



A History of

The Princess Mary's Hospital

Royal Air Force Akrotiri 1963–2013

Colonel D J Vassallo L/RAMC



Dedication

To my father, Dr Luis Vassallo¹, who awakened in me a keen interest in medical history, and to all the patients and staff, past and present, of The Princess Mary's Hospital, Royal Air Force Akrotiri, Cyprus.

¹Vassallo D J. Obituary – L A Vassallo. *British Medical Journal* 10 December 1994;309:1578



COMMANDING OFFICER
 CLINICAL DIRECTOR
 OC NURSING
 OC SUPPORT UNIT

Welcome to The Princess Mary's Hospital (TPMH)

Ward / Department	Reception	Level
Patient Admin Cell (PAC)		Ground
Outpatients		Ground
GU Medical Department		Ground
Oral Maxillofacial Surgery		Ground
Plaster Suite		Ground
Central Sterilisation Services Department		Ground
Hospital Kitchen / Dining Room		Ground
Ward 1		Ground
Pathology (Access via Outpatients)		Ground
Medical & Dental Servicing Section		Ground
Barrack Supply		Ground
Lifts		All
Ward 4 - Maternity Unit		First
*+ The St John & Red Cross		First
Defence Medical Welfare Service		First
Physiotherapy / Rehabilitation Department		First
Clinical Measurements (ECG / EEG)		First
Hospital Headquarters		First
Hospital Chapel		First
Hospital Support (Registry)		First
Medical Library		First
Conference Suite & Lecture Theatre		Second
Ward 5 - Young Persons Surgery		Second
Ward 6 - General Ward		Second
Radiology Department (X-ray)		Second
Operating Theatres		Third
Ward 7 - Aeromed Cell		Third
Ward 8 - General Ward		Third
Community Mental Health		Cliff House



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First Edition

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Introduction

The Princess Mary's Hospital, Akrotiri, more familiarly known by its initials as TPMH, at the south-western tip of the Akrotiri peninsula within the Western Sovereign Base Area in Cyprus, is the last permanent British military hospital remaining out of fifteen that existed in the 1960s (as distinct from operational field hospitals such as Camp Bastion, in Helmand Province, Afghanistan). Its closure brings to an end an era of permanent British military hospitals dating back to pre-Napoleonic times. It is only fitting, in this 50th and final year of its existence, to commemorate this anniversary by recalling how TPMH and its predecessor at RAF Akrotiri have provided essential hospital services in peacetime and in times of conflict for service personnel, dependants and the local population in Cyprus. It has also given succour to individual seafarers in distress and supported maritime operations and humanitarian missions overseas during this period, as well as supporting military operations further afield, such as in Aden, Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Oman and Libya.

Strategic location of Cyprus, some 40 miles south of Turkey, 60 miles west of Syria, and 230 miles north of Egypt²



² Maps provided by: www.worldatlas.com

The story of this hospital's lifetime of service is partially drawn from extracts from both hospitals' Operational Record Books³, whether held at the National Archives in Kew or at TPMH⁴, as well as extracts from personal reminiscences, websites and other publications, including two previous histories⁵ of TPMH. These extracts give a fascinating insight into the role of a British military hospital strategically located at the junction of three continents and next to major international flashpoints with ongoing tension.

“Cyprus is, after all, a country sui generis at the meeting place of the three continents of the Old World, with an ancient civilisation and a long and complicated history. These conditions set racial, political and ecclesiastical problems of a specialised kind that had their counterpart, so far as British Colonial administration was concerned, only in the Palestine of the Mandate.” (Sir Harry Luke⁶)

³ Five Operational Record Books (F540s) for the years 1956–1960, and 1966–1980, are publicly accessible at the National Archives, Kew, having been released after a mandatory 30 years. These consist of monthly summaries of the unit's activity, and are a standard requirement for all RAF units. www.raf.mod.uk/ahb/sourcesofinformation/ See Author's Note in Bibliography for further details. These monthly summaries ceased to be collated at TPMH after 1995, possibly as a result of the transfer of responsibility for the hospital from the RAF to the Defence Secondary Care Agency in 1996.

⁴ Three Operational Record Books for the years February 1974 – December 1980 are currently held at TPMH but will be transferred to the Air Historical Branch for onward transfer to Kew when TPMH closes in 2013.

⁵ Flight Sergeant G H Cuthbert produced a history for the 35th anniversary in 1998, and Flight Lieutenant Karl Colehouse produced a history for the 40th anniversary in 2003. Both histories were looseleaf and only distributed locally. The author gratefully acknowledges both authors for inspiring him in creating this 50th anniversary history, and particularly Flight Sergeant Cuthbert who kindly sent him numerous newspaper cuttings regarding TPMH as well as a copy of his history. Readers are referred to both histories and the file of laminated newspaper cuttings, all kept at RAF Akrotiri Museum, for idiosyncratic comments and further details about life in TPMH.

⁶ Sir Harry Luke, *Cyprus*, 1965. Sir Harry Luke, K.C.M.G., D.Litt., LL.D., was an Oxford classicist and administrator with a great love for Cyprus. He first visited Cyprus in 1908, on a “Grand Tour” of the Levant, and contrived to return as Private Secretary to the High Commissioner in 1911, going on to successively become an Assistant Secretary to Government, Commissioner of Paphos and later of Famagusta. He ended his official connection with Cyprus in 1920, though he nearly returned as Governor in 1938 (after serving as Lieutenant-Governor of Malta from 1930–1938), and he spent many winters and springs of his retirement on the island, before dying in Cyprus in 1969.

Cyprus – a divided island



The Princess Mary's Hospital



Signed portrait of Princess Mary presented to TPMH 1963

The Royal Air Force (Temporary) Hospital, Akrotiri: 1956–1963

In the early 1950s, as the worldwide clamour for independence from imperial powers gathered pace, relations between Egypt and Britain began to deteriorate, and it became increasingly apparent that the British military presence in the Canal Zone⁷ could not continue for long.

In April 1954, Colonel Nasser became Prime Minister⁸ of Egypt and by October he had signed an agreement with the British Secretary of State for War to withdraw all British troops from Egypt within twenty months. As a result British troops began dismantling their bases in the Canal Zone and relocating to Cyprus. This was the only other British territory in the Eastern Mediterranean and, hereafter, it became the main British base in the Middle East.



The Royal Air Force (Temporary) Hospital, Akrotiri.
Hawker Drive

⁷ Canal Zone – the British-occupied strip of territory safeguarding the Suez Canal that was considered a vital communication link to British interests ‘east of Suez’. Nasser’s nationalisation of the Canal in July 1956 following the British withdrawal precipitated the Suez Crisis.

⁸ Seven months after becoming Prime Minister, Colonel Nasser succeeded General Neguib as President of Egypt, on 17 November 1954.

RAF Nicosia had limited facilities to cope with the massive influx of troops from Egypt and the increased military and post-war civilian air traffic. A new airfield, able to accommodate the largest and heaviest jet aircraft, was therefore constructed on the Akrotiri peninsula⁹. By 1 January 1956 its single runway of 6,000 feet was ready to use¹⁰, followed by an extension to 9,000 feet to allow full V-Bomber¹¹ operational capability by 1959.

THE OPENING

On Thursday 9 February 1956, Royal Air Force (Temporary) Hospital Akrotiri opened its doors for outpatients. Some of its nurses were from the recently closed RAF Hospital Fayid, the last RAF hospital in Egypt¹². Twenty beds for medical cases were opened on 14 February, and main surgical facilities were available on 21 February, with a total of 40 beds. The Maternity Department opened two years later, in February 1958. There were now some 30,000 British servicemen, many with families, stationed in Cyprus.

LOCATION

The original hospital was housed in five single-storey pre-fabricated buildings (Cawoods¹³) that had originally been Airmen's married quarters, located either side of a road in an area of RAF Akrotiri around Harding Avenue and Duke Street. The Cawoods had originally been intended for Aden and Egypt, but had been diverted to Cyprus. The early days were not easy as much of RAF Akrotiri was still under construction and there were no proper roads. Heavy winter

rains reduced the area to a mud bath and the staff wore gumboots almost continually¹⁴.

The first surgeon at the hospital, Squadron Leader (the late Air Vice-Marshal) Paddy Griffin, described the problems that arose following the first operation:

*“When the patient was wheeled back from the operating table the theatre trolley was too wide to go through the doors of the ward (a converted sitting room). A rapid assessment of the situation and the unconscious patient was manhandled through a window back to his bed. The doors were quickly widened.”*¹⁵

⁹ The history of RAF Akrotiri began on 1 July 1955 when the first 30 personnel posted to the 'Unit' established themselves in the flat, dry, rocky scrubland on the windswept Akrotiri Peninsula. See www.rafakrotiri.co.uk

¹⁰ Air Chief Marshal Sir David Lee. *Wings in the Sun – a history of the Royal Air Force in the Mediterranean 1945–1986*. HMSO, 1989. Chapter 4, The new Cyprus Base, p55.

¹¹ V-Bomber – the Valiant, Victor and Vulcan strategic bombers capable of delivering nuclear weapons inside the USSR.

¹² RAF Hospital Fayid, which had officially opened on 1 January 1948 and closed in 1956. Information drawn from *Sky Wards – A History of the Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service, 2001*.

¹³ Cawood – named after the North Yorkshire company that constructed these pre-fabricated buildings. This company is still in business.

¹⁴ Tenth Anniversary of RAF Hospital. *Dateline... Royal Air Force*. No 208 dated 29 November 1973.

¹⁵ Tenth Anniversary of RAF Hospital. *Dateline ... Royal Air Force*. No 208 dated 29 November 1973.

The theatre sister at the time, Squadron Officer Helen Cookson, recalled the difficulty of getting patients to and from operations:

*“A camp road divided the theatre from the wards, and staff wheeling patients across the road often had to wait for passing traffic.”*¹⁶

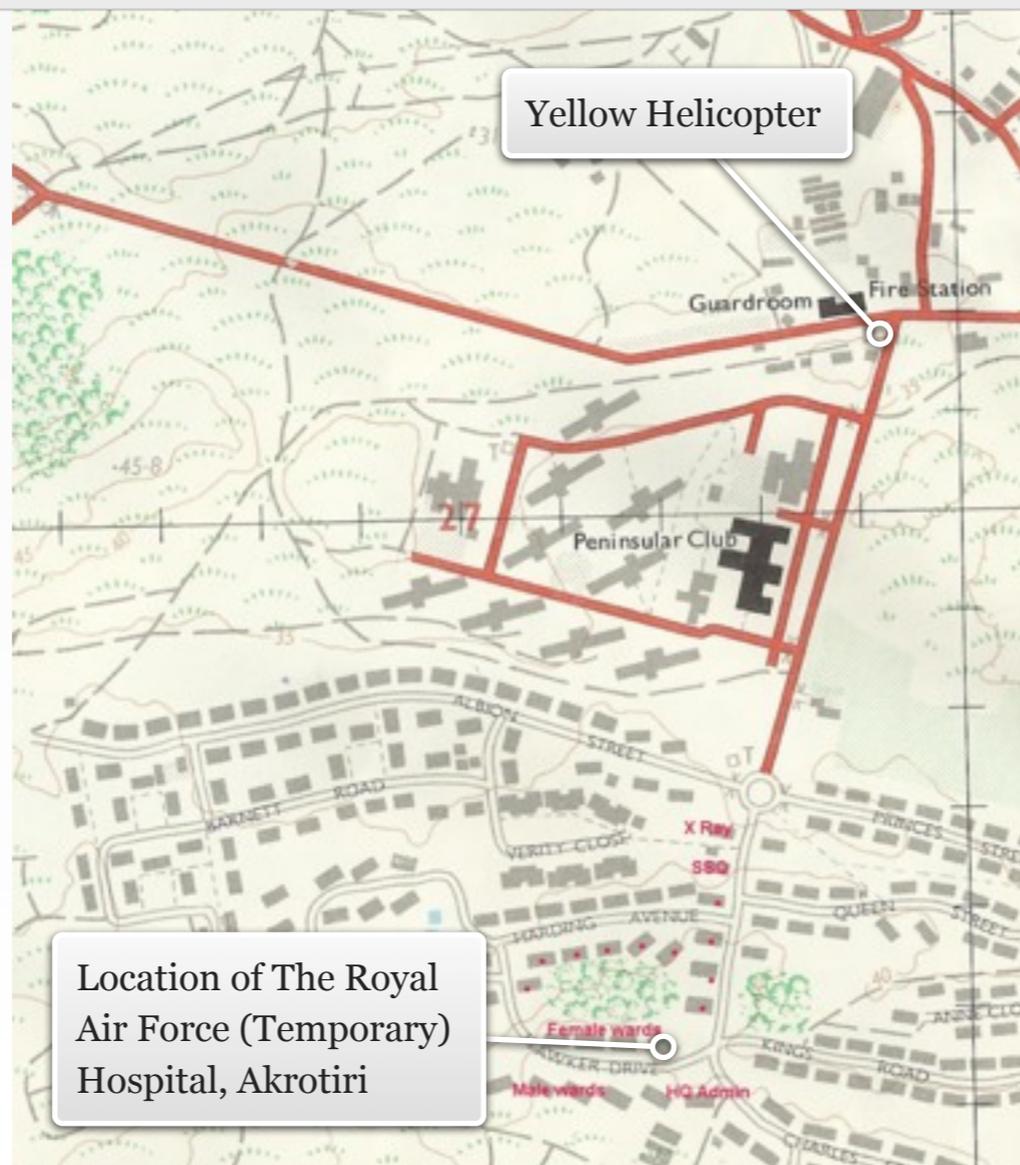
¹⁶Tenth Anniversary of RAF Hospital. *Dateline ... Royal Air Force*. No 208 dated 29 November 1973.



Nurses at The Royal Air Force (Temporary) Hospital, Akrotiri, late 1950s¹⁷

¹⁷The caption to this photo in the TPMH archives reads: Flight Officers Muriel Dunn and Bell King on their way to the Battle of Britain Church Parade, in No. 1 Dress, 1950s.

Location of The Royal Air Force (Temporary) Hospital, Akrotiri, in an area now completely redeveloped. A useful landmark is the yellow helicopter (a Westland Whirlwind Mk 10, in Search and Rescue colours) situated at the road junction opposite the Guardroom. This Whirlwind, the first of its kind, operated in Cyprus from 1969, and flew many patients to TPMH before its last flight in 1982.



Location of The Royal Air Force (Temporary) Hospital, Akrotiri



The story of the yellow helicopter (see photograph on page 17) is told in www.rafaakrotiri.co.uk . Map provided by Bill Cundall, RAF Association Aphrodite Branch.

CYPRUS IN CONTEXT – THE CYPRUS EMERGENCY: 1955–1959

After the Second World War, the Greek Orthodox Church in Cyprus was under duress from a resurgent Cyprus Communist Party. The politically ambitious Archbishop Makarios III, elected in 1950 at the early age of 37, launched an emotionally charged campaign for Enosis (union with Greece, a long-standing aspiration of many Greek Cypriots)¹⁸ and independence from Britain as a way of re-asserting the Church's authority and influence in society, and many Greek Cypriots followed his lead. This caused a reactive struggle for Taksim (partition) by many Turkish Cypriots.

Makarios secretly collaborated with a retired Greek Army colonel and very experienced guerrilla fighter, 52-year-old Cypriot-born George Grivas, to help achieve Enosis by military means. Grivas founded the organisation **EOKA** (Ethniki Organosis Kypriou Agonistou, or 'National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters') for this purpose. EOKA commenced its operations with a bombing campaign against the British Colonial Administration on 1 April 1955, and the increasingly bitter guerrilla conflict resulted in the declaration of a State of Emergency in November 1955 by newly appointed Governor and Commander-in-Chief Cyprus Field Marshal Sir John Harding¹⁹. The developing situation is eloquently described by Lawrence Durrell in his prize-winning 1957 book, *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus*.

Lest We Forget



The British Cyprus Memorial 1955–1959.



Cyprus - Britain's Grim Legacy (Part 1)



© Granada Television 1984 (see DVD for Part 2)

¹⁸ *The Cyprus Conspiracy 1999*. Chapter 2: The Enemy Within: the rise of the Enosis Campaign.

¹⁹ Tabitha Morgan. *Sweet and Bitter Island: A History of the British in Cyprus*. I B Tauris, 2010. Chapter 13: A Child's Game of Pretend 1955–58, p 211.

