

SCHOOL OF MILITARY SURVEY ROYAL ENGINEERS

a guide for

New Arrivals

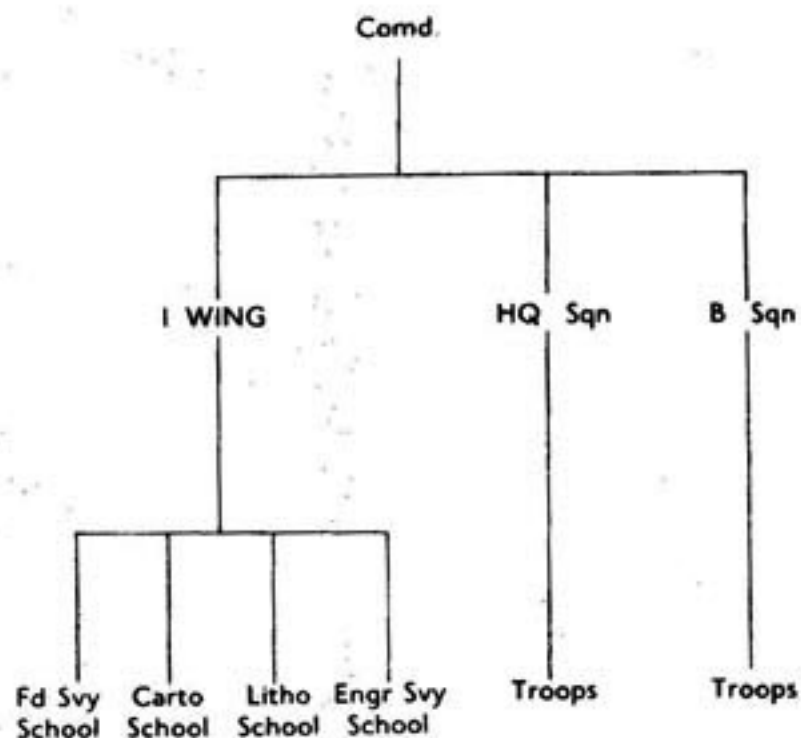
FEBRUARY 1955

This School exists to provide the Army with the skilled people who are needed for map making, an activity which is important in all armies, and which is the responsibility of the Corps of Royal Engineers. It is over two hundred years since the Army first started making accurate maps where none existed before, and in that time it has produced the first maps of many parts of the Commonwealth. Engineer officers and men were largely responsible for the origin and growth of the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain and the Survey of India, and they also made the first surveys in many countries. Wherever these maps are made, they have an important influence upon the opening-up and prosperity of the country concerned. Map making in the Army is first of all in preparation for any possible war, but it also helps many peaceful and useful activities.

You will now probably become part of this survey organisation. Before long you may be measuring angles, drawing lines, developing photographs, tending a machine, driving a truck or preparing a meal. Whatever you may have to do, remember that you belong to a body which has a great deal to be proud of.

Organisation

The School has a Commandant, who is a Lieutenant-Colonel of the Royal Engineers. Another Lieutenant-Colonel, the Chief Instructor is responsible for the Instructional Wing of the School where all technical survey training is done. But the School is not only a training establishment, it is also a military unit and has to organise pay, promotion, discipline, military training, leave and all the many other aspects of Army life. For these purposes, the School is divided into two Squadrons, H.Q. being very largely composed of the drivers, cooks, batmen and other members of the permanent staff, while B is the squadron to which all the survey learners are posted. The squadrons are each commanded by a Major. Other Majors are appointed as Senior Instructors for the Schools (sub-divisions of I Wing) which cater for each particular branch of survey training.



Your Troop

Every soldier in the School belongs to a Troop, and each Troop is commanded by an officer, and has a Troop Sergeant. If you want to apply for leave, or for a commission or for permission to do anything unusual, you must start by applying to your Troop Officer through an NCO. This is also where you start if you have a reasonable complaint to make.



The Pool

If you have come here to be trained in some branch of map-making, it may very probably be some time before your course begins, and you will find yourself in the Pool which provides manpower for the many essential jobs to be done around the camp. People who have finished their course, and are awaiting posting are also included in the Pool.

Pool duties are many and varied. You may find yourself working as an office runner, as a gardener, issuing coal and coke, looking after the School pigs or stoking the fires. These and many other jobs are absolutely essential if the unit is to run efficiently. Be prepared for anything if you are on pool.

The Working Week

If you are not on pool duties, you will very probably be doing technical training. This goes on during most of the week and sometimes entails going away from the School for a while in order to practise your trade in the field. Technical training sometimes goes on at dead of night, as with field astronomy, or in the middle of a river as with hydrographic survey, but most of it is done at the School during a normal working day.

On Wednesdays technical training stops short, and the Squadron Commanders step in with all the numerous military activities. Padres hour is held either on Wednesdays or on Thursday evenings. If you have to do a P E test or fire on the ranges, it is almost sure to be on a Wednesday. There is usually some kind of ceremonial or Adjutant's parade on Wednesday, while the Commandant's inspections of various parts of the School are usually held on Wednesday. If you have been put on an education class, this will be part of Wednesday's programme too. Recreational training is also squeezed into this very busy day.



Military Training



"Wednesday's child is full of woe"

Looking after yourself

In peacetime, and in Britain, the most important part of looking after yourself is to stay out of trouble. You must obey orders, and, quite apart from those issued by the NCOs whom you have with you most of the time, there are written orders being issued every day. Some of these may concern you. Make sure that you read School Orders, I Wing Orders and Squadron Orders. They are posted up daily at various points in the camp; the NAAFI, for example. Apart from this, make sure that whatever you do is being done in the right way. In the course of the centuries, the Army has usually managed to invent a good way of doing each of the various things which add up to a military life. If you stick to the approved pattern, then Life becomes easier for yourself as well as everyone else. There is still scope for the exercise of individuality.

