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ROYAL COMMISSION ON HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS

**Report on the Manuscript Collection
of the
Royal Engineers Library
Brompton Barracks
Chatham
Kent**

compiled by the
Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts
Quality House, Quality Court
Chancery Lane
London WC2 1HP

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Note on Access

Access to the Library's collection is by prior appointment only. Bona fide researchers and family historians should write to the Librarian, Royal Engineers Library, Brompton Barracks, Chatham, Kent ME 4 4UG.

INTRODUCTION

There has been a professional RE library at Chatham since 1813. The original library was founded under General Charles William Pasley, who arrived at Chatham with the nucleus of the RE Establishment in 1812. The Chatham library subsequently became the professional library of the School of Military Engineering (later the Royal School of Military Engineering), also located at Chatham. Pasley was also influential in developing the network of Corps branch libraries for both officers and enlisted men, located at the various RE home and foreign stations. This network was largely established by the mid 19th Century. The branch libraries were supplied with technical reference books from a central repository library in London, situated after 1871 in the War Office. In 1877 responsibility for the management of the Corps libraries was handed over to the Secretary of the RE Institute. The Institute received its royal charter in 1923 and a library committee was appointed to administer the Corps libraries within the charter.

As a result of a long process of rationalisation, which began in the second half of the 19th Century and quickened in pace during the inter-war period, many of the out-station branch libraries were closed. In 1939 the professional RSME library at Chatham lost its independent existence and was absorbed into the central Corps Library in London, which took over the Chatham site - henceforth becoming the Library of the Corps of Royal Engineers

The present RE Corps Library is situated in a re-fitted lecture theatre in the main RSME building. This work was begun in 1953. In 1969 a Bureau of Archives was established and a basement strong room fitted to store new acquisitions of archival material. Since then the Library has collected both published and unpublished archival material, including manuscripts, photographs, maps, plans and sketches relating to the work of the RE. In modern times the character of the Library has been transformed. Traditionally, the Library's function was to serve as a technical reference and loan library for RE personnel. However, since the late 1960s, the Library has devoted more and more of its resources to providing information to outside bodies such as government departments and private companies as well as individual historians, authors and research students. More recently the Library has also proved an important source of information for family historians.

The following list of archival manuscript holdings was made during a visit to the Library on December 2, 1993. The Commission is very grateful for the assistance and hospitality provided by the Librarian, Capt (Retd) RT Arnold and the Assistant Librarian, Mrs M Magnuson.

Jonathan Spain
January 6 1994

ROYAL ENGINEERS LIBRARY

Manuscript Collection

1. (a) Official records of the Corps and related bodies:

Garrison letter books c1774 - late 19th cent including both home and foreign stations, c 330 vols. (Strongroom)

RE unit war diaries: China - Boxer Rebellion (2 folders); Boer War (16 boxes); First World War (77 boxes); Palestine - 1936 (1 folder); Second World War (17 folders, incomplete); Korean War (16 boxes); Gulf War - 1991 (1 vol). Top copies are with the Public Record Office. (Annex)

RE Corps Orders 1813-1894 16 vols. (355.133)

RE Company order books, letter books, operational orders, reports and misc records, incomplete and restricted 19th-20th cent. (Annex)

Commanding Engineer, Sebastopol: In and Out letter books 'A' and 'Q' matters, March 1855 - April 1856 (947 "1855-56"); Reports, March 1855 - September 1855, 2 vols, (947 "1855")

Crimea: RE Company order book June 1854 - January 1855. (947 "1854-1855")

Indian Mutiny: 21st Company RE order book 1858. (954 "1858")

Roll of officers in the Corps of the Royal Engineers, originally copied from MS notes of the late Captain TWJ Connolly RE and subsequently maintained by the Corps Librarian, 1757 - present day, 1 vol.