TROODOS FOREST FIRE: 1956

The newly opened RAF hospital very soon had to deal with the human cost of this conflict, as is cryptically recalled in its archives:

(17 June 1956) "Troodos Forest Fire. Six lying cases, nine sitting cases admitted to this hosp. Two died of burns." (Kew²⁰)

This tragedy occurred during the hottest summer in Cyprus for many years, as British troops were closing in on Grivas, holed up in a 25-square-mile area of dense tinder-dry woodland in the mountains west and south of Mount Olympus:

"When the net finally closed in on Grivas, disaster struck the operation. A fire broke out in the trees behind him, and the flames streaked through the wood and up the nearby slopes, setting ablaze an army lorry. Nineteen soldiers died and 18 others were injured. Helicopters buzzed in to rescue the injured, and in the commotion the guerrilla leader vanished."²¹

This was the single greatest loss of life in the Cyprus Emergency. The 17 soldiers who died that day in the Troodos Forest Fire, and the two who died subsequently in hospital, were almost all young national service conscripts of 21 years of age or less, mainly serving with the Gordon Highlanders and The Royal Norfolk Regiment. Their names are recorded on the British Cyprus Memorial unveiled on the 50th

anniversary of the ending of this conflict, Remembrance Day 2009, in the old British cemetery in Kyrenia, and can be viewed in the online Roll of Honour at www.BritishCyprusMemorial.org/roll. Their names and those of all 371 British servicemen who lost their lives in Cyprus during this period are also recorded on the National Memorial at the National Arboretum, Nottingham. The soldiers themselves are buried in the British Military Cemetery (Wayne's Keep Cemetery²²) in Nicosia (now relatively inaccessible as it is situated in the Green Zone).

Their names are also recorded in a book, *Mayhem in the Med*, dedicated to the memory of the spirit and sacrifice of the young national service conscripts who served in the Cyprus Emergency, originally published in 2005 on the 50th anniversary of the start of this conflict²³. This book chronicles the events and circumstances of those times on a daily basis in the form of unfolding news stories.

²⁰ AIR/29/2789 TPMH January 1956 – December 1960. All unreferenced quotes hereafter are taken from the relevant Operational Record Book.

²¹ *The Cyprus Conspiracy*, p35, quoting Barker, *Grivas*, p126–7.

²² Wayne's Keep Military Cemetery www.britains-smallwars.com/cyprus/Davidcarter/Wayneskeep/keep1.html

²³ *Mayhem in the Med: A Chronicle of the Cyprus Emergency 1955–1960*. Richard Stiles. Savannah Publications 2009.

SUEZ CRISIS

The scale of the EOKA conflict and its impact on the medical services in the RAF and Army hospitals during the Cyprus Emergency of 1955–1959 are perhaps better appreciated when one realises that during the Suez operation of 1956, more British troops died at the hands of EOKA in Cyprus than in fighting Nasser's troops. There had been 174 separate bomb attacks on British military targets on the island since the beginning of August that year when military planning for Suez commenced (one of which severely damaged the Akrotiri runway and delayed the Suez invasion by two weeks)²⁴. There were 23 deaths in Cyprus in November 1956 alone, one more than the total number of fatalities during the Suez operation²⁵.

It was not just British servicemen who were cared for at the RAF hospital:

(January 1957) "Two EOKA terrorists were admitted on 18 January 1957. One had gunshot wounds of the chest and the other gunshot wounds of the left arm. The former was discharged on 28 January, 1957 and the latter remains in hospital."

Another EOKA terrorist was admitted on 23 January 1957 in a coma and was diagnosed as having an intracranial haematoma. Right sub-temporal decompression was carried out and a large sub-dural haematoma found. Patient died on 25 January 1957 without recovering consciousness."

²⁴ *The Cyprus Conspiracy*, p43.

²⁵ www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-11743727

MILITARY MEDICINE IS NOT ALL SURGERY...

Clinical work at this hospital was not all trauma: the physicians had their dramas²⁶, as did maternity:

The first delivery: *(February 1957) "A WRAC Private was admitted during February with symptoms and signs suggestive of infective hepatitis. She was found to be about 30 weeks pregnant. After a few days her condition deteriorated suddenly, jaundice becoming much deeper with some peripheral cyanosis. Surgical induction of labour was carried out by Major Magner (BMH Nicosia²⁷) and a live male child, of approximately 30–32 weeks gestation, was delivered, the first delivery at this hospital. Unfortunately, the baby never established adequate respiration and died about six hours after birth..."*

²⁶ Fortunately the physicians at RAF Akrotiri in 1956 did not have to deal with malaria, despite the peninsula, with its salt lake, being heavily infested with mosquitoes. The single unequivocally beneficial legacy of British rule in Cyprus has been the eradication of malaria in 1949 after a three year campaign spearheaded by the island's chief health inspector, Turkish Cypriot Mehmet Aziz, and paid for from the Colonial Development Fund. Having previously been considered one of the most malarious places in the world, with around 10,000 cases of malaria each year, Cyprus became the first of the world's malaria-infested countries to totally eradicate the disease from its shores, being declared malaria free in February 1950. Details from: Tabitha Morgan. *Sweet and Bitter Island: A History of the British in Cyprus*. Chapter 12: The Great Liberator 1945–55, p197. Cyprus issued two stamps to commemorate this, in its Malaria Eradication Campaign Issue of 14 May 1962.

²⁷ **BMH Nicosia:** Built in 1941 as a temporary hutted hospital, with 200 beds, on a 'kopje' east of Nicosia, and originally known as 57 General

Epidemic outbreak: (May 1957) *“Epidemic outbreak of streptococcal sore throat. 498 cases between 13 and 26 May. Many food handlers in the Airmen’s Mess tested positive. Most cases treated in emergency wards in barrack blocks about three quarters of a mile from the hospital.*

Polio pandemic: The worldwide polio pandemic of 1957–58 had its victims among British forces in Cyprus:

(December 1957) *“The poliomyelitis case admitted on 11 November 1957 continued to make progress and was evacuated to the UK by air on 19 December 1957. A special team arrived from the UK on 15 December and spent the interval in getting the patient accustomed to the use of the cuirasse, which he found most comfortable.”*

(May 1958) *“Medical Division: 11 cases of poliomyelitis were notified during the month. Four, all airmen, were paralytic including one very severe case who suddenly collapsed and died after two days in the Both respirator. Two of the cases, one officer and one airman, developed an encephalitic illness without any residual paralysis, although one of them was comatose and in decerebrate type rigidity for four days.*

Hospital. Renamed British Military Hospital, Cyprus in 1947, when it housed a 100-bed Jewish Wing following detention of illegal Jewish immigrants intercepted en route for Israel, until their transfer to Israel in 1948. With the outbreak of the EOKA campaign in 1955, the hospital expanded to 300 beds. Following the opening of BMH Dhekelia in 1958 BMH Nicosia was redesignated Nicosia Military Hospital. Following the cessation of the EOKA campaign in 1959 and the withdrawal of British units from most of Cyprus, Nicosia Military Hospital discharged its last patient on 15 December 1959. Details from *Army Medical Magazine*, April 1960, p52.

The remaining five cases had brief meningitic illness with no sequelae. There was no pattern in the outbreak suggesting any common source of infection.”

Typhoid: (July 1958) *“Three cases of true Typhoid fever were treated during the month. The patients were one of our Nursing Sisters, a Navigator on this Station and a senior officer’s wife from Episkopi... Circumstantial evidence suggested that they were all infected at a party given in Akrotiri Officers’ Mess on 4 July. The patients were treated with chloramphenicol for 14 days and all made satisfactory recoveries without complications.”*

Pathology: (August 1958) *“Body of a Greek Cypriot detainee brought in. Considerable adverse publicity on 16 August (day after inquest) in ‘Cyprus Mail’ and ‘The Times of Cyprus’, necessitating repatriation of RAF pathologist Flt Lt TRC Boyde for safety.”*

Maternity: (February 1959) *“The Maternity Department completed its first year in operation on 23 February 1959, and during this period there were 255 births, including 13 by Caesarean Section. There were no maternal deaths, but five still births and four neonatal deaths. One case of puerperal pyrexia was notified. The Department was equipped with eight beds from the time of opening until 30 October 1958, then with 10 from 1–24 November, and thereafter with 14 beds.”*

CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES

The EOKA campaign came to an end in 1959, after combined action by the Greek and Turkish Governments to avert disaster by agreeing to jettison both Enosis and Taksim in favour of promoting independence²⁸ for Cyprus, and after four years in which EOKA fighters (whether styled terrorists or freedom fighters) had killed more of their fellow Greek-Cypriots than British and Turkish-Cypriots combined. (Sir Harry Luke²⁹)

INDEPENDENCE

On 15 August 1960, Cyprus became independent, with the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus, simultaneously with the establishment of two British Sovereign Base areas (encompassing a total area of 99 square miles) at Akrotiri and Dhekelia (each with their own military hospital) as well as a small number of ‘retained areas’ elsewhere (see map on p6).

INCREASED HOSPITAL REQUIREMENTS

(December 1960) “With the advent of Christmas, the wards were gradually emptied until on Christmas Day there were only 50 patients in hospital...”

Despite extending into additional Cawood buildings, it was soon realised that the original hospital was not adequate to meet the needs of the growing base, which, by 1961, was well on its way to becoming the largest operational station of the RAF with a Service population alone of almost 6,000 and a dependant population of more than double that³⁰. The decision was made to construct a new purpose-built hospital

at Cape Zevgari, previously only used for sheep grazing, a safe distance of approximately three miles from the airfield, because of the perceived bombing threat. This was the height of the Cold War and, with Egypt leaning towards the Soviet bloc, the threat to Akrotiri of surprise air attack from the Soviet ‘volunteer’ bomber force in Egypt was all too real³¹. Incidentally, the name Cape Zevgari, meaning ‘yoked’, derives from two rocks about half a mile off the cape, said to resemble two oxen³².

²⁸ While the EOKA campaign may have ended with the independence of Cyprus, memories of the struggle for independence have remained potent in Greek Cypriot consciousness. The Cyprus postal authorities issued commemorative stamps on 31 March 1995 to mark the 40th anniversary of the commencement of the EOKA Liberation Struggle, and again on 9 May 2000 to mark the 40th anniversary of the ending of the EOKA Struggle. The aim of both issues was to commemorate the fighters who gave their lives for independence, but also to “*let everyone also remember to forgive past injuries and mistakes while seeking a brighter and peaceful future for all the citizens of this land*”. Details from *Cyprus Stamps 1880–2004: Linking History and Culture*. Cyprus Department of Postal Services, 2005.

²⁹ Sir Harry Luke, *Cyprus*, p185–186.

³⁰ There were some 20,000 personnel including dependants based at RAF Akrotiri alone in the 1960s compared to the current population of under 3,000, and the current total population in British Forces Cyprus of some 8,000.

³¹ *The Cyprus Conspiracy*, p38.

³² “*The word Zevgari translates into English as ‘couple’ and was used for the yoke that ‘coupled’ the two oxen in a ploughing team. In Cypriot dialect the word also describes the activity of ploughing and alludes to the iron point on the old wooden ploughs. There is conjecture that the very pointed shape of the Cape on which TPMH stands was likened to the point of a plough and therefore called ‘Zevgari’. My son’s godfather who was a Paphos mountain village boy recalls that his father used the phrase “na pao zevgari” when he was off to plough between his grape vines.*” (Roger Bent, personal reminiscence in email to author, 19 September 2012).



The new hospital under construction at Cape Zevgari, 1961



Roy Barnes (AMWD Engineer, Matron and Commanding Officer, Group Captain Dhenin (Officer Commanding) outside Cliff House nursing officers accommodation. The garden opposite was known as Matrons Garden, 1961

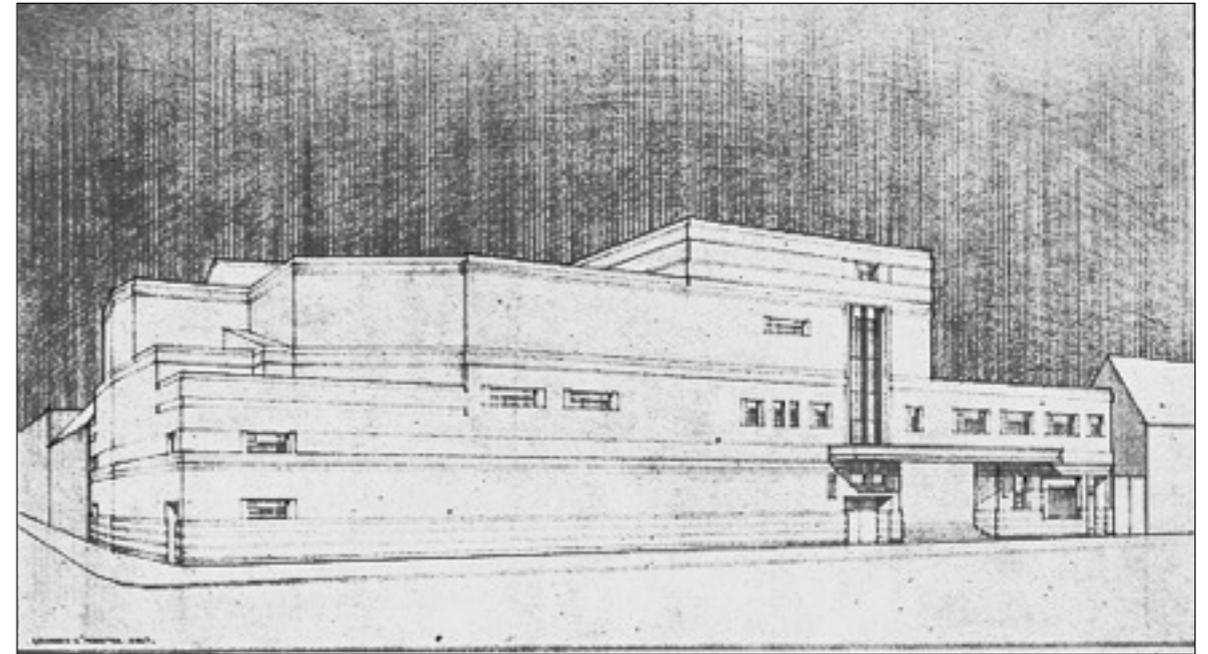


The yellow helicopter (a Westland Whirlwind Mk10) - a useful landmark

The Princess Mary's Hospital, RAF Akrotiri (TPMH): 1963–2013

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

TPMH was designed by architect Alister Gladstone MacDonald³³, who was born in 1898 as the eldest son of James Ramsey MacDonald, Britain's first labour Prime Minister. He was a pioneer of many aspects of architectural science, especially building science and use of experimental materials. He was internationally renowned for his newsreel cinemas, some of which bear a strong resemblance to TPMH's facade and entrance, his most innovative designs being the cinemas at Waterloo and Victoria stations in London. He had been involved in major works for the British garrison in Dhekelia and Episkopi since 1950, largely through his company's expertise in cantonment planning in India³⁴. Besides designing TPMH, he was involved with other projects in Yemen, Mombasa, Malta and Jordan (for his friend King Hussein), and in 1966 he designed another hospital, this time for the Sultan of Brunei. He died in 1993.



The Angus Playhouse Cinema, Montrose³⁵, 1932, designed by Alister MacDonald

³³ In 1916, when he was 18, Alister MacDonald volunteered as an orderly with the Friends Ambulance Unit. He worked for three years on No 17 ambulance train in northern France ferrying the wounded from the trenches back to the coast to be shipped to England. He drew haunting pen and ink drawings of the devastated countryside as well as doing comedy turns in the revues organised on board. The horrors of what he experienced never left him and he often spoke about his life on the train and the wounded men he cared for. At the outbreak of the Second World War he was one of the band of architects who set up a firefighting vigil, known as the St Paul's Watch, armed only with hassocks and buckets of water, to save St Paul's Cathedral from destruction by incendiaries. Details from Obituary by Susan MacDonald. *The Independent* 27 March 1993 and www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/building_full.php?id=232845

³⁴ *The History of the Corps of Royal Engineers* Vol X, 1948–1960. Chatham, 1986. p111.

³⁵ Downloaded from www.flickr.com/photos/31016052@N05/5477253464/lightbox/

The structural engineer was Iorys Hughes, who had been involved in some illustrious projects, working with E Wingfield-Bowles & Partners, based in Nicosia. The builders were Taylor Woodrow and Medcon Construction Ltd of Nicosia, using a workforce of 600, including many from Akrotiri village.

On 1 June 1961 work started on the new hospital build. The foundation stone was laid on 7 September 1961 at the hospital entrance by Lady MacDonald, wife of the Air Officer Commander-in-Chief. The construction of the new building, using reinforced concrete with built-in earthquake protection, took less than two years to complete, at a cost of just over £1,000,000.

The hospital was designed for 155 beds in eight wards, seven in two four-storey wings running north and west (forming the arms of a letter L), and the eighth on the second floor of a separate wing providing spacious pathology and maxillofacial departments on the ground floor. There were two operating theatres with an adjacent recovery ward, and a central sterile supply department large enough to supply both the hospital and all the RAF sick quarters and clinics in Cyprus. There were an x-ray department and two maternity wards, one of which contained a premature baby unit. An outpatient department offered all the main specialist clinics, and there was a casualty department with patient access both by road and via the hospital's own helicopter landing ground³⁶. A central hospital garden was laid out, and a Flame of the Forest tree gifted to the hospital by the people of the Greek island of

Kos was planted outside the outpatient department³⁷ (see photograph p26). This tree was reputedly descended from the tree that Hippocrates used for shade while treating patients, and so provided a symbolic link between this hospital and the father of medicine. This tree with its magnificent red blooms became steadily more resplendent over the years until old age overwhelmed it.

