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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN SURVEY CORPS  
ASSOCIATION  
Queensland Branch

**BULLETIN**



CHRISTMAS EDITION

DECEMBER 2000

**Colonel James Leslie Stedman**  
**1922 - 2000**  
**RA Svy Corps Director 1975 –**  
**1978**  
later Colonel Commandant,  
friend and mentor to many.

**VALE – Betty Anderson**

The Committee and members of the Association extend their sincere sympathy to our patron, Ed and the Anderson family on the death of Ed's wife, Betty. To all who knew her, Betty was indeed a gracious lady and we will all greatly miss her.

**CHRISTMAS MESSAGE**



*Your Committee wishes all members of the Royal Australian Survey Corps Association, their family and friends, serving members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Topographical Survey Squadron RAE and all others who have supported our Association during 2000 a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2001.*

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## COMMITTEE

Patron Lieutenant Colonel EU Anderson MBE (Ph 3408 9179)

**President** Peter Bates-Brownsword (Ph 3289 7001)

**Past President** Jim Houston (Ph 3351 4952)

**Vice President** Bob Skitch (Ph 3265 1370)

**Secretary** Mary-Ann Thiselton (Ph 3353 1026)

**Treasurer** Stan Campbell (Ph 3285 3970)

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Bulletin Editor Bob Skitch (Ph 3265 1370)

Membership Records Kim Weston (Ph

WW2 Veteran Member Hal Jones (Ph 3395 1404)

Squadron Liaison & Welfare Jim Gill (Ph 3264 1597)

Squadron SSM WO1 Steve Winner (Ph 3332 7564)

**Note:** Refer Veteran's Affairs matters to Peter Bates-Brownsword and Stan Campbell

## NOTICES

### THE GAYTHORNE RSL

Are you thinking of becoming a member of the RSL? The Gaythorne RSL provides a great service to your Association in the form of meeting rooms for your Committee, space to carry out post-outs and, of course, a venue for our annual reunion. Tea, coffee, biscuits or cake are provided at no cost on each occasion. The Club facilities are excellent. Gaythorne is a Club that truly supports the ex-serviceman. The cost to join both the Club and the sub-branch is \$10.00 per year. Membership of one club confers reciprocal rights in all other clubs

### THE HISTORY

Copies of 'Australia's Military Mapmakers' remain available through the RAE Corps Shop at a cost of \$37.00 plus postage. Full details were published in the October issue of this Bulletin. Postage varies with location, however for Brisbane orders it is \$7.46, other SEQ, \$7.74, Central Qld, \$8.29 and North Qld \$8.40. Send orders to RAE Corps Shop, Moorebank Avenue, Moorebank, NSW 2174. RA Svy Corps ties are also available at a cost of \$11.50.

### LAST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH DRINKS

This regular informal event has found a permanent home at the Gaythorne RSL. The beer is cheaper without loss of quality. The management have agreed to reserve a table for our use and snacks are provided. There is ample car parking at the rear or alternatively, rail to Gaythorne or Mitchelton Stations. The RSL is about half way between. The next gathering will be on 19 January 2001. The last Friday in January happens to be Australia Day) See you there....

**Rock Thiselton**

### ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2000 – 2001 ARE OVERDUE!

With this issue of the Bulletin we have reduced our distribution to those who are currently financial or who are in arrears not more than one year.

Our financial year runs from September to September and at the end of September less than 50 have paid and are financial. Subscription is but \$10.00 per year. We encourage you to pay three years in advance (or more if you wish). Some have already done this. **Keep in touch with you Survey Corps mates by remaining in your Association.**

### AWARDS

Clem Sargent advises that a clasp *South East Asia* on the Australian Service Medal (1945 – 1975) ribbon will be legislated before Christmas. This will allow the awarding of that medal to those who served on survey operations in Indonesia before 1972. What is the logic of that you may well ask. It seems that 1972 is the official date of the cessation of active Australian involvement in South East Asia. The case for the further awarding of the 45–75 medal to those serving on survey operations in Indonesia rests with Army and Clem is optimistic of a favorable outcome. If successful, the awarding of the 45–75 medal to the pre 76ers will provide the logic for a further submission to Army (or whoever) for the awarding of the Australian Service Medal (post 75) to those who served in Indonesia on all subsequent operations.

