

A SHORT HISTORY OF 13 FIELD SURVEY SQUADRON ROYAL ENGINEERS

Notes.

(Transcribed from the “Souvenir Programme for the 150th Anniversary of the formation of 13 Field Survey Squadron Royal Engineers”)

Although not important, there are inconsistencies in the military writing presentation in this document. Maj, Major, Company, company, coy etc., as there are also in the 19 Squadron Souvenir Programme history.

THE EARLY YEARS

The first surveys carried out by military personnel were undertaken in the Highlands of Scotland in 1747, following the Jacobite risings of '45. The officers who carried out these surveys may be considered the pioneers of military map making. Control of the Artillery and Engineer branches of the Army was at that time vested in the Board of Ordnance. As a result of the Highland survey the Ordnance Survey was formed in 1791 with the task of carrying out a survey of the whole of Great Britain. Officers of the Royal Engineers were of course closely involved in this work, a situation which exists to this day.

In June 1824 the House of Commons sanctioned the trigonometrical survey of Ireland by the Ordnance Survey, and Major (later Colonel) Thomas Colby RE was appointed to superintend the work. Following a suggestion by Major William Reid, RE, Col Colby considered it would be desirable to employ men of the Royal Sappers and Miners to assist in the task. The Duke of Wellington, then Master General of the Ordnance, was approached, and on the 1st December 1824, His Grace obtained a Royal Warrant for the formation of a company of 62 NCOs and men, to be employed in the operations of the survey of Ireland.

The company, the first military survey unit, became the 13th (Survey) Company, Royal Sappers and Miners, and was at once organised at Chatham under the command of Major William Reid, R.E. The men, selected from members of the Corps at Chatham, were specially trained for their technical duties under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Charles Pasley R.E. who commanded the Royal Engineer Establishment at that station. After training, the first detachment on one NCO and twenty men moved to Ireland in March 1825 under command of Lieutenant Edward Vickers RE, and was reinforced a month later by the remainder of the company. Initially stationed at Mountjoy, Dublin the Company quickly moved to Dromore and the men were soon distributed in small sections to Antrim, Belfast, Coleraine, Dungiven and Londonderry.

The authorities were so convinced of the good sense of employing Sappers and Miners on this work that a further two companies each of 62 NCOs and men were formed for this work in Ireland; 14th (Survey) Company on 24 April 1825 and, 16th (Survey) Company in December 1825.

The Duke of Wellington continued to take a great interest in the survey of Ireland, and in 1827 the Board of Ordnance sanctioned an increase in the establishment of the survey companies of 29 privates each.

From the start Col Colby insisted on selecting only the ablest men for the survey companies. The rates of working pay for the men authorised by the warrants were limited to the three ordinary classes of 6d, 9d and 1s per day, but extraordinary powers were granted to Col Colby of awarding increased rates of up to 2s per day proportionate to attainments. The qualifications demanded of surveyors in the eight classes devised by Col Colby are set out in Connolly's History of the Royal Sappers and Miners and give some clue to the nature of the work carried out by the Company in Ireland.

Daily Rate	Class	
s. d.		
1 1	1 st	To be capable of surveying for content - flat country.
1 2	2 nd	Surveying the content - hilly country, including the use of the theodolite, taking the horizontal and vertical angles, as well as reducing the lines to the horizontal

		planes of the links on the arch.
1 3	3 rd	Competent to register angles and distances, and to make a content plot.
1 4	4 th	Able to compute areas and horizontal and vertical distances and triangles.
1 5	5 th	Able to lay out town lands or parishes for content with skill, so as to prevent confusion or unnecessary labour in the subsequent measurements.
1 6	6 th	Fully acquainted with every branch of content surveying, and capable of directing parties of content surveyors.
1 7) 1 8) 1 9)	A	Competent to survey and plot roads etc.
1 10) 1 11) 2 0)	B	Competent to draw plans

The survey parties working in Ireland at the outset were not entirely military, as many local civilian surveyors were also employed. The experience of most of these civilians was of surveys of estates of limited size, performed without hurry and with few assistants. Col Colby on the other hand in framing his instructions for the survey of Ireland, had in mind the rapid survey of a large country with much more accuracy than had hitherto been the practice. It was soon discovered that it took less time to train Sappers, who had none of the preconceived notions of the local surveyors, and who were brought up by military discipline to obey. It was also established that the progress on the survey made by the sappers under military control was greater than that of the civilian surveyors with a commensurate reduction in cost. Hence the survey of Ireland became essentially military in its organisation and control, the Royal Engineer officers being directors of districts and large parties, and the NCOs of the Sappers and Miners the controllers of small parties.

