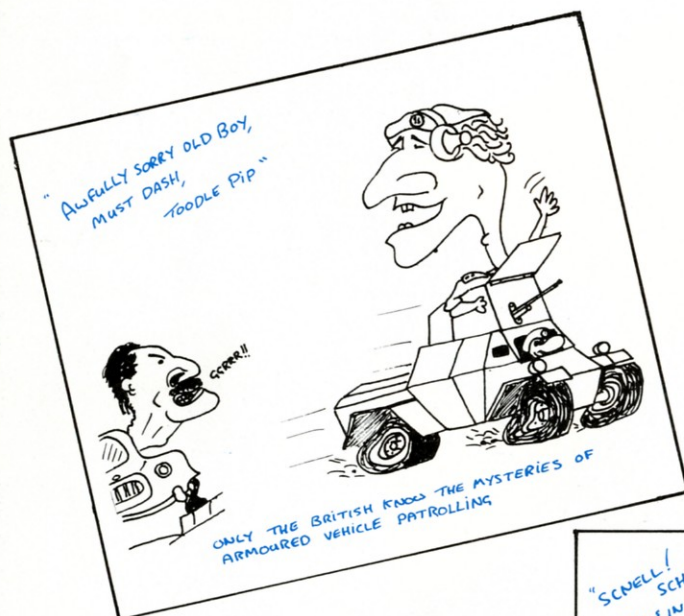
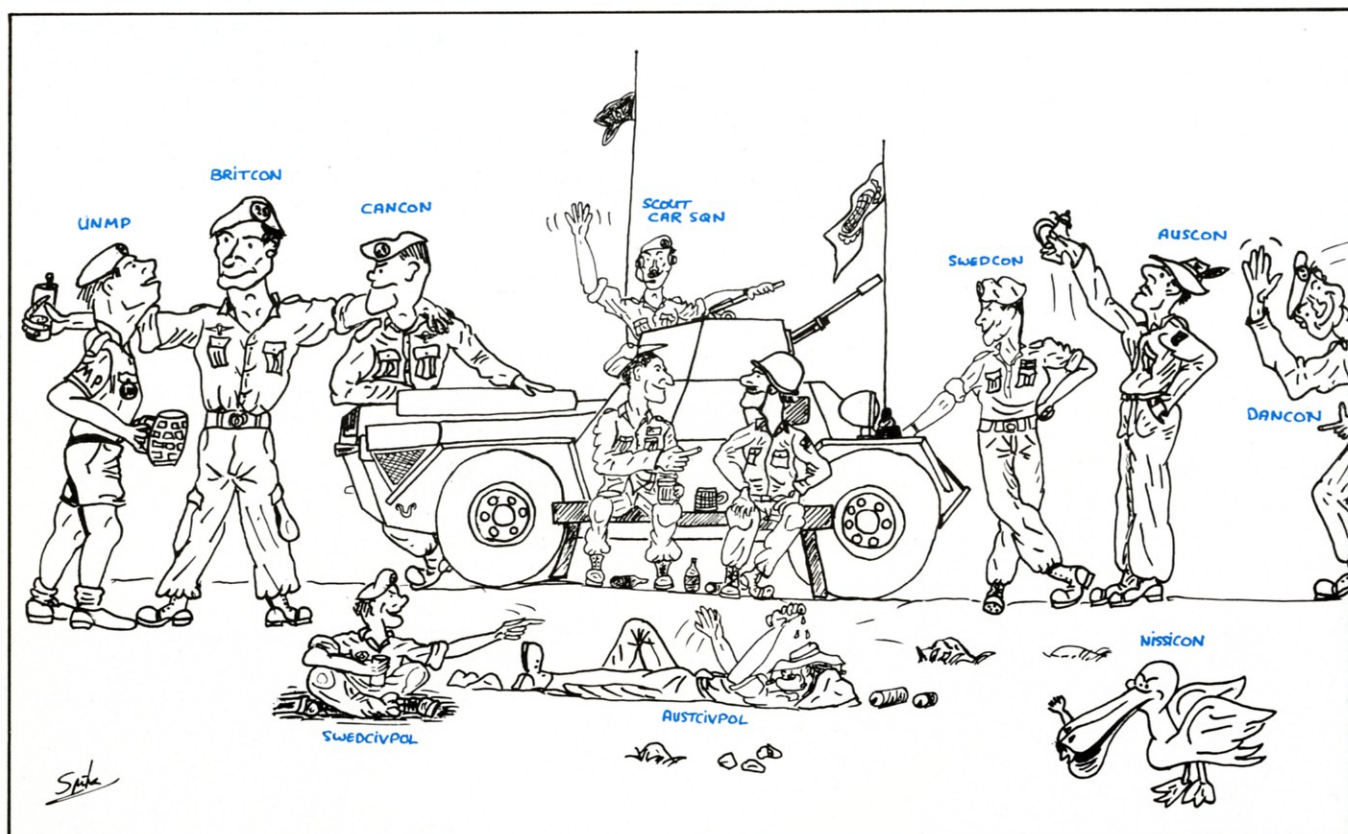


THE BLUE BERET



NOVEMBER 1986





"SPIKE" - is the cartoon signature and nickname of Cpl H Windle. Cpl Windle is a member of D Squadron, 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards, who are at present the Force Scout Car Squadron in UNFICYP.