## JIM STEDMAN – a reflection

Bob Skitch

I first met Jim on a cold and blustery evening in about June 1955.

Fifteen or so newly graduated recruits fresh from Kapooka, all destined for Survey, peering expectantly through the misted windows of the rather antiquated army bus as it pulled into the kerbside adjacent to the School of Survey orderly room at the uncivilized hour of 11.00pm to be greeted by the sight of a lone great-coated figure, cap slightly askew, redish hair protruding and three pips on the shoulder. Met by a captain – friendly at that! Words to the effect – ‘my name’s Stedman – don’t stand here in the cold – straight up to the dining room – hot coffee and a large tray of choc cake’. That disappeared in seconds not a crumb left – then to the lines with our baggage. Talk about *‘kiss me goodnight sergeant major – tuck me in my little wooden bed’*. After the rigours of Kapooka it all seemed too good to be true. Even the beds were already made up! And a Captain who cared about us!! Is this the Army? “I’ll see you blokes in the classroom in the morning” was the final riposte.

We were assured by an equally friendly warrant officer who fussed around us that we would see a good deal of Captain Stedman – and we did – he was our senior instructor and if the 7/55 Basic Survey Course was anyone’s course, it was certainly Jim Stedman’s. Gruff, blunt but friendly, JL, Steddy, the roan bull, but to us ‘Sir’, following a few words from the Chief Instructor, the avuncular Lieutenant Colonel Wally Relf, laid down the ground rules in no uncertain terms – this course was costing the Army 2000 pounds per student and God help anyone who stuffed up. We were impressed. The course had started and with that, one of the great experiences of my life.

Jim enlisted in February 1941 as a young sapper. His son Mervyn tells that dad enlisted in the army even before he had completed his final year of schooling, his earlier attempts to join the navy and the air force being thwarted by his parents. Jim’s WW2 service commenced with 5 Field Survey Company, serving in Queensland then Marauke in Dutch New Guinea, Moratai and North Borneo. Promotion during WW2 tended to be

rapid, especially if you showed any real ability and Jim had plenty of that. He reached the rank of WO2 in 1943 serving with 3 Field Survey Company in 1946 and 47. He then transferred to Northern Command Field Survey Section with promotion to WO1 in 1948.

Jim was commissioned to Lieutenant in 1950 and soon after was detached to the Woomera Rocket Range to complete the Port Augusta to Mount Eba first order trig chain. Clem Sargent, then a young corporal, recalls that the operation had fallen into disarray and it was Jim’s task to pull it together and get it back on schedule. This he did. Jim’s reputation even then was formidable and Clem (can you believe it) was somewhat overawed traveling north from Adelaide to Woomera in Jim’s company. Jim could certainly be a man of few words! Clem tells of an incident soon after arriving at Woomera. Trig stations were being reoccupied and Clem was to observe directions on a certain trig station with Steddy booking, at the same time keeping lights for adjacent stations. Some problem occurred with the light on one of those stations so Jim set out by vehicle to check it out. (no radios in those days) Jim hadn’t arrived back by night-fall so Clem continued light-keeping and then set out to find him. They connected some distance from the station – apparently Jim’s vehicle had broken down or ran out of petrol – and as they trudged back to their campsite, Clem deemed it wise to refrain from asking about the incident or attempting light conversation.

In 1953 Jim was posted to the School of Survey (‘Military’ was added at a later date) at Balcombe, initially as adjutant-quartermaster and then as an instructor, so commencing a long association with the School and a continuing interest in the training of surveyors and draughtsmen. In this he continued and fostered the strong training tradition commenced by Lieutenant Colonel Bill Johnson who had by then retired.