The outlay on the survey for the year 1827 was £37,000, of which more than a third went on the salaries paid to the Officers. By 1841 when the annual expenditure had more than doubled, the amount paid to superintending officers had been reduced to one twelfth the total. Thus is demonstrated the increasingly important part played by the sappers as their technical efficiency increased.

By December of 1842, the survey of Ireland at a scale of 6 inches to 1 mile was virtually completed and the Sapper strength in Ireland was much reduced by withdrawing the companies for use on the Survey of Great Britain. Approximately fifty men were left in Ireland for revision work and in the engraving office at Mountjoy. 13th (Survey) Company were however to return to Ireland many times in the years ahead.

From 1825 to 1915, 13th (Survey) Company was continually involved in the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain and is known to have been based at the following locations.

1825	1838	Many Irish locations
1838	1839	Portarlinton
1839	1942	Cork
1842	1844	Skipton
1844	1846	Dublin
1846	1847	Liverpool
1847	1852	Dublin
1852	1853	Londonderry
1853	1854	Belfast
1854	1860	Dublin
1860	1861	Edinburgh
1861	1871	Dublin
1872		London
1872	1873	Chester
1873	1878	Inverness
1878		Norwich
1878	1879	Derby
1879	1882	Edinburgh

1882	1900	Clifton
1900	1903	Bristol
1903	1909	Clifton
1909		Southampton

During the early years the company provided men for many boundary commissions and other surveys. Participation has not been definitely established, but it is very likely that personnel from the company took part in the following early survey tasks in which it is known that surveyors of the Sappers and Miners played a role:-

1825	1826	Sierra Leone and Gold Coast
1834		Triangulation of Lancashire, Cumberland including the connection to the Isle of Man and part of Scotland.
1835	1839	Triangulation West and North of Scotland.
1839	1844	South Australia
1839		Maine, USA (boundary dispute)
1840		Triangulation Northern England
1843		Boundary Commission North America

Some personnel from 13th (Survey) Company Royal Engineers were detached to serve in South Africa during the Boer War.

THE GREAT WAR 1914-1918

At the start of World War I it was anticipated that the small British expeditionary Force on the continent of Europe would be working under favourable conditions in developed country which would have already been mapped, The BEF took with it to France only two small HQ survey staffs and the printing Company RE. As the war developed this was found to be totally inadequate and the survey service expanded; towards the end of the war there was a Field Survey Battalion with each Army.

Early in the war , before this expansion took place, 13 Survey Company RE was remobilised at Pembroke on 13 April 1915 as a Base Park Company RE (Mediterranean) totalling 78 personnel. Later, in April 1915, the company under command of Major E.N. Mozley RE, embarked at Plymouth and sailed for Alexandria, arriving two weeks later. On 16 May 1915 the company re-embarked for Gallipoli, landing on “W” Beach, Cape Helles, on 19th May 1915. Shortly afterwards Maj Mozley was posted as CRE to an Australian Division and Maj P.H. Campbell RE assumed command on 1 June 1915.

The company was employed mainly in the lighterage of equipment from store ships in the bay, but enemy shellfire and submarine activity necessitated moving the Base Park first to Imbros and finally to Mudros. It is recorded that a small detachment of 12 men left on “W” Beach until August 1915 suffered 6 killed and 3 wounded from shellfire. At Mudros a RE Pier was built in August 1915 and this greatly helped the unit’s task of boat ferrying stores to Helles, Imbros, ANZAC and Suvla beaches. During this time the unit strength was greatly depleted due to sickness, falling at one time to 42 all ranks.

On 29 January 1916 the company disembarked at Alexandria from Mudros and Lt W.M. Jennings RE who had been with the company at Gallipoli assumed command. The Base Park was established at Alexandria and the company now greatly reinforced was kept very busy moving stores by ship and rail. During February and March 1916 the average daily handling of material was 885 tons, this was made possible by the provision of large working parties from the Egyptian Labour Corps.

