

NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF 517 FIELD SURVEY COMPANY R.E.

1. INTRODUCTION.

It is believed that there are no detailed “official” unit histories for the Field Survey Companies raised in the second world war. It is now perhaps doubtful if any will be compiled. For some of the companies, brief anecdotal souvenir histories were produced towards the end of the war using the cartographic and photographic skills and mobile printing resources of the units.

Hopefully, the following notes on various sources of historical material will serve in lieu of a unit history until the compilation of one is addressed, if ever.

There are four obvious sources of historical material : -

- a. Brigadier A.B. Clough’s monograph “Maps and Survey”, H.M.S.O., 1952.
- b. References, mainly war diaries, held in the National Archives at Kew.
- c. Anecdotal souvenir histories produced by the units.
- d. Personal accounts or reminiscences and correspondence regarding the same.

Notes on a-d above are at paragraphs 2-5 below. Anyone wishing to add to these notes or to suggest improvements of corrections is invited to contact the Defence Surveyors’ Association at www.defencesurveyors.org.uk or : -

Defence Surveyors’ Association, c/o Royal School of Military Survey, Denison Barracks, Hermitage, Berks, RG18 9TP.

2. NOTES FROM “MAPS AND SURVEY” BY BRIGADIER A.B. CLOUGH, H.M.S.O., 1952.

For each theatre of war Brigadier Clough describes the historical background and the strategical and military considerations followed by the survey planning and an account of the phases of the campaign including the survey involvement. These are followed by sections on the maps and map production, triangulation and field surveys, aerial photography and survey and map supply and distribution. For anyone interest in military survey in general or survey unit histories in world war two “Maps and Survey” should be consulted. Notes towards unit histories have been extracted from “Maps and Survey” and these are shown below, sometimes in full, sometimes in brief.

Since these notes were made, “Maps and Survey” has been scanned by DSA and is now available on the DSA website. The notes below may still however provide an “at a glance” summary of the unit’s involvement in world war two.

For 517 Field Survey Company R.E. the index in Brigadier Clough’s “Maps and Survey” gives : -

Theatre	Pages
Greece	54, 55, 487, 495
Home Forces	37
Italy	300, 301.
Middle East	56-58, 65-67, 88, 129, 132, 269, 273, 536.
Palestine	84, 132.
Sicily	70, 499, 503.
Torch	269, 273.

At the beginning of January, 1941 there were nine Field Survey Companies under Home Forces control and they were located in the commands as shown below :-

Southern Command	No. 519 (just formed) No. 516 (with 5 Corps)
Eastern Command	No. 14 (ex B.E.F.) No. 1 Canadian (with Canadian Corps)
Northern Command	No. 13 (ex B.E.F.) No. 521 (just formed)
Western Command	No. 517 No. 520 (just formed)
Southern Command (Clough page 37)	No. 518 (just formed)

Survey Organization in the Middle East (June, 1941).

....

517 (Corps) Field Survey Company R.E. (less detachments under command Desert Force).
(Clough 56)

Western Desert.

514 (Corps Field Survey Comnay R.E. (less detachments) was at Matruh carrying out large scale surveys. One printing section and details of 514 Field Survey Company, plus one printing and drawing section of 517 Field Survey Company, were at the Alexandria drawing office. Two topographical sections of the mobile echelon of 512 Field Survey Company were in the El Alamein area engaged in topographical surveys of that area. The sections were later transferred to 517 Field Survey Company to make the latter up to strength for its move to Palestine.

Alexandria drawing office.

Supervised by 514 Field Survey Company under the control of A.D. Survey Desert Force. Printing was carried out by detachments from 514 and 517 Field Survey Companies.

(Clough 57)

Survey units in Palestine.

517 Field Survey Company, after being re-equipped and made up to strength, was transferred to Palestine in July, 1941.

(Clough 58)

Opening of British offensive at El Alamein.