Spike was born in Batley, West Yorkshire and joined the QDG's in August 1974. Since then he has served in England, Germany, Northern Ireland and now here in Cyprus. It was whilst in Northern Ireland during 1980-82 that he began drawing mainly as an alternative to watching videos in his free time. He has never sold commercially but hopes that one day someone may be interested in commissioning him to draw for them.

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The Blue Beret is the house journal of the United Nations Force in Cyprus and as such, is intended to provide a source of information on current events within the Force, on UN matters of general interest and on local tourist advice.

Articles of general interest are invited from all members of the Force. Photographs should be in black and white on glossy paper size 160mm by 210mm. This is an official publication prepared under the direction of the Force Commander. The views expressed are, however, those of the author concerned and do not necessarily conform with official policy.

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Front cover

UNFICYP

BOARD SAILING CHAMPIONSHIP

By Mr. Andrew Beswick

THE BLUE BERET



Editorial

24 October marks United Nations Day. Sadly this event goes somewhat unnoticed by most people in this world except for - dare I say it - those who benefit from a day's holiday! At 41 years of age the United Nations has gracefully attained middle age and is now one of the senior, if not the senior international organisation. This is in fact a success story in itself and so it should be. Organisations such as ours are only ever as good as its staff and members. As in all other organisations there have been ups and downs, nevertheless, the old girl continues to survive the trials and tribulations of international politics. The present storm clouds on the horizon as is only known too well are of a financial nature. We as individuals are of course in no position to rectify this sorry state of affairs and we can only hope our political masters will be in a position to help. We can on the other hand, help not to exacerbate this problem. An unnecessary burning light will contribute to our present drive to cut overheads. Don't let the UN down through thoughtlessness because we owe it to our future generations. Who knows she may still be around at her 100th birthday!

Contents

	Page
Cartoons	2
Editorial/Contents	3
BRITCON Medal Parade	4
Canadian Airborne Regiment	5
Pictorial News	6/7
Interview with Lt Col Machly	8
Safe & Skilled Competition	9
UNFICYP Transport Sqn/Vouni Palace	10
1986 NINES Cup/Finnish Minister visits UNFICYP	11
Golf In Cyprus	12
Camp Victoria Opens Her Gates/AUSTCIVPOL New Commander	13
Master Driver	14
Sport	15
Caving In Cyprus	16



BRITCON MEDAL PARADE



By: Capt J Shaw

The BRITCON Medal Parade took place on the UNPA Football Pitch on Friday 19 September. The security situation in the Sovereign Bases had prevented the Third Battalion - The Parachute Regiment from practicing for the normal parade format, so a series of entertaining events were conceived to provide a build up to the presentation of medals to 24 BRITCON personnel by the Force Commander.



Force Commander chats to the Bandmaster, WO1 Hogg.

The Parade was launched by a sevenman Free Fall Display by the Third Battalion team, joined by Capt Hal Skarup from the Canadian Airborne Regiment. Jumping from a Wessex of 84 Squadron from 8,000 feet, they linked in free fall then split up to open their canopies. Spiralling to the cross in front of the spectators, they each released a flag; one for each Sector, one for the UN and a Battalion flag. It was this flag that the team captain, Sgt Andy Sinclair, flew as he delayed landing till last and landed smack on the cross, to the crowd's delight.



A Kukri Dance followed from the men of 69 Squadron, Queen's Gurkha Engineers. This was a delightful spectacle, surely unprecedented at a Medal Parade. Only one of the four had actually performed before, so the Dance was obviously the cause of some sleepless nights to get it right on the night!

The Kukri Dance



Photos by: Sgt A Beaton

The Falklands Band of the Parachute Regiment Beat the Retreat with a wide range of music, from opera to the Regimental March of the SAS. The Bandmaster, WO1 Hogg learnt his music with the Cavalry, and the variety, wit and lightness of touch displayed were greatly appreciated.

As the medals were presented and the Force Commander made his speech, one man's attention was concentrated elsewhere on the position of the sun! For SO2 BRITCON, Major Harvey Mitchell, this was his fourth BRITCON Medal Parade and his fourth attempt at getting the sunset ceremony, that traditionally concludes parades, to coincide with sunset. On this his last day in the job, the synchronization appeared perfect until a cloud began to cover the sun as the speech was made. Sadly, this meant that 'Sunset' was played with the sun still technically up but obscured by clouds. However, as that was the only thing that went wrong, it was an entertaining, colourful and an enjoyable BRITCON Medal Parade.