THE TRANSFER TO THE NEW SITE

The move from the original hospital site at RAF Akrotiri to the new building on Cape Zevgari began in May 1963. The move was split into three phases to ensure the hospital was never out of action and, by the end of June, The Princess Mary's Hospital (TPMH) was fully operational.

While it was 'all mod cons' on the inside, the desolate location and arid surrounds of the new building initially earned it the nickname 'Alcatraz'³⁸. However, once the newly planted lawns and gardens took shape, it resembled more of a luxury hotel,

³⁶ *Whitehall Newsletter* No. 878. 14 November 1963.

³⁷ Wing Commander Ken Pudney, Commander Troodos Garrison for the last 13 years, as of 2012, and previously OC Admin TPMH for 10 years, personal reminiscence to author. Ken served under nine successive Commanding Officers at TPMH: Mike Palliser, Robin Davie, Bob Chapple, Pat Collins, Keith Prior, Tony Cullen, Warwick Pike, Tom Rogerson and Peter Coles.

³⁸ G H Cuthbert, 35th anniversary history.



TPMH. Commemorative photograph taken on the occasion of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, 29 June 2012, with hospital staff forming the words TPMH (bottom left), and location overlay

an impression heightened by the thick steel sun breakers³⁹ that shaded all the windows in the clinical areas, and by the deep blue Mediterranean sea surrounding it on three sides. The Nursing sisters were housed in a nearby building⁴⁰, overlooking an 80-foot cliff and giving all-round views of the Mediterranean.



A photograph of TPMH showing the thick steel blast-proof shutters outside all the ward windows, circa 1990.

³⁹ The thick steel blast-proof shutters, aligned vertically outside all the ward windows, were designed to hinge shut rapidly and automatically if the base came under attack, and were reputedly strong enough to withstand a low-yield nuclear explosion. Their hinges eventually rusted solid so the shutters were removed after about 30 years, when the Cold War ended, leaving only the horizontal sun-breakers above the ward verandahs.

⁴⁰ The Nursing sisters eventually moved to the main Station Officers' Mess. The building was renamed Cliff House on 4 October 1982 when the Community Mental Health Team moved into part of the building. The rest was converted into Visitors' flats that generations of visiting officers and staff will remember with mixed emotions, as by 2012 they were showing their age.



Mr R Campbell (Draftsman), on left, presenting a model of TPMH⁴¹ that he made to Mr Roy Barnes, AMWD Engineer, who subsequently gave the model to the Commanding Officer. The side visible is the seaward-facing south side of the hospital, with the outpatient department on the right

OFFICIAL OPENING: 1963

Group Captain G H Dhenin was appointed as the first Commanding Officer with Wing Officer J E M Kennedy as Matron. The new hospital was officially opened on 21 November 1963 by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, Air Chief Commandant of the **Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service**.

The hospital motto was hung over the hospital entrance. Ascribed to Hippocrates and chosen by Group Captain Dhenin, it read:

“To help – or at least to do no harm”.

⁴¹ Details taken from caption to photo in 1961 photo archive. The caption to this photo in the 35th anniversary history of 1998 mistakenly states: “Mr Roy Barnes Engineer being presented with a model of the new RAF Hospital at Cape Zevgari, RAF Akrotiri by Mr Vic Camden, Christmas 1961.” The 1998 caption goes on to state: “Mr Barnes in turn presented the model to TPMH where to this day it can be found in the Commanding Officer’s office.” The model of TPMH remained in the office of successive Commanding Officers for many years, occasionally being exhibited to visitors in the hospital’s Reception area. It is last remembered by Group Captain John Gaffney (Commanding Officer 2008 – 2010). It appears to have disappeared during a refurbishment of Reception in 2009 or so. The present whereabouts of the model is unknown.



Commemorative stone at entry to TPMH



Princess Mary at official opening, 21 November 1963. Group Captain Dhenin in attendance



One of two identical large copper crests at the entrance to TPMH. They show a Caduceus surmounted by a King's Crown (noticeably different from the Crown of Queen Elizabeth). These were the gate crests of the 500-bed RAF Hospital Habbaniya, Iraq, 60 miles from Baghdad. This hospital existed from 1937–1958, when all British troops withdrew from Iraq, most of the hospital staff moving to the hospital in Cyprus. It is probable that at least one of these gate crests moved with them to Cyprus in 1958. One crest is evident on a TPMH photo taken at the tenth anniversary in 1973, while the caption of the photo below simply states 'TPMH Plaque Presentation 1979', possibly indicating the presentation of a second crest to complement the first. The author would appreciate confirmation of this. These crests will be assigned to the RAF Akrotiri Museum on closure of TPMH.



Presentation of Habbaniya crest to TPMH by Air Vice Marshal D W Atkinson (Principal Medical Officer Strike Command), 02 July 1979

PRINCESS MARY

Her Royal Highness **The Princess Mary**, Princess Royal and Countess of Harewood, the only daughter of King George V, had already visited the hospital that was to be named after her when it was still under construction, signing the first page of the new hospital's visitors' book on 5 March 1962. She then returned for its formal opening in November 1963, some six months after it started accepting patients.

In between these two visits, the Station Officers' Mess was destroyed by fire following a lightning strike on 4 December 1962⁴², and the new Mess was opened on the same site on 25 October 1963, just in time for the Royal Visit. It is possible that the Royal Visit, and hence the hospital's formal opening, were delayed by the need to wait for the new Station Officers' Mess to be constructed.

AN OVERVIEW, FROM OPENING TO CLOSURE

The capacity of the Hospital has changed considerably over the years. On its opening in 1963 it had 155 beds, but by 1972 the bed numbers had expanded to 170, with the addition of a purpose-built Intensive Therapy Unit. At the peak of its activity at the beginning of the 1970s, TPMH was handling 20,000 outpatients and 5,000 inpatients each year, reaching its busiest time during the Greek coup and Turkish invasion of Cyprus in July 1974. By the end of that year, following the election of a Labour Government⁴³ in the UK and Whitehall ordering massive cutbacks to the Forces in Cyprus and worldwide, the beds had reduced to 120. With the closure of the British Military Hospital at Dhekelia⁴⁴ in 1978 after 20 years' existence, TPMH became joint service under RAF command, with a 3:2 ratio of RAF to Army personnel. As the numbers of Services personnel in Cyprus dropped further following the end of the Cold War in 1990, the hospital's capacity reduced yet more.

Cyprus joined the European Union on 1 May 2004. This was to have profound implications for relationships between the Sovereign Base Areas and the Republic of Cyprus, easing the way for eventual transfer of secondary health care services to the Republic. Inpatient paediatric care was transferred from TPMH to the **Ygia Polyclinic**⁴⁵ in nearby Limassol in 2005. The Ygia Polyclinic had opened in 1987 as the first (and still the largest) private hospital in Cyprus, and it expanded to include obstetric services in 2007.

⁴² This is commemorated on a plaque alongside the partially burnt wooden Flamingo emblem of the old Mess, which now hangs outside the main entrance to the new Officers' Mess.

⁴³ On returning to power in February 1974, Labour leader Harold Wilson announced plans for sweeping defence cuts. The Defence chiefs of staff had even begun to discuss whether British forces should be kept in Cyprus at all, until the coup in Nicosia drastically altered the situation. *The Cyprus Conspiracy*, Chapter 17 'Crisis of trust – Spying bases at risk'.

⁴⁴ **BMH Dhekelia**: The foundation stone was laid on 26 May 1955 by His Excellency, Sir R P Armitage, Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Cyprus. After delays due to strikes, curfews and EOKA bombs the hospital opened its doors to its first patient on 22 September 1958. It was formally opened on 4 November 1958 by Lady Bower, wife of Sir Roger H Bower, Commander-in-Chief Middle East Land Forces. Details obtained from *Army Medical Services Magazine*. A Medical Reception Station was retained on closure of the hospital in 1978. The hospital building was demolished in 1988: www.qaranc.co.uk/bmhdhekelia.php

⁴⁵ Ironically, up until the mid-1980s, before there were any private hospitals in Cyprus, TPMH was seen as the pinnacle of medical treatment on the island. Many Cypriot patients were treated there, being charged the rates for non-entitled patients. TPMH (and BMH Dhekelia) also used to treat the island's B-thalassaemic patients under a British Government 'Hearts and Minds' initiative, because treatment was not available locally at the time and many could not afford to go overseas for treatment. The patients came from both the Turkish and Greek Cypriot community. The last two TPMH thalassaemia patients were discharged from TPMH medical care in July 2012.

In its last few years, while retaining the capability to expand into unused wards in emergency, TPMH concentrated its inpatient services onto one maternity ward (Ward 4, with about 150 deliveries per annum) and one 22-bed adult ward (Ward 6). This was not that different in overall capacity from the original hospital of 1956, though by 2012 there were rarely as many as five patients in hospital overnight, the majority of patients being day cases.

Hospital activity in the last full year of clinical work (1 August 2011 – 31 July 2012) had dropped to 5,000 outpatients⁴⁶, one quarter of the workload in the hospital's heyday in 1972. There were 894 inpatient admissions⁴⁷, a fifth of the admissions in 1972. There were 132 paediatric admissions [under 16 years of age] to the Polyclinic in this last year.

With all other military hospitals in Germany, UK and Gibraltar closing over the last twenty years, and a period of austerity and defence cutbacks setting in to cover the cost of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, with clinical governance issues raising their head as the NHS became increasingly specialised, and with the total number of Services personnel and dependants in Cyprus falling to under 8,000, it was clear that TPMH's days of providing a generalist service were numbered.

The tipping point came when a formal assessment in February 2011 of the impressively well-equipped and staffed Ygia Polyclinic by the Royal College of Obstetricians deemed that the level of maternity care provided there matched UK levels

of care. Preparations were initiated to transfer hospital care to the Republic of Cyprus. After competitive bids were examined, the **Ygia Polyclinic** was given the green light on 23 July 2012 to provide secondary healthcare to the British Forces and their dependants in Cyprus.

The last full day of clinical activity at TPMH is scheduled for 31 October 2012. Inpatient and outpatient services transfer to the **Ygia Polyclinic** on 1 November 2012, with some retained services (ie physiotherapy and community mental health) moving to new premises in the Akrotiri Station Health Centre. TPMH is scheduled for formal closure in its 50th year, in April 2013, though the future of the building itself is uncertain.



Ygia Polyclinic, Limassol

⁴⁶ 5,757 booked outpatients, with 752 of these failing to attend.

⁴⁷ Subdivided as 323 admissions to Ward 4 (maternity) and 571 admissions to Ward 6 (general adult).



The Flame of the Forest tree from the island of Kos (see page 19)

The early years: 1963–1974

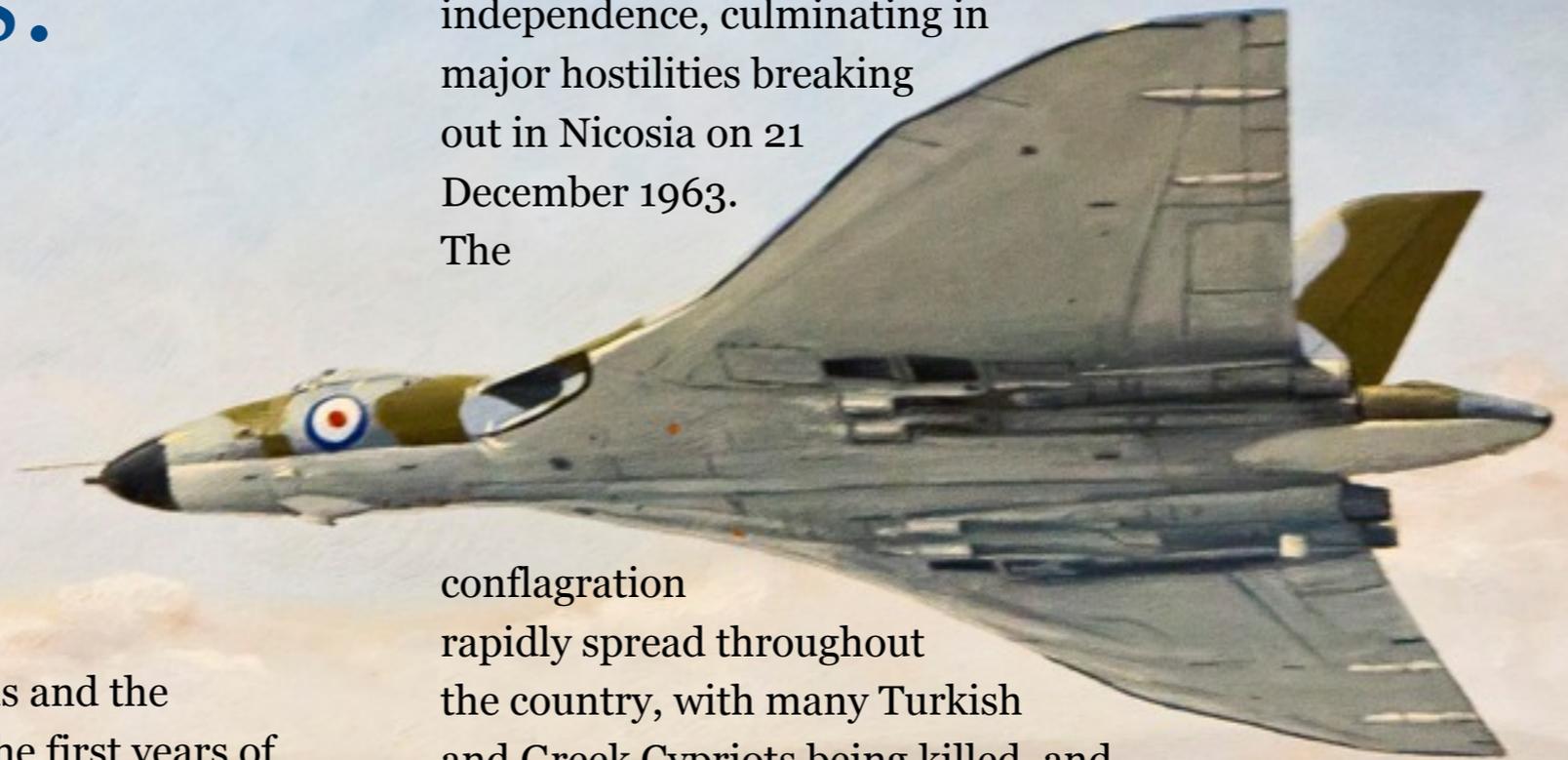
CYPRUS – ETHNIC CONFLICT:

1963–1965

There were major events that affected Cyprus and the Sovereign Base Areas, and often TPMH, in the first years of TPMH's existence. In the background there was the ongoing Cold War, in which RAF Akrotiri played a significant operational role⁴⁸, with the world coming close to nuclear war at the time of the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962.

In Cyprus itself there was growing ethnic tension following independence, culminating in major hostilities breaking out in Nicosia on 21 December 1963. The

conflagration rapidly spread throughout the country, with many Turkish and Greek Cypriots being killed, and some 18,000 Turkish Cypriots fleeing their homes and villages by mid-February 1964. The American embassy at Nicosia was bombed, American civilians were evacuated, and Turkey mobilised an invasion force.



⁴⁸ The Strike Wing at RAF Akrotiri, with its four resident Canberra squadrons, attained a nuclear capability of its own when a supplementary storage area was completed in November 1961, and was therefore no longer dependent upon reinforcement by V-Bombers from Bomber Command in the UK. Vulcans eventually replaced the Canberras in 1969. Details from Chapter 13 'The RAF, the Baghdad Pact and Cento', The advent of a nuclear capability, in: Air Chief Marshal David Lee. *Wings in the Sun – a history of the Royal Air Force in the Mediterranean 1945 – 1986*. HMSO, 1989.

The two NATO countries of Greece and Turkey were at loggerheads and threatened war with one another over Cyprus, Soviet submarines and destroyers and the US Sixth Fleet moved into the area, and British troops on the ground attempted to establish truces and prevent retaliatory massacres. The biggest battles took place in Limassol, with heavy exchanges of fire for days, and RAF ambulances being sent in to extract the wounded and take them to TPMH once British troops secured a ceasefire. Intensive British and American diplomatic and military efforts only just managed to forestall a Turkish invasion in February 1964 as Turkish warships were already steaming towards the island:

“Then just as we approached Cyprus we were told to return to Turkey.”⁴⁹

A United Nations peacekeeping force (**UNFICYP**) was established at the end of March 1964, initially consisting of British troops, though further hostilities and atrocities persisted and intermittently flared up to critical levels throughout 1964, with the Americans having to intervene on several occasions to stave off further threats of Turkish intervention in Cyprus and a Greek-Turkish war⁵⁰. UNFICYP is still in existence, and is the longest-running UN peacekeeping operation.