.....
The Survey units operating with Eighth Army were 46 (South African) Survey Company and 517 Field Survey Company R.E. The field section personnel were trained in resection methods by night from fixed vertical searchlights, the idea being to determine the position of units moving forward during the battle in desert country where there were very few landmarks to aid the normal methods of identification of position. Survey parties accompanied the leading infantry brigades on the opening attack, but the method outlined above did not meet with much success as the searchlights were far back, and the formations to whom the survey parties were attached did not seem to know how best to make use of these skilled surveyors. The clouds of dust and sand which arose as a result of gun-blasts and shell explosions soon enveloped the whole battle area in such a thick fog that it is doubtful whether the vertical beams could have been seen even if the searchlights had been placed very much further forward.

(Clough 65)

Amongst other tasks, 517 Field Survey Company undertook the survey of the wrecked ships in Tobruk Harbour, in conjunction with the Fleet Hydrographic officer. This unit also did a re-survey of part of the Egypt-Libya frontier, where the existing 1/50,000 maps were little better than rough sketch maps.

(Clough 66)

Eighth Army.

Survey Directorate.

46 (South African) Survey Company S.A.E.C.

517 (Corps) Field Survey Company R.E.

13 Field Survey (Map) Depot R.E.

(Clough 67)

.....
Principal field survey units which were assigned to Eighth Army were the 46 South African Survey Company and 517 Field Survey Company R.E., each of which was equipped with mobile demy size printing equipment.

(Clough 88)

The survey resources at the disposal of D.D. Survey, Military Forces in Palestine, during 1941 included 517 Field Survey Company R.E. with its mobile demy size reproduction equipment and 2/1 Australian (Corps) Field Survey Company R.A.E. which was equipped with double-demy size machines mounted in trailers.

(Clough 84)

As Eighth Army continued its advance into Tripolitania, the division of the map reproduction work between 46 Company and 517 Company became very unequal. **517 Company** was back at Bardia and had little printing to do, as map stocks of eastern Cyrenaica were adequate. 46 Company, however,

was overwhelmed with repeated demands for overprints of enemy defences, etc. **517 Company** was therefore moved forward to the Sirte area to assist 46 Company, and to prepare the 1/100,000 series of Tripolitania for printing on the mobile demy machines.
(Clough 88)

The Mediterranean Chain.

Section H.

H-3 observed by 517 Field Survey Company R.E.

(Clough 129)

Ground control in the Western Desert and Libya, for mapping, revision and other field use.

Here the work was more of an active service nature, often in the near presence of enemy forces. Some of it was done by normal triangulation methods, and where this was not either feasible or justified, astronomical observations were taken, and many miles of car and compass traverse were completed. The units principally engaged on survey work in the battle area, first of all with the Desert Army, and subsequently with Eighth Army, were the Mobile Echelon of 512 Field Survey Company R.E., the South African Survey Company, and 514 and **517** Field Survey Companies R.E.

(Clough page 132)

The final phase (April-May, 1943)

.....

Colonel V.E.H. Sanceau was D.D. Survey Eighth Army with the following units at his disposal : -

517 Field Survey Company R.E.

etc

(Clough 269)

British map production resources.

Within First Army 518 Company was available from about "D"+16 and 516 Company from early February. To provide A.F.H.Q. with adequate map printing power 11 and 12 Map Reproduction Sections R.E. were sent out by the War Office, arriving towards the end of March.

When Eighth Army entered Tunisia, and thereafter came under the control of 18 Army Group and A.F.H.Q., it brought with it 46 South African Field Survey Company and **517** Field Survey Company R.E., both of which had mobile reproduction sections of the normal type.

(Clough page 273)

Conversion to 46 Survey etc

46 Survey Company was in survey support of Eighth Army from El Alamein to Tunis, together with **517 Field Survey Company R.E.** which operated as a reserve company during most of this period.

(Clough 536)

(iii) The link up between the Italian triangulation in Cyrenaica and that in Tripolitania (46 South African Survey Company, 36 New Zealand Survey Battery, 517 Field Survey Company and 524 Field Survey Company).

(i) Ground control in Egypt, etc.

Includes 517 Company.

(ii) Ground control in the Western Desert and Libya for mapping etc

Includes 517 Company.

(Clough 132)

Operations in Italian East Africa and Greece.