Jim’s next posting was in 1957 to the newly created Army Headquarters Survey Regiment (created by the addition of the Southern Command Field Survey Section to the AHQ Cartographic Company with further augmentation). Major Spencer Snow was OC of the Regiment’s newly formed Topographic Squadron, however, he had been deployed

on Project Cutlass, the mapping of New Ireland, and it fell largely to Jim to raise and establish the Topographic Squadron. That unit was to become one of the most productive geodetic and mapping units seen in Australia at the time, in the years that followed undertaking major operations in northern Australia and TPNG. Jim had a burning interest in survey technology and undertook a signal role in the introduction of the Geodimeter and Tellurometer into not only the Corps but also geodetic survey practice in Australia. At about this time, 1957 or thereabouts, Jim turned down an exchange appointment to Canada so he could continue his developmental work with the Geodimeter. During his time with the Topo Squadron, Jim commanded some of the most significant geodetic survey operations undertaken to that date. Convoys of landrovers and GMCs (later Studebakers) would depart Fortuna in the early hours of an April/May morning heading for northern Queensland or the Northern Territory, returning nine months later, having carried out extensive tellurometer traversing. In 1958 it was Charters Towers to Tennant Creek; in 1959, Mt Hensman on the WA border to Borooloola and in 1959 Borooloola to Mount Isa with 1:250,000 map control in the Georgetown/Croydon area. It was in 1959 that Jim received his majority at the same time as Cpl Mick Simmons turned 21 years old. On the evening radio sched Jim congratulated Mick on achieving his majority and Mick was able to return the compliment. In addition to work in the field, Jim took an active role in the development of the Corps' aerotriangulation capability although most of this followed in the mid sixties after Jim was posted to Army Headquarters in Canberra.

In 1962 Jim was appointed OC of Northern Command Fields Survey Unit then located in 'L' Block, Victoria Barracks, moving out to Damascus Barracks at Gaythorne soon after. That unit had also been engaged in extensive tellurometer traversing in north Queensland, occupying many of the old WW2 trig stations along the Great Divide and associated mapping. In 1963 this activity moved westward with a tellurometer traverse from Bourke (NSW) to Charleville together with 1:250,000 mapping in the St George area. It was here that I came to recognize one of the great qualities Jim always

exhibited as a leader. That was his ability to delegate to his subordinates (NCOs and young officers) and his preparedness to accept their decisions. His expectation of them was never unrealistic and if they stumbled he picked them up without rancour and gave them another chance – and then another. Furthermore, he expected and required his young officers to act the same. In this way he commanded tremendous loyalty from all ranks serving under him. He was their friend and all could approach him and yet none would ever contemplate anything verging on disrespect. In 1964 the Army acquired the Schoalwater Bay training area and the Unit turned its attention to its detailed mapping at scales from 1:25,000 to 1:100,000, the latter fitting onto a single sheet as the Schoalwater Bay Special, to become something of an icon in training area mapping.

With almost his entire military career having been in the field, actively participating in survey operations, Jim finally moved to Canberra and a desk job in 1967, initially as DAD Survey and then on promotion to Lieutenant Colonel, as AD Survey responsible for the technological development of the Corps. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that it was during Jim's time in that role that the Corps leaped ahead in all areas of technology, both in the field and in the office leaving other survey and mapping agencies behind. It was during this period, from 1965 through to 1975 that the Corps saw the development of analytical aerotriangulation and its acceptance as a routine procedure, aerodist and airborne laser terrain profilers, Doppler position fixing and automated cartography. The Corps' activities went overseas with full map coverage of Papua New Guinea being achieved and the defence cooperative mapping project with Indonesia. On the Australian mainland, the Corps commitment to the 1:100,000 national mapping program was completed and the 1:50,000 tactical mapping program in northern Australia commenced.

Jim would be embarrassed were it suggested that he alone carried responsibility for all of this. Many others contributed in both major and minor ways, not least the Directors under whom Jim served. Brigadier Don MacDonald, Brigadier Frank Buckland, Colonel John

Nolan and all of the younger officers, warrant officers, NCOs, both senior and junior and the workers, the sappers themselves, all played their part and served well. For many of us, however, Jim was our inspiration.

Jim became Director on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1975 and finally retired on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1978. To some extent at least, these final three years of service held disappointments for Jim. That remarkable structure, the National Mapping Council, that had steered mapping coordination in Australia for 30 years had begun to fracture although it managed to limp along for a further ten years. It was becoming increasingly hard to continually justify the role of the Corps to the Army hierarchy and this sort of continual lobbying was not Jim's forte. When the Corps finally demised in 1996 Jim more than most found that hard to accept.