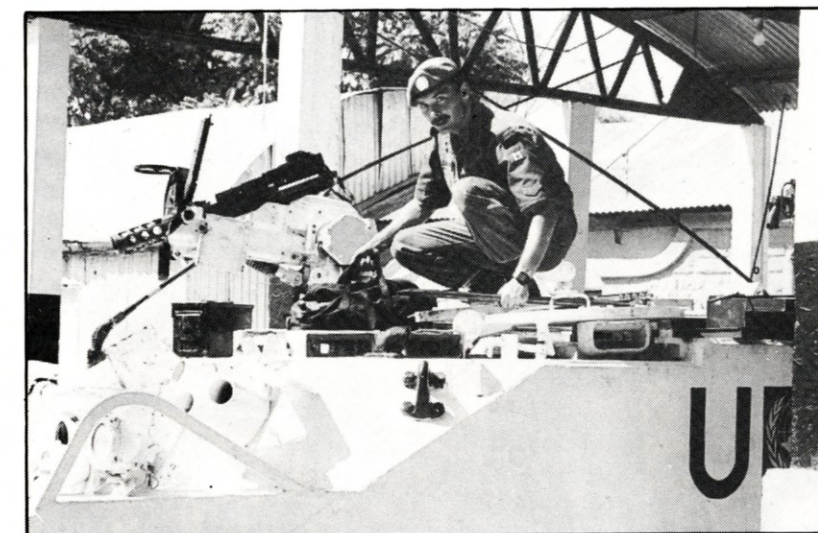
CANADIAN AIRBORNE REGIMENT



By: Capt H Skarrup

With the arrival of the remaining members of the 46th rotation of Canadian Forces troops to Cyprus in September, the Canadian Airborne Regiment has settled into the job of peacekeeping full time. The members of 3 Commando not accompanying the Regiment completed their tour on the Island six months ago, and are now looking after the "rear party duties" for the unit at home in Petawawa, Ontario in Canada. On the Island our Headquarters and Signal Sqn, and members of 1 Commando (Commando West) and 2 Commando (Commando East) are securely ensconced within the Buffer Zone in the Ledra Palace at Wolseley Barracks Nicosia or in many of the line houses on OP duty. The remaining elements of the Regiment, including the Airborne Service Commando, are housed within the grounds of the UN Protected Area at Blue Beret Camp.

As with any rotating unit, the various change of command ceremonies have taken place, and the handovers are complete. The Regimental flags and signs are all



Cpl Chapin of the AB HQ & Sigs Recce Platoon prepares his Lynx for patrol

in place and giving CANCON a "new" look.

Having a large percentage of Francophone personnel with the Canadian Contingent creates some interesting situations on the line, as visitors are briefed in French on Commando West OP's and in English on Commando East OP's. Any visitors can be briefed in either of Canada's two official languages, which is a definite asset in the multilingual environment of the UN in Cyprus.

The Buffer Zone area of

Nicosia with its partially or fully destroyed buildings forming a barrier across the middle of the old city and running West to Sector Two and East to Sector Five, has provided interesting viewing for all members of the contingent. The broad differences in culture between the Turk and Greek Cypriot sides of the line also have their contracts with the Canadian style of living. On the other hand, the common ground where both sides seem to make use of the same water and power system for example, does show that where necessary difficulties can be worked out.

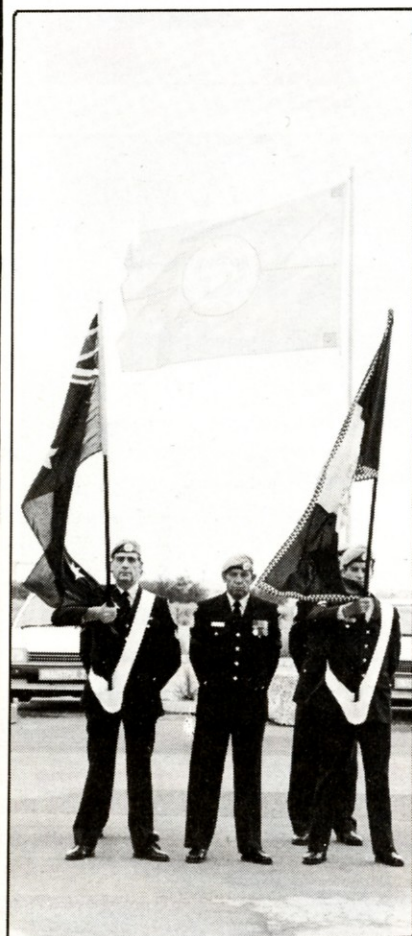
A continuing series of negotiations, local and bilateral agreements and occasional low level confrontations mark the normal cycle's of duty for Regimental personnel on the line. Helping to resolve any difficulties that arise takes up a considerable amount of time on all sides, but at present, most problems seem to meet with a reasonable solution sooner rather than later. It is to be hoped that eventually, the same will apply to the overall question of the future for Cyprus, and that during our tour, the Canadian Airborne Regiment will contribute to that solution.



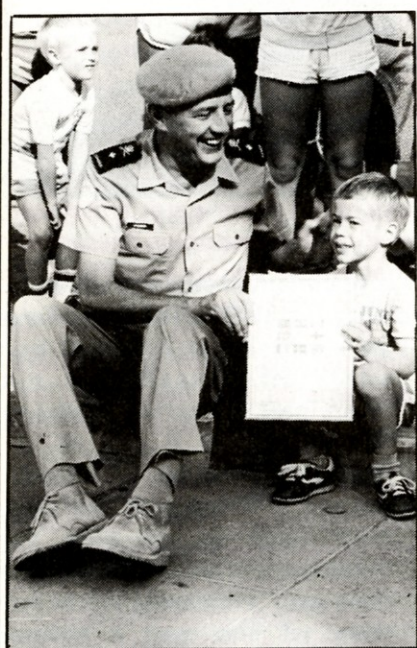
French Canadian members of 1 Commando clean their unit weapons in Wolseley Barracks.