..... an Expeditionary Force was hastily assembled in Egypt and sent over to Greece. Colonel Hotine, having been withdrawn from East Africa, accompanied the force as D.D. Survey with a small survey directorate. The units placed at his disposal were the headquarters and two sections of the mobile echelon of 512 Field Survey Company. **517 (Corps) Field Survey Company**, which had shortly before arrived from the United Kingdom, and 9 Field Survey Depot, which had just been formed in the Middle East theatre. Of the above, only the topographical sections of 512 Company and 517 Company (less its printing equipment) reached Greece together with the Survey Directorate and 9 Depot. The A.F. G1098 stores of 517 Company, for its printing and drawing sections, were embarked on a separate

convoy and were lost. A large portion of 9 Field Survey Depot were taken prisoner, together with personnel from the Survey Directorate and from the topographical sections of 512 and 517 Companies.....
(Clough 54-55)

The mapping preparations which were undertaken for the campaign, and the arrangements for map distribution, are described in later paragraphs. Colonel Hotine, who had been D.D. Survey with the force in East Africa, was assigned to the Greek Expeditionary Force for survey duties and the following survey units were included in the order of battle : -

Survey Directorate.

Mobile Echelon, 512 (Army) Field Survey Company R.E. (less two sections).

517 (Corps) Field Survey Company R.E.

9 Field Survey Depot R.E.

1 Australian (Corps) Field Survey Company.

.....

(Clough 487)

.....
517 Field Survey Company R.E. had arrived in Egypt without its printing equipment, but provisional arrangements were made for the use of local plant in Athens. The unit (less conductors for the technical lorries) sailed in one of the later convoys to Greece. Unfortunately the technical stores of the printing and drawing sections were loaded in another ship and were lost at sea by enemy action. Leaving its topographical sections to continue work in Greece, the unit was sent back to Egypt a few days before general evacuation was ordered. Many of the topographical section personnel were taken prisoner.

(Clough 487)

Contact was maintained with Advanced Force H.Q. so that it should receive consignments of these new maps, but provision was also made for a floating detachment of 517 Company to proceed forward to a focal point on the lines of retreat, so that direct issues could be made to the units as they passed through. To provide for further emergencies, 517 Company was authorized to despatch forward, if considered necessary, further personnel and transport of the unit with fresh consignments of maps as they arrived. Under the circumstances, this worked as well as might be expected, but it involved throwing in most of the surveyors and their transport available in the country. This temporary misuse of technical survey personnel and its transport was fully justified here, as elsewhere, on an occasion when map issues to the fighting troops were of such vital importance.

(Clough 495)

The invasion of Sicily.

..... The survey units available in Cairo for map preparation were 13, 512, **514**, and 524 Field Survey Companies R.E. The first of these was scheduled to take part in the operation, and it was known that it would be withdrawn for training and other duties some time during the planning stage.

The following survey units, hitherto belonging to Middle East Command, accompanied Eighth Army to Sicily : -

Survey Directorate, Eighth Army.

13 and 517 Field Survey Companies R.E.

7 General Field Survey section R.E.

20 (Army) Field Survey Map Depot R.E.

(Clough 70)

Survey organization.

The Survey organization, apart from that in Cairo was as follows : -

Eighth Army (British)

Survey Directorate (Colonel V.E.H. Sanceau).

13 and 517 Field Survey Companies R.E.

20 (Army) Field Survey Map Depot R.E.

(Clough 499)

Control and ground survey in Sicily.

But on 30 Corps front one topographical section of 517 Field Survey Company was, unfortunately, left behind owing to a last-minute change in shipping priorities.