An April 1916 a Workshop of 2 Officers and 52 men was added to the establishment, this was kept extremely busy providing base workshop facilities at Alexandria.

Major Jennings handed over the company to Captain D.A. Law RE in October 1917; he commanded briefly until the arrival of Major W.E. Francis RE on 19 November 1917. Maj Francis relinquished command in October 1919, by which time the company strength was gradually being run down; the name of his successor is not recorded.

The company remained at Alexandria as a Base Park until 6 April 1920 when the war diary closed and it is assumed that the company disbanded on that date.

1920-1929

At the end of the Great War the field survey units which had developed during the war were disbanded and the regular personnel returned to duty with the Ordnance Survey. The Ordnance Survey annual reports show that 13 Survey Company RE existed between 1920 and 1929 and was based at York.

At that time the members of the company were no doubt well scattered on survey work in the north of England and only came together for their annual military training. The report for 1925-26 records the excellent range results at annual camp of 13 Company when every member passed as a first class shot.

In 1929 a re-organisation of the military element of the Ordnance Survey took place with the result that 13 Survey Company lost its identity. All trained military surveyors were absorbed into the Survey Battalion at Southampton.

At this time all survey recruits received their basic military training at the Training Battalion RE at Chatham. They then joined 19 Survey Company at Fort Southwick near Fareham where they received their technical training, before passing on to the Survey Battalion for work with the Ordnance Survey. 19 Survey Company also ran courses, both technical and military, for personnel of the Survey Battalion.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

On the 1st September 1939 the mobilisation scheme for the RE Survey Service was put into effect at Fort Southwick. The plan involved the formation of three field survey companies and two Survey Training Units, from the men provided by the Survey Battalion, 19 Survey Company and recalled reservists.

One of the companies formed was 1 (Corps) Field Survey Company, but this title was soon changed to 13 (Corps) Field Survey Company. On 2 September 1939 the company, under the command of Capt H. Carrington-Smith RE, paraded at Fort Southwick and marched to nearby Fort Wallington which was to be the scene of bust embarkation preparations. In less than three weeks the company gathered together its oddly assorted establishment of vehicles and equipment, carried out familiarisation training, and was ready to sail for France with the 1st Corps.

On 20 September 1939 the company consisting of 6 officers and approximately 110 men landed at Cherbourg and by the 8th October was established at Brebieres where it was billeted for the next six , Topographical, Drawing and Printing. The Topo Section was employed on the verification of trig lists, the adjustment of values, and in providing support to RA Survey units. The drawing and printing sections were mainly employed on the revision of existing maps and the overprinting of military information. At this time the Printing Section was equipped with two hand-fed machines mounted in trailers, the trailers being towed by Scammel tractors obtained from Artillery sources complete with drivers.

The whole of the 1st Corps requirement of 1:25,000 maps was printed by the company; in one day in January 1940 as many as 12,000 sheets were produced. All this was done during a winter when the water was freezing on dampers and plate, until glycerine was added to the water and electric heaters were eventually obtained.

At the end of December 1939 Maj Carrington-Smith left the company to attend a Staff College course and Capt H.C. O'H Moore RE arrived to assume command, he was to remain with the company throughout three very busy years.

In early May 1940 the German offensive began, and on 11 May 1940 the company left Brebieres and began a series of moves which eventually led them to the beach at La Panne just east of Dunkirk. At the start of the offensive the topo sections were attached to 1 Survey Regiment RA for a task on the Saar front. The section was recalled and made a forced march across the line of the German Panzer thrust in time to rejoin the Company for the withdrawal through Belgium.

Throughout the withdrawal the company continued to carry out printing tasks to keep pace with the rapidly changing situation. The last emergency printing task was carried out on 26 May, on this occasion the helio work was carried out by exposing the plates to the sun and developing in a nearby stream with apparently good results. Early on the 28th May, whilst at Furnes only a few miles from the coast, orders were received to destroy all material and equipment which may have proved useful to the enemy. Later that day the unit was ordered to move to Nieuport to assist in the defence of the left flank.

Most bridges over the canal had been prepared for demolition, but the leads from the charges on the railway bridge were found to run to the East! This was quickly rectified and the exploder moved to the western bank. 2Lt A.J.D. Halliday RE with two NCOs was sent to blow the bridge and as most had been overcharged the results were good.