PICTORIAL NEWS PICTORIAL NEWS PICTORIAL NEWS PICTORIAL NEWS PICTORIAL NEWS PICTORIAL NEWS PICTORIAL NEWS PICTORIAL NEWS PICTORIAL NEWS PICTORIAL NEWS

AUSTCIVPOL MEDAL PARADE



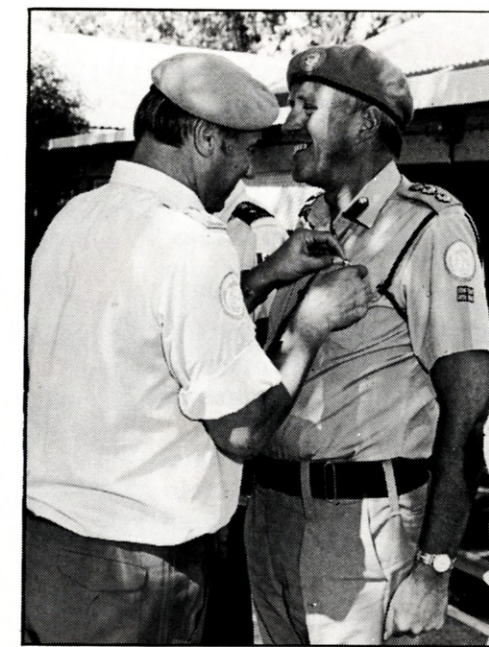
Would you ever trust a policeman, looking at this crowd???



Brig Gen MacInnis getting down to the job! presenting Douglas Greenhowe with his 50th Hash Certificate. At 5 years of age, Douglas is the youngest ever hasher. Well done.



United Nations Day Press Reception at Ledra Palace Hotel, where journalists from the north and south came together.



Force Commander presenting COS & DCOS with their UN Medal



A Host of Padres!!



QDG's on exercise in Trouli Copper Mines

INTERVIEW WITH THE OUTGOING COMMANDING OFFICER SECTOR SIX-LT COL WERNER MACHLY



By: Capt Karl Miklautsch

Your tour as Commanding Officer Sector Six is coming to an end. Because of this forthcoming event, I'd like to ask you to answer a few questions for the BLUE BERET readers here in Cyprus and also for the readers in those countries that contribute troops to UNFICYP.

What motives did you have as CO of an HQ tank Bn in Austria to serve for one year with UNFICYP as CO Sec Six?

There were several reasons for my decision. Speaking of my service for UNFICYP, I'd like to point out that this is almost the only chance for us Austrian officers to meet fellow officers from other countries and from the military point of view, being successful when competing with them. Additionally, this is an excellent opportunity to find out about the standard of the training and the employment of our soldiers. Personally speaking, I have always considered my UN-Service a good chance to make a small contribution for keeping the peace in the world.

Due to your two previous missions here in Cyprus, you are well acquainted with the military and political situation here. Did you know in advance with what you'd have to cope with?

Undoubtedly, my former stays here have helped me a great deal to cope with the situation in Cyprus - a situation that has remained much the same. Apart from that, I have had enough time to prepare myself carefully for my work so that my conception of a peacekeeping mission has corresponded with the prevailing situation here on the island.

Personally speaking, what

event has struck you most during your tour here?

On the bright side - I'd like to draw your attention to the readiness of every single soldier of our contingent to give his very best so that smooth functioning of our battalion as the fulfilment of our task has always been guaranteed. I am deeply impressed and am convinced that one can rely on this battalion.



It is known that you are highly experienced as a UN peace keeping officer.

Do you think that the Austrian way, a combined professional and reservist contingent, has been successful in coping with all the problems that arise from our task in our sector?

Referring to the mixture of professionals and reservists within our army, I have to say that our Austrian model has done well. May I also add that we do not fear a comparison with the other UNFICYP contingents. But, I am a little concerned about the lack of willingness of them taking part in military competitions. The results from Military Skills Competitions speak for themselves. In former years our teams were always among the best. At present we are

among the "also-rans". I put that down to the rather short time of training of our reservists.

Do you see main differences between your position here and your position as CO at home?

Yes I do! At home I am too much involved in administrative work of my unit. It's task and organization is completely different from

AUSCON's. What exerted a very strong pull on my becoming the CO of a field unit was the fact that I could make decisions alone - decisions that were accepted unquestionably by my superiors.

You are a passionate wind-surfer, who has the knack of utilising the power of the wind for his wind-surfing skills. Symbolically speaking, have you also been successful when you tried to get the very best out of your soldiers?

First of all I have to reply that I am only an average wind-surfer, and for the rest of your question - you really have to ask the ones that should know best - my soldiers!

May I express my warmest thanks for this interview.

SAFE & SKILLED DRIVING COMPETITION

AUSCON FAR AHEAD

By: WO1 G Schwingenschlogel

The legendary skills of the AUSCON drivers were once more proved in an impressive way during the official Safe and Skilled Driving Competition held on 7 October 1986 at HQ UNFICYP Nicosia.



Although the responsible officers 1/Lt Zahrada and WO1 Schwingenschlogel were well aware of the high standards of their drivers, they stuck to the motto "training is the best preparation" and did not spare man or material to eliminate the last small weaknesses. So the Austrians were in every respect far ahead of all other drivers. Already the first competition, "driving with light vehicles" was won by 1/Cpl W. Erian with a Brit and a Canadian following up. In



Back row: M Cpl Feyel, L Cpl Prochaska, M Cpl Stamminger
Front row: M Cpl Baeck, L Cpl Bartenberger, M Cpl Erian, 1/Lt Zahrada

this competition the AUSCON team could not be beaten and won the team prize. The only non-Austrian victory was gained by a Dane in the individual contest "driving with heavy vehicles", but he was closely followed up by two Austrian drivers, 1/Cpl W. Stamminger and 1/Cpl N Bartenberger. This made AUSCON by far winners of the team contest in this class, since the fourth place was also won by an Austrian, 1/Cpl W Prochaska. In consequence the overall prize for all contests also went to AUSCON.