Jim Stedman's retirement in 1978 marked the end of another era; he was the last Director of Survey with WW2 service. Those of us who had the privilege of serving with him will always remember his honest and straightforward style. For many of us Jim was the Survey Corps. His values were the Corps' values and the values we all adopted. Jim's passing closes a chapter as certainly as the passing of the Corps itself. We will remember him.

Jim is survived by his wife Joan, sons Mervyn and Robert and daughter Barbara.



**1ST TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY SQUADRON – the year in review...** by Capt David Sapparth

Things got off to a quiet start in 2000, as there was a large proportion of the squadron taking leave after their deployment to East Timor. The first warlike deployment of Survey assets since the Vietnam War, the work done in East Timor was a great opportunity to show to the Army that the Squadron had evolved into an invaluable provider of geomatic information. New technologies were utilised in a way that helped commanders to visualise the terrain they were operating in at a level never before seen.

After Timor, the Squadron settled into its core business: providing force and formation level geomatic support. As well as this the

Squadron continued to train its members in a variety of areas including driver's courses, minimi courses and technical courses. The Squadron was represented in the UK by a member attending Exercise Longlook.

An important milestone for the Squadron was the opening of the new building in July to allow the management and production of secret level data. For the first time since the raising of the Squadron as an RAE unit its assets were centralised and able to work together more effectively.

Later this year the Squadron provided SOCOG with assistance at the Olympic Games in Sydney, in the form of communication managers and geomatic support to the Joint Task Force. This was titled Operation Gold. Fortunately there were no major incidents that threatened the games, and the operation went smoothly.

Assistance to East Timor has continued throughout the year, and recently a two man detachment visited the 1 RAR Group in country to provide data support to their operations. The result of this visit includes many hours of work back in Australia.

As tasks are finished off at the end of this year the Squadron looks ahead to a busy 2001, filled with new challenges and new equipment with which to operate.

#### **1 TOPO SVY SQN BBQ**

Reported by Bob Skitch

Our final event for the year was a well attended barbecue in the rec hut of 1 Topo Svy Sqn at Enoggera on Friday 8 December – and many thanks to the OC and members of the Squadron for inviting our Association members to this event.

We assembled in the Squadron foyer at 12.30pm for a conducted tour of the Squadron led by WO2 Mark Donnelly and Sgt Mick Carroll. We were welcomed by the Acting OC Captain David Sapparth and the Acting SSM WO2 Brian Bunney. By way of explanation, the Squadron OC for this past 12 months, Major Craig Hersant has been posted to Washington, USA and his 2IC, Captain (now Major) Shaughan Hoffman is posted to Army Headquarters on the staff of the Army Chief, Lieutenant General

Cosgrove. (Would that have happened in the days of the Survey Corps?) The SSM, WO1 Steve Winner, who has given such fine support over this past 12 months was on leave.

The tour was highly informative and quite a range of tasks was observed underway. As one would expect, the unit is fully computerized with high class work stations and software to match. We observed the ease with which standard map detail in digital form is draped over a digital elevation model and viewed perspective as a low oblique from any direction as if one were flying over the land in a helicopter. Soft photogrammetric equipment was in use (where the overlapping air photographs converted to digital imagery are displayed on a fine image monitor and viewed through binoculars such that a perfect stereo image is seen by the operator) the equipment is used for creating a digital elevation model and the image can be overlaid with map detail and contours, directly plotted from the model or introduced from some other source. The use of satellite imagery was also evident. We were taken through the geodetic section and the general geomatic section, perhaps another name for mapping. Finally we inspected two mobile truck-mounted pods each fully equipped with computer equipment similar to that described above but ruggedised to withstand field use. Also within the pod was a large format colour ink-jet printer. The pods can be deployed either by vehicle or by heavy-lift helicopter.

The impression we all gained was that of a well equipped and competent unit clearly capable of carrying out its role in the modern battlefield. It is to be hoped that with the recently advised injection of capital into Defence, our survey unit will get its fair share.

Following the tour of the Squadron a very significant event took place. This was the inaugural presentation of the Derek Chambers Award to the soldier who had made the greatest contribution to the Espirit de Corps of the Squadron in the preceding twelve months. The award comprises a beautifully designed shield with a cameo size photograph of Derek centrally mounted together with a book order of \$50.00.