PANDORA’S BOX – WHY ARE THE 1961–1965 ARCHIVES CLOSED?

The pattern of life in TPMH’s predecessor, The Royal Air Force (Temporary) Hospital, Akrotiri, can be envisaged clearly by perusing its Operational Record Book, publically accessible at Kew, and is well illustrated by the extracts quoted above⁵¹. By contrast, the early days of TPMH are partially obscured by a veil of secrecy, as the first Operational Record Book⁵² of TPMH is still closed to the public, even though almost 50 years have passed since the last entry in 1965.

Why is this so? The author sent a Freedom of Information request to access these archives in May 2012. Unfortunately this request was denied on 9 July 2012:

“We are unable to open this document [AIR 29/3287] because all of the information is exempt under section 40 (2) (by virtue of section 40 (3) (a) (i)) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This means that we cannot make the document open to you or to the public in general.

⁴⁹ *Daily Express*, 17 February 1964.

⁵⁰ *The Cyprus Conspiracy*, 1999.

⁵¹ Kew archive: AIR29/2789: *RAF Hospital, Akrotiri*, January 1956 – December 1960.

⁵² Kew archive: AIR29/3287: *RAF Hospital, Akrotiri*, January 1961 – December 1965.

Section 40 exempts personal information about a ‘third party’ (someone other than the requester), if revealing it would breach the terms of the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998. The DPA prevents personal information from release if it would be unfair or at odds with the reason why it was collected, or where the subject had officially served notice that releasing it would cause them damage or distress.

The exemption applies in this instance because the file contains a significant quantity of personal medical information about identifiable living persons. Medical information is a class of information that falls within the definition of sensitive personal data at section 2 of the Data Protection Act. The information is regarded as very private in nature and warrants special protection. Release of the information would be unfair as it would be highly likely to cause the persons concerned damage and distress. They would also have no expectation that it would be open to public scrutiny during their lifetime. Consequently release of this information would be a breach of the first principle of the Data Protection Act, 1998.”

A limited amount of information about life in TPMH during these early years can however be garnered by reference to local newspapers:

Strike Wing Mercy Flight: *“An Akrotiri Strike Wing Canberra... hurried a team of medical specialists and their equipment to El Adem [a staging post inland from Tobruk, in Libya] on Tuesday 21 September [1965] to answer an*

emergency call. The call for help was received at 2.10pm. Squadron Leader Boxendale, obstetrician at The Princess Mary’s RAF Hospital and Flight Lieutenant Fidler, anaesthetist, were alerted and issued with flying clothing. Meanwhile, supplies of blood plasma and operating equipment were loaded on to the aircraft and at 3.34pm it was airborne. Two hours and 45 minutes after the call was received the doctors were at the patient’s side over 500 miles away...

There is no doubt that the patient, Mrs Malton, wife of SAC Malton, owes her life to the speed and response of Strike Wing...”⁵³

⁵³ Strike Wing Mercy Flight. *The Lion (The British Army Cyprus Weekly)* 9 October 1965.

AN UNEASY PEACE AND HOSPITAL LIFE: 1966–1973

Fortunately, the hospital's Operational Record Books from 1966 onwards are available for consultation:

Earthquake: (August 1966) *“On Friday 19 August 1966 at 1415 in the afternoon an earthquake occurred in the areas of Erzerum and Mus in Eastern Turkey causing considerable damage to life and property. On Saturday, a Surgical Team from The Princess Mary's Hospital, Akrotiri in Cyprus was alerted to proceed to the area to assist in dealing with casualties. However, owing to uncertainty of the conditions it was decided to send certain medical stores, blankets, and tents and a two-man team to investigate first...”*

Ethnic conflict: (25 August 1967) *“An outbreak of shooting occurred in Limassol. Civilian and Service staff were unable to get transport to work, and the Turkish Quarter of the town was declared ‘Out of Bounds’ to all Service Personnel.”*

Libya: (6 October 1967) *“The consultant in Surgery and the senior specialist in Anaesthetics were called to an emergency operation at RAF El Adem [Libya].”*

Ethnic conflict: (16 November 1967) *“Hospital medical officers were instructed to ‘standby’ to receive Turkish casualties following an outbreak of trouble near Kophinou.”*

Plane crash: (18 August 1968) *“A UAR airliner crashed in the sea 100 miles south of Cyprus. The Marine Craft Unit*

recovered 20 bodies but no survivors; the bodies were taken to Egypt. This unit had been asked to help if required.”

Golfing hazard: (7 January 1969) *“Cpl Percival, RAF Akrotiri, was struck by lightning while playing golf at Episkopi and was admitted suffering from shock and paraesthesia.”*

A farewell: (14 January 1969) *“The Kokinelli Night planned to say ‘Farewell’ to Gp Capt Cloutman was abandoned when he was admitted to this hospital as an emergency.”*

Tornado: (22 December 1969) *“RAF Akrotiri was hit by a tornado, which also caused extensive damage in Limassol. Fortunately the hospital was not damaged though the main electricity supply was disrupted for a short time, and telephones worked intermittently for the following week. Three Cypriot locally employed civilians admitted with serious injuries as a result.”*

There were to be at least two more occasions where TPMH was affected by tornadoes, in 1983 and 2003. Tornadoes are a regular occurrence around Cape Zevgari during the months of December and January⁵⁴.

⁵⁴ RAF Akrotiri Meteorological Office, personal communication.

Lebanon: (11 May 1970) *“Captain Marcel Prince, Chief Surgeon of the Lebanese Military Hospital in Beirut, arrived at the hospital with two paraplegic Lebanese aviators for aeromed to the UK. He discussed aeromedical problems with the Registrar and DPMO (Av Med), and described his visit as highly successful in spite of the fact that it ended prematurely when he was recalled by signal to Beirut following a massive Israeli attack on the Lebanon.”*

Yemen: (1971) *“There was an undeclared war in the Yemen in 1971, during which Special Air Service personnel and British Army Trauma Teams assisted the Sultan of Oman. RAF personnel formed Field Surgical Teams, and all patients from this conflict were aeromedically evacuated via TPMH.”*⁵⁵

Lebanon: (18 May 1971) *“Wing Commander MW Sleight, consultant surgeon, left for Beirut. Two Lebanese pilots were suffering from crushed fractures after ejecting from aircraft and a second opinion from a RAF doctor was sought at the request of the Lebanese Prime Minister.”*

⁵⁵ G H Cuthbert, 35th anniversary history.

⁵⁶ Flight Lieutenant Dick Bealer was eventually promoted to Wing Commander. He is now retired and living near Kyrenia. He still has the D ring handle and its canvas attachment from the ejector seat because he never let go of it during the ejection sequence. It should have remained with the seat when his parachute deployed. (Ken Pudney, email to author).

Infectious disease: (22 June 1971) *“Admission of Christina and Maria, daughters of Corporal Murphy (suspected smallpox cases). Corporal Murphy and his family were en route from Singapore and staying on Cyprus on holiday. Major Templar, consultant physician BMH Dhekelia, arrived by helicopter to see these patients in the absence of Wing Commander Hill. A diagnosis of smallpox was considered extremely unlikely. This was later confirmed and the children discharged.”*

The World Health Organisation had launched an intensive smallpox eradication campaign in 1967. The last natural case of smallpox in the world occurred in Somalia in 1977, and the World Health Organisation declared this global scourge to be eradicated in 1980.

Lightning crash: (30 September 1971) *“Notification was received of a Priority 1 Lightning crash, The pilot, Flight Lieutenant Bealer⁵⁶, who did not suffer any injury, had ejected 35 miles out at sea. He was kept overnight for observation and declared fit to fly after one week.”*

There were to be several ejection incidents at RAF Akrotiri over the years, with the last such patient being admitted to TPMH in 2009.

COUP AND INVASION – THE EVENTS OF JULY-AUGUST 1974

Greece had been under an increasingly unpopular military junta since 1967, and on 15 July 1974 this junta tried a Falklands-type diversion⁵⁷ by staging a coup d'état to overthrow the Cypriot President, Archbishop Makarios, and forcibly bring about union with Greece. An RAF helicopter airlifted Makarios to safety within the British base in Akrotiri, whence he departed via Malta to London. Once the coup protagonists proclaimed Nikos Sampson (former leader of an EOKA execution squad and extreme Turkophobe⁵⁸) as president, Turkish intervention to protect the Turkish Cypriot minority became almost inevitable, and as many predicted Turkey invaded northern Cyprus on 20 July 1974, precipitating a massive refugee crisis.

15.7.74	Military coup
16.7.74	7 maternity admissions from Limassol for custody. 2 Greek Cypriot wounded admitted.
20.7.74	Turkish invasion of Cyprus
21.7.74	9 admissions from local population – 8 wounded Turkish Cypriot, 1 appendicitis Greek Cypriot. Surgical teams formed.
23.7.74	12 wounded Cypriots admitted (11 Turks, 1 Greek)
24.7.74	4 wounded Cypriots admitted. 72 rescued Turkish sailors succoured and then evacuated by helicopter.

Extract from TPMH Operational Record Book, July 1974

TPMH certainly lived up to its motto “Strive to heal” (and not just in the physical sense), caring impartially and passionately for victims on both sides of the conflict following these events.

At the beginning of the invasion, Services families living in Limassol were moved onto the base and had to share accommodation with other families, up to 20 people per quarter. As the Turkish Army moved forward, TPMH went onto a war footing resulting in all staff being required to live and sleep at the hospital working an eight-hour rota. The workload was interspersed with frenetic periods when wounded casualties arrived, on top of a steady flow of medical and obstetric patients.

THE EVACUATION OF KYRENIA AND THE KOCATEPE INCIDENT

(24 July 1974) “Today has been the acid test for our hospital. At 1100 hours we were faced with a MULTICAS situation stemming from the evacuation of Kyrenia by the Royal Navy. One hour later we had been inundated with 85 casualties... I am proud of you all. As we started with Royal Naval involvement I think it is only fair to end the day with one of their old traditional and reserved [sic] customs. “TO ALL PERSONNEL ‘SPlice THE MAINBRACE’ the bill to be paid from my Fund.”” (Group Captain Donald⁵⁹)

⁵⁷ Phrase used in *The Rough Guide to Cyprus*, 2002.

⁵⁸ *The Cyprus Conspiracy*, Chapter 18 ‘The Greek Colonels oust Makarios’, p152

⁵⁹ Hospital Bulletin No 8. Personal Message from Officer Commanding The Princess Mary’s Royal Air Force Hospital Akrotiri. Held in AIR23/8716: RAF Hospital, Akrotiri: Action in the Cyprus Emergency, 1974. TPMH Archives, Kew.



Evacuation of wounded civilian from Kyrenia to Akrotiri, 1974

(24 July 1974) “72 rescued Turkish sailors succoured and then evacuated by helicopter.”

Commanding Officer’s summary: The major incident referred to in these intriguing extracts is described more fully in a five-page letter⁶⁰ summarising the hospital’s role in this conflict. This was sent on 9 October 1974 by Group Captain Donald (Commanding Officer TPMH) to Air Marshal GH Dhenin, Director General Medical Services (RAF), who had coincidentally been TPMH’s first Commanding Officer in 1963:

(9 October 1974) “Now that the dust has apparently settled, I know you would wish to know how the hospital fared during the Cyprus troubles...”

The busiest day was 24 July, when at approximately 1030hrs we were given some 15 minutes’ notice of the arrival of 74 Turkish naval seamen, who were survivors of a Turkish destroyer sunk three days earlier by one of their own submarines... The hospital’s ‘Disaster Plan’ for the reception of mass casualties was implemented. Helicopters – SAR Whirlwinds and naval Sea Kings from HMS Hermes – began to arrive at the hospital helicopter pad at under five-minute intervals and soon Ward 7 was full. The only suitable space left was the wide corridor outside the Physiotherapy Department and approximately 30 safari beds were positioned there and rapidly filled. These survivors mainly

⁶⁰ Letter held in AIR23/8716: RAF Hospital, Akrotiri: Action in the Cyprus Emergency, 1974. TPMH Archives, Kew.

wore only underpants and were suffering from exposure and sunburn with some minor injuries and it must be assumed that the more seriously injured expired at sea. They were given drinks, slept for some 2–3 hours and then were being served with a hot meal when we were informed that if fit to move they could be taken back to a Turkish vessel, starting in approximately 30 minutes' time – the opportunity was too good to miss. In this short period, the hospital and station wives rapidly gathered our shirts, slacks and footwear and by the time the seamen left they were all decently clad. Again the evacuation went very smoothly, all being removed in just



The survivors of the Turkish destroyer *Kocatepe* which was sunk during the conflict were treated at TPMH RAF Akrotiri Cyprus - The Princess Mary's Hospital until repatriated to Turkey by the Turkish Red Cross.

over one hour's time. That day Cape Zevghari [sic] resembled an operational beach head..." *Kocatepe* survivors, courtesy of www.i-dive.com.cy (the caption should have read 'Turkish Red Crescent')



Kocatepe (ex-USS *Harwood*), courtesy of www.i-dive.com.cy

The helicopter pilot: Almost 30 years later, the obituary notice for helicopter pilot Captain Ian McKechnie revealed intriguing details about how he had transferred the Turkish survivors of the *Kocatepe* from British care to the Turkish vessel *Berk*, under dangerous and stormy night-flying conditions, resulting in his being awarded the 1974 Boyd Trophy for his heroism in doing so.

Due to the political sensitivity at the time, no mention was made of the Turkish survivors having initially been brought ashore onto a Sovereign Base Area and into a British hospital. It would appear by extrapolation from TPMH's archives that, in that frantic afternoon hour mentioned above, the Turkish seamen were taken from TPMH to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary *Olna*, for onward transfer to *Berk* by Ian McKechnie. It is probable that the obituary writer did not have sight of the TPMH records at Kew.

“The Queen's harbourmaster on the Clyde and captain of the Post of Faslane who saved 72 survivors of a Turkish destroyer hit by friendly fire, Captain Ian McKechnie... has died aged 60. As a pilot, McKechnie marked a distinguished career in naval aviation with two significant actions. The first was his 1967 napalm bombing of the stricken oil tanker Torrey Canyon, which helped contain the disastrous torrent of oil.

Secondly, and unpublicised for political reasons, was his ship-to-ship transfer by helicopter of 72 survivors from a Turkish destroyer, sunk by friendly fire during the Cyprus War in 1974. He was later awarded the Turkish Distinguished Service Medal, the only foreign recipient in the history of Ataturk's republic, and allowed to wear it by the Queen.

He performed his most outstanding and gallant airmanship during the 1974 Turkish military response to the Greek-inspired coup in Cyprus. On 21 July, Turkish aircraft mistakenly attacked and sank the Turkish destroyer Kocatepe (ex-USS Harwood) off Akrotiri. Rescuers found 72 exhausted survivors who were taken [sic] to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship Olna. But the political decision was made to remove the Turks from British care within 24 hours. As Wasp helicopter pilot on the Leander Class frigate, HMS Andromeda, Lieutenant McKechnie volunteered to undertake a ship-to-ship transfer in darkness and stormy conditions. In his two-seater 'paraffin pigeon', he ferried up to five survivors at a time to the Turkish warship Berk.

As she was a new vessel with no lighting on her flight deck, he instructed Turkish sailors to stand in a square, holding aloft RN-issue torches to create an illuminated horizon for landing.

He later recalled: "Different-sized, tiring Turks do not make for a very good horizon bar after two hours." Nonetheless, he completed 55 deck landings, including four stretcher cases, in four-and-a-half hours of near-constant flying. "It transpired our Wasp was the first helicopter to land on the Berk's heaving flight deck," he later said. He had earlier evacuated civilians and tourists caught up in the fierce fighting around Kyrenia and by 2pm on 23 July more than 2,000 people had been rescued by HM Ships Andromeda, Hermes, Devonshire, and RFA Olna. With the removal of flotation gear, four adults and two children in arms could be carried in his tiny Wasp. McKechnie recalled "a string of signals from Whitehall held us back" from landing in the dusty ground inside Kyrenia, which was under small arms, mortar, and tank fire. "Thanks to UN forces, Turkish tanks were persuaded to hold off until the evacuation was complete," he added. Two passengers included a mother and her four-day-old baby, abandoned in hospital as the fighting intensified.

The citation for his 1974 Boyd Trophy (which he won twice), presented by the Royal Navy for the Turkish incident, reads: "The successful completion of this mission was due entirely to the exceptional flying skill of Lieutenant McKechnie, backed up by the professionalism and initiative of all members of his Flight..." The Turkish ships and personnel were described as

"foreign" and the incident was not publicised. He was also awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service in the Air."⁶¹

The survivors were evacuated back to Turkey with the assistance of the Turkish Red Crescent. The Turkish Red Crescent representatives have recorded their names in the official TPMH Visitors' Book, just below those of *HMS Devonshire* which had aided in the evacuation from Kyrenia.