.....
Early in August, the topographical sections of 517 Field Survey Company were withdrawn for service elsewhere, but the campaign was then drawing to a close etc.
(Clough 503)

Italy

H.Q. 15 Army Group (D.D. Survey - Colonel K.M. Papworth; later - Colonel V.E.H. Sanceau)

.....
For most of the period **517** Field Survey Company R.E. was under the direct control of H.Q. 15 Army Group, and at various times and for short periods, 13, 19 and 514 Field Survey Companies R.E. were also available to meet special requirements together with extra field survey depots and map depot detachments.
(Clough page 300)

Italy

The survey directorate crossed over to Italy in September, 1943, with Colonel V.E.H. Sanceau as D.D. Survey. The units at first operating with Eighth Army were 13 and **517** Field Survey Companies R.E., 7 General Survey Section R.E., and 20 (Army) Field Survey Depot R.E. In December, **517** Company, after 14 months valuable service with Eighth Army from Alamein to Tunisia, Sicily and Italy, passed to 15 Army Group command, and was replaced by 514 Field Survey Company R.E. from Middle East. Then, in March, 13 Field Survey Company was assigned for duty under A.F.H.Q. control, its place being taken by 49 South African Survey Company.
514 Field Survey Company, after nine months of strenuous and efficient service with Eighth Army, was withdrawn, being replaced by 518 Field Survey Company from A.F.H.Q., one of the two original units with First Army during operation "Torch".
Together with 49 Survey Company (S.A.E.C.), 7 General Survey Section, and 29 Field Survey Depot, 518 Company remained with Eighth Army till the end of the war.
(Clough page 301)

3. NOTES FROM REFERENCES, MAINLY WAR DIARIES, IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, KEW.

As far as possible, the brief notes from unit war diaries listed below are in chronological order. War diaries from world war two are generally foolscap in format. In addition to the war diary proforma which may be in manuscript in pencil or ink, or typescript, the files usually contain the periodic returns of soldier and officer strengths. Some also contain technical diary annexes but many are confined to mundane notes on arrivals and departures and movements and their content as a source for a historical and technical account can be disappointing. The following "shorthand" notes are generally based on initial hasty examinations of the diaries simply to assess their scope and possible worth as sources for a unit history.

517 Corps Field Survey Company War Diary May-Dec 1940.

Letter authorising the formation of 516 and 517 Field Survey Companies dated 30 Apr 1940.

Usual ms or typescript WD pages covering formation and build up of strength of the Coy.

May 1940.

Capt D.W. Price and Lt J.H. Nield first 2 officers. 2 May. Formed up at Cambrai Bks Tidworth. On 9 May move to Windmill Hill Ludgershall. Shared with 516 Coy. 2Lt Crookenden arr 22 May. By end of May camp ready for reception of men up to strength.

Jun 1940.

17 2Lt W.R. Andrew and 2 Lt G.S. Burrows report. Numerous OR arrivals in dribs and drabs.

L July - Lt F.J. Woods shown on recce of new map store and unit loc nr Chester. OR recruits in dribs.

12 computers and svyr trig to OS for computing task.

August 1940.

1 Maj Price and 10 O.Rs to Chester to prepare building at Caergwrlle near Chester. 7th Entrain for Chester. 17 Lt Nield to Mersey Defences survey Print Secs to Greystones, Cefn-y-bedd. Some field work done for RA. List of Cassini coords attached.

September 1940.

Trig densification for 3 Regt RA. Route Guides. ¼ inch overprints done. Work on German grid refs. Svys for 45 Bde HAA. Cardiff, Swansea, Pembroke, Pembrey. Hired tpt being replaced.

October 1940.

Print lorry arrived from Crabtrees. 9 Oct Maj Hunter arr to assume cmd. Capt Woods posted to 4 Corps Svy Dte. Capt Swideski Polish officer attached

November 1940.

DGOS visits. Col Boulnois GSGS visits. 2 Lt Wade and Spaven join. CSM Forbes takes over from CSM Heignes. Fourth print lorry taken over from Pictorial Machinery Ltd at Highgate. Unit now practically fully equipped.

December 1940.

Nil of relevance.

PRO WO 166/3782

Seen 15-11-08

517 Company War Diary Dec 1940 ?

PRO WO 169/413 Possibly. This may be a Field Company RE diary. NYS

517 Field Survey Company War Diary Jan to Dec 1941

Usual war diary but mostly manuscript WD pages and the usual strength returns, little of technical content.

Maj Hunter O.C.

Jan 1941.

