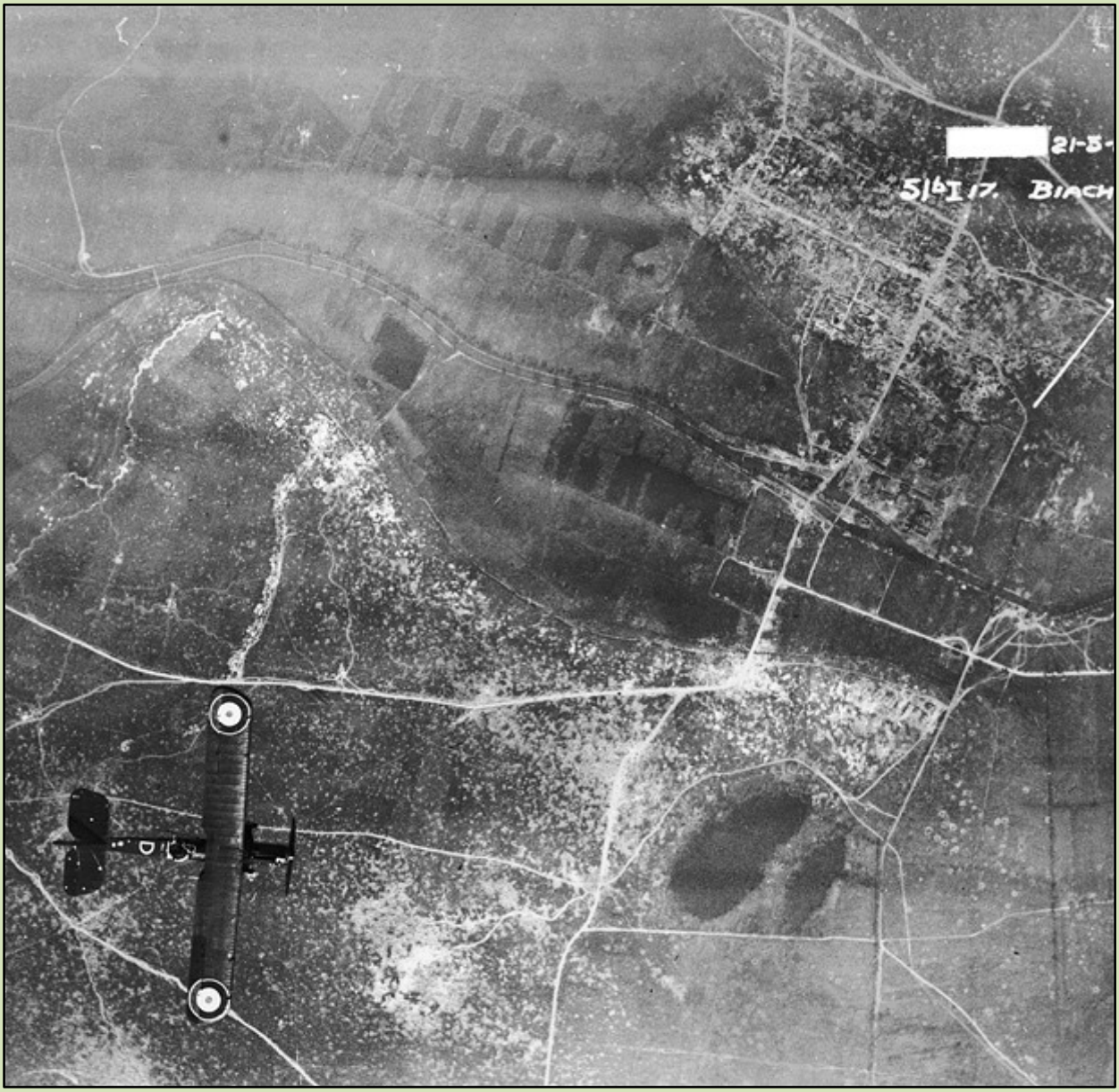
We will let you know new dates as soon as this can be arranged with the unit

The Surveyor – pinterest.com

A bird's-eye view of the battlefield: aerial photography

(By Alan Wakefield Head of photographs at IWM 5:41PM BST 04 Apr 2014
This page forms part of Inside the First World War, part eight, Daily Telegraph)

Aerial photography became an essential weapon for Britain in the First World War, following the high-flying successes of ally reconnaissance missions



In the picture: an Airco DH.4 over Biache-Saint-Vaast

The trench deadlock that descended on the Western Front at the end of 1914 acted as a catalyst for the development of aerial reconnaissance. Traditionally, cavalry had served as the eyes of an army, scouting behind enemy lines and reporting to commanders about troop concentrations and movements. In trench warfare, such freedom of movement was impossible, leading armies to devise new ways of looking behind the opposing front line.

In the years immediately before the First World War, armies began to harness the growing capabilities of aircraft to warfare. Aeroplanes and airships provided an elevated, mobile observation platform, able to cross enemy lines and view a large area of territory. The results from pre-war manoeuvres overcame the scepticism of senior officers and by 1914 all major armies had an aviation arm.

When war broke out in August 1914, the French led the way with aerial reconnaissance. By October, each French army included an aerial photographic section manned by specialist staff, pioneering camera development and the collation of intelligence information from aerial photographs.

A pilot is told which areas to photograph

Following the deployment of the Royal Flying Corps to France on August 13, 1914, the British quickly began learning from their ally. Nos 1 and 9 Squadrons experimented with hand-held press and private cameras to take photographs over the front line. These units included such pre-war pioneers of aerial photography as Frederick Laws, John Moore-Brabazon, Charles Campbell and John Brooke-Popham. Support for this work came from the top as the first commanders of the RFC, Lt Gen Sir David Henderson and Major Frederick Sykes, realised the importance of aircraft in gathering intelligence information for the army.

The first intensive use by the British of aerial photographs in military planning came at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle in March 1915. Lt Charles Darley (No 3 Squadron) photographed the German lines. The resulting prints showed up new trench construction leading to modifications in the plan of attack.