The mystery convoy: One still hears speculation and reports (probably well-founded) that this 'friendly fire' incident involving the unfortunate *Kocatepe* was a result of decoy radio messages by Turkish-speaking Greeks, which fooled the Turks into thinking that a Greek relieving naval force was en route from Rhodes⁶².

The destroyer was actually sunk by Turkish jets not a submarine, and the story is told by the well-respected Turkish journalist Mehmet Ali Birand in his book, *30 Hot Days*, published in Nicosia in an English translation in 1985. The following are extracts from *The Cyprus Conspiracy* (1999), which refers to relevant portions of Birand's book:

"By the end of the first day [20 July], the Turks had captured a strategic point overlooking the port of Kyrenia..."

⁶¹ Obituary: Captain Ian McKechnie, in *The Herald Scotland*, 6 May 2003 www.heraldsotland.com

⁶² *The Expedition on a Historic Wreck in Cyprus*, November 2010, I Dive Tec Rec Center Plc www.i-dive.com.cy and www.turkiye-wrecks.com/kocatepeeng.html

Though it was all going to plan, the Turks were worried about rumours that a group of Greek warships had left Rhodes, which could mean Athens was about to enter the battle. They sent a reconnaissance plane to check on the nationality of the mystery convoy, without success.

The Turks wanted to stop the Greeks using the [Nicosia] airfield to provide air cover for the landing force, which was believed to be heading towards Cyprus escorted by seven destroyers...

But it was the Americans who took the lead in the frantic behind-the-scenes diplomacy to stave off war... In Ankara, Sisco told the Turks there were two conditions for the Greeks choosing talks in London instead of war: an immediate ceasefire, and agreement to confine the invasion force to specific areas... However, the Turks insisted that Greece should recall its convoy, pull its troops out of Turkish-Cypriot enclaves, and order the Greek and Greek-Cypriot forces to cease offensive operations. The Greeks had threatened to leave NATO and declare war on Turkey if it did not end its action in Cyprus within 48 hours. The threat gained credibility because the Turks believed the mystery convoy heading for Cyprus comprised up to nine ships, some of them destroyers.

The Turks rushed three destroyers towards the north-western tip of Cyprus, where they expected to find the Greek warships. On their way they fought with three Greek gunboats, but found no convoy and carried on southwards

towards Paphos. Kissinger at this point was worried that the whole Cyprus situation could blow up in his face... The Americans had several warships off the south-east coast to ward off trouble. But their own intelligence could not confirm the presence of a Greek convoy. When Turkish warplanes were sent by the dozen to attack the ships, they hit three of their own destroyers, fatally damaging one of them.



The sinking of *Kocatepe*, photo courtesy of www.i-dive.com.cy



The sinking of *Kocatepe*, photo courtesy of www.i-dive.com.cy

The convoy was never found, and the destroyers were attacked because they did not give the right answer when challenged by the Turkish pilots. It was hard to distinguish a Greek destroyer from a Turkish one visually, because both countries had the same supplier – the United States. Turkish commanders were devastated by the self-inflicted disaster, but realised that matters could have been much worse if their pilots had mistakenly attacked the British or American ships positioned nearby.

The mystery naval threat made Kissinger anxious to secure a ceasefire, to kill any possibility of the junta going to war...

Having agreed to a ceasefire deadline, the Turks tried to secure the fall of Kyrenia as quickly as they could, and bring in reinforcements. Warships shelled Greek positions on the mountains above the town, and waves of helicopters and transport planes dropped paratroops on the slopes to secure the rear of the port... At 1pm, Kyrenia fell to the Turks...

The Turks had agreed to hold their fire, but not to end their intervention. Their self-assured defiance astounded the British in particular. Ecevit even threatened to use force to stall efforts to evacuate British civilians from the area of conflict. The 17,000 Britons on Cyprus – holidaymakers, expatriates and families of servicemen – were told to seek refuge in the sovereign bases. Across the island there was pandemonium...

Some British and foreign nationals found it easier to head north through Turkish-held territory in the hope of being evacuated from Kyrenia. During 22– 23 July, the bulk of Britain’s naval task force steamed westward around Cape Andreas for this purpose. This presented Wilson and Callaghan with a problem, because the Turkish navy tried to disrupt the Royal Navy’s attempts to move its warships close to the beaches to pick up the evacuees. When Callaghan protested to Ecevit, he confessed that his navy had been ordered to keep the British warships 10km from the coastline. Callaghan then warned him that he was sending the ships in, and if there was any more trouble Ankara would have to answer for it. “Fortunately for the Turkish ships, they did not attempt to enforce their orders,” recalled the former Foreign Secretary. Hermes and Devonshire were ordered to head for the north coast to back up Andromeda and Rhyl, which rescued the 500 evacuees in full view of the Turkish warships...

While the evacuees were being landed at Akrotiri, two Sea King helicopters recovered 72 men, survivors of the Turkish destroyer mistakenly sunk by Turkish jets.”

It is not surprising that in the heat of the moment (‘the fog of war’) Group Captain Donald had thought *Kocatepe* had been sunk by a submarine and that there was some confusion over the exact number of patients received during this incident, as it coincided with the arrival of multiple evacuees in Akrotiri from Kyrenia. It would appear that 72 Turkish seamen were rescued by ships returning from Kyrenia, and that injured

evacuees accounted for the remainder of the 85 casualties mentioned in the CO’s Hospital Bulletin. Between 54 and 232 sailors and marines are variously reported to have lost their lives when the *Kocatepe* sank, some 10 miles south west of Pathos⁶³. This was only eight years before the Falklands War.

THE STORK SPECIALS

With TPMH very much on a war footing and with the Sovereign Base Areas overcrowded with British refugees and families evacuated from Limassol, many dependants were evacuated to UK. There were some rather special flights:

(17 August 1974) Flight Nos 2556 (110 on board) and 2557 (117 on board) VC 10s: “These two flights were christened ‘Stork Specials’ as they consisted of pregnant women in the last eight weeks of pregnancy who were evacuated from Limassol. All arrived safely and there were no deliveries in the air.”

(24 August 1974) Flight No 2421 VC 10 (27 on board): Another ‘Stork Special’.

In total, the RAF evacuated some 9,000 civilians from Cyprus.

HAPPY VALLEY REFUGEE CAMP

In addition to caring for inpatients from both communities, medical and nursing staff from TPMH were also deployed to care for some 8,000 Turkish Cypriot civilians who had fled from Limassol and the surrounding areas (mainly Paramali).

⁶³ *The Expedition on a Historic Wreck in Cyprus*, November 2010
www.i-dive.com.cy

These refugees were housed in tents on the sports pitches of Happy Valley (the valley next to Episkopi Garrison, still part of the Sovereign Base Area, which was normally used for sporting activities).

“In all, 130 non-entitled civilians were admitted between 15 July and 31 August.”⁶⁴



Refugee tents in Happy Valley, 1974

(October 1974) “The only department where the work has fallen off is the maternity division – where we are now delivering more Turkish than British babies.”⁶⁵

An idea of the obstetric workload that TPMH took on from Happy Valley can be obtained by analogy from the published report on the obstetric workload at BMH Dhekelia during the same period ⁶⁶. The heaviest months for the obstetric department there were August, September and October 1974, when the large majority of pregnant mothers admitted were unbooked refugees in labour. Even under these difficult circumstances BMH Dhekelia still achieved gratifying end results, reflected in the overall perinatal mortality rate of 10 per 1,000 total births.

The refugees in Happy Valley were to remain under the care and protection of British Forces until they were evacuated to Turkey and thence to the northern part of Cyprus by the International Committee of the Red Cross several months later.

CLINICAL OVERVIEW AND WELL-DESERVED TRIBUTES

TPMH played a unique role during this turbulent period, as the only hospital that could deliver impartial care to both sides.

⁶⁴ Group Captain Donald, Commanding Officer TPMH. Letter held in AIR23/8716: *RAF Hospital, Akrotiri: Action in the Cyprus Emergency, 1974*. TPMH Archives, Kew.

⁶⁵ Group Captain Donald, Commanding Officer TPMH. Letter dated 9 October 74, held in AIR23/8716: *RAF Hospital, Akrotiri: Action in the Cyprus Emergency, 1974*. TPMH Archives, Kew.

⁶⁶ Printer KD. *Obstetric Record of the Cyprus Emergency, July 1974 – July 1975*. *J Roy Army Med Corps* 1977;123:142–147.

The trauma workload eventually consisted of 71 patients injured by bullets, fragments, bomb blasts or mines, drawn from British personnel, United Nations Forces and the local Cypriot military and civilian population, and mainly admitted during the first two weeks. The casualties were often severely wounded and beyond the capabilities of the local hospitals (far less developed in 1974 than in 2012). Many required multiple operations extending over the next three or four months. Altogether, 119 operations were carried out on 41 patients at TPMH⁶⁷.

Besides the obstetric and trauma patients, the majority of other patients had minor illnesses such as dehydration and heat exhaustion. Diarrhoea was also prevalent due to the cramped living conditions of the evacuees.

“The DC-9 chartered by the International Committee of the Red Cross took off from Geneva Airport on 22 July 1974, and set a course for Malta, its first and only stop before its final destination: Cyprus.... During the refuelling stop in Malta, Pierre Gaillard, the head of the ICRC mission, held his first operational briefing with the whole team... Landing in Nicosia being impossible, the DC-9 touched down towards the end of the afternoon, after a seven-hour flight, at the British military base of Akrotiri, in the south of the island...

As soon as we landed, Pierre Gaillard and the doctors conferred with the chief surgeon of the base hospital, in order to gain an idea of immediate priorities. Then we went on to Limassol, the southern-most town of the island...”⁶⁸

(13 September 1974) “May I add my own thanks for the extremely helpful and important role which the Akrotiri hospital has played throughout the emergency. Your generous help to both communities has, I have no doubt, been an important factor in the excellent relations which the Sovereign Base Areas enjoy with the Cyprus Government and the Turkish Cypriot Administration.” (Her Majesty’s High Commissioner in Cyprus, His Excellency SJL Oliver CMG MBE⁶⁹)

(31 October 1974) “It is with gratitude that we acknowledge the fact that 37 women and young girls could thus be released from their detention camps in the north and could receive the medical treatment necessary for their physical and mental health.” (Philipp Zuger, ICRC ⁷⁰)

⁶⁷ Malpass CP, Winter JS. A report on missile injuries in Cyprus 1974. *British Journal of Surgery*, 1976, 63:482–487.

⁶⁸ The International Committee in Cyprus. *International Review of the Red Cross*, August 1974. ICRC.

⁶⁹ Her Majesty’s High Commissioner in Cyprus, His Excellency SJL Oliver CMG MBE, to the Commanding Officer of TPMH, Group Captain JG Donald OBE. Letter held in AIR23/8716: *RAF Hospital, Akrotiri: Action in the Cyprus Emergency*, 1974. TPMH Archives, Kew.

⁷⁰ Letter from Philipp Zuger, Head of Mission, ICRC, to Mr DM Day, Deputy British High Commissioner, Nicosia, held in AIR23/8716: *RAF Hospital, Akrotiri: Action in the Cyprus Emergency*, 1974. TPMH Archives, Kew.

WILKINSON SWORD OF PEACE

The caption on the Sword proudly displayed in the RAF Akrotiri Museum reads:

“The 1974 Wilkinson Sword of Peace was awarded to RAF Akrotiri for its outstanding efforts during 1974 in the field of humanitarian activities.”

This was in no small part due to the efforts of all staff at TPMH (see February 1974 – February 1975 statistics on p42).

RAF Akrotiri has been awarded the **Wilkinson Sword of Peace**⁷¹ three times in its history – the first for its services in the 1974 Cyprus Emergency, the second in 2002 for services to the wider international community, and lastly in 2006 for its part in the evacuation of refugees from Lebanon (Op HIGHBROW).

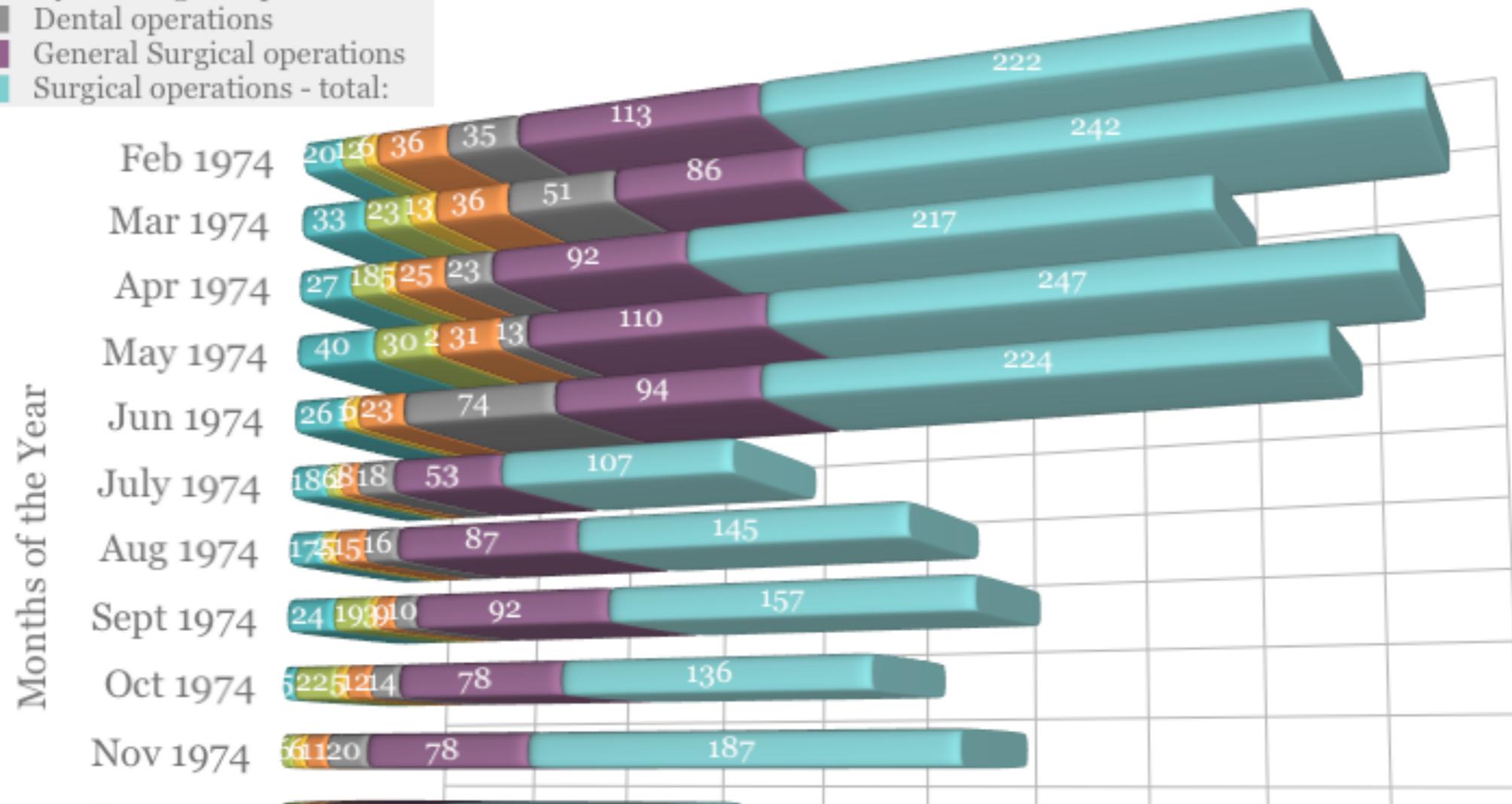
⁷¹ The Wilkinson Sword of Peace was instituted in 1966 by famed British swordmakers Wilkinson Sword. It is an award given to units of the British Armed Forces for activities above and beyond the unit's normal role that improve relations with the community, either within the United Kingdom, or overseas. After Wilkinson stopped the production of swords in 2005, Firmin & Sons began sponsoring the award.



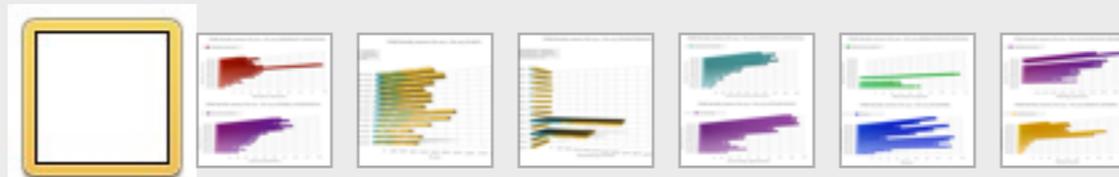
The Wilkinson Sword of Peace awarded to RAF Akrotiri in 1974 and now held in RAF Akrotiri Museum

TPMH Monthly statistics Feb 1974 - Feb 1975 (SURGICAL OPERATIONS)

- Orthopaedic operations
- ENT operations
- Ophthalmic operations
- Gynaecological operations
- Dental operations
- General Surgical operations
- Surgical operations - total:



Surgical Operations Total



The later years: 1974– 2012

THE U2 CRASH: 1977

(7 December 1977) “As a result of a U2 crash on takeoff, the hospital received seven casualties and five bodies brought in dead. One casualty subsequently died from 95% burns and another, a non-entitled civilian, was later casevaced to the burns unit at PMRAF Hospital, Halton.”