Bob Skitch introduced the Award giving an outline of the special quality possessed by

Derek that made him the soldier/NCO an OC would 'prefer to have' or 'fight to get' (in the words of the old confidential report). Derek never complained when the going was tough, he got on with the job and made light of difficulties and in doing so had that ability to bring others along with him. Bob recalled that he had conducted the initial interview of Derek when he enlisted in about 1963 but wasn't sure whether he interviewed Derek or his father. Derek, then just out of school, was a quiet young man! Bob was Derek's OC in Vietnam in 1966/67 and then later in 1 Field Survey Squadron in 1974/75.

The Award went to Sgt Mick Carroll. Captain Sapparth read out a citation which clearly showed that Mick Carroll possessed all the qualities demanded of the Award. The Award was presented by Derek's son Grant who conveyed to the gathering a family message.

Following this auspicious event the barbecue commenced, well cooked steak and sausages and ample liquid refreshment of the amber variety.

Members of the Association attending were:

Kim and Faye Weston  
Hank and Anna Opdem  
Percy and Dell Long  
Jim Cook  
Jim Gill  
Bob Skitch  
Alex Cairney  
Rock and Mary Ann Thiselton  
Peter and Barbara Bates-Brownsword  
Ace and Mrs Evans  
Stuart and Tania Hibbert  
Jim Hawker (Jim is a past member of the ARes component of the former Squadron. He is now a senior survey officer (geodetic) of the Department of Natural Resources)

**Editor's Note: Unfortunately it was not possible to publish photographs of the event in this issue. These will appear in the next issue of the Bulletin.**

#### **AN AWARD OF A DIFFERENT KIND**

No one would dispute that sport in Australia is close to being a religion and to this fact can be attributed at least to some extent the outstanding success of the 'best ever' Olympic and Paralympic Games. We all saw and marveled at the performances of not only

our own athletes but also those from all of the participating nations. But who gave a thought to those unsung heroes of sport who give freely of their time in helping others to achieve, others of all ages and abilities. Those who play it for the sheer love of participation and competition. Well, the Australian government did. It struck a medal to award just those people. The Australian Sports Medal with its distinctive ribbon now takes its place in the lexicon of Australian Awards. Why is this of interest to our Association? For no less a reason than our President, **Peter Bates-Brownsword**, has been awarded the medal. I borrow the following from the Gaythorne RSL publication 'The Bayonet':

*'The Australian Sports Medal is being awarded during the year 2000 by the Governor General of Australia to commemorate Australian sporting achievement. The Medal's formal purpose is to: recognize persons (whether or not Australian citizens) who have made a contribution to Australian sport as a current or former participant or through the provision of support services to sport.'*

*Peter was Director of coaching at Everton District Basketball since leaving the Army in 1990. He was also involved in coaching junior teams and the development of Junior basketball within the District. Peter is still active in the sport and has competed in the Australian Master's Games in Adelaide during October 1999. Peter has also played Interservice Basketball and coached combined services over a long period. More recently, Peter competed in the Asia-Pacific Games.*

Congratulations Peter. We hope to see that medal on our next Anzac Day march.

#### **SICK PARADE AND OTHER JOTTINGS**

**Jim Houston** has had a bit of a rough trot health-wise. He was admitted to Greenslopes to have a knee job done and picked up an infection in the waterworks region. However, Jim is home now and fully recovered I am told so we can look forward to seeing him at future events.

**Kevin Walsh** soldiers on at Caloundra. In far from good health, Kevin's spirit keeps him going. Kevin's address is 4 Pelican Heights just off Caloundra Road as you enter Caloundra. Kevin always appreciates a visit.