The Force Commander, Maj Gen G. Greindl and the CO/Sector Six, Lt Col W. Machly, who both closely watched this event, were very pleased and expressed their praise and appreciation of the performance of all competitors, in particular of course, that of the Austrians.

Photos by: Sgt A. Beaton

7

UNFICYP TRANSPORT SQUADRON

By: 2Lt A Heath

The time is drawing near when we, 7 Sqn RCT will sadly depart from the Sunny Island and hand over to our sister unit 8 Sqn RCT. During our time here we have covered over 700,000 miles and held the accident figures down to a respectable level.

Over the last few months we have managed to achieve a certain notoriety both in sporting events and military competitions.

7 Sqn RCT Military Skills Comp. Team.



L/R-WO2(SSM) Phillips, Lt Bush, Dvr Smith, Dvr Tenniswood & Dvr McFadden

Lt Bush led a five man team to a remarkable fourth place in the Military Skills competition, finishing behind three teams from the resident Canadian Infantry Battalion. This is the highest placing ever achieved by a non infantry unit and we congratulate them on their performance. Twenty two members of the Squadron took part in the Dancon marches and Cpl Dougal

succeeded on being the first British representative home on both days. Most of the participants could be identified the following day by their inability to walk (after all we are trained to cover the ground in trucks!).

To prove that the Squadron is not infallible, the sectors succeeded in taking all the major prizes in the Safe and Skilled Driving competition organised by Capt Prince, Lt Bush, 2Lt Ferrie and SSgt Young.

As we prepare to leave we hope that during our tour we have succeeded in achieving our aim which was to provide a service throughout UNFICYP. Some of you may recall that our Corps March is "Wait for the wagon" we trust that you have not waited too long for your wagon and wish all contingents the best for the future. Finally we hope that 8 Sqn RCT can retrieve the CO's Shield from 254 Signals Sqn in the forthcoming Support Regiment competition.

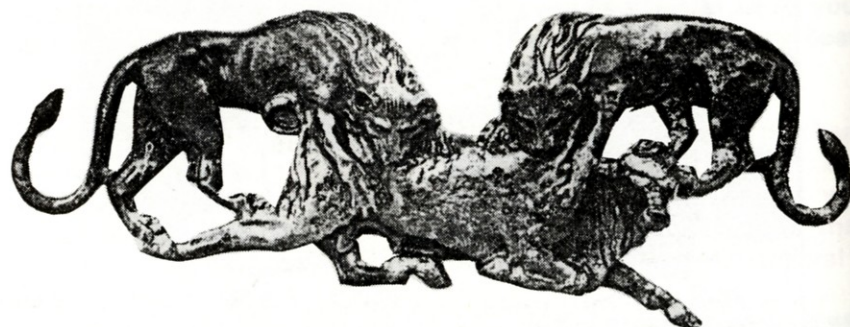
VOUNI PALACE
near Soloi

Immigrants from the Aegean world started arriving in Cyprus from around 1400 BC. By 1100 BC whole Mycenaean settlements were arriving and forming their own communities. Soloi was one such settlement and it developed into a capital city of one of the great Greek kingdoms. By 545 BC the whole island was under Persian rule. During the Ionian Revolt of 499 BC the Greek cities tried to break free of the Persians but were unsuccessful. The Persian king sent an army to quell the disturbance. The Cypriot army was beaten in the field and the cities were sieged. Soloi held out for five months.

The pro-Persian king of Marion with the permission of the Persians built the Palace on the

hill at Vouni to oversee the city of Soloi. In 450 BC the Athenian General KIMON liberated Marion and placed a pro-Greek in the palace. The new owner rebuilt the palace with a strong Mycenaean

style in order to emphasize his Greek descent. The palace was totally destroyed by fire in 380 BC. The building is one of the finest examples of a Classical building in Cyprus.



A TREASURE FROM VOUNI - made around 450 BC, two lions killing a bull

By: 2Lt J. Gray

THE 1986 NINES CUP



As is the tradition, the Nines competition was held on the first of October between the "Cavalry Strollers" and the "Artic Stormers" who were represented by the Camp Polar team, who liked to be known as Athletico Athienou.

The build-up of the traditional cup match was intense by both teams with 2Lt Gray captaining the Strollers whilst Captain Ehn led his side. Both sides knew the basics of the old Saxon game and Major Freiburg produced a 1932 book of rules by which the game was played.

The Swedes won the crondale and decided to scramble immediately. They did not reckon on Sgt Ratcliffe's amazing ability in this area and it proved to be costly as Cpl Gibbons was able to break through the Swedish pollid and with good support from Tprs Jones and Jones successfully barronged and collected four extra lairs for benning.

The Stormers pressurised the Strollers Darril and eventually bedoynd to lead after the 1st Strumpf. The second strumpf



proved to be tiring, especially in the afternoon heat. Four hours of this sport is fine in North Europe but not Cyprus! As a result there were many small mistakes by both boyles thus causing a lot of open grotting. The best grot was by 2Lt Gray, Tprs Meredith and Austin. They took advantage of a bad gryme by Capt Svensson and WO2 Moller and took on two of the Strollers grabgages - Lts Sultan and Falleren - and beat them. Mr

Gray out-paced WO2 Tornberg to barrong but Lt Lundgren paranged Tpr Williams to close the scores.

The Stormers lived up to their name and had a full barrong cut down to a tryllb by a great parrang by LCpl Talbot on the Stormers skipper thus giving the Strollers the victory by 2 bodrings and 3 pipis to 2 bodrings and 1 pipi.