(1 December 2008) “The Akrotiri Operational Record Book covering 1975–80 was released earlier this year (AIR28/2170). An appendix for the day in question briefly describes the accident, but obviously makes no attempt to explain the cause. However, the file does contain pictures of the accident site shortly after the crash –

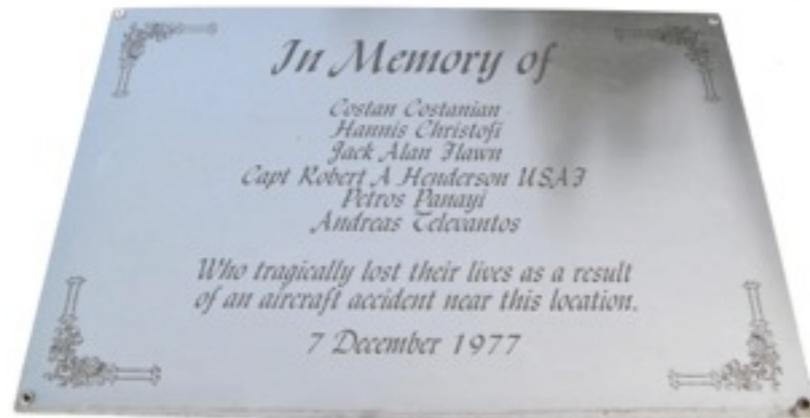


as an ex-forecaster myself (Episkopi not Akrotiri) I was shocked at how little remained of the met office.” (Brian Lyffe⁷²)

⁷² Brian Lyffe. The Aviation Forum
<http://forum.keypublishing.co.uk/showthread.php?t=55347>

The U2⁷³ crash destroyed the Ground Operations Cell and the Meteorological Office. A quick-witted serviceman drove a vehicle through the burning wall of the wooden-framed building of the Ground Operations Cell⁷⁴ to create an exit route for the people trapped inside. Four Cypriot workers and the weather forecaster, as well as the USAF pilot, died as a result. Their

names are recorded on the memorial⁷⁵ in the Garden of Remembrance set up alongside the Air Traffic Control Tower.



THE RECOMPRESSION CHAMBER: 1979

(February 1959) "A Royal Navy diver aged 21 was admitted on 17.2.59 following an underwater accident. He appeared to be suffering from the effects of partial drowning and decompression. X-ray presented interesting appearances of pulmonary consolidation and oedema. In spite of his serious condition on admission he made a rapid and uneventful recovery."

This was the first recorded incident of decompression illness presenting to hospital in Akrotiri. With the advent of scuba diving as a pastime in the late fifties, coupled with extensive commercial sponge diving around the coast of Cyprus

(particularly in Larnaca, Limassol, Paphos and Lachi), there was a small but slowly increasing trickle of patients into hospital following near-drowning incidents. A cluclas-type recompression chamber⁷⁶ was installed at TPMH in late 1979 to cater for patients from the western end of the Island, with patients from the eastern end gravitating towards a similar facility in Nicosia.

In its first two years of existence, 11 patients underwent treatment in the recompression chamber at TPMH. Most of the documented incidents were caused by flagrant disregard for accepted diving practice, with a combination of a 'macho' attitude (*"I have been bent hundreds of times."*), ignorance, and the commercial pressures of sponge diving⁷⁷.

⁷³ Two U2 aircraft have been stationed at RAF Akrotiri since August 1970 to monitor the Egypt – Israel ceasefire agreement http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAF_Akrotiri

⁷⁴ The site of the crash and the levelled buildings is marked by an area covered in large beach stones next to the Air Traffic car park.

⁷⁵ The memorial plaque to the U2 crash reads 'In memory of Costan Costanian, Hiannis Christofi, Jack Alan Flawn, Capt Robert A Henderson USAF, Petros Panayi, Andreas Televantos who tragically lost their lives as a result of an aircraft accident near this location. 7 December 1977.'

⁷⁶ Life-saving equipment comes to TPMH Akrotiri. *The Flamingo*. February 1980, No 111.

⁷⁷ TPMH Akrotiri Recompression Chamber: report 1979–1981.

(1988) “During the Easter Weekend, nine Turkish seamen were evacuated from a cargo vessel by 84 Squadron with carbon monoxide poisoning. All required chamber therapy and this event unfortunately disrupted the hospital pig roast night!”⁷⁸

The chamber closed in about 2005 because it had become unserviceable and better facilities had been developed in Larnaca (at what is now called the Poseidonia Centre). The chamber was removed in 2008.

THE BEIRUT BOMBING: 1983

On 23 October 1983, an RAF Hercules airlifted 21 US Marines from Beirut to TPMH following a massive suicide bomb attack in which 241 US troops were killed. A medical team from TPMH was sent to assist with the evacuation and triaged casualties on the tailgate of the Hercules under air support from two helicopter gun ships. One casualty died shortly after arrival at TPMH from chest injuries. 19 Marines were airlifted three days later to Wiesbaden West Germany, by a US Air Ambulance. The remaining critically injured Marine was treated in ITU until he was well enough to be airlifted to the US on 30 October 1983. During this period of activity TPMH was on Red Alert following direct threats from terrorist groups. 34 Squadron RAF Regiment set up sangars on the hospital roof and in the surrounding areas in order to provide increased security.

⁷⁸ Karl Colehouse, 40th anniversary history.



Wounded US Marines being offloaded at RAF Akrotiri, en route to TPMH. This attack resulted in President Ronald Reagan pulling American troops out of Beirut three months later

FIRST EVACUATION FROM LEBANON: 1984

In February 1984, TPMH personnel were called upon to assist in the evacuation of families from Jourieh Port, Lebanon. Various personnel were sent to assist on a Cypriot-owned car ferry. The lower deck was turned into a medical reception area, providing 150–200 camp beds. Only 90 refugees were able to board the ship due to heavy fighting. The remaining refugees were eventually flown out by 845 RNAS to the RFA *Reliant* and then by Chinook helicopter to RAF Akrotiri.

TERRORIST ATTACK ON AKROTIRI: 1986

“On Sunday 3 August 1986, a relaxed, sunny, RAF Akrotiri was subject to a surprise attack by a group of terrorists. That it was not more successful in its objectives must be a question of remarkably good fortune.

The station came under mortar fire. Miraculously no-one was killed, but Mrs Eileen Malpass did sustain shrapnel injuries from a mortar round which landed outside her married quarter. At the same time as the mortar rounds landed on the station, a group of terrorists outside the Lady’s Mile gate which is behind the ARABS (Akrotiri Rowing And Board Sailing) beach club opened fire with small arms and a rocket launcher. They also threw grenades into the car park. Families who were on the beach ran for cover into the beach club buildings and one dinghy sailor threw himself into the water as his boat came under fire. By a remarkable coincidence, the children of Mrs Malpass were in the ARABS Club car park with Mrs Sandra Edwards when the firing started. Rebecca Malpass aged eight showed great bravery and presence of mind by running out, under fire, to drag her younger brother to safety (she was subsequently awarded a CBFC's Commendation for her actions and goes to a service in Westminster Abbey just before Christmas). Mrs Edwards sustained shrapnel injuries to her foot and leg. Some other members of the club were also in the car park at the time and they too had a lucky escape by ducking behind their cars for cover.

The whole attack was over in minutes and the attackers sped off along a packed Lady’s Mile beach which at the time

contained literally thousands of tourists and local people, it was the first Sunday of the Cypriot national summer break. To add to the confusion the escaping terrorists fired over the heads of people on Lady’s Mile causing some alarm.”⁷⁹

Several casualties were treated at TPMH for minor fragment injuries. The United Nasserite Organisation claimed responsibility for the attack, publishing their claim in a Beirut-based newspaper after the event.

“After the terrorist attack on RAF Akrotiri, it was deemed all [Station] personnel including hospital staff would take their turn as armed guards on the main gate at RAF Akrotiri, this despite all the on- call duties and shift work. It was obvious that this was having a detrimental effect on the running of the hospital and I argued the case many times with the RAF Akrotiri execs to exempt the hospital staff. Finally, an infant was being medevaced back to UK and the ventilator that the child was on failed. The aircraft diverted to Athens and the child's breathing was maintained manually. The child survived. A subsequent investigation showed that the ventilator had missed its routine servicing as MDSS [Medical and Dental Servicing Section] were about six months behind due to the guarding commitment. CBF [Commander British Forces] ordered that TPMH were to cease guarding immediately and get back to running the hospital!”⁸⁰

⁷⁹ *The Flamingo Magazine*, Winter 1986
www.rafakrotiri.co.uk/flamingo/flamingo86/flam86.html

⁸⁰ Wing Commander Ken Pudney, ex-Officer Commanding Admin, email to author

A RUSSIAN SEAMAN: 1988

In January 1988, a 26-year-old Soviet seaman named Alexander Parchamenco, was airlifted to TPMH by a Wessex helicopter of 84 Squadron from his merchant vessel, Donetsk, which was 100 miles south west of Cyprus. Alexander had suffered a traumatic amputation of his leg by a steel hawser on board his ship⁸¹.

“Another time, on one Sunday morning at 5am, I was suddenly told that there was a chopper coming in from a ‘Russian fishing trawler’. A Russian sailor had had his right leg taken off at the knee when a wire hawser had snapped and whiplashed across the deck. The captain of the trawler had sent out a distress signal to which the RAF had responded and he was brought in to me.

He was a very frightened sailor and I needed to resuscitate him and explain that I needed to take him to theatre in order to do the necessary tidy up surgery so that he would have a good stump for fitting a prosthesis. I did not speak Russian at that time, and he could not speak English so I swiftly phoned intelligence and within 10 minutes there was an English major in the Intelligence Corps with me translating in perfect Russian, and we were then able to communicate and put the poor sailor's mind at rest. The major taught me basic Russian and Vladimir and I then got on like a house on fire during the next four weeks before he returned to his ship. It was very fortunate that the headmaster of the camp school and his wife and family were very good friends and

neighbours of ours where we lived in Cornwall Avenue [Number 17, traditionally the surgeon’s house, where the author also lived while at TPMH]. He had lost his leg (through knee amputation) as a result of an injury playing football while in some remote area in Nigeria when he was there with VSO [Voluntary Services Overseas] when he was 20.

So he was invaluable in that he was able to demonstrate to my Russian how it is possible to walk again after an amputation. Wonderful how the Good Lord steps in and helps out in all sorts of odd circumstances.” (John Lovegrove, consultant general surgeon TPMH 1988⁸²)

⁸¹ A touch of Glasnost. *The Lion*, 29 January 1988.

⁸² Lieutenant Colonel John Lovegrove RAMC, consultant general surgeon TPMH 1988, personal recollection in email to author, May 2012. His career provides a perspective on life in the Royal Army Medical Corps in the 1980s. He joined the RAMC at age 33 in 1979 as a surgical registrar. Thereafter he served at the Cambridge Military Hospital in Aldershot, the Duke of Connaught Unit in Northern Ireland, Belize, Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital in Woolwich, St Bartholomew’s Hospital in London, BMH Rinteln in Germany, BMH Dharan in Nepal, Hong Kong, and TPMH in Cyprus in 1988 before being posted to BMH Munster in Germany. The author first met

John at BMH Munster in 1989 on his own first posting after joining the Regular Forces as a surgical registrar.



Alexander Parchamenco with Wessex helicopter crew⁸³. He was eventually transferred back to the Soviet Union for further treatment

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK... 1988

"I suppose I would perform two to three appendicectomies, two to three Hernia repairs, and two Cholecystectomies a week. But my main work was caring for drunken servicemen between 10pm and 6am who had drunk too many brandy sours and had crashed their cars into cliffs or other cars on the way home from a night out with their mates. There were

no drink driving laws there at that time. So I was often faced with sudden acute admissions of usually young men who had been involved in RTAs [road traffic accidents], with multiple fractures, head, neck, thoracic and abdominal injuries. It all seemed so crazy and avoidable.

There was one incident which occurred on a Friday afternoon when I was contacted to expect three choppers bringing in 14 soldiers from the Coldstream Guards, who had been involved in a horrific accident while on exercise that afternoon up at AKAMAS on the west side of the island where the Army trained. They had been involved in an attack among the dunes up there by the sea, and to make it realistic there had been a mortar firing live rounds in front of their advance platoon as what they call 'Field Fire Support'. It had all been carefully monitored during the day so that it would be unlikely for anyone to be injured. But at about 4pm someone took their eye off the ball when the last mortar shell was fired and it had landed right in the middle of that advance platoon, killing one private and seriously injuring 14 other officers and men. I was still in the hospital as always. Well I quickly alerted all my staff and pulled the GPs to the A and E dept. On camp there is a separate GP health centre, while The Princess Mary's RAF hospital is beautifully situated on a promontory right by the sea some three miles from the main camp and your married quarter.

⁸³ Wessex helicopter crew, left to right: Flight Lieutenant Steve Mason (Pilot), Flight Lieutenant Pete Ritchie (Navigator and Winch Operator), and Flight Sergeant Kevin Brooks (Winchman).

We coped but it was a difficult night with the triage, resus, stabilising of patients, and me operating in order of priority all night.

Three months later [my wife] and I were rewarded by the Commanding Officer of the Coldstream Guards at their Mess in Episkopi with an invitation to meet the survivors again at a very splendid 'Beating of the Retreat'. But of course I could only enjoy a sip of champagne being single handed!" (John Lovegrove, 1988⁸⁴)

MAJOR INCIDENT ON TROODOS: 1989

On 2 November 1989, a four-ton truck laden with soldiers of the resident battalion, the Coldstream Guards, returning to Episkopi from duty in Troodos accidentally left the road and plunged down the hillside. There were six fatalities at the scene. 17 casualties were airlifted by helicopters to TPMH. Flight Sergeant Bowie SEN PMRAFNS from the Troodos Medical Centre was subsequently awarded an Air Officer Commander-in-Chief's commendation for his actions at the scene⁸⁵

ROLE OF TPMH IN OP GRANBY:

1990–1991

The months of preparation for conflict from a nursing perspective at TPMH were well documented in the article 'The vital links' in the Nursing Times of 27 February 1991, which went to press as the ground war was under way. *"We hope we are not needed but if we are, we're prepared."*⁸⁶

TPMH was to be a critical staging point in the 4,000-mile-long evacuation chain from the Gulf to the UK during the first Gulf War, as is also illustrated by this extract from the Royal Air Force Association website:

"After Saddam Hussein's forces invaded Kuwait in August 1990 and British Forces were committed to the UN multi-national force facing Iraq, plans were developed to cope with potential casualties. A complex aeromedical evacuation system was put in place and medical services and facilities at Akrotiri were fully committed. The Princess Mary's RAF Hospital expanded from its normal 60-bed capacity to its full 200-bed capability by re-activating and equipping normally dormant wards. Extra medical teams from the UK and Belgian Medical Services reinforced TPMH staff. At the same time, a 300-bed Low Care Transit Facility (LCTF) (manned by personnel from No 1 AEVAC Sqn and TPMH) was established in a large storage building adjacent to the airfield to provide a holding area for Priority 3 patients who would potentially arrive from the Gulf in C130 aircraft and transfer to civil Boeing 737s at Akrotiri. Eventually, one ward in TPMH (Ward 5) would be turned into a secure area for returning British prisoners of war (released SAS and RAF Aircrew).

⁸⁴ Lieutenant Colonel John Lovegrove RAMC, see reference 82.

⁸⁵ G H Cuthbert, 35th anniversary history.

⁸⁶ The vital links. *Nursing Times*, 27 February 1991, p26–30.

*The Station Medical Centre was reinforced to provide cover for the greatly increased Akrotiri population, and also to allow the SMO to become the focal point for managing all the various aspects of the aeromed task. Akrotiri was the only link in the aeromedical chain where a 100% check on aircraft patient manifests could be made to enable the Medical Evacuation Cell at United Kingdom Land Forces to designate UK destination hospitals. Some 800 patients passed through the aeromed chain during Granby, actual battle casualties were mercifully few, and it was with great relief that the medical facilities were quickly disbanded on cessation of hostilities. In fact the LCTF, which took some 17,000 stock items to establish, was transformed in 24 hours into the venue for Akrotiri's victory celebration party!"*⁸⁷

During the Gulf War, Ward 5 on TPMH became a secure area for returning prisoners of war and released RAF aircrew, among them Flight Lieutenants John Nicol and John Peters. In their book *Tornado Down*, they remember a nurse who was 'all kindness, starch and cleanliness'. They tried to charm her, in typical pilot fashion, into bringing them a beer, but she sternly reminded them of hospital rules. However, a few minutes later she reappeared with a smile and a six-pack of the local beer, saying "Just don't tell anybody that I gave it to you"⁸⁸.