Connolly Papers: Captain Connolly's original MS biographical notes on RE officers (8 vols). (Strongroom)

MS list of RE officers 1757-1877, together with additional biographical notes, 1 vol. (A 231.2)

Corps record books and registers:

Misc returns and company details RS & M 1780-1839. (92/101)

Distribution of army and regiment numbers to units and establishments 1914-1939. (92/102)

Register of boys 1931-1942. (92/201)

Permanent staff instructors to TA/OTC/SUP reserve 1934-1939. (92/205)

Officers in RE Tunnelling Companies 1939-1945. (92/207)

Roll of officers of Mechanical and Shipyard Formation of IW & D 1914-1918. (92/210)

The Register: officers of Tunnelling Companies RE 1925. (92/212)

Appointments to Establishments for Engineer Services (EES) 1940-1942. (92/215)

Register of Survey soldiers; 1866-1937, 1871-1921, 1916-1939, 1918-1944, 4 vols. (92/220A-D)

Register of Clerk of Works courses (C), nos 125-129, 1962-1967. (92/301)

EES seniority roll of Foremen of Works 1925-1946. (92/310)

EES seniority roll of Engineer Clerks 1923-1942. (92/360)

EES nominal roll of Military Mechanics 1927-1952. (92/360)

Register of Military Foremen of Works courses nos 98-101, 1947-1949; Clerk of Works courses nos 102-124, 1950-1962. (93/311)

EES nominal roll of Foremen of Works 1927-1952. (92/312)

Register of Military Foremen of Works courses nos 91-97, 1937; (temporary) nos 1-68, 1940-1944; (basic) nos 1-20, 1945-1947; (refresher) nos 1-10, 1944-1945 and ORs Works courses nos 9-29, 1943-c1946. (92/313)

Register of Deputy Military Foremen of Works courses nos 1-47, 1946-1958. (92/314)

Register of Military Foremen of Works courses nos 17-91, 1874-1937; Draughtsman classes 1873-1887; Inf Pioneer Sgt Classes nos 27-48, 1874-1902; recruits examined as Draughtsmen 1874-1902; Engineer Draughtsmen classes no 1-4, 1934-1936. (92/315)

EES nominal roll of Draughtsmen, Engineers and Clerks 1934-1952. (92/340)

EES seniority roll of Engineer Draughtsmen 1925-1946. (92/341)

Enlistments and Medal Rolls 1908-1915, 1897-1902. (92/401)

Record of re-engagements 1937-1939. (92/405)

Registers of transfers 1881-1904, 3 vols. (92/410A-C)

Registers of marriages 1914-1937, 2 vols. (92/515A, 220B)

Register of deserters 1872-1876. (92/420)

Register of deserters and deceased Dups 1920-1930. (92/421)

Register of deserters 1949-1959. (92/422)

Register of discharges, re-enlistments, deaths and desertions 1922-1941 (mostly 1938 and 1939). (92/423)

Discharge registers 1920-1946, 36 vols. (92/440A-Jj)

Registers of casualties; seriously and dangerously ill 1951-1969, 4 vols. (92/600, 601A-C)

Death registers 1920-1981, 8 vols. (92/620A-H)

Death register (reservists) 1946-1962. (92/621)

List of soldiers graves in South Africa, 1899-1902. (92/650)

Prisoners of War. (92/700)

Japanese Prisoners of War. (92/701A/701B)

Royal School of Military Engineering order books, letter books and annual reports, 19th-20th cent. (Mostly published). (Annex)

RE Charitable Benevolent Fund minute books 1869-1965 13 vols; misc reports and accounts, (A 233.61)

RE Historical Society minute books, 2 vols. (A. 233.635)

REHQ Mess committee minutes, 10 vols. (A 233.651)

Proceedings of the RE Band committee 1861-1964, 4 vols. (355.317 ROY)

RE Sports and Games Fund 1960-1972, 1 vol; misc records including cash books, rules, correspondence and papers, 8 vols. (A. 233.68)

RE Sports Board minutes, from November 1972. (A. 233.682)

RE Football Club match reports 1867-1889, 3 vols; general meetings minutes 1893-1939, 1 vol. (A.233.682)

RE Cricket Club match reports 1871-1961, 12 vols; meetings minutes, batting and bowling averages, c 30 vols. (A.233.684)

RE Beagles hunt books 1909 - , 11 vols; ledgers and cash books, 5 vols; hunt diaries and stud book, 4 vols. (A 233.685)

RE Yacht Club charge books and committee minutes, 19th-20th cent, c 30 vols; collection of ships logs including *Buccaneer* 1885-1905, 2 vols; *Annasonia* 1964, 1968-1978; *Avalanche of Adelphi* c 1950-1970. (A.233.686)

1. (b) Official MS reports of RE operations:

Records of various operations executed at the RE Establishment and elsewhere 1822-1866, 10 vols (vols 1-5 written by General Sir William Pasley): 623 "1823/66" (vols I-V); 623 "1842/45" (vol VI); 623 "1845-49" (vol VII); 623 "1822/66" (vol VIII), 623 1856/62 (vol IX); 623 "1864/65" (vol X).