5. Coy left Cairg???? To embark for o'seas..
7. Sailed. Rest of month at sea.

Feb 1941

Whole month on H.M.T. Samaria.

Mar 1941

9. Unit disembarked at Suez.
10. Arr Tahag Camp, Camp 48..
- 13 Collect vehicles from Port Said.
- 29 Move via Wadi Nutrun to Amariya.
- Det 517 WD 25 Mar - 2 May Crete.
- Lt Nield RE. 8p ms and 14 page typescript report.

Apr 1941.

1. Embarked HMT Cameronian.
3. Arr Piraeus.
4. Reported to Col Hotine.
8. Move from Camp 3 to Primary school in suburbs.
- Report copied no more WD notes.
- 10 Embarked
13. Arr Athens.
- 19 Moved to Piraeus. And OC, Lt Andrew & 52 OR embarked.
- 21 Convoy attacked by aircraft.
- 24 Disemb Alexandria.
- 26 Entrained for Tahag.

May 1941.

10. arrived Abbassia Barracks.
28. Drawing Section complete posted away to form nucleus of Army Air Photo Interpretation Unit.

Jun 1941.

- Abbassia. Lt J.H. Nield in temp command. Hunter at Svy Dte.
3. Printing Sect att 49 SAEC at Maadi for spec duties.
 23. Dwg Sect from 512 transferred in.

Jul 1941.

6. Dwn Sect to 514 Coy Alex on attachment.
- 20 Coy, under Capt Nield less 1dwg sec and 1 repro sec mov to Palestine.
- 21 Arr Jerusalem.
- 25 Two topo secs mov to Beirut under Nield.
- 26 Coy HQ in Italian School Jeruslamem
- 30 Dwg Sect arrive from Alex.

Aug 1941.

Mapping of Baalbek area.
Dwg sect to RAF Aquir to plot photog of survey flt.

Sep 1941.

Goings maps of Syria discussed.
29. Large run of Western Desert sheets.

Oct 1941.

Jerusalem. Sheets of Cyrenaica.

Nov 1941.

Not very informative!

Dec 1941.

Ditto. Mainly comings and goings of OC and officers.

Officers were Maj K.H. Hunter. Capt J.H. Nield, Lts R.W. Andrew, J.H.C. Chesshire and F.D.N. Spaven.

PRO WO 169/1905

Seen 30-12-08

517 Corps Field Survey Company War Diary Jan to Dec 1942

File 1.5 cms thick. Manuscript, pencilled WD pages 2-4 per month and strength returns.

Jan 1942.

Maj K.H. Hunter, Capt J.H. Nield, Lts R.G. Stuart, R.W. Andrew, J.H.C. Chesshire, F.D.N. Spaven.

Feb 1942.

Mar 1942.

Apr 1942.

May 1942.

Jun 1942.

This has typed Task order for 517 Coy & 36 N.Z. Survey Bty.

Jul 1942.

Souk el Gharb.

Aug 1942.

R.M's being trained in Air Suvry ????

Sep 1942.

Oct 1942.

15. Unit 4 Off 138 OR 4M/Cs, 28 Vehs moved off. Arrr Tulkarm West

16 Arr Asluj.

17 Arr E. bank of Canal

18 Arr Mena Camp, Cairo.

All above blank entries mostly comings and goings.

PRO WO 169/5315

Seen 30-12-08

517 Corps Field Survey Company RE War Diary Jan - Dec 1943.

File 6cms thick. But WD in pencil and 2-3 pages each month. Little tech. No maps. Few topo sec appendices.

January 1943.

Maj J.H. Nield O.C. A Capt G.V. Ashton EAE. Lt Eden J.A. Lt F.D.N. Spaven. Lt D.E. Gardner. Lt H.L. Strange. At Bardia and moving to Gazala thence Timmi, De Martino, Barce to Bengasi, Agedabia, Ageila, Nofilia, Sirte from 10th to 18th. 19th Maj Irwin Svy Dte handed over 100,000 of Tunisia to be maintained by Coy. Also recd main trig connections to join Tripolitania & Libya systems. 30th ordered to move to Tripoli on completion of printing order less top det to complete trig connection. Att Order of March of unit vehicles.