The cup now lives in the Squadron Bar - from where it has been absent for the last four years.

By: Capt J-E Juslin



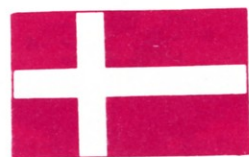
Defence Minister Pihlajamaki receiving the UN plaque in the Lion's Den, where he met members of the Finnish Contingent.

THE FINNISH MINISTER OF
DEFENCE VISITED UNFICYP

The Finnish Defence Minister, VEIKKO PIHLAJAMAKI, visited UNFICYP on his official inspection tour to the Middle East on the 2nd November. He was accompanied among others by Vice Admiral JAN KLENBERG, the Chief of Staff of the Finnish Defence Forces.

During the Ministers short visit to HQ UNFICYP he met the Force Commander, Major General Greindl and the UN Special Representative Mr Holger. He also met members of FINCON under the command of Major RAIMO KOSKELA.

From Cyprus his tour continued to the Middle East where he inspected, among others, the Finnish Battalion in the Golan and Lebanon.



GOLF IN CYPRUS

By: Major Niels Truelson

As President of the Danish Army Golf Association and commanded down for 6½ months service with the UN-forces in Cyprus during nearly the whole golf season in Denmark, I was very interested in the golf possibilities in Cyprus.

But it is a long way from DANCON to the SBA and the few golfers in Sector 1 were very lucky to discover that one of the oldest golfcourses in Cyprus - the Cyprus Mine Corporation GC - actually only was five minutes drive from



View from clubhouse over Dhekelia Golf Course

Not very surprising the golf courses are to be found in the SBA's. There are 18 hole courses at DHEKELIA and EPISKOPÍ and a 9 hole course at AKROTIRI. As far as I know all of them are combined military and civilian golfcourses. DHEKELIA can irrigate 12 fairways, and is still expanding. There are no greens in Cyprus - only "browns" which consist of a combination of sand and oil mixed in a cement mixer and then spread out on a round cement ground to form the "brown". You are only allowed to play in flat shoes without pattern on the soles and you have to sweep the "brown" with a broom turned upside down before you leave it. Greenfees are fairly cheap - £C3 in high season (October - April) and £C2 in the low season. Membership of either of the two 18 holes courses allows you to play on the other green free of charge.

our HQ. Since 1974 nobody at DANCON had been allowed to play there, but this contingent managed to obtain permission.

Today it is a 6 hole golfcourse but a seventh hole is to be reopened. The green is situated next to the hospital at PENDAYIA and a note dated 1 January 1975 on the door to the clubhouse tells you that "Mr I.R. Cooper, Secretary and past Captain of C.M.C.G.C., resident in a C.M.C. staff house at PENDAYIA is authorised to maintain the C.M.C. golf course, and use the club house and equipment for the benefit of golfers in Cyprus".

That means all golfers are very welcome and there are no greenfees, entrance or membership fees, but it is customary to donate 500 Turkish lire to help towards the maintenance costs. The course consists of three par 4 and three

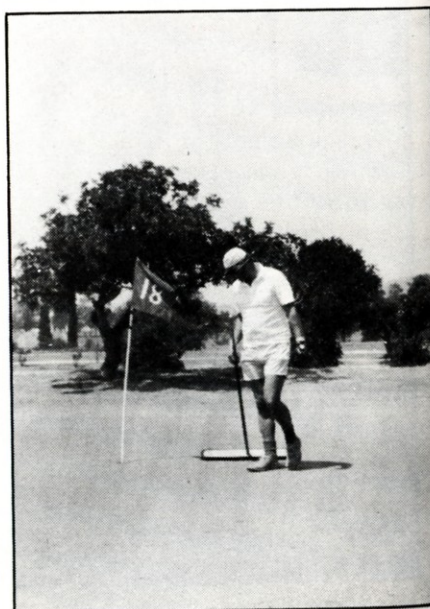


par holes, two of them 200 yards or longer. The "browns" are well bunkered and as some of the holes are played along the seashore, there is always a good wind to make the course quite difficult and interesting to play. In the old days the fairways were irrigated but not any longer, but as soon as the first rain comes, Mr Cooper says "the fairways will turn green again".

On Tuesdays and Thursdays English speaking people from KYRENIA and the surrounding country meet at around 9 o'clock to have a friendly game of golf.

Afterwards they enjoy their own sandwiches and drinks in the club house which - of course - has a 19th hole with a refrigerator to keep the beers cold. On the other days of the week the course is very empty, and one will never have to wait on the 1st tee.

I really would recommend golfers in HQ UNFICYP to contact DANCON to arrange a game of golf at this rather special course which actually is the nearest to NICOSIA.



On a golf course even generals have to work!



CAMP VICTORIA OPENS HER GATES

By: Capt Tommy Klaar.

For more than twenty-five years Sweden has contributed to peace by sending peace-keeping forces to various parts of the world. Consequently, the interest in UN missions abroad is considerable amongst the Swedish people, especially in those visiting the countries involved. That is why the Swedish contingent for many years have arranged guided tours around their main camp, which is Camp Victoria in Larnaca.



Learning about UNFICYP



"Once we get you inside..."!

Six or seven times a week the Swedes open the gates for groups of about 40 tourists from Nordic travel agencies. During May to October this means around 1,000 tourists every month. Making a total of approx 6,000 during the summer battalion!

The visitors are guided by Swedish UN Officers, who first take them to church! This is where they are given a briefing on UNFICYP in general and the Swedish contingent in particular.