Meanwhile the enemy had taken up defensive positions allotted to it and by 1700 hours was well dug in. Firing was heard from a position half a mile in front. 2Lt Halliday was sent forward to reconnoitre and discovered some gunners and two or three armoured cars holding the canal and two bridges as yet unblown to the east of the town. This information was passed to HQ and the company was ordered to advance its posts to the east edge of the town to hold the east branch of the canal. A reconnoitre by the OC proved this move to be impractical owing to the position of the advance enemy troops. 2Lt Halliday volunteered to go forward with two men to blow the bridges but found the enemy already across and was unable to get near enough.

During the morning of 29 May there was some skirmishing to the left front, with some mortar fire. That afternoon an attack commenced on the right and the troops on the company's right began to withdraw without orders. Fortunately the attack did not develop and the withdrawal stopped. At 1700 hours the unit was relieved by Royal Fusiliers of 11th Inf Bde later staged a counter attack that evening.

Early on 30 May orders were received to withdraw to the beach; by 0400 hours the company arrived at La Panne and were ordered to wait in the reception camp until boats became available. The company had an uneventful wait on the beach until embarking on HMS Basilisk at 0400 hours on 31st May. Docking in Dover at about 0930 hours personnel were soon on their way by train to reception centres throughout the south of England. Casualties sustained during the withdrawal were 1 died of wounds and 8 wounded. For his action during the withdrawal 2Lt A.J.D. Halliday was later awarded the Military Cross.

By 6 June 1940 some 75% of the Company had found their way to Fort Southwick, the rest returned in twos and threes, and by 16 June the company was complete. New arms, clothing and equipment were issued by the Survey Training Centre and on 17 June the unit moved by special train to Swindon Hall Camp at Cheltenham.

In early July 1940 the unit moved to Northern Command and was billeted at Tadcaster in the house and grounds of "Inholmes". The printing section was put into lodgings in York and operated in Ben Johnson's printing works using one of the firm's machines. For the next few months the topo section was kept busy on surveys for new coast defence and anti-aircraft batteries at sites throughout the north of England; initially travelling in a fleet of hired transport consisting of 6 private cars and two lorries.

By early 1941 the unit had been re-equipped with vehicles including two printing vehicles, two photo-mechanical vehicles, and evidence of Marshall Aid in the form of two left hand drive Dodge 3-ton trucks.

The company was warned for overseas service and by early April 1941 all preparations were complete including the issue of tropical kit. A series of frustrating delays now occurred, the vehicles and equipment were shipped at the end of May and an advance party was sent off at the beginning of June. Due to lack of convoy space the departure of the main party was constantly delayed, and without equipment it could carry out no technical work. It even had to move into tents in the grounds of "Inholmes" to vacate the buildings for the incoming 521 Field Survey Company; having at one stage been threatened with a move to the Workhouse at Ouseburn.

At the end of August the unit eventually moved into some rather unsavoury billets at Horsforth near Leeds and in September a decision was taken to re-equip the unit it not now being required overseas. News was received that the stores and advance party arrived safely in the Middle East, a sad loss to the Company.

The process of collecting equipment and vehicles, together with tasks for Northern Command, and training, occupied the unit for the remainder of 1941. In January 1942 the company was again warned for service overseas, and after a further series of delays and postponements eventually sailed on 19 June 1942 aboard HMT F13, together with No. 3 Map Photographic Section who were attached.

Following an uneventful voyage the unit arrived in Durban, South Africa on 20 July 1942 and spent five weeks in the Imperial Forces Transshipment Camp at Clairwood near Durban, sailing again on 24 August. On 6 September the company disembarked at Suez and entrained for Gaza to be met by a transport column for the road journey to Hebron in Jordan, which was to be used as a base until 17 October 1942. During these few weeks the unit came under the control of DAD Survey Palestine, carrying out surveys for anti-aircraft sites in Palestine and the compilation of two 1:250,000 maps of Trans-Jordan.

On 18 October the main party arrived at Souk El Gharb in Syria where it took over from 517 Field Survey Company. The unit was within 84 Sub Area of the Ninth Army, and it was under the technical control of DD Survey Ninth Army. During this period it carried out plane table and air surveys of areas in Syria, and was involved in producing 1:50,000 and 1:25,000 mapping.