Feb 1943.

Adv party to Tripoli. Unit arr on 4th. Lt Col Thompson brought new material for battle maps of Ben Gardane? & Medina areas. Top sects at Sirte. Trig completed by 12 to Wadi Tannet?? 27th Lt Eden posted to comd 7 Gen Svy Sect. Maj Irwin posted in wef 18 Feb. 7 Gen Svy Sect att to 517. 28th OC 46 SAEC visited.

March 1943.

6th No 1 Topo arrived. 7th they left for Pisida area. 13th Irwin takes over. Unit leaves Tripoli arr Olivetti. 14th arr Ben Gardane 10th 2 topo sect truck damaged on mine. 3 REME killed recovering when stepped outside cleared area. 14th Unit arr Nefatia. DD Svy brings urgent def op task. 15th No 1 Topo leave for trig restoration Medenine-Gourine area, att to 4 Svy Regt RA. 29th Extensive repro prog 200,000 & 50,000 Tunisia put in hand. 12 hr shifts till 9 Apr?

April 1943.

Nefatia. 3rd vist by SGA officers. 4th 1 Topo with 4 Svy Regt RA at Akarit posn. 8th unit moved to Outref area. 16th moved to Sousse area, repro vehs prep for work. Urgent task done by 19th. 20th 2

Topo to do weeks work at Tripoli for 2 AA Bde. After Buerat job. 24th visit by DD and DD Svy 18 Army Gp Col Wheeler. 24th visit by 4 Chinese officers incl 2 generals.

May 1943.

Sousse. By 5th all at Tripoli. 1 Topo on AA Def. 1st 1 Topo and 7 Gen Svy Sec mov to Tripoli 30th 1 & 2 Topo to Sfax to join 4 Svy Regt RA. 27th Lt Anson collects Lister Gen Sets from Algiers.

June 1943.

?????

July 1943.

Lentini. Various visits etc. Def op maps delivered to 13 and 30 Corps. Op Husky Orders for 2 Topo Sec. Topo Secs 517 with 30 Corps Pachino area. Topo Secs 13 Sqn with 13 Corps Catania. All Regts RA to be fixed on grid. Air photo control provided by stereocomparator. +-10m. to Regts to fix themselves without outside help, experimental, for first few days, density not great. Gd work will be needed ASP. Prov of fresh trig instructions. Capture of Italian 2-3 order data instructions.

1st Instructions for 7 Gen Svy Sec to do block plots of Sicily. 10th D-Day for Husky. Printing 100,000 of Italy by 22 Jul. 14th 10 Corps RA want BPs north of Garian. 21st unit at Trpoli docks and embarked on LSTs. 23 arr Syracuse, met by Capt S.L. Newcombe Survey 8 Army. Unit left for Lentini. Att reports from topo sects on embarkation problems.

August 1943.

Lentini. Visits by Brig Brown and Col Sanceau. Report of 2 Topo landing Sicily 4 Aug and in Ramacca en route Centuripe with 4 Svy Regt. Topo Secs to be prepared to leave Sic for N Af by mid Aug.

8th 2 Topo on west slopes of Etna. Visited by Irwin. As was 1 Topo. Both sects to be ready mov from Augusta for N Af leave tpt, draw new from 10 Corps. 19th Large repro programme recd. Round clock shifts.

Sep 1943.

6th Unit left Lentini via Catania to Bronte, San Piero and Patti to Falcone 8th Italian surrender.

15th 5000 copies Italy 100,000 Sheet 199 Potenzo deliver to Messina. 17th unit packing. 19th unit moves via west coast route Palmi, Vibo Valentia, Catanzaro and arr Messina. Light vehs embark LCM for Reggio di Calabria. New destination Francavilla. 21st unit arr Crotone. 28th unit moves Round clock repro prog. All scales mainly 100,000 S Italy. Appx Report of Topo Sects moves.

Oct 1943.