Darley also pioneered the overlapping of photographic prints to form a mosaic of a sector of trench line, a technique that became standard practice. Following the French lead, Royal Engineers survey companies used a combination of aerial photographs and ground survey techniques to produce detailed trench maps.

A Canadian officer studies a photo

Two men quickly won over by the usefulness of aerial photographs were Haig's senior intelligence officer, Brig Gen John Charteris, and Maj Gen Hugh Trenchard, the man charged with leading the RFC from August 1915. Such high-level support ensured that from 1916 aerial photography was an integral part of the BEF's intelligence-gathering machine. At the Battle of the Somme, RFC squadrons took more than 19,000 aerial photographs of the German trenches, from which 430,000 prints were made. To cope with demand, the number of RFC photographic sections was greatly increased. Staff maintained camera equipment, loaded magazines with unexposed glass plates and, on return of an aircraft, fixed the negative and developed prints.

In a speed test undertaken by No 10 Squadron in summer 1916, photographic prints could be delivered to HQ within 30 minutes of the development process having begun: commanders could have accurate photographic reconnaissance information to hand as a battle progressed.

To ensure maximum information was drawn from an image, specially trained photographic interpreters were employed. These men could spot signs giving away enemy positions, improvements to trenches or concentrations of troops and equipment for an offensive. As this work reached new levels of efficiency, camouflage was developed to mask battlefield activity from the ''eye in the sky''. Another way to prevent reconnaissance aircraft fulfilling their mission was to stop them from crossing the front line. Anti-aircraft guns proved a particular threat during photographic flights, which called for aircraft to remain over enemy territory for a prolonged period flying straight, level passes at a set altitude.

A co-pilot using a pistol-grip camera

An even greater menace to the two-man reconnaissance aircraft were single-seat fighters. By 1915, an aerial arms race had begun as both sides developed faster and better-armed aircraft. Fighters had two tasks: to prevent enemy reconnaissance machines from crossing the lines and to defeat an enemy fighter force so their own two-seaters could penetrate over and behind the opposing front line.

Until mid-1917, the Germans stole a march in fighter technology, leaving the British and French to react by developing their own improved aircraft. Two periods of particularly high casualties among British aircrews were known as the ''Fokker Scourge'' (autumn 1915-summer 1916) and ''Bloody April'' (1917). Despite flying greatly inferior aircraft, the pilots and observers of reconnaissance squadrons continued their vital work. Trenchard realised Haig's army would be at a great disadvantage without intelligence information gathered from aerial reconnaissance. He drove his men on despite heavy losses while at the same time demanding the production of more effective aircraft.

By summer 1918, the Allies had in effect won the battle for air superiority, mass producing large numbers of aircraft to more than ensure the replacement of combat losses at least in terms of machines if not experienced aircrew. The Germans, in contrast, were increasingly hard pushed to maintain an air arm as shortages of raw materials, fuel and industrial unrest in factories ensured that, even when new aircraft were designed, few reached frontline units.

The final year of the war witnessed a massive aerial effort on the part of British, French and US air arms. RAF squadrons alone took a total of 2.5 million aerial photographs during 1918. Throughout the war, both sides employed aerial photography in all theatres of war to assist military operations. The personnel of reconnaissance squadrons achieved impressive results in the face of difficult operating conditions and the technical limitations of cameras and aircraft. This work ensured that, by 1918, the aerial photograph and its detailed interpretation had become the defining source of military intelligence.

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REPORT ON CONFERENCE OF AEROPLANE PHOTOGRAPH OFFICERS HELD AT BLENDECQUES ON 3 – 9 DECEMBER, 1917

Note: - Representatives of the French, Belgian and American Armies also attended the conference, and representatives of various arms were present at discussions which affected them.

1. Introduction

The object of the course was to co-ordinate the views of the Intelligence Officers for aeroplane photographs in different Armies, in such a manner as to ensure the greatest practical value being obtained.
The study of photographs is only of value in so far as the results may be turned to practical account, either in the way of assisting tactical operations, or of obtaining information regarding the enemy's intentions and dispositions.
The subjects discussed during the course and the recommendations (see Appendix A) made are summarized below; the recommendations were endorsed by a conference of G.S. officers held at the conclusion of the course.

2. Aeroplane Photograph Sections at A.H.Q.

The functions of these sections are: -
a) To examine and interpret photographs of the Army area.
b) To disseminate the information thus gained to all concerned (including branches of A.H.Q.).
The present establishment is insufficient. The number of photographs received during favourable weather is too large to permit detailed study by one man.

The Army area should be divided into sectors (normally by Corps fronts) and all photographs taken in a sector should be examined in the first instance by a N.C.O. or man who would deal permanently with that sector, and thus be thoroughly conversant with its features.

Photographs of interest to the various staffs and directorates at A.H.Q. should be circulated to those concerned with a slip calling attention to the points of interest.

3. Photographs and mosaics for use of troops

Conditions governing issue As regards types of photographs useful to troops, two cases must be considered: -
1 Where a defensive front is held.
2 Where active operations are intended or in progress.
In the former case, the features and details of the enemy's organizations change very little and slowly. Consequently, once a comprehensive picture of the front has been obtained, it is only occasionally that it requires amendments and additions.

In the second case, owing to our own or enemy action, both ground features and enemy organizations are continually changing.

In both cases, up to the present, it is probable that troops have been issued too indiscriminately with single copies of photographs, often insufficiently marked up and of little practical value.

Oblique photographs - In many cases, ordinary oblique photographs are not sufficiently annotated at present, owing to the fact that they are taken from a different point of view from that of the user, they lose their value unless they are fully marked up.

Stereoscopic photographs - Stereoscopic photographs, and especially stereoscopic oblique photographs, are of great value for studying the ground over which troops may advance. Owing to the fact that in many parts of the front contours on maps are at 5 metre intervals, many ground features of tactical importance are not shown, but they stand out well on a clear stereoscopic oblique photograph.