On 17 November 1942 Maj H.C. O'H Moore left the company to take up command of 512 Fd Svy Coy RE. He had seen the unit through a very active period, and since December 1939 had experienced almost three complete changes of the other officers of the unit. Capt J.R. Hyatt assumed command until the arrival of Major G.S. Burrows RE on 29 November.

Mid April 1943 saw the unit moving by road to the survey camp at Abassia near Cairo, to be joined there a few weeks later by the topo section who had remained behind to complete a task. In Egypt the unit under control of GHQ Middle East was soon heavily engaged, together with three other survey companies, in the production of mapping for the forthcoming invasion of Sicily (Operation Husky). The company was to take part in this operation and the time at Abassia was used to re-equip and re-organise. For the operation the organisation of the unit became:

Recce Party	1 Offr	3 ORs	1 veh
Topo Sections	1 Offr	34 ORs	8 x 15 cwt vehs 1 x Bantam motor cycle
Main Body	4 Offrs	110 ORs	26 vehs including generators

On 27 May 1943 the company came under command of the 12th Army and in early June sailed to Malta where it spent a month waiting for the operation to commence. 'D' Day was 10 July and on this day the 12th Army was redesignated 8th Army, coming under command of General Montgomery. The main body of the company landed from an LST and an LCT at Syracuse, Sicily, on 16 July 1943. In Sicily it operated in support of 13 Corps being engaged in artillery survey (coincidentally with 13 Survey Regiment RA) and printing tasks.

On 21 September the unit crossed to Italy by the shortest route, Messina to Reggio. During the next five days it moved 450 miles in stages over inferior roads to Mellitto without any serious breakdowns to the vehicles. During September 1943 the unit moved from one location to another ten times. The reproduction section printed each day they were not on the road and in 20 working days produced 1,209,000 impressions, averaging 60,500 in a 24 hour day. Twenty four hours working was only possible by using non survey personnel as machine minders' assistants; the figures speak well of both machines and operators.

In mid October 1943 the unit moved to Biccari near Lucera where it found itself located close to 517 Fd Svy Coy RE commanded by Maj B. St. G. Irwin RE. At Biccari the company was visited by Maj Gen F.W. de Guinand, Chief of Staff 8th Army, who expressed his admiration for the excellent work

done by the company. The drawing section was busy at this period on the revision of 1:100,000 and 1:50,000 mapping. The topo sections were detached on artillery survey and working on the conversion of new Italian secondary trig. The weather became extremely bad and roads became impassable forcing the topo sections to make use of locally procured mules and donkeys.

On 10 December 1943 the unit moved to a new location in a monastery 2 miles east of Casalbordino. The monastery buildings provided all the technical offices and 60% of the sleeping accommodation. Three months were spent there, the topo sections being 'at home' for a rest and refit for much of the time. A reproduction section from 12 Polish Corps Fd Svy Coy was attached for some weeks to gain experience under field conditions.

During this period on the east coast of Italy the Company was in direct support of 5 Corps. About mid March 1944 the unit ceased to be 8th Army Troops and came under command of HQ Allied Forces in Italy. On 29 March the unit moved into school buildings at Mugnano di Napoli, 5 miles north of Naples; the luxury of these buildings was fully appreciated. At this time the unit took delivery of 2 new Foden printing lorries and 2 new Foden photo mech vehicles. The pointers and draughtsmen were exceptionally busy for the next two months.

On 5 June 1944 the unit left Mugnano and moved to Castrocielo where it again came under DD Survey 8th Army. It subsequently moved to Orvieto on 19 June where it was located in the Italian Aeronautical College. Map distribution to the steadily advancing Army was making great call on the unit's ageing transport. The almost continual use of cargo vehicles resulted in an unusual number of breakdowns, and with vehicles being sentenced without replacement a difficult situation arose.

On 9 July 1944 the unit once again had a change of masters, leaving the 8th Army and returning to the operational control of AFHQ. On the same date it moved to Arzano, 4 miles north of Naples, and occupied the village school in conjunction with 516 Corps Fd Svy Coy. The buildings had previously been occupied by 19 Army Fd Svy Coy before they moved on to Rome.