The Belgian Medical Services detachment based at TPMH were apparently in action only once and this was to treat a local woman who fell from a first floor window.

XV Squadron Tornado GR1



Signed with gratitude to TPMH staff by Flight Lieutenants John Peters and John Nichol. Original kept in RAF Akrotiri Museum

⁸⁷ Acknowledgements to RAF Akrotiri Revisited website
www.rafakrotiri.co.uk/

⁸⁸ Mackie, Mary. *Sky Wards – A history of The Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service*, 2001, p329.

RELEASE OF BEIRUT HOSTAGES: 1991

On 24 September 1991, Jackie Mann, the oldest western hostage held in Beirut, was released after 865 days of confinement. He and his wife Sunni landed at Akrotiri en route to a hero's welcome in Britain, being taken for breakfast and a rest at the Red Cross Welfare Department at TPMH before continuing with their journey⁸⁹.



RAF Akrotiri welcomes Jackie and Sunni Mann

19 November 1991, Beirut hostages Terry Waite and John McCarthy were released from captivity and examined at TPMH prior to their return to England⁹⁰.

Some 96 foreign hostages were taken and held by Hezbollah during the Lebanon hostage crisis between 1982 and 1992, mainly serving as insurance to prevent retaliation against Hezbollah, which was thought to be responsible for the killing of more than 300 Americans in the embassy bombing in Beirut in April 1983 and the Marine barracks attack of October 1983.



Terry Waite and his brother David, with Group Captain Pike and TPMH staff

⁸⁹ RAF Akrotiri hosts freed hostage – Jacki Mann. *Flamingo Magazine*, November 1991

⁹⁰ Akrotiri takes centre stage in release of Terry Waite. *Flamingo Magazine*, January 1992.

ROYAL YACHT BRITANNIA: 1993

In 1993, 26 junior ratings of the Royal Yacht Britannia were admitted with salmonella food poisoning (sourced to a batch of dodgy Scotch eggs served only in the Junior Ratings' Mess!). No senior ratings or any member of the Royal Family were affected. Ward 5 was set up as an isolation ward⁹¹ and the Royal Yacht sailed to Akrotiri mole where the casualties were received.

“Then the casualties arrived. No, I don’t mean started to arrive, all 19 arrived on the same bus. The CO, Group Captain Tom Rogerson, in shorts, t-shirt and baseball cap, OCA Squadron Leader Keith Lane (in similar attire), and most of the admin staff – in fact anyone who wasn’t involved on the ward itself, acted as porters to ferry the very ill looking sailors up to the ward and get them into bed. This of course was a useful rehearsal for Uncle Tom Rogerson, who was later to feature as a hospital porter in the edition of ‘Soldier Soldier’ that was filmed at TPMH!

*Another six or seven were admitted during the following two days...”*⁹²

As a thank you, the Admiral and crew invited the hospital staff to a cocktail party on board. This was reportedly the first time that an all-ranks party had been held on the Royal Yacht.

The Admiral also presented a large Royal Yacht plaque to the CO and staff, which was hung in the reception area at TPMH⁹³. The current whereabouts of this plaque is unknown.



As this edition of the Magazine has a Naval flavour, and as the Royal Yacht Britannia was decommissioned last year, perhaps now is the time to tell the tale of that ship’s encounter with TPMH RAF Akrotiri.

Cover of Princess Mary’s RAF Nursing Service magazine, summer 1998

⁹¹ TPMH’s Commanding Officer Group Captain Tom Rogerson designated the men’s toilet on Ward 5 as ‘Britannia Ward’ and a suitably inscribed sign was fixed to the toilet door. When the Admiral visited the ward the next day along with Surgeon Commander Robin McNeill Love, the ship’s medical officer, he found it most amusing and gave instructions to his aide that a Royal Yacht plaque be delivered post haste to hang alongside the Britannia ward sign. Tom Rogerson apparently instructed that when the refurbishment programme was completed, the toilet door, complete with sign and plaque, be preserved as part of TPMH’s history. *The Flamingo*, summer 1998. Article by Squadron Leader (Retd) J Oakman ARRC. Alas, the toilet door has been lost.

⁹² *Princess Mary’s RAF Nursing Service magazine*, summer 1998.

⁹³ *Sky Wards*, p330.

IT'S A GIRL! 1995

On 17 October 1995, Squadron Leader Hani Awad (Consultant Gynaecologist and Obstetrician) was involved in a humanitarian operation to airlift a pregnant 23-year-old Palestinian woman, whose waters had broken, from a Cyprus-registered ferry with 650 Palestinian refugees on board stranded 90 miles off the coast of Larnaca. The refugees, including more than 350 children, had been expelled from Libya by Gaddafi and had been refused entry to Syria or to Cyprus. Squadron Leader Awad and midwife Squadron Leader Hazel Weir were winched down to the ship from the 84 Squadron helicopter, the woman initially refused to leave so preparations were begun to deliver her on board, but she was eventually persuaded⁹⁴ to be winched up and transferred to Larnaca General Hospital. The transfer was uneventful and the woman gave birth 48 hours later to a healthy baby daughter. The husband and another daughter were temporarily detained at Larnaca Airport as they had not gone through normal immigration channels, and the RAF helicopter was similarly detained by the overzealous immigration officer⁹⁵!

NO LONGER ANY RAF HOSPITALS: 1996

On 31 March 1996, the three great RAF hospitals of Wegberg in Germany, Wroughton in Wiltshire, and Halton in Buckinghamshire closed their doors for good as a result of defence cutbacks, as did the major Army hospitals in Aldershot and Woolwich. The same day, The Princess Mary's RAF Hospital Akrotiri's RAF Ensign was lowered for the last time, as the hospital transferred to the care of the newly

formed Defence Secondary Care Agency, and was renamed The Princess Mary's Hospital, Akrotiri. This RAF ensign was laid up in the hospital chapel on 23 August 1996 in a formal ceremony conducted by the three RAF Akrotiri padres, where it remained thereafter to remind staff and patients, present and future, of a proud RAF history⁹⁶.

CRUISE LINER FIRE: 1997

“As with all hospitals practical jokes were played, particularly on night duty staff. Picture the scene: two staff looking forward to going home, it's around 0600 hrs at the weekend and they are just beginning to think about getting the patients up and ready for breakfast. A call comes through from reception with the message – ‘standby to receive casualties cruise liner on fire 800 people on board off Cyprus’. The Corporal who called was one of the main practical jokers, so the reply was ‘yes really’ and the phone was put down on him. This happened twice. On the third occasion, now quite agitated, he said ‘If you don't believe me look out of the window towards Episkopi’. Still thinking it a prank, one of the ward staff sauntered over to the window to see a cruise ship on fire down the coast with rescue

⁹⁴ Hani Awad later found out that the ship's captain had apparently threatened to throw the woman overboard if she persisted in refusing to be winched up to the helicopter. Fortunately this was never put to the test.

⁹⁵ It's a girl – expectant mum in mercy flight dash. *The Lion (The British Forces Cyprus Weekly)*, 25 October 1995.

⁹⁶ RAF Ensign laid up at TPMH. *The Lion*, 6 September 1996.

*helicopters overhead. Fortunately everyone was offloaded without incident or injury.”*⁹⁷

This incident took place on 4 October 1997, when the Cyprus-registered cruise liner *Romantica*, with 487 passengers and 186 crew members on board, developed a serious engine fire 65 miles south of Akrotiri. Two Wessex helicopters from RAF Akrotiri deployed to the scene and transferred the passengers and crew to RFA *Tristram*, a Royal Fleet auxiliary vessel, which was 30 miles away from the incident. All passengers and crew were then transferred to another Cyprus-flagged cruise liner, *Princessa Victoria*⁹⁸. TPMH was placed on standby, but fortunately no-one was injured. The listing *Romantica* was towed into Limassol Bay⁹⁹, but broke its moorings in the heavy seas and ended up temporarily stuck on the sands off Lady’s Mile Beach.

⁹⁷ G H Cuthbert, personal reminiscence, in email to author 10 September 2012.

⁹⁸ *Cyprus News Agency*, 4 October 1997 www.hri.org/news/cyprus/cna/1997/97-10-04.cna.html

⁹⁹ Hundreds saved from burning Cyprus cruise ship. *New York Times*, 5 October 1997 www.nytimes.com/1997/10/05/world/hundreds-saved-from-burning-cyprus-cruise-ship.html



Cruise liner *Romantica* ashore at Lady’s Mile Beach, Limassol

AFRICAN REFUGEES: 1998

In September 1998, the call went out at Akrotiri: “Boat carrying refugees has run aground in local waters. Many stranded at cliff bottom.” The author remembers this episode clearly as he had that day commenced a locum attachment at TPMH. A boatload with dozens of desperate refugees from diverse African and Middle Eastern countries, including a new mum who had delivered her baby onboard, had come ashore on the rocks under the cliffs next to TPMH. The refugees were winched to safety and taken to a makeshift reception centre, and the hospital and Maternity Unit placed on standby. The refugees were at their last tether, having been adrift for days, and all were suffering from dehydration, pains and emotional distress. Dr Frances Gillies (on-call doctor at Akrotiri Station

Medical Centre) vetted the refugees for health problems. Luckily, none needed hospitalisation. Dr Gillies subsequently wrote up her account for the *BMJ*¹⁰⁰. Hani Awad, TPMH's Egyptian obstetrician, being fluent in Arabic, acted as interpreter each afternoon after a normal day's work for the next six months, teasing out individual stories and helping sift out the genuine refugees (such as Kurdish refugees fleeing persecution in Saddam Hussein's Iraq) from the human smugglers or those simply seeking a new life abroad.

The old and overladen boat had made for the prominent Red Cross displayed on the seaward wall of TPMH. As a result, the Commanding Officer (Group Captain Dougherty) had the Red Cross whitewashed so that it would not act as a beacon for any further boatloads, hopefully preventing the political headache of refugees disembarking on Sovereign territory. Some refugees were eventually returned to their home countries, others were given asylum in various European countries, and several others (including the mum and her baby) have remained in 'Richmond Village' in the Eastern Sovereign Base Area. Hani Awad has subsequently helped deliver three more babies of that mum at TPMH.

A Memorable Night

Frances Gillies. A memorable night. *BMJ* 2009;339:B4359.

A MEMORABLE NIGHT

Some years ago now, I was the GP on call for primary and pre-hospital emergency care. The evening call came in "boat carrying refugees had run aground in local waters. Many stranded at cliff bottom". I declined to be winched down, knowing the rescued would need to come up sooner or later. They were ferried to a makeshift reception centre and I made my way there, wondering what to expect. I was not prepared for the scene, dozens of people, many nationalities, men, women and children sprawled exhausted across any available seat and the floor. Their initial relief at having survived was soon replaced by complaints of dehydration, pains and emotional distress. Cultural and language differences were a hindrance but my stethoscope identified me as a source of help. No-one spoke a mutual language sufficiently for effective doctor-patient communication and my request for an interpreter resulted in an A4 sheet of identical medical questions in two different languages but unfortunately no answers! History taking proved impossible but we did what we could.

I examined an infant on the baby changing facilities of the tiny ladies toilet, her mother claimed she was born on the boat, this could never be proved but her clamped umbilical cord was indeed still attached. I wondered how desperate she must have been to board that boat. Social needs for water, food and shelter took precedence over ill health though my intervention was called upon for both. Soon food, clothes, nappies and baby milk appeared as the local community pulled together.

Six weeks later, I gave birth to my first child in the comfort and security of a hospital and as I cradled him in my arms I once again contemplated these people. What fear, desperation or hope for a better life had led them to put to sea and entrust their lives to a money grabbing captain? Old and over laden the boat had not carried them to distant promised lands and welcoming relatives, instead their voyage had ended abruptly on the rocky coast outside my hospital window. For many perhaps this was enough, as they successfully sought asylum in various European countries, for others the outcome was more protracted.

Dr Frances Gillies
Civilian Medical Practitioner

Dr Frances Gillies - *BMJ* 2009;339:B4359

¹⁰⁰ Frances Gillies. A memorable night. *BMJ* 2009;339:B4359.

SAIF SAREEA: 2001

During the three months of August-October 2001, Oman hosted a five-phase live exercise known as SAIF SAREEA II. This saw the largest deployment of UK armed forces since 1991. Although planned prior to the events of 11 September, this was considered by many to be the precursor to operations in Afghanistan, and subsequently in Iraq. TPMH was to fulfil an integral role during the exercise. The recently refitted Ward 8 was opened to act as an Aeromedical Evacuation holding facility. Although this was an exercise, the unit received real casualties, due to its nature. This new ward utilised reserve personnel from No 4626 (County of Wiltshire) Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, Royal Auxiliary Air Force, and regular medical personnel from UK-based units, to augment the reservists.

11 SEPTEMBER 2001

11 September 2001 (to be remembered thereafter as 9/11) saw the terrorist organisation Al Qaeda hijack four American airliners. Two of these were flown into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre, New York. A third was deliberately flown into the Pentagon, Washington DC, and the last crashed into a field in the State of Pennsylvania, only after the brave attempts of that craft's passengers to subdue their hijackers. This was to lead directly to US military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq, in both of which the British and TPMH would play their part.

TORNADO OFF TPMH: 2003

Shortly after 0900 on 27 January 2003, waterspouts were noticed forming off the south coast of Cape Zevgari. The longer-serving members of staff may have feared the hospital would be hit again as it was 20 years before, in 1983, when the second floor sustained flood damage, but thankfully on this occasion it escaped unscathed.



Tornado off TPMH, 2003

Nonetheless, by the end of the morning one serviceman would end up in hospital, and many pounds worth of damage were wreaked upon Akrotiri and its surrounding areas. Two paediatric nurses witnessed their spectacular formation, and apparent passage over Royal Navy patrol boats, in the sea south of the hospital. One of the tornadoes passed close to the northern boundary of TPMH, where it followed a path from Cliff House across Jubilee Way, the helipad and the adjacent golf course¹⁰¹.

¹⁰¹ Karl Colehouse, 40th anniversary history, 'Strive To Heal', 2003.

ROLE OF TPMH DURING OP TELIC:

2003–2008

“The Princess Mary's RAF Hospital at RAF Akrotiri on the south coast of Cyprus was the aeromedical interface of casualty transfer during Operation Telic...

On arrival at RAF Akrotiri, the patients would be moved to The Princess Mary's Hospital if their stay was expected to last more than six hours. Transit patients were otherwise housed next to the airfield in a hangar known as 'the shack'.”¹⁰²

By January 2003, RAF Akrotiri and TPMH were making contingency plans for another war in Iraq.

Moves were made to significantly expand the hospital's capacity, in order to meet the perceived needs for such a conflict. In peacetime Ward 8 was the disaster ward, designed to be opened rapidly to receive mass casualties from an aircraft crash or other major incident. Now the ward was to function as an Aeromedical Evacuation holding facility. Flight Lieutenant Karl Colehouse was tasked to manage this ward, and he recounted the story of its contribution to Operation TELIC in his history of TPMH:

“With nine months service behind me, I arrived at TPMH in January 2003, as a Nursing Officer on the Paediatric Ward. By the end of the month I had been tasked by Wing Commander Williams, OC Nursing Wing, to prepare Ward 8 as an Aeromed Holding facility. February saw a visit from Brigadier Newell, Commander Med (Designate) Op TELIC,

the most senior medical officer for the conflict. Here we were briefed on the possible operational scenario.

Officially TPMH was to provide a Role 3+ and Aeromedical Evacuation facility. TPMH was expanded to accommodate 90 beds, and also domiciled in the hospital was a Critical Care in the Air Support Team (CCAST). We were to expect patients with a variety of battle, and non-battle, injuries. Utilising staff from other wards, Ward 8 was deemed operationally capable by the end of February, which wasn't a day too soon.

25 February saw the first patients arrive, this before the war had officially started.

In March, under increasing patient numbers and in addition to a small contingent of existing TPMH nurses, augmentee personnel from the UK arrived. Some were regular PMRAFNS nurses drawn from MDHU units, although the majority came from 612 (County of Aberdeen) Squadron, Royal Auxiliary Air Force, RAF Leuchars. As ward manager I was somewhat in trepidation, as this was the first operational conflict I'd been involved in, and also the first occasion I'd worked closely with reservist colleagues. My fears of how we would integrate and develop as a team were soon to be dismissed. By the close of the conflict, all augmentee nursing and paramedical staff had proved their capability, worth, and just what made HM Forces a world leader.”