Time of issue - Generally speaking photographs which reach troops less than 48 hours before operations are of little value, as there is no time to study them thoroughly.

Mosaics - The production and issue of large mosaics should be limited. They are very wasteful of paper and are chiefly valuable to staffs for giving a general idea of an area or in conjunction with the examination of prisoners.

Facilities offered by R.F.C. - With the cameras now available, (see Appendix B), Photographic Sections, R.F.C. can now produce practically any type of photograph and require only to be informed of what is needed.
The following types of photographs will normally be required: -

a) Vertical largescale photographs of front areas for detailed study of trench systems, and of areas farther in rear for the location of hostile batteries, and the study generally of the counter-battery area.

b) Vertical wide-angle photographs for the use of the Survey Company, and for preliminary study of back areas, also in special cases for combining on one photograph a large area of the frontline system.

c) Oblique photographs taken from a low altitude showing the British front system, No Man's Land, and the enemy's front line.

d) Oblique photographs taken from a medium altitude for showing country farther in rear that is not underground observation.

Standardization of photographs - Headings of prints and dimensions of stereoscopic photographs should be standardized throughout Armies.

4. **Instruction in the interpretation of aeroplane photographs for Officers and other ranks**

Two cases come under consideration: -

a) The instruction of officers who require a detailed knowledge, e.g. Divisional, Brigade and Battalion Intelligence Officers, officers charged with the examination of photographs at the various artillery headquarters.

b) Regimental officers and other ranks to which a general knowledge is of value.

a) The first case can best be met by the institution of special courses of instruction held under Army arrangements.

Trained instructors already exist in the shape of Branch Intelligence Section officers and the Army aeroplane photograph officer.

The instruction given should include, wherever possible: -

Interpretation (from its elementary stages)
Branch Intelligence Section duties
Corps Topographical Section duties
R.F.C. system of work
Types of cameras used.
Practical work on examining trench systems and topographical features with the aid of photographs taken behind the line
A practical flight in an aeroplane

A syllabus to suit local conditions in each Army can be drawn up by G.S.O's, I.

Courses of 5-6 days would usually be sufficient and should be limited to 8 officers at a time if only one instructor is available.

It would be of advantage to hold them at or near a R.F.C. squadron, preferably the Army reconnaissance squadron.

b) Instruction of regimental officers and other ranks can be given at Army schools.

4 separate hours instruction should be sufficient to give a grounding on the subject.

The knowledge thus acquired can be further developed by comparison of photographs of the country in the vicinity of the schools with the actual ground. This latter practice could be extended to all training areas by arranging for photographs to be taken and supplies to be kept for issue to troops training in the area.

5. **Dissemination of information from aeroplane photographs**

Normally, advance copies of all photographs affecting them are sent to those concerned. In addition, whenever new work of importance appears on a photograph, Branch Intelligence officers should despatch a telegram to those directly concerned, at the same time that the advance copy is sent off, calling attention to the new work and giving the numbers of the photographs on which, it occurs.

A map showing new work (with photo numbers to facilitate reference), an interpretation, and a diagram showing the map squares covered by the photographs, should accompany each packet of the full issue sent out.

Difficulties existing at present Branch Intelligence Sections have no transport allotted to them and are often some distance from a signal office. If the work of distribution is to be satisfactory, some form of transport is required.

Photography for artillery units Artillery officers who attended the conference stated that batteries often suffered both from shortage of photographs and delay in receiving them. If Branch Intelligence Sections are provided with distribution charts showing numbers of copies required by groups, packets for R.A. Headquarters can be made up so that they are ready for immediate distribution at the Headquarters concerned. In particularly urgent cases, arrangements might have to be made for R.A. headquarters to fetch photographs from Corps Squadrons R.F.C. as soon as they were ready.

In certain Corps, the work of disseminating information obtained from photographs to the artillery was greatly facilitated by the presence of an artillery liaison officer who was permanently attached to the Corps Squadron sand worked in co-operation with the Branch Intelligence Officer.

Collation of information In addition to the maps sent out with packets, it is of great advantage to combine all information received from aeroplane photographs during the day on to one map.

6. **Division of work between Field Survey Company, General Staff & R.A., as regards examination of air photographs**

The responsibility of the Field Survey Company and Corps Topographical Sections, as regards information contained in maps, is limited to :-

(a) The correct drawing and plotting of topographical detail:

(b) The accurate plotting of batteries.

G.S. Intelligence is solely responsible that maps contain the necessary military information required by troops.

The Artillery (C.B.S.O's.) is responsible for collating information regarding hostile batteries, declaring their activity or otherwise, and allotting numbers. If it delegates any of this work to Field Survey Companies, the responsibility remains with the artillery.

Owing to the amount of work required in examining photographs on an Army front, Artillery officers present were of the opinion that this work should preferably be done in Corps.

7. **Circulation of information regarding new or unusual features which may appear on photographs**

At present, beyond Intelligence Summaries, no system exists for the interchange of information between aeroplane photographic officers of Armies.

This should be carried out in two ways: -

(a) By circulation between Armies of photographs of interest.

(b) By periodical conferences of aeroplane photograph officers.

8. **Duplication in orders for photography of areas**

Attention was called to the fact that cases occur of several squadrons receiving orders to photograph the same spot on the same day. There is a special tendency for this to occur in neighbourhoods where squadrons under different commands (French, Belgian, Naval, and Military) are working over the same area.

9. **Camouflage**

Cases often occur of camouflage being applied in an unpractical manner.
Camouflage is largely intended for protection from aerial observation, and the chief requirement is knowledge of what the ground looks like from the air at the height at which the enemy are likely to come over.
For this purpose, photographs of all country behind the line, more particularly the battery areas should be taken periodically, especially at the change of seasons, and issued to camouflage officers.

10. **Notes on the interpretation of aeroplane photographs**

This pamphlet was revised during the conference, and draft copies will be forwarded to all concerned.

11. **Technical equipment**

An Appendix (B) giving some detail as to types of cameras available is attached.