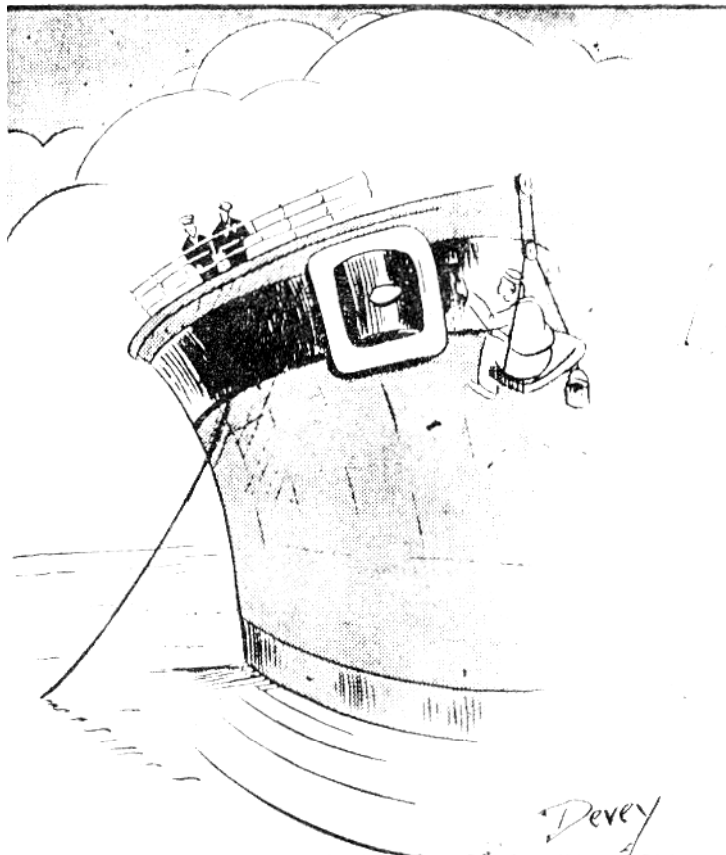
**Hall Jones** also has been ailing. Recovery after a mid-year attack of flu has been slow and Hal feels that he is suffering from 'fatigue syndrome'. But then at 80+ that may be a problem facing all of us. Peter B-B is helping Hal to get a bit of support from Vet Affairs. We all hope you regain your usual zest for life Hal as quickly as possible.

Many would remember **Jim Corless** at the School of Military Survey. Jim with a couple of others transferred to the Survey Corps from Educational Corps during the 70s. Jim's health has not been so good either. He had a severe heart attack which resulted in a triple bypass op. An attack of pneumonia and a large stomach ulcer delayed his recovery, however, Jim is now able to get out and about but not without difficulty.

On a recent trip to Victoria I met with two of my older Survey Corps mates – **Kevin Moody** and **Lou Sommer**. Kevin was with me on the 7/55 Basic Course and Lou on the 8/56. Both are well and enjoying retirement. Kevin's career after leaving the Corps was mainly with National Mapping and Lou with Telecom and its predecessors. Lou and Kevin are great mates and have done many interesting things over the years including rafting the Franklin and traversing the Murray from where it bubbles out of the ground to where it enters the ocean – over successive trips.

**Alex Yeates'** son Rod tells me that the plaque on Alex's plot at Mount Thompson has at last been affixed. In one corner the plaque bears the WW2 Survey Corps 'theodolite' badge and in the other corner, the traditional Rising Sun badge. This was surprisingly hard to do, first to get an accurate drawing of the old theodolite badge and secondly to determine who could authorize its use. Finally Mount Thompson accepted the authority of the Association that the theodolite badge was the correct one to use. The drawings of all three badges were supplied by the RAE Museum in digital form on a floppy and Rod has agreed to give these to the Association. Rod Yeates is engaged on sorting out Alex's huge collection of memorabilia, a good deal of which concerns 5 Company.

**LAUGH WITH DEVEY (LIONEL DEVENCORN)** another of the WW2 artist draughtsmen



35

"GOING MY WAY?"



"Hey! See this, two pounds for my contribution to TABLE TOPS"



He used to be a boxer, and says no hitting below the belt."  
 QX53669, Cpl. L. Devencorn—10/-.



"Which tooth is it?"—QX53669.  
 Cpl. L. Devencorn.



"The trouble with you fellows is that when you've nothing to do, you do nothing."  
 QX53669, Cpl. L. Devencorn, 10/.

**Acknowledgements**

Throughout this year our Bulletin has been reproduced (120 copies) by the 1<sup>st</sup> Topographical Survey Squadron at Enoggera at no cost to the Association. We thank the Officer Commanding and Squadron staff for their generous support.

This particular issue featuring the colour photo of Colonel Jim Stedman on the front has been printed by Digital Copying Services, and our thanks go to the proprietor of the firm, Jim's son Mervyn.