Records of various operations executed at the RE Establishment and elsewhere:
Demolition of the Docks at Sebastopol 1854, 1 vol. (623.68)

Records of various operations ... : The Siege of Sebastopol 1854-1855, 3 vols. (947 "1854-55")

Records of various operations... : The Chinese War 1858-1860. (951 "1858-60")

General Sir William Pasley: Demolition of the Brig William, 1 vol. (92 - Pasley)

Journal of the Expedition to Port L'Orient, 1746, under Lt General St Clair. (940 "1746")

Journal of the Siege of York (Yorktown) in Virginia 1781 (photostat copy, French and English), including 6 maps. (970 "1781")

Reports to the Military Board on various fortified places in India 1784-1800. (623.12 (54))

Journal of the Siege of San Sebastian, 1813. (940 "1813")

Commanding Engineer: The state of fortresses in Flanders, November 1815. (623.1. "18" (493))

Report on French forts 1816. (623.12)

Report with plans on forts in Great Britain, France and Flanders, early 19th cent.
(623.12)

Report on engineering operations in Afghanistan 1839-1841. (958 "1839-41")

Journal of the Inkerman attack, 1854-1855, 1 vol. (947 "1854-55")

Colonel CAR Browne, RE: papers of the administration of Chinese railways during the Boxer Rebellion, 1902. (951 "1902")

The RE in Gallipoli, 1915: MS notes prepared for RE Corps history, 3 vols. (940.3 (497))

Report on engineering operations in Mohmand, North West Frontier Province, 1935
(954 "1935")

Czechoslovakia "C" Force Instructions 1938, 1 folder (940, 42 "1938")

Notes on German field works 1944, 4 folders (623.12 (43))

Report on German coastal batteries in the Calais-Boulogne area 1944. 9623.13 (43))

Commanding Engineer, Palestine Work Services: monthly narrative report, September 1946 - October 1947. (956.94 "1946-47")

Bridging Records 1889-1906, 2 vols (ms reports with plans). (355.486 (RE))

'Who killed Lieutenant Roper?' File of papers used in research into the murder.
(92 (Roper))

2. Papers of RE officers and other ranks (including correspondence, diaries, journals, personal narratives and memoirs):

Major T Beaumont: letters from The Sudan and India, 1939-1946, 1 vol. (92 (Beaumont))

Sapper R Bishop, 48 (South Midland) Signals Company: 'Fed Up: The Great War Diary of Sapper Roland Bishop', 1916-1918. (92.1 Bishop)

EV Bowra RE: diary (typescript), 1931-1935, 2 vol. (92 (Bowra))

Colonel CAR Browne: diary and papers relating to the Boxer Rebellion, June-December 1902. (951 "1902")

Major JL Caldwell: notes and diaries relating to his public works in India, 1802-09, 3 vols. (92 (Caldwell) / 725 (54))

Major General W Cave-Browne: memoirs, 1903-41, (personal account). (92 (Cave Browne))

Lieutenant W Cave-Browne: diary in India and Iraq, 1911-1917. (92 (Cave Browne))

Major PW Clark: 'The Campaign in Northern Kurdistan 1932. Extracts from the letters of Major PW Clark to his family, edited by his son', (ms transcripts). (956.7 "1932")

Lieutenant Colvin: diary and account of the Chitral expedition and Malakand Field Force, 1895-1897, (typed transcript). (954.13 "1895-97")

Captain TWJ Connolly: diaries, January 1848 - December 1863 (3 vols). (355.486 (RE)/A.231.2 (Con))

Colonel VF Craig: 'Desert Exploration 1925-33; reports, letters, newscuttings, describing trips to Petra, Siwa, the Western Desert and Persia'.
(92 (Craig)/ 910 (252))

Lieutenant ABD Edwards: diary in France, 1917-1918, (typescript copy). (92 (Edwards))

Sir John Glubb: diaries 1916-1919, 13 vols (1st vol missing). (92 (Glubb))