The special nature of the work of both companies at Arzano necessitated extensive security precautions. Reinforced double apron fences, barker war dogs, and extra guards were introduced. All personnel were confined to camp for a period of five weeks except for organised outings. The purpose of the precautions were the preparations being carried out by the two units for the invasion of Southern France. Security was not relaxed until three days after the commencement of the operation.

On 1 September 1944 the company moved to quarters within Maddaloni Flour Mills near Caserta, another location it was to share with 516 Coy. The accommodation was good, all being housed in buildings; the company remained at Maddaloni throughout the remainder of the war. The period saw many changes in personnel, the unit being used by AFHQ as a pool to reinforce other Survey units. Personnel were also posted to the UK on the grounds of long service overseas (Python Repatriation Scheme) and a UK leave scheme (LIAP) was commenced.

The 13 October 1944 saw the unit redesignated 13 Fd Svy Coy RE, dropping the "Corps" title. A change which was welcomed as much mail had been misdirected to 13 Corps Area.

In November 1944 an officer and two surveyors were detached to 310 Bomber Group of the US Army Air Force in Corsica. This detachment which was later increased by another 4 surveyors was based at Chisonaccia, it was engaged on computation of essential geodetic data and instrument settings for the 'Shoran' Radar Navigation System. The detachment returned in April 1945 but was immediately sent off again to 'H' Computing Unit RE at Fano.

On 16 December 1944 Brig M. Hotine the Director of Military Survey, accompanied by Brig R Llewellyn Brown D Survey AFHQ, visited the unit.

During February and March 1945 an officer and 4 surveyors were employed on surveys of Radar sites in the region of Rabat, French Morocco.

The early months of 1945 were a busy time for the repro section who were producing mapping of Yugoslavia and Austria.

VE Day on 8 May 1945 was celebrated by a theatre holiday on the following day. In the days ahead dances were held by the various messes, the first for a very long time.

On 23 May 1945 Maj G.S. Burrows RE left the unit on posting to UK under the Python Repatriation Scheme after 4 ½ years service overseas. He handed over command to Maj W.G. Wookey RE who had lately been DAD Survey HQ Land Forces Greece.

Between 29 June and 5 July 1945 No. 1 Survey Computing Unit under the command of Maj A.J.D. Halliday MC RE was attached to the Company prior to transfer to the UK. The interesting point in this was the future direct link between the units which was to be forged in 1950.

During August and September the topo sections maintained a detachment at Reggio di Calabria in South Italy on an air photo trig identification task. Difficulty was experienced in supplying and maintaining contact with the detachment in an area where the Italians were less than friendly; this was demonstrated by several destroyed bridges. VJ Day on 15 August was celebrated by a holiday on 17 August.

On 15 September 1945 Maj Wookey left on release from the Army under Class 'B'. Maj J.R. Hyatt RE arrived from 19 Coy after UK leave to assume command.

In October 1945 news was received that the company had been nominated for transfer to the Middle East, from then until the end of the year the process of sorting out personnel for the new company went ahead. Only personnel with sufficient residual overseas service and under Age Service Group 33 being retained for the MEF Company. Of the old 13 Coy only 3 Offrs and 30 Ors were eligible for the new 13 Coy out of a total strength of 131 all ranks.

On 25 October 1945 Spr Bartlett of the Company was admitted to hospital with infantile paralysis and 6 men who had been direct contacts were strictly isolated. Spr Bartlett died on 27 October 1945. The isolation of contacts lasted over two weeks and an intensive disinfection campaign took place.

Maj Hyatt left the unit on 19 November and Maj the Hon J.A. Adderley RE arrived from 'B' Air Survey Liaison Section to assume command.

The War Diary closed with the company warned to move to the Middle East during mid January 1946.

1946 - 1948

The exact date of arrival of 13 Field Survey Company in the Middle East has not been established. It is known, however, that Maj W.E.J. Rees RE was in command from January to April 1946 and that the unit was engaged on the revision of 1:20,000 Palestine maps. Major Rees had been second in command of the unit when it left Italy. Middle East Land Forces Survey Service reports for the period show that Maj N.H. Stansfield RE commanded the unit between May 1946 and October 1946.