Damage to print machine cogs due to palette knife. 27 Def maps of R Sangor posn. 2 Topo Trig report Volturmo-Naples. Report by Svy Recce Party Op Avalanche 23-9-43 by Lt Strange, 2p FS. Report on Trig Naples - Volturmo 1-14 Oct.

Nov 1943.

Liaison with Americans and comparison of mobile equipt. Lt Eden brings slotted template back from 5 Army from 46 SAEC for experiments. 27th stereocomparator team to proceed M.E. 29th Orders to take over all block plot and def op work from 13 Coy

2 Topo sec report 17-26 Nov

Dec 1943.

4th Unit to move to Ruvo Di Puglia (Bari) on 15th and hand over to 514 Coy. 7 Gen Svy Sec to remain till 18th than join 514 by then en route to Vasto. 12th Svy party on Sangro Bridge returns. 18th 517 to be resp 100,000 sheets 156, 157, 164, 165, 173-178 and 183-191 and all sheet south excl Sic. Road rev of sh 175, 176, 177, 187, 188, 189, 199, 200, 201. 31st Road revision by topo tps area Cerignola.

WO 169/10698 Copied to Svyhist 517 Fd Svy Coy

Seen 15-11-08

517 Field Survey Company War Diary Jan-Dec 1944.

War Diary 6 cms thick, but with many irrelevant strength returns. No maps

Apr 44

Officers, Maj Belfield, Capts J.L.R. Bais?? W.W. Anson, F.D.N. Spaven, D.E. Gardner, N.H. Stansfield.

War Diaries now include Statistics which gives a little on tech work done, Drawing, printing, Topo Sections.

Some reports give Allied Forces (AF) unique numbers for print jobs.

WO 170/1701

Seen briefly 15-11-08

517 Field Survey Company War Diary Italy Jan-Dec 1945

Jan 1945.

1. Maj J.R. Hyatt O.C. Loc at Q892209 nr Sienna.

7. Moved to Q773635 south of Flkorence.

31 Att Movement Orders. Loading Tables. Unit Standing Orders. M.T. Orders.
31 Monthly report 3p typed. Statistics etc.

Feb 1945.

Notes for men working in M.R.S. typescript. Monthly report. A.J.D. Halliday now O.C.

Mar 1945.

Notes for men working in P.R.S. Maps of Austria.

Apr 1945.

Warning order on future tasks. Boundary work army of occupation? Otherwise MRS and PRS continues. Possibly Town Plans.

May 1945.

OC Halliday. Capt J.L.R. Baiss, Lts J.L.R. Clark, N.H. Stansfield, C.A. Wilkinson.

Still at Florence. Stats incl GSGS 4164, M702 Yugoslavia, Med 4 Austria.

Jun 1945.

3. Move to Lake Garda area. Arr Verona 4 Jun. Baiss O,C, from 12th Jun.

Jul 1945.

Coy comes under AFHQ on break up of 15 Army Group.

11-13. Move to Civitavecchia via Bologna etc.

Aug 1945.

Maj S.L.N. Newcombe RE is OC.

Sep 1945.

2. Unit moved into Titanus film studios Rome.

22. 516 Coy disbanded. Remaining personnel absorbed by 517 Coy.

Printing included L401 Manchuria, L551 Korea, L571 C. Japan.

Oct 1945.

Still at Rome. Dwg Sect practically ceased to exist. Repr low output.

Work on AFHQ History 550 pages incl illustrations.

Nov-Dec 1945.

Coy running down. Most men to 13 Fd Svy Coy and 650 Fd Svy Production Coy.

PRO WO 170/5229

Seen 30-12-08

4. NOTES FROM SOUVENIR BROCHURES.

THE DESERT - 517 FIELD SURVEY COMPANY OCTOBER 1942 TO JULY 1943.

A souvenir brochure produced by the unit in 1944.

About 40 double spread pages 34 x 23 or 80 pages 16.5 x 23 cms.

BL 9100.g.2. The first 16 pages photo-copied and held by M. Nolan.

Seen briefly 20-5-02.

5. NOTES FROM PERSONAL ACCOUNTS.

None available as yet.

End.