Captain FD Gurrey, 173 Tunnelling Company RE: biographical papers and typescript autobiography relating to RE tunnelling and construction on the French coalfields during the First World War. (92 (Gurrey))

Colonel AJ Hepper: memoirs (typescript), 1839-1915. (92 (Hepper))

Colonel AM Henniker: notes and documents relating to his military career, 1887-1929. (92 (Henneker))

E Renouard James RE: 'The Journal of My Life', 3 vols (bound typescript), including a detailed account of his service in the Crimea. (92 (James))

Lieutenant Colonel WFD Jervois: diary when on special commission to Canada to report on its defences, September - December 1863. (971 "1863")

Kennedy ?: 'Cretan Crisis, 6 September 1898, correspondence and papers'.
(92 (Kennedy))

Major WP Jones: letters to Mr Jackson from various garrisons, including Woolwich, Chatham, Ireland, Singapore, Ireland and Natal, 1 vol (typescript). (92 (Jones))

Lawrie family: letters home, 1 vol, collated by Aitken Lawrie. (92 (Lawrie))

Lieutenant Colonel AH Macguffie: personal papers 1907-1947, 1 box.
(92 (Macguffie))

Sgt J McMurphy: 'A Royal Engineer in British Columbia 1862-1863; the diary of Sgt J Mc Murphy'. (A 231.25 (McM))

A Marshall, 249 Field Company, Airborne, RE: 'One Man's War', (personal memoir), December 1942-August 1946. (92 (Marshall))

Major ED Mawer: 'Recollections of a Wartime Garrison Engineer 1939-1945', (typescript). (92 (Mawer))

Major FJ Mulqueen: memoirs (typescript), relating to 172/182 Tunnelling Companies 1914-1918. (92 (Mulqueen))

WF Mutlan: 'memiors of life in the RE', 1902-c1930, (typescript journal). (92 (Mutlan))

DG Newman, 440 Searchlight Company: memoir (typescript), 1939-1945. (92 (Newman))

Captain W Nicholas: diaries (transcripts) relating to the blockade of Cadiz 1810-1811. (940 "1810-11" NIC)

Major H Panet: personal journal and record relating to service in Palestine, 1936. (92 (Panet))

Brigadier AW Roper, Commanding Engineer, Dardanelles: papers 1915, 3 vols. (940.3 (497)

Lieutenant Colonel GH Sim: journal of the Afghan campaign 1879-1880, with 4 maps. (954.1 "1879-80"); journal of the campaign in South Africa 1899-1902. (968 "1899"/02)

General Sir Frank Simpson: private letters received, 1942-1945, 1 vol. (92 (Montgomery)

Lieutenant GE Smith: 'The Mombasa - Uganda Road', journal and panorama sketch book. (967.6)

Major JE Smith: letters and sketches 1892-1913, 1 vol. (92 (Smith))

Colonel FTN Spratt Bowrigg: 'MS account of work of the RE in the China or 'Boxer' War of 1900-01', (lecture). (951/952 "1900/01")

Colonel John Charles Tyler: 'General Sir William Pasley, his family and career', 1929, 2 vols, unpublished ms account with inserted correspondence and papers. (92 Pasley))

Lieutenant TT Pears: 'Extract from Overland Journey to India. 1937', (typescript account). (92 (Pears))

Lieutenant JCG Vowler: memoirs (typescript), 1914-1918. (92 (Vowler))

Lieutenant General Sir Harold Williams: letters from officers who served him 1947-1950, 1 folder. (954.358.2)

AL Wilson 128 Field Company RE: 'Sketches, 1916-1919', (typescript account). (92 (Wilson))

3. Collection of maps, plans and sketches :

See separate library index to plans, fortifications and battle maps. This is an extensive collection dating from the Peninsular War period.

4. Photograph collection:

See separate index maintained by library staff. The collection dates from the Crimean War period, including individual and group portraits, topographical photographs and technical military engineering subjects.

5. Rare Books and Manuscripts Collection stored in separate security cabinet:

including;

Baron van Coehorn: two volume manuscript with plans of fortifications in the Low Countries c 1680. (940 (084) 623.1."16").

Johannes Nicolai Valturius, De Re Militaria, Verona, 2nd edition, 1483. (623.6."14" = 50.)

END.

JRS January 1994