APPENDIX A

RECOMMENDATIONS

Aeroplane Photograph Sections at A.H.Q.

To enable the work to be carried out efficiently, the establishment of aeroplane photographic sections at A.H.Q. should be increased by: -
1 clerk (for receiving, issuing and indexing)
1 draughtsman per Corps front (for preliminary examination of all photographs in the area opposite to the Corps front.)

Photographs and mosaics for use of troops

(a) Photographic information should be issued to troops in every sector in one strongly made compendium.
Annotated mosaics and obliques to show brigade or battalion fronts should be mounted with a map ordinarily in use, in such a manner that the whole will fold into a packet full plate size. This can be done by Branch Intelligence Sections or Corps Topographical Sections.

Obliques should be taken from a low altitude and should show the British front positions and the immediate foreground thoroughly marked up. Areas covered should correspond as far as possible with sectors held by formations.

Packets for issue to infantry should illustrate the area between the British front line (inclusive) and (a) a line 1000 yards beyond the German front line system for a quiet sector, and (b) a line 1000 yards beyond the immediate objective in a sector in which operations are being carried out. Artillery units will require the counter-battery area.
In the case of a defensive sector, such packets would require to be renewed periodically, and every month or six weeks, to cover ordinary wear and tear.

Any fresh work discovered during the interval could be conveyed to troops by means of single prints or small mosaics, clearly marked up, which could be compared with the original mosaics already in their possession.

In the case of an active front, new issues would have to be more frequent, but should preferably take the same form, i.e. of small mosaics, well- marked up, rather than of individual prints, which would have to be put together by the recipients.

(b) The production and issue of stereoscopic photographs and especially of stereoscopic oblique's should be developed, and a portable form of stereoscope authorized for issue down to Infantry Battalions and Artillery Brigade Commanders. (The Pleyau is of little value; R.F.C. are undertaking to produce a suitable article.)

(c) A PELLIN stereoscopic photograph chooser should be issued to each Branch Intelligence Section and to A.H.Q. This stereoscope is not intended for detailed study of prints but is an apparatus for rapidly selecting the best photographs for stereopics.

(d) Armies and Corps should limit the production of large mosaics as far as possible.

(e) It is the duty of the formation ordering the photographs to specify the type required, i.e., wide angle, large scale, obliques to show large or small area, etc. (See Note below).

Photographic sections R.F.C. should be prepared to lend negative plates to Field Survey Companies for short periods for mapping purposes.

(f) **Standardization of photographs**

(i) **Vertical photographs**

The name of the nearest village should be inserted on photographs under the squadron reference number, as well as the list of squares covered.

(ii) **Stereoscopic photographs (vertical and oblique)**

All mounts should be cut 8 inches by 3 ½ inches, with the dividing line between prints 3 ½ inches from the left edge of the paper.

The following should be inserted in the blank space at the right edge of the paper: -

Formation ……... Stereo number ……
Date …… Hour ……
Rough location ……. Exact co-ordinate ……

The numbers of the two photographs used should be inserted immediately beneath them.

a. Photographic Sections, R.F.C. should trim off white margins of prints before issue.

b. The scheme for marking co-ordinates on prints for describing points is undesirable.

Instruction in the interpretation of air photographs

(a) Army Classes. Aeroplane photograph courses should be held under Army arrangements for instruction of Divisional, Brigade and Battalion Intelligence Officers.

(b) Classes at Army Schools. Representations from Infantry, Artillery, Trench mortar and Sniping schools were present at this discussion.

It was generally agreed that: -

1) One instructor per Army Infantry School could attend a short course of instruction at the Army (see para. 4 of report).

2) Four hours during each course at Army Infantry Schools could be set apart for instruction in air photographs under the instructor thus trained.

3) Photographs should be taken of the country round Army Schools and of portions of Divisional Training areas; copies of these should be held on charge and issued to officers and N.C.O's on arrival, so that they may be able to study photographs on the ground when opportunities offer.

Note. The necessary photographs for instructional purposes at Army Schools can be obtained in any number on application to Army Headquarters.

Dissemination of information from aeroplane photographs

(a) The provision of a despatch rider with motorcycle and side car for Branch Intelligence Sections is an urgent necessity.

(b) R.A. should consider the advisability of attaching an artillery liaison officer to each Corps Squadron, R.F.C. to work in co-operation with the Branch Intelligence Officer.

(c) During active operations, information obtained from photographs during the day should be incorporated in a Corps situation map, showing information from all sources, which would be prepared by G.S.O.2, I., in consultation with B.I. officer, C.S.S.O. and R.O.R.A.

Division of work between Field Survey Company, General Staff and R.A., as regards examination of aeroplane photographs

(a) The responsibility for maps of the Field Survey Companies and Corps Topographical Sections should be limited to the correct drawing and plotting of detail.

(b) G.S. Intelligence should be responsible that maps contain the necessary military information required by troops.

(c) The Artillery (C.B.S.O's) should be responsible for collating information regarding hostile batteries, declaring their activity or otherwise and allotting numbers.

(d) The Field Survey Companies should be responsible merely for the accurate plotting of batteries. Should they do more, the responsibility remains with the artillery?

Circulation to Armies and G.H.Q. of new features that may appear on photographs

Aeroplane photograph officers of Armies should circulate interesting photographs with notes to the photograph officers of other Armies, and to G.H.Q. A conference of aeroplane photograph officers should be held periodically at A.H.Q. in turn.

G.H.Q. should arrange that such interchange of information be extended to the French, Belgian and American Armies.

Camouflage work

Photographs of the country behind the line, especially of battery areas, should be taken periodically for use in connection with camouflage work, and issued confidentially to officers concerned.

APPENDIX B

Types of Cameras for Aerial Photography

Since the early part of 1915, cameras have gradually improved until now the difficulties caused by the vibration of the engine and the shortage of good lenses have been almost eliminated.