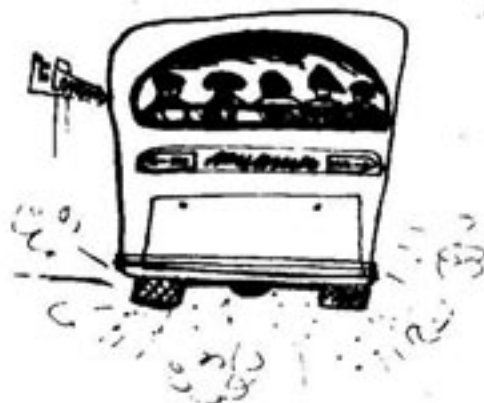


If you have a problem, or if you feel uncomfortable and not at all happy, try to do something about it. Sometimes a word to your Troop Sergeant may help. If there is nothing that he can do, then you have every right to ask to see your Troop Officer, your Squadron Commander, and, finally the Commandant; provided that your complaint is genuine. Complaints about food can be made to the Orderly Officer, or can be brought up at the Messing Meeting. The Pay Officer has special times when pay queries can be attended to. The golden rule for all complaints is to **DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.**

Weekends

Technical training on a free weekend ceases on Friday afternoon, and most people then get away on a 48 hour pass. These free weekends occur once in each calendar month, and if, for any reason, you are not allowed off, you will usually be given a 48 hour pass on some other weekend instead.

When any part of the School has done particularly good work, the Commandant allows them an extra 48 hour pass.



Very occasionally the whole School devotes part of the week-end to more elaborate military training.



Trades

These are the trades in which training is given at this School

Surveyor Trigonometrical

This is the chap with the theodolite, who also has to do a lot of calculating.

Surveyor Topographical

Uses a plane table and surveys from air photographs

Draughtsman Topographical

He draws the map from information given to him by others.

Photographer Cartographic

He uses a process camera.

Helio Worker

This is the man who makes the plates from which the map will be printed.

Photowriter

He makes alterations by hand to photographic plates.

Lithographic Draughtsman

The same as the last, but on zinc plates.

Lithographic Prover

He prepares and tests the plates for machine printing

Lithographic Machine Minder

* He is responsible for the machine which actually turns out the copies of the finished map.

Storeman Survey

Among other things, is concerned with cutting paper to size, producing grained plates and general map storage.

Draughtsman GD

Training is given in this trade to other parts of the Army besides the Royal Engineers. Draughtsmen GD look after Wall maps, adding detail, drawing traces etc.

The NAAFI

This contains a restaurant and the usual amenities. You can play snooker, table-tennis, darts or the piano. You can also watch the television set, borrow a library-book, have your hair cut or read School Orders. You are not expected to dress like this, but a minimum of shoes, shirt and trousers is insisted upon, even in hot weather.



Sport

There is a fair amount of organised sport in the School, mainly on Wednesdays and Saturdays. At any other time, however, it is quite possible to draw sports kit by going along to the Central Sports Store and signing for it. The playing fields are there for your use, just make certain that you are not operating to the public danger. Apart from the fields, there are tennis courts, a squash court and a basket-ball court available.



Going Sick

If you are not well, then you have to see the doctor. This is commonsense. It is also commonsense that if you have a slight headache or a cut finger you can get an aspirin tablet or a piece of plaster for yourself.

Education

There may be something that you are studying, or ought to be studying. There is a RAEC NCO permanently at the School, and he can help you, provided that you intend to help yourself.

Off-duty in Camp

Unless you become a permanent defaulter, you are bound to have a certain amount of spare time in camp. This may be spent in several different ways.

Clubs

There are several different clubs within the unit, catering for special interests. The exact ones operating at any one time depend upon the number of interested individuals that happen to be in the unit. The Camera Club has its own dark room and other facilities for members. The Music Club is building up a small collection of Long Playing Records.

If you want to know what the different clubs are doing, keep your eye on the notice-boards around the camp.



The Motor Cycle Club has a building where members may store their machines. Trials are held from time to time.

Your Living Accommodation

This place was originally built as an American hospital during the last war. Many of the buildings were not intended to last more than ten years and some of them are certainly not up to the standard which the Army would like to have. Rebuilding costs money, and it is the Treasury, not the Army, which decides when barracks can be rebuilt. One of these days we may get comfortable barrack-rooms with CENTRAL HEATING.



One day, we may get more amenities.

In the meantime, look after the gardens, bird-baths and pigeon lofts which have been erected by private enterprise.

Off-Duty Out of Camp

Whether you go out in civilian clothes,



or in uniform, please make sure you are tidy.
When you go out in uniform it must be worn correctly,
all the time.

Transport

Both Reading and Oxford are within range of this camp, but Newbury is much nearer, and, therefore, more patronised. If you want to get to Newbury, there is a kind of train service



mainly at useless times of the day. Most people go by bus, but this service is far from frequent, so it is as well to get to know the times. It is quite possible that all your friends will be travelling by the same bus so be prepared to walk or hitch-hike if necessary.



When you leave the School

After your training is completed, you will probably find yourself back in the pool for a while, impatiently waiting to hear what your posting is to be. You may go to one of the Survey units at home, or to almost any of the other military stations throughout the world. You may find yourself situated in a somewhat remote outpost, but you can be quite sure that when you come back you will declare loudly that you would not have missed it for anything. And that is what most people say about their career in the Army.



THE END