In November 1946 Maj W.N. Morris MC RE assumed command without a handover and at that time the company was located in Aller Camp on the Bethlehem to Hebron road. The work being carried out included map revision and the production of two 1:250,000 sheets of areas in Trans Jordan. It was during Maj Morris's time as OC that the unit title changed and the company became a squadron.

October 1947 saw another change of command when Major Morris handed over to Major E.G. Wise RE.

The following extract from the monthly report of HQ MELF Survey Service for July 1948 gives some clue to the activities of the topo surveyors.

“The most important event of the month was the conquering of Jebel Ram by 1 Topo Troop of 13 Squadron. It is almost certain that this is the first time the highest point has been reached by Europeans, or possibly by anyone. The climb would have been impossible without the help of the local sheikh named Hamdan, he was rewarded with money and a rifle (not from Army sources). The time spent on the ascent has been well worth-while, excellent figures are now possible in the chain which is being rapidly pushed east to Jebel Tubeiq. Jebel Ram is a hill famous for its remarkable shape and

colouring. An excellent description is given in the "Seven Pillars of Wisdom" by Lawrence who was tremendously impressed by it."

It is thought that the unit under Major Wise moved to Egypt some time in early 1948. Authority was given in July 1948 by GHQ MEF for the disbandment of 13 Fd Svy Sqn RE and this took place at Fayid on 31 August 1948 when the personnel of the squadron were absorbed into 42 Survey Engineer Regiment, at that time commanded by Lt Col Belfield RE.

1950 - 1964

13 Field Survey Squadron RE was reformed at Tolworth in, as far as can be determined, April 1950. No. 1 Survey Computing Unit RE had moved to Tolworth from Bushy Park sometime in 1949, and it was this unit, which redesignated, formed the nucleus of the squadron. Maj C. St. A. Wylie RE was in command, and a year later in April 1951 he moved the unit to Fernhurst Camp, near Haslemere in Surrey. In this particularly pleasant location the squadron was to remain for close on 13 years.

Maj E.H.T. Silva RE assumed command in August 1953 and in turn handed over to Capt E.X. Halliday RE in July 1956. Since arriving at Fernhurst the unit had been involved in many field survey and map production tasks. The main role in the summer months however was the training of the Army Emergency Reserve survey units. The squadron was also responsible for all Survey Service recruiting displays. The late summer of 1956 saw the Suez Crisis and the squadron became closely involved in the survey support provided for the operation.

Maj W.L. Covington RE commanded the unit from January 1957 to August 1959, during this period field survey detachments were sent to Cyprus, the Arabian Peninsula, British North Borneo, the Seychelles Islands and Christmas Island. The establishment was increased in June 1958 by one Captain and 10 Ors for the geodetic surveys necessary for 'Operation Emily', the installation of Thor Guided Missile sites. The task was to continue until September 1962 when the weapons became obsolescent.

In August 1959 Maj W.W. Ker RE took over command to be followed in August 1960 by Maj E.X. Halliday MBE RE. The unit continued in its role of providing survey parties for classified and special tasks in UK. In 1961 the squadron assumed responsibility for producing the indexes for the Army Map and Chart Catalogue, this was to continue through 1962 and 1963.

Maj D.P.S. Wilson MBE RE assumed command of the squadron in April 1962. Early in 1963 a troop was sent to Kenya to carry out surveys for a large land settlement scheme and demarcation of a regional boundary. The troop was located at Kinangop and the survey covered approximately 50,000 acres.

In January 1964 the unit left Fernhurst Camp and moved to Aden. The establishment of the squadron was revised and consisted of 5 Officers and 92 other ranks.

1964 - 1967

The squadron arrived at Falaise Camp, Little Aden, in January 1964 and moved from there to Normandy Lines, Khormaksar, in August 1964, where until its return to the United Kingdom in June 1967, it provided mapping and general survey support for operations within Middle East Command, as well as completing survey commitments for the Ministry of Defence. Maj Wilson handed over command of the unit to Maj E.W. Barton MBE RE in August 1965.