Thereafter the "Pelican Walk" takes place on the One Way Road through the camp, here the tourists are shown different branches in action and how the UN soldiers live their daily life here in Cyprus.

The one hours visit to the camp is very popular and of course is an excellent opportunity to spread good will and an understanding of the UN's role here in Cyprus. A unique, but nevertheless important part of our peacekeeping job on this island.

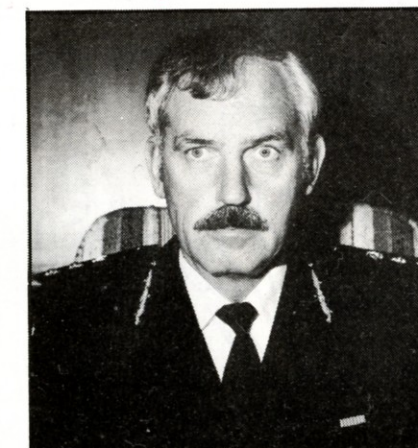
AUSTCIVPOL CHANGE OF COMMAND

By: Inspector John Deeks

It is that time again when we have had to say farewell to the Commander, Austcivpol, Chief Superintendent Walter WILLIAMS and his wife Phyl and now welcome the new Commander, Chief Superintendent Alan BIRD, who took over on 24 October 1986.

Whilst it is recognised that the publication of these remarks is a trifle belated the Austcivpol Contingents would like to express their appreciation to Chief Superintendent WILLIAMS for his leadership and guidance during his time as Commander. Our thanks also go to Phyl for her friendship and the positive contribution she made towards the well-being of the members.

That they enjoyed their time in Cyprus was evident from the trips that they made in the region, enjoying the archaeological sites and even it has been suggested, discovering some that the local



Ch Supt Alan Bird



people did not know about.

Chief Superintendent Alan BIRD joined the Victorian Police Force in 1958. Shortly afterwards he moved to Canberra and joined the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Police.

However, it does appear that Alan may have a problem occupying his spare time, as I understand his hobbies include golf and gardening as well as swimming. As the first two are a little difficult in Cyprus, perhaps now is a good time to expand the horizons as far as hobbies are concerned! Perhaps windsurfing could be the thing or, who knows, we could see a new face in the Aussie cricket team?

MASTER DRIVER WRITES STAY LOW-SAY NO

Certain words and phrases conjure up images of Christmas for all of us 'Away in a Manger', 'Decorations', 'Christmas presents', 'Yule tide' etc. This list can now unfortunately be extended to include 'Drinking and Driving'. There are certain things you can remember over Christmas which will keep you free from injury and accident involvement through drink.

5 TO 1

The legal limit for driving is 80 milligrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood. Please remember that this Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) is a legal limit. To reach the legal limit an average adult male would need to drink only 5 units of alcohol. What is a unit of alcohol? Each of the following equals one unit of alcohol:

½ pint of beer, or
1 glass of wine, or
1 glass of sherry, or
1 single measure of spirits

Drinks affect different people in different ways. Size, sex and

the amount of food in the stomach will each play a part in deciding how quickly you reach the legal limit. However one thing is certain: eventually every last drop of alcohol will find its way into your bloodstream. This leads to another certainty; your driving will become impaired and your chances of having an accident or being stopped by the police will increase. How can you reach a safe compromise between having a Merry Christmas and not Drinking and Driving? Consider the following defensive measures:

*** Remember it is now socially acceptable to refuse a drink on the grounds that you are driving.

*** Don't feel embarrassed about ordering soft drinks and don't ridicule someone who does.

*** If you intend to drink any amount take a taxi home. Order the taxi before you go out; while you are still sober.

*** If you intend to drive stay alcohol free.

*** Keep out of buying rounds of drinks. To avoid feeling mean you can pay for something else.

*** If you must drink make a point of ordering single measures of spirits and order shandy instead of beer.

*** Keep a watchful and friendly eye on any person who is a known drinker and driver.

If you go to collect your car, from wherever you left it after a heavy night out, take care as it is not uncommon for drivers who have had 5 pints of beer or 5 brandy sours to be still unfit to drive up to 1100 hrs on the following day.

Finally please remember the spirit of Christmas does not come out of a bottle.

**STAY LOW - SAY NO
PLEASE DON'T DRINK AND
DRIVE**

CARTOON



UNFICYP BOARD SAILING CHAMPIONSHIPS

CRICKET WITH A DIFFERENCE

By: Mrs Carol Biddle

The UNFICYP Wives Club held a fund raising cricket match on Friday 26 Sept 86, challenging the WO's & Sgt's Mess Jubilee Camp. The whole afternoon was a roaring success with hamburger, b.b.q. and cake stalls, all made by the wives, who's effort and presentation was magnificent. All raffle prizes were donated from various shops



The good sports & their Night Nurse!



"We are the champions"

and establishments in Nicosia. Our special thanks must go the men who looked wonderful on the day and were tremendous sports, we look forward to a re-match sometime next year! Well done to our ladies who had only had 3 practises and played brilliantly. The afternoon raised nearly £400, which is a magnificent sum. The Wives Club would like to thank everybody involved, and all those people who sponsored us. It was a hard but very enjoyable task!