It is intended next spring to use cameras with the following plates and lenses: -

Army Squadrons
(a) 4 x 5 cm. plate with 10-inch lens.
(b) 4 x 5 cm. plate with 20-inch lens.
(c) 18 x 24 cm. plate with 10-inch lens.

Corps Squadrons
(d) 4 x 5 cm. plate with 8-inch lens.
(e) Same cameras as (a).
(f) 18 x 24 cm. plate with 20-inch lens.

The advantage of the 18 x 24 cm plate is that contact prints will be issued normally instead of enlargements, which lose detail. (Contact prints off 4 x 5 cm. plates are not often issued as they are considered rather small for examination without a magnifying glass).

The effect of a long lens is to enable a large-scale photograph suitable for counter-battery work to be taken from a great altitude. The difficulty of ensuring that a given point is included in the photograph is however largely increased. The shorter lenses take photographs at a wider angle, embracing a greater extent of country, but with increased distortion, especially round the edges.

Only a small number of 20-inch lenses are available.
With reference to the above list of cameras: -

(a) Is for ordinary work
(b) Is suitable for photographs of hostile batteries taken from a great altitude. The tendency of enemy batteries to fire at increased range will necessitate many of the photographs required by out counter-battery being taken by Army squadrons, which are responsible for photographing rear areas.
(c) Is the best wide-angle camera and takes photographs suitable for preliminary study of back areas and for mapping work.

(The Report was transcribed by Mike Nolan in 2019)

A sergeant of the Royal Flying Corps demonstrates a C type aerial reconnaissance camera fixed to the fuselage of a BE2c aircraft, 1916. Q33850.jpg

Sgt Phipps in Ethiopia

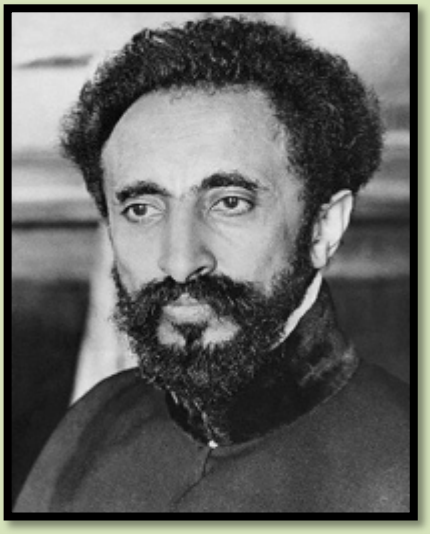
(This article was first published in the Military Survey Service Newsletter dated 23rd January 1975. Edited by Mike Stanbridge for the Director of Military Survey)

(The aim and work content of the DOS project in Ethiopia were described in the August newsletter by Sgt Phipps and for this edition he writes on the recent troubles in Ethiopia and the effects they have had on the project and staff)

Arriving here as my wife and I did on 26th February was rather unfortunate, as only five days before seeing the start of the riots and demonstrations which all too soon were to become a part of every-day life in Ethiopia. Two days after moving into our hotel we had our next shock – Ethiopia's first ever National Strike which included all members of the Labour Unions – including all our hotel staff. Fortunately, we were able to find a small shop open that was unaffected by the strike and so dined on bread rolls and tangerines. Luckily most things were back to normal by the following day, but needless to say we were most relieved to move into our flat after ten days in the hotel. Meanwhile a curfew had been imposed from 8.30 pm to 5.00 am and so our evenings were restricted to the flat after finishing work at 6 o'clock.

With the curfew came the start of the "clean-up" campaign, where government ministers, officials and members of the Armed Forces and police past and present were arrested on various charges of maladministration and embezzlement of public money – to name but a few. These arrests were to carry on right through the year, the arrested persons being detained without trial, all possessions confiscated – their families living off meagre supplement from the government. Curfews were lifted and reimposed like a yo-yo depending on the mood of the military and the behaviour of the people; our present curfew was imposed in July and has had a starting time varying between 7.30 pm and midnight – it is at present 9 pm.

With the continuing arrests and the sight of the ever-present armed police and soldiers on the streets, tension among the people was steadily mounting – especially among the "foreign" population such as ourselves out here on aid and other relief projects. It was certainly not uncommon to hear gunfire during the day but more so at night. Arriving home for lunch one day you can imagine my surprise and apprehension at finding one of the apartment buildings in our compound cordoned off by troops and two heavy machine guns mounted on jeeps aimed straight at the front door! Just another arrest, but luckily the Army's show of power worked, and the guilty party was arrested without a shot being fired – not always the case with some of the arrests. As if the military forces didn't have enough on their hands, they were continuously being called out to break up large gathering of rioting students protesting against the closure of the University of Addis Ababa in February. Unfortunately, some of these demonstrations have got out of hand, resulting in a few students getting shot or wounded.



Emperor Hailie Selassie

September saw the end of nearly 3,000 years of Imperial rule in the country with the deposition of the Emperor Hailie Selassie and the introduction of the present Military Government. This inevitably unleased a further wave of hysteria among the people – some being entirely in agreement with the action but many of the older ones being dead-set against it – Hailie Selassie being to many the "Saviour of Ethiopia". Tanks and other armoured vehicles were seen on the streets with more troops than ever, but this didn't seem to have the reassuring effect on the people it was designed to have, just making them more jumpy than they were before.

At this time, it was decided to send all Ethiopian school children above the age of 15 with their Ethiopian teachers into the surrounding countryside to preach the new doctrine of "Ethiopia Tikdem" (Ethiopia First) to the people there who were out of touch with the new developments going on in Addis Ababa. They were supposed to "preach" to the people that the old Imperialist regime was bad – having squandered the country's money whilst countless thousands died in the famine and drought affected areas of the country etc. They were also to set up schools, clinics and welfare centres help the poor people achieve a better standard of living – they must think that the students of Ethiopia are supermen! However, with the recent execution of 60 of the ex-ministers and officials arrested during the year, feelings against the military were again running high in the backward parts of the country, also minor tribal wars had developed over land reform problems and so it was thought unwise to start the project until things quietened down a bit.