The principal field survey tasks consisted of second order traverses from Ethiopia through Perim Island and along the South Arabian coast as far as Riyan. Traverses were also extended northwards into the Radfan Mountains and the Beihan State, and the combined topographic troops spent two seasons traversing in the Dhofar Province of the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, covering an area of 25,000 square miles. Other tasks included assisting the U.S. Army Map Service in their satellite tracking projects, providing gravity, astronomical and magnetic surveys in South Arabia, carrying out scale checks on the existing Trucial Coast Triangulation, boundary surveys at Buraimi Oasis, survey attachments for the Combined Services Expedition to Socotra, and miscellaneous control and large scale surveys in Bahrain, Masirah Island, Sharjah, Yas Island and Aden. A topographical troops was deployed to the Radfan during the operations there to supply height control for essential mapping.

The reproduction work of the Squadron included the compilation of new maps, both at large scale and for town plans, the production of air photo mosaics, the reprinting of existing maps to maintain stocks, and the provision of overprints for operations, boundaries and restricted areas.

The main party of the squadron left Aden by air at 24 hours' notice on 29 June 1967.

1967 - 1974

On returning from Aden the Squadron was located in 'B' Camp Barton Stacey in the accommodation which it still occupies. It continued as an independent unit until 4 March 1968 when it came fully under command of 42 Survey Engineer Regiment, although remaining on a separate establishment.

A parade was held on 27 October 1967 to commemorate the return of the Squadron from South Arabia. The reviewing officer, Brig B. St. G. Irwin, D Mil Svy, presented Commander-in-Chief's Commendation to the following:

Capt A.K. Butt RE For services to Map Production in South Arabia from September 1965 to May 1967.

Cpl C.R. Osborn For services to Field Survey during the Combined Services Expedition to Socotra from March to May 1967.

Cpl P.K. Foster

LCpl W.R. Matthew

Maj J.A. Underwood RE assumed command of the unit in November 1967.

At a parade on 4 March 1968 Lt Gen Sir John Mogg KCB, CBE, DSO, GOC Southern Command, presented the British Empire Medal to Cpl C.R. Osborn for his excellent overall service in the Middle East.

Following the settling in period at Barton Stacey the unit was soon committed to technical tasks. A large levelling task was completed in four months between September 1967 and January 1968 which involved heighting over 23,000 points on the main runway at Boscombe Down, the data being required for trials affecting the undercarriage of the Concorde aircraft. Work to geodetic standards was completed in the spring and autumn of 1968 fixing the positions of Loran C Aerials in the Shetlands. The air surveyors were engaged in the compilation of 13 sheets of Muscat and Trucial States town plans, and the printers had a full programme of reprints in hand.

A detachment was sent to Australia in May 1968 for 6 months to assist the Royal Australian Survey Corps in their mapping programme of Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Maj C.N. Thompson RE assumed command during 1969. From April to September 1969 a detachment of 1 officer and 10 surveyors worked in Nova Scotia providing mapping control for the Canadian Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Four surveyors were detached for four months from June 1970 for altimeter heighting work in West Kalimantan in conjunction with the Royal Australian Survey Corps and the Indonesian Army.

In September 1970 Maj J.S. Himbury RE assumed command to be followed in October 1971 by Capt R.P. Paul RE. During 1971 overseas detachments were sent to the following locations:

May 1971 1 officer and 3 surveyors to the Trucial States for 2nd Order Astro Azimuths.

June 1971 3 surveyors to Anguilla for map revision work.

September 1971 1 officer and 11 surveyors to Jamaica for survey work during Ex Calypso Hop.

A party of 2 officers, 15 surveyors and 18 support personnel spent six weeks from February to April 1972 detached to Military Advisory Team Gulf. The task was to carry out a large scale survey in the Diba area and to provide control for nine 1:50,000 maps.

With the introduction of a new establishment the Squadron became an integral part of 42 Survey Engineer Regiment on 26 November 1971. At the official amalgamation parade held on 16 March 1972 the Reviewing Officer was Colonel G.A. Neale, a former Commanding Officer of 42 Survey Engineer Regiment. On this parade the Squadron flag was symbolically handed over.

In August 1972 Maj R.B. McGuire took command.

A major repair programme for the troop semi-trailers was carried out in 1971-72, the return of these vehicles saw an increase in tactical exercises. The Squadron exercised in Germany on Ex Barletta during September 1973 and Ex Dominate XV in May 1974. The Squadron has been involved in the deployment of rapid map printing techniques and maintains tactical rapid printing teams and vehicles.

Maj McGuire retired from the Service in October 1974 and command was assumed by Maj M. St. G. Irwin RE.