CAVING IN CYPRUS

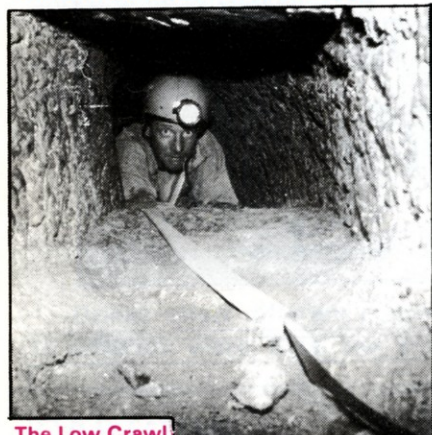
By: Cpl Garry Cripps

Photos by: Sgt A. Beaton

The opportunity to explore new areas and hopefully to find virgin caves, is every caver's dream. When a UN tour of Cyprus was forecast for Cpl Chris Gibbons and I, our dream became more of a reality.

There is very little knowledge of cave exploration in Cyprus. This thought fired our hopes in making new discoveries, unseen by man before.

Our first job was to find the limestone regions in which to begin our explorations. We were unable to obtain a geological survey of the island, but fortunately "grapevines" being what they are, word soon spread of our eagerness to explore anything resembling a cave.

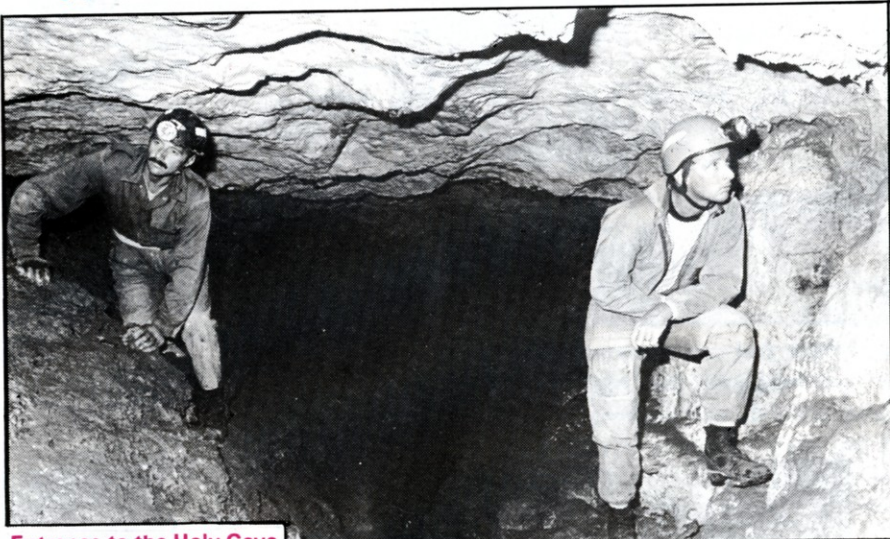


The Low Crawl

We were introduced to members of the Cyprus Wildlife Society, who had discovered a cave thought to be occupied by Fruit Bats. As they did not have the necessary equipment, our assistance was requested in their exploration. The "Bat Cave" as we now call it, although comparatively small was a good first find for caver and naturalist alike. The entrance was high in the wall of a gorge. Once inside we were confronted by a sheer drop of approximately twenty metres. The rock was very loose so it took a while for us to find safe anchor points and to rig up the equipment we needed. The actual descent was quite simple, 'straight down' into the darkness. The cave was approximately 25 metres high, 35 metres long and varied

between 3 and 5 metres wide. We found several calcite and crystalline formations on the walls. The cave was also home to a colony of about 2,000 fruit bats, ranging from 15 to 45 cm in wingspan.

discovered that the cave was home to two different species of insectivorous bats. Until now it was not known that different species would live together in this way. This was quite a find for the naturalists.



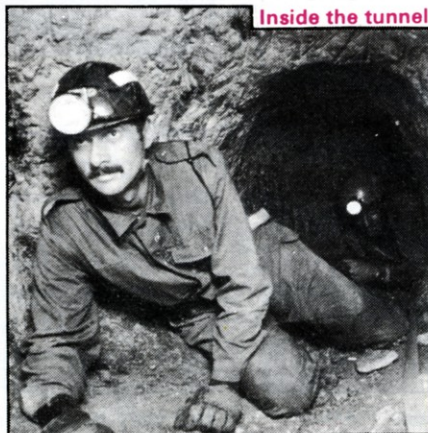
Entrance to the Holy Cave

In August we were asked to take David Attenborough's (one of Great Britain's most leading naturalists) film crew into the cave to film the bats for his new series "The First Eden", which is to be shown in March next year.

After further conversations with local shepherds and farmers, we set about to explore a second cave which we call "The Holy Cave" due to the shrine placed at the entrance. It is said that a saint once lived there. The cave is a waterway and quite different from the first we had explored. We found some excellent calcite flowstone formations and many straws and stalactites. We also

Due to the overwhelming numbers of bats we have not been able to reach the end of the cave. In the interest of conservation and for the sake of our blood pressure, we have left the cave to the bats for now, we will try during the winter months, when the bats will be hibernating and hopefully we can bypass them.

We have several projects underway, one of them being a tunnel believed to be an escape route from an ancient monastery (this has yet to be confirmed). On our first exploration of this passageway we were confronted by a few bats that receded further into the tunnel as we advanced. At one point the tunnel turned into a very low crawl, going on for about 25 metres. It was approximately only 50 cms wide and 40 cms high. This is where technique comes in and elbows get worn out. If your Bottle will go, now is the time it will happen! I only hoped that the bats we had seen earlier didn't put up a fight, "This tunnel ain't big enough for the both of us". The crawl led to a larger tunnel which we will explore at a later date. We'll let you know what happens!



Inside the tunnel