So, with the postponement of the "National Work Scheme" as it was called, the students were able to get back to their studying, interspersed with more riots and demonstrations against the military and in particular the National Work Scheme.

In the past two weeks there have been three bombing incidents in the city – supposedly reprisal attacks for the recent executions by sympathisers and friends of the old regime. One of the attacks, at a fuel depot at the international airport, was foiled by guards, but the other two – one in an hotel restaurant and one in administrative offices at the City Hall – were successful and caused extensive damage as well as killing and injuring several people.

As all news reports and papers are quite heavily censored, exact details are not known, but knowing Europeans working in the hospitals where the injured were taken, the casualty figures reported by them are much higher than those released to the news media. We are still awaiting the outcome of the trails of the other 140 or so still in prison, no doubt there will be more reprisal attacks once their fate has been made public.

It is dangerous to go out in the city without your I.D. as it has to be shown to police or soldiers before going into any public building such as the Post Office or Library, in addition to being searched. The civilian guards outside the DOS offices are now armed with rifles and all vehicles and persons are searched quite thoroughly before gaining entry to the building. We also have two armed soldiers assisting the guards and several other who appear in the office from time to time making security searches. It all makes life a little inconvenient, but as they say "Better safe than sorry" and having had to do it myself at Barton Stacey I know how the guards and troops must feel.

Generally, the DOS Project has not been affected by these developments apart from the mental consternation suffered by its staff. Some tangible effects have however resulted from the shake-up. Since the virtual abolition of the Ethiopian Royal Family, the word "Imperial" has been deleted from all governmental and ministerial titles and as the word appears at least 5 or 6 times on each of our map sheets there has been a lot of frantic duffing and stripping – in on our final negatives of sheets awaiting printing. Also, the term "Governorate General" – applying to the main administrative regions of the country – has been superseded by the less grandiose one of "Kifle Hager", thus necessitating more alteration of type on the administrative boundaries section of the map sheets.

Printing has not yet started due to non-arrival of printing paper and plates from UK, but this is perhaps just as well as the 20 or so sheets (this includes those prepared by DOS in UK) have to be re-proofed after the above alterations have been done and then sent to an Ethiopian military committee for security vetting before printing can commence and this could take some time as none of the Ethiopian staff are very competent at producing wipe-on proofs, their average time for a 6 colour (10 exposure) proof being about 5 days and even then the end product is far from satisfactory. So, to save time and the hard to come by materials I invariably make them myself – time, availability of equipment (and water) permitting.

Despite it all, life as we have come to accept it goes on ……

DOS project in Ethiopia

(Unfortunately, the article referred to above where John Phipps describes the DOS project is not available. However, The National Archive (TNA OD 6/1687) holds records of the project the details of which are set out below in a December1976 Press release).

MAPPING PROJECT COMPLETED

A joint Ethiopian/British mapping project which started in May 1971 was completed last month. The project has involved the survey, air photography and mapping of 68,000 square kilometres (almost twice the land area of Switzerland) covering all of Arussi and southern Shoa, extending from Addis Ababa south to Awassa, and from the Gibe River in the west to Awash and Goba in the east. 88 map sheets have been produced giving exact details of topography, communications, drainage and settlement which will form the basis for future development projects in these areas.

This project has been a joint effort by the Ethiopian Mapping Agency of the Ministry of Agriculture and Settlement and the Directorate of Overseas Surveys on behalf of the British Government. The ground and air surveys have been carried out jointly by Ethiopian and British technicians.

The bulk of the map production and all the printing has been done by the Ethiopian Mapping Agency, with support from DOS experts, at their headquarters in Addis Ababa. The British Government's contribution has totalled 2½ million Birr more than ¾ of the total cost of the project.

To mark the completion of this project a small ceremony was held in the office of His Excellency Ato Zegeye Asfaw, Minister of Agriculture and Settlement. His Excellency Mr Derek Day, the British Ambassador was present along with the senior officials from the Ethiopian Mapping Agency and the Directorate of Overseas Surveys who have been closely involved in the project. Favourable comments were passed on the high quality of the maps produced and His Excellency Ato Zegeye praised the cooperation between his Ministry and the DOS in this important field of development for Ethiopia.

A second mapping project is already underway. This will cover an area even larger than the first project – an area of 77,000 square kilometres (larger than the land are of Portugal) and will include parts of Wollega, Shoa, Illubabor, Kaffa, Gemu Gofa and Sidamo.

(British Information Press Release – 22 December 1976)

The DOS experts involved in the printing of the maps were Sgt's Colin Jenkins, Barry Hughes & John Phipps in succession from 1971 to 1977.

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A Fayid Incident

By Major Ian Winfield

During 1948 internal security duties were a major claim on manpower with guard duties one night in three. All the units in the Canal Zone were responsible on a rota basis to provide standby guards who in the event of an incident would turn to and investigate. On one such night 42 Survey Engineer Regiment were responsible for the standby guard on the Officers' Club situated on the shore of the Bitter Lake.

Suddenly the guard was mobilised, and on arrival found the Club alight and about 150 anti-British, pro-nationalist Egyptians, many the worse for drink on the contents of the Club bar, in a very ugly mood. The guard commander, one Sergeant Moaks, with some trepidation lined the guard up and ordered in his best parade ground voice - "fix bayonets". To his and the soldiers' immense relief the drunken mob decided instantly that discretion was the better part of valour and in an orderly manner disappeared into the darkness.

Ian Winfield served with 42 Regiment from April to December 1948

Branch Lapel Badges

All members attending the Reunion/AGM on 3rd 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.

135 Geographic Squadron RE

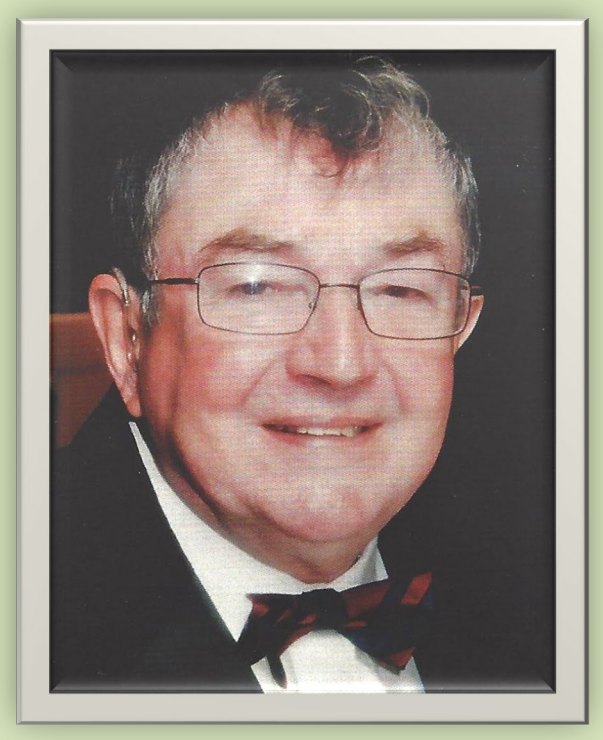
135 Geo Sqn conducted technical training on their Geographic Information Systems to maintain their technical skills. This is vital to ensure they are ready to deploy in support of 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) and the wider UK Defence.

Soldiers from 135 Geo Sqn joined 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic) on Exercise Dragon Mongolian Odyssey. This was an opportunity for soldiers to visit Mongolia and climb some of its highest peaks. Adventurous training is an important part of Reservist training. It encourages teamwork pushing yourself further than you thought possible and instils self-confidence.

Source – 135 Geo Sqn FaceBook Group Posting

Notification of Deaths

Michael (Mick) John Gowlett
22nd August 1938 – 4th December 2019



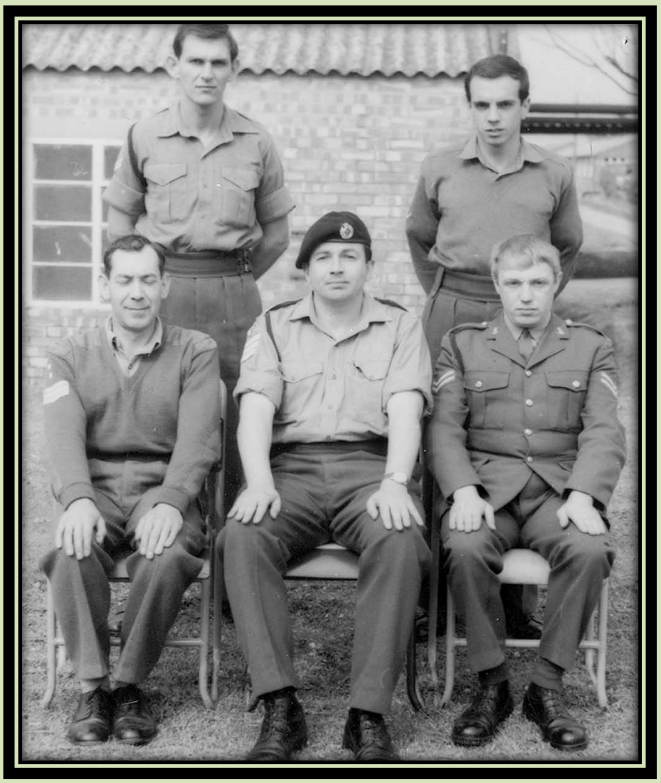
Michael died in St Michaels's Hospice Basingstoke on 4th December 2019. A memorial service was held at St Michael and All Angels' Church Highclere on Monday 23rd December 2019 and the committal followed at the West Berkshire Crematorium. The service was led by Very Reverend Denis Sandes of Ballyhasty Cloughjordan Co. Tipperary (Michael's cousin) and Reverend Canon Marvin Bamforth of Highclere. After the committal friends both civilian and ex-military joined Pauline (widow) and Derek and Graham (stepsons) at the Mercure West Grange Hotel Reading for refreshments.

Michael was born in Saffron Walden Essex and having spent his early years in Ireland finished his schooling at the Ashford Grammar School in Kent. Mick joined the Army as an apprentice at Harrogate in 1954 and had a full career retiring in 1978. He was posted to 9 Training Regiment RE Farnborough, to complete his Sapper training. Then he and ex-Harrogate colleagues (Terry Evans, Jack Pugh and Michael Martin) were posted to 42 Regt in Cyprus in 1958. Mick was a very accomplished hockey player and a member of arguably the strongest Army unit team on the island. He recalls beating the powerful, and previously undefeated, team from Royal Air Force Nicosia. He thought they were surprised to see a lot of squaddies climbing out of a 3-ton truck at their comparatively well-appointed camp (in comparison to our tents). They were certainly surprised when we won 3-1 (as he recalls). The cricket team he played in was not too dusty either, led by Captain Geoffrey Seaton who had played the game at first class level.

In 1961 Mick moved to JARIC at RAF Brampton and under Major Rushworth RE was involved in the setting up of "The Photogrammetric Section" later renamed the "Technical Support Squadron."

In the late 1960's Mick was posted to SMS Hermitage and was employed as a course instructor on the Air Survey wing. On retirement in 1978 he joined British Gas and later, the Electricity Board. Mick was also awarded a degree in Management by Lancaster University.

Mick had been our Branch treasurer for a number of years and then supported Tony Keeley in acting as the independent auditors of the Branch's accounts. Always an active member of the Branch with a great sense of humour he will be sadly missed.



No 14 Adv Svy Topo Course – 19 May 1969 to 31 October 1969
Mick Gowlett Course Instructor sitting in the centre

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Don Laurie

Don Laurie standing second from right

Don's wife let us know that he had passed away a year ago, having suffered from a brain tumour. Don was at AAC Chepstow group 61A with Jerry Baker and Taff Hemming and left there at the end of 1963. He later did a Tech 2 at SMS in 1966, and then went on to join 47 Sqn at Barton Stacey. *(Dave Whyborn)*

Chris Robbins

Chris (WO1) sitting on the left. Conversion Course - Lithographic Artist to Cartographic Draughtsman Aug/Sept 1970
(Note –We have just been informed that Geoff Hancock Standing back left passed away on 10th February 2020)

We have been advised by Ann Robbins (widow), that Chris sadly passed away on Boxing Day 2019.

Ann writes:

Chris thoroughly enjoyed all his army service in Survey. He joined as a boy the Army Apprentice School in Harrogate in February 1951 to 1954.

Entering the RE as a Sapper the first few months were spent at 9 TRRE in Farnborough on cadres and such like and he then went on to the SMS in Hermitage Newbury. He was lucky enough to have served with the Regiment and with 13, 14 and 84 Squadrons rising to the rank of WO1.

Chris was commissioned in 1974 going on to serve with 14 Squadron in Ratingen when they celebrated 150th Anniversary and back to Barton Stacey, both in the Regiment and with 13 Squadron before retiring in 1979. In 1975 Chris prepared the historical record of 14 Field Survey Squadron RE for the 150th Anniversary.

Leaving the service and living in Southampton he received all sorts of comment about joining Ordnance Survey but was quite happy to seek an alternative. He joined a small consultancy in Southampton, a part of which was engaged in providing drafts of Electronic Component Specifications for the Electronic Industry.

Taking the drafts Chris bought in the necessary equipment to produce camera ready copy, then printing and distributing. The capability to print soon opened the door to the commercial market and staff were drafted in to take this forward as a separate entity.

However, Chris was smitten by the small consultancy division of the company who were becoming more and more involved in Quality Assurance and Quality Management and this small division soon enlarged - writing and providing Quality Management Training and Lead Assessor training, always to a full complement of students on the courses.

As is the way in civvy-street, the big boys appeared showing a very firm interest in what the company was doing and how they were doing it! They wanted the successful organisation, in their field, out of the way!! As one of the three directors in the company, Chris was not keen to get swallowed up although buyers were keen to retain the identity of the company. However, the other two directors, quite q bit older than Chris, saw a good profit from all of the hard work that had been put in and a price for the company was agreed, and before long there was a requirement to move closer to London. Chris was certainly not keen on that so declared himself redundant and looked forward to an easier life.

Not to be unfortunately, as the difficulty to walk any small distance was a peculiar feeling, any strength in the legs was just not there. A trip to the doctor was called for and eventually, some weeks later, the problem was diagnosed a s a malformation of blood vessels in the spine, something which occurs in one in 8 million and it seemed he was the one in his lot! A spinal operation was necessary, but this affected the nerves in the lower half of the body, in which he had very little feeling from the waist down and movement became difficult. Sadly, this did not improve. Chris looked forward to the evening dinners arranged at Hermitage every February, but it became extremely difficult and eventually too much.

Chris sitting center as course instructor for No 3 Advanced Litho Artist (Maps)

Richard George (Tim) Holt

Tim Holt front right – on No 1 Basic Stereocomparator Course at SMS

James Butterworth and Andrew Thomas informed us that Tim died of a massive stroke on Sunday 29th December 2019, whilst on holiday in the Czech Republic with his wife Ada. Repatriation of Tim's body has taken a while as has the necessary paperwork.

Tim joined the army as an apprentice at Harrogate in early 1956 (Term 56A) and left in 1959. He was posted to ASLS R.A.F. Wyton and was there in 1962. He was then posted to 84 Svy Sqn Singapore in 1964 and was known to be in Sarawak in 1966. He then returned to the UK and posted back to R.A.F. Wyton where he stayed until he was discharged in 1968.

The funeral was held at Sawtry Parish Church 'All Saints' Sawtry, Hunts. PE28 5RD at 11:45 hrs. on Monday 2nd March 2020

Rob Traynor

Rob is sitting on the left - No 6 Advance Photo Tech Course Aug 68 – Feb 69

Rob was born on Christmas Day 1945 at Crawley. He was the middle of three sons and spent all his school years at Crawley until he joined the Army Apprentice College (AAC) Harrogate in 1960. He then moved to AAC Chepstow to undertake his training as a photo technician in the Royal Engineers. He was then posted to the School of Military Survey, Newbury to continue his training and then joined 13 Field Survey Squadron at Haslemere. In 1964 he married Ros prior to his posting to Aden. After a 2-year tour he returned to the SMS where he remained until 1969, when he left the Army in the rank of Sergeant. His civilian career started by using his photographic skills in the development of Concorde during its trails at Fairford. Following that he worked as a cameraman on Look North with BBC and then again with the BBC at Bristol. During this period, he and his family had settled in Wiltshire first at Cricklade then Wroughton. In 1977 he joined the Wiltshire Constabulary, achieving top cadet accolade, and retiring in 2003 as an Inspector. He maintained a keen interest in Rugby Union throughout his life playing for unit teams and Newbury Town.

He passed away, at home on 27th January 2020 and will be sadly missed by his loving wife, son (David), daughter (Leanne), his seven grandchildren and all who knew him. His Family are pleased to announce they have carried out his wishes that his body be donated for research. There was no funeral or memorial service. However, donations in Rob's memory to the Prospect Hospice, may be sent c/o Mead Family Funerals, 10 St John Road, Wroughton, Wiltshire, SN4 9ED

(*Ricky Braybrooke & Butch Batchelor*)

Ken Goodearl

Ken reading about Luxor in Bannister Fletcher, in Ismailia

Ken had lived well into his 90's and those that have read the recent newsletter will know of Ken's national service in 1948/9 with 42 Survey Engineer Regiment, when it formed for the first time in Egypt and, by his own admission, spent more time on leave than working. But he did keep a diary and some photos, a copy of the map he worked on etc., etc., and in writing his life history for his family he included a little about his time in Egypt. John Kedar had first contacted him following a chance encounter with Vanessa Lawrence CB (of OS fame) and thus Noel had written up Ken's notes for all of us to share

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