¹⁰² David Rew. *Blood, Heat + Dust – Operation Telic and the British Medical Deployment to the Gulf in 2003*. E-book, Defence Medical Services Department, 2005. Chapter 14: Aeromedical Operations, p17

Early May saw the President of the USA prematurely announce the end of major combat operations in Iraq. By the end of the month the ward had closed, but not before a total of 477 casualties had been treated at TPMH. Further battlefield casualties continued to arrive despite the official cessation of combat operations, and by October 2003 over 2,000 patients had been evacuated from RAF Akrotiri, with a significant proportion going through TPMH. Subsequent escalation of conflict in Iraq necessitated occasional use of TPMH as an aeromedical transit and holding facility on a smaller scale.

THE NEW HOSPITAL BADGE: 2004

The official heraldic badge of The Princess Mary's RAF Hospital was designed by the College of Arms and approved by Queen Elizabeth in November 1965. Following the change of name to The Princess Mary's Hospital Akrotiri in 1996, a new badge was designed by the College of Arms in November 2004 as a close copy of the original, and with the original light blue circle being replaced by purple to properly reflect the tri-service ethos of the hospital. Its Description is a Sun in splendour and a Rod of Aesculapius. Its motto is 'Strive to Heal'. The Sun in the badge represents the climate of Cyprus and the Rod of Aesculapius emphasises the medical role played by the hospital.

The framed originals, normally hanging outside the Commanding Officer's office, will be assigned to the Air Historical Branch on closure of the hospital.

TPMH official heraldic badges



The Princess Mary's RAF Hospital official heraldic badge designed by the College of Arms and approved by Queen Elizabeth in November 1965.



EARTHQUAKE IN PAKISTAN: 2005

A 7.6 magnitude earthquake devastated a large swathe of Pakistan on 8 October 2005, causing nearly 80,000 deaths and injuring countless thousands. At the time, the lead consultant general surgeon at TPMH was Colonel Nuri Ismaili, originally from Pakistan, who had served more than 31 years in the British Army. He was on leave in San Francisco when the quake happened, and immediately sought permission from the Commanding Officer at TPMH to offer his services to his home country. This leave was promptly granted, with his colleague Wing Commander Tom Day also agreeing to cover him as long as necessary, and Colonel Ismaili then spent the next five weeks alongside the Pakistani Armed Forces Medical Services, carrying out more than 125 operations of a complicated nature, mainly on women and children. This was his swan song before retirement the following June:

*“This earthquake gave me the opportunity to do some work in my own country. It has made me feel that my life has been useful to the world.”*¹⁰³

¹⁰³ *Cyprus Lion*, 3 February 2006.

SECOND EVACUATION FROM LEBANON – OP Highbrow: 2006

On 18–19 July 2006, RAF Akrotiri helped with the evacuation of thousands of expatriate civilians from war torn Lebanon. The most urgent cases, which included a lady pregnant with triplets, were initially airlifted by Chinook helicopters. One hundred and eighty people, mainly women and children, including many casualties, were then evacuated by *HMS Gloucester* to Limassol and there transferred either to medical facilities in Cyprus or to RAF Akrotiri¹⁰⁴. From there they boarded a chartered flight to return to the UK. Another 5,000 people were evacuated over the next two days by *HMS York* and the aircraft carrier *HMS Illustrious*. *HMS York*, *HMS Bulwark* and *HMS Gloucester* made repeated trips to Lebanon until all the ex-pats were evacuated. TPMH was involved with the care of patients as necessary¹⁰⁵, having been supplemented for the week with extra staff from the UK (including Surgeon Captain James Campbell and Lieutenant Colonel Doug Bowley as general surgeons, and Wing Commander Ian Sargeant as orthopaedic surgeon). James Campbell was to return on a one-year posting as general surgeon and clinical director in 2010.

¹⁰⁴ Lynda Baker, midwife. Nurse/Midwife on Operation Highbrow. *PMRAFNS Association magazine*, 2006, p4–5.

¹⁰⁵ Details from www.qaranc.co.uk/theprincessmaryshospital.php

ROLE OF TPMH DURING OP HERRICK:

2002–2012

As conflict broke out in Afghanistan following 9/11, RAF Akrotiri and TPMH went onto a war footing. Cyprus is on the main aeromedical evacuation route from Afghanistan to the UK so flights would often stop at RAF Akrotiri for refuelling. Occasionally patients had to be off-loaded to TPMH, whether due to temporary aircraft unserviceability or due to deterioration of their clinical condition en route.

A recent example of this in 2012 has been a patient with back and bilateral buttock pain who developed urinary incontinence en route, the flight nurse correctly diagnosing cauda equina. The patient was offloaded to TPMH then transferred to the Ygia Polyclinic for urgent MRI, and thereafter underwent urgent discectomy at the neurosurgery department in Nicosia General Hospital, before returning to TPMH and eventually the UK.

Another recent example was a patient who had a tangential high energy gunshot wound to the abdominal wall muscles during close quarter combat. Initial debridement (but no laparotomy) was carried out in Camp Bastion Field Hospital. He developed increasing abdominal pain during the aeromed flight so was offloaded to TPMH with a presumptive diagnosis of peritonitis due to blast injury to the intestines. He was transferred to the Ygia Polyclinic where urgent abdominal CT showed free air and fluid, and subsequent laparotomy

revealed two perforations of the small bowel. He made a full recovery after surgery.

The airbridge over Europe to the UK (but not between Afghanistan and Cyprus) was suddenly, but only temporarily, disrupted in April 2010 due to ash clouds from the eruption of the Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull. As part of subsequent contingency planning, TPMH medical stores were significantly augmented in case larger numbers of patients from Afghanistan might have to be offloaded at RAF Akrotiri in the event of further volcanic eruptions.

LECTURES, AUDIT AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

With TPMH being a small unit far from the UK and therefore isolated from the professional mainstream, the medical and nursing staff have, from the earliest days, organised regular in-house lectures, teaching sessions and instructional courses in order to keep abreast of developments in medicine. A high degree of patient safety has been provided through careful audit of hospital practice, good clinical networking, attention to quality control and a closely-monitored system for identifying those patients who need to be transferred to a specialist centre, whether in the UK or in Cyprus¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰⁶ Day TK, Veen H. Getting the best of both worlds – clinical excellence at a peripheral unit. *J Roy Army Med Corps* 2008;154(1):41–46.



TPMH in-house professional development

The archives record regular and frequent talks and courses by resident or visiting consultants on a huge variety of medical topics. There has been the occasional talk in a more light-hearted vein or on a non-medical topic:

(3 February 2012) Pre-Valentine's Day Special: 'Healthy Chocolate'. Speaker: John Adams, chocolatier from The Chocolate Workshop, Platres. The author reckons that this was the most delicious lecture he has ever attended.

(9 March 2012) 'Echoes from the Dead Zone'. Speaker: Dr Yiannis Papadakis, Professor of Anthropology, Nicosia University, describing his experiences researching both sides of the Cypriot divide for his book on this topical issue, so relevant to TPMH.

(20 July 2012) 'From Borstal to Buckingham'. Speaker: Lieutenant Colonel (ret'd) Bob Pickford MBE. A particularly inspiring and refreshingly non-medical talk from a former juvenile offender who ended his career in the Army as Episkopi Garrison Commander, during which time he was made a Member of the British Empire for re-organising decompression services for British Forces returning from Afghanistan.



A Flashback - Memories from 1984 – new kneelers for the hospital chapel¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷The Tapestry kneelers were designed by Mrs Anne Chapple, wife of Group Captain Chapple, Commanding Officer TPMH, embroidered by hospital staff, and presented to the chapel in June 1984. Left to right: Squadron Leader Maureen Gariff, Val Pickles, Flight Lieutenant Caroline Dart, Anne Chapple, Helen Batchelor, Pat Hindle, Flight Lieutenant Penny Kostick. See Chapter 8, Anniversary celebrations, for photos of the hospital chapel in 2003, with these kneelers in-situ

Commemorations

TPMH has not been without its sad times. It is only fitting that we should commemorate individual TPMH staff who have died under tragic circumstances.

PLANE CRASH: 1973

On 29 January 1973, two Nursing Officers, Helen Deery and Sheila Noble, were killed in an aircraft crash.

(29 January 1973) “Two Nursing Officers from this hospital – Flying Officer HM Deery and Flying Officer S Noble – were killed in an aircraft accident. Their plane, an Ilyushin aircraft belonging to EGYPTAIR, crashed near Lapithos, on the Kyrenia coast. There were no survivors from the eight members of the crew and 30 passengers. Sister Noble and Sister Deery were returning from leave and were on their way to Nicosia from Cairo. Identification was done by members of the hospital medical, dental and nursing staff.”

The two Nursing Officers had been returning from a trip to Egypt and the Holy Land when their plane hit the Kyrenia mountain range above Lapithos¹⁰⁸ and burst into flames.

¹⁰⁸ The site of the crash is now within a Turkish military controlled area and is not accessible to the public. On 10 September 2011, Les Smith, a member of the RAF Akrotiri Mountain Rescue Team that attended the incident, stated on the internet that he has a detailed report of the crash including photographs and a map - British Military Sheet No 4011/IV Map Ref 169 081. Information taken from North Cyprus Forums Homepage www.cyprus44.com/forums/73237.asp



Twenty-three years later, in practically the last act of The Princess Mary's RAF Hospital before it relinquished its RAF status and became part of the Defence Secondary Care Agency, a dedication service took place at the hospital to honour the memory of the two nurses, followed immediately by a Sunset Ceremony marking the transition of the hospital to the DSCA. The dedication ceremony, which was conducted by the Roman Catholic Padre, Father Chris Webb, was attended by senior RAF Medical Officers, including Air Vice Marshal Baird, Director General Medical Services (RAF), and Director Nursing Services (RAF), together with Helen's two sisters, Pearl and Alice, who were making their first visit to Cyprus since the accident.



The dedication ceremony with Helen's sisters, Pearl and Alice

A Garden of Remembrance was dedicated to them, and a bronze plaque was placed under the jacaranda tree therein with the simple words: *"In fondest memory of Helen Deery and Sheila Noble PMRAFNS"*. The next week Helen's two sisters were joined by their brother Patrick and all three visited the site of the crash and laid bouquets there in memory of Helen and Sheila¹⁰⁹. A permanent memorial has been placed at the crash site – the author has been unable to ascertain the exact whereabouts of this memorial due to the area being closed to the public.

During the author's research into this incident, Bill Cundall, RAF Association (Aphrodite Branch Vice President), put him in touch with former Senior Aircraftsman Vince Kearney who had been nursed by Helen Deery at TPMH after he sustained severe injuries during a go-karting crash, shortly before her fatal accident. The following is Vince Kearney's account:

"I arrived in Cyprus, RAF Akrotiri in July 1972. I was posted to 280 Signals Unit, Cape Gata.

I was 20 years old and held the rank of Senior Aircraftsman.

¹⁰⁹ The Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Hospital Akrotiri honours the memory. *The Lion*, May 1996.

I was involved in a very serious racing accident on the track at Akrotiri about September 1972. I suffered very serious injuries including multiple fractures of the skull, face, eye and mouth. I also had general injuries to the rest of my body. I was admitted to TPMH unconscious and placed in intensive care on the critically ill list. I was subsequently informed that I was not expected to live.

I was placed under the care of a fantastic man called Wing Commander Chapman-Andrews. He performed major surgery on me, mainly from the neck up. He rebuilt my head and face, placing a scaffolding around my head, face and neck. It was screwed into and around my head/skull and face incorporating my jaw.

During my time and subsequent recuperation in TPMH, a nursing sister, Flying Officer Helen Deery, made herself known to me. I was still extremely ill and it transpired that Helen had seen my medical records history and noticed that I was originally from Drogheda, Co Louth, Ireland. During our initial meetings on the ward Helen informed me that she was born and educated in Dundalk, Co Louth. In my very ill condition I remembered feeling so happy and excited to talk to someone from home. Our friendship developed massively, both on a personal and professional level over the following weeks and months, both during my hospital stay and subsequent release.

I have to admit that Helen made me feel like a very special patient with the care and attention she continually showed towards me and I'm sure all other patients. Helen would continually spend what appeared to be a little extra time with me while on duty and would then appear again on her

off-duty time just to comfort me and bring small presents, soft drinks, books etc. Bear in mind I could not talk or even eat solid food. All I can say is that we became very close friends and she always displayed a huge endearing and homely nature towards me.

I was also aware of another nursing sister called Sheila. Both Helen and Sheila were the ward sisters, both being very humorous, caring and professional, they were such good fun and loved by all the patients. In fact, Sheila would generally accompany Helen on ward rounds but also on off-duty visits to see me. As I recovered, Helen would take me for walks (wheelchair bound) around the hospital grounds both on and off duty. This was well above and beyond her normal responsibilities but portrayed her beautiful nature and personality.

We would talk and reminisce for ages and during one of these times our mothers came into the conversation. Helen told me that her mother was a nurse in the Dundalk General Hospital.

I remember saying that I had possibly met her mum as I had been in that hospital some years earlier (school days) with various sports injuries. In fact, after further talks, I was absolutely sure that her mum had treated me in Dundalk. Following one of our lovely conversations, I wrote to my mum telling her about Helen and her mum nursing in Dundalk. The reply I received to this mail was astonishing. My mother said that she knew Helen's mum from old and would visit her. Some short time later Helen and myself chatted and both relayed that a meeting had taken place in Dundalk between both mums. Helen's mother

had received a special thanks from my mum for the great care Helen had given me. Then it transpired that both mothers were together during nursing training in Burnley, Lancs, some 30 or 40 years earlier and had been great pals at that time. Obviously they had lost contact over the years until then. What an absolute shock for Helen and myself!

In approximately November 1972, I was discharged from TPMH and given sick leave to return to Ireland for R+R [rest and recuperation]. During this leave I was able to meet Helen's mum and enjoyed a great afternoon with her, thanking her for her beautiful daughter's help and care in Cyprus. I returned to RAF Akrotiri around December 1972. Helen and I had exchanged letters while I was on sick leave and continued our fantastic friendship on my return, regularly meeting up and chatting for ages.

Regrettably and with massive sadness some short time later, Helen and Sheila lost their lives in the aircraft accident. I was devastated and shocked. My best friend Helen had gone. All I could recall was how happy they both were and how caring Helen was to me. Those were dark days and her memory will live on with me forever. All the different connections we had discovered were unreal to us, but little did Helen know that she would be so strong in my mind for the rest of my life!

On my release from the Service, I settled in Northern Ireland. In approximately 1999, I decided to trace Helen's family. This was my first opportunity due to the ongoing security situation and the fact that while serving I was unable to return home to Drogheda or Dundalk. After a considerable time, and to cut a long story short, I discovered

Helen's sister. I was told that she was a Catholic nun and in semi retirement. I visited a house in Dundalk and found Sister Pearl Deery. After a great chat, tea and sandwiches, Sister Pearl took me to see her mother who was ill and of considerable age in a room upstairs, I was delighted. I was able to relay for the first time properly my whole story to that date. I am unsure if Helen's mum really remembered me, but she did respond and appeared happy to see me and hear the story. I also discovered that Sister Pearl was taken to Cyprus some years earlier by the RAF to attend a small service and memorial, at the aircraft accident site on the Turkish side of Cyprus.

David, I am so pleased that you contacted me and allowed me to highlight in my small way what a fantastic person Helen Deery was. She was a credit not only to her family and the Royal Air Force but also to the nursing profession in general.

May God bless and look after her for me.

Kindest regards,

Vincent Kearney”¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Vince Kearney, personal reminiscences in email to author, 12 July 2012.

HELICOPTER CRASH: 1986

Tragedy struck the hospital again on 5 November 1986 when a Wessex Mk5 helicopter from 84 Squadron RAF Akrotiri was scrambled to MRS Dhekelia to collect an expectant mother in labour. The helicopter crashed into Limassol bay shortly after taking off, sinking into deep water. Flight Lieutenant Fiona Johnstone from TPMH, *'a lively nurse who was the life and soul of most occasions'*¹¹¹, and Corporal Martin Cook, a nurse from the Station Medical Centre, died along with the loadmaster. Their bodies were never recovered. Only the pilot survived the crash. Some wreckage was subsequently recovered and is preserved as a mark of respect in the RAF Akrotiri Museum.

A memorial service was held in their honour at RAF Akrotiri on 14 November 1986. Another service at RAF Stafford, led by Reverend Ian Greenhalgh, brought together Fiona Johnstone's family and friends in the UK. Group Captain Michelle Shaw, Matron-in-Chief of the PMRAFNS, read the lesson¹¹².

The Martin Cook trophy is now awarded every year in Corporal Cook's memory to the best student nurse at the annual Defence Nursing Services (RAF) symposium.

The officers of TPMH presented a large beautifully framed black and white photograph of a Search and Rescue Wessex Mark 5 helicopter overflying TPMH to the Maternity Unit in memory of Fiona Johnstone. This photograph hangs proudly in the Day Room of Ward 4 in her honour.



Photo presented to Maternity Unit in memory of Fiona Johnstone¹¹³

The Maternity Unit itself was renamed the Fiona Johnstone Maternity Unit¹¹⁴ for a number of years, eventually reverting to Ward 4.

¹¹¹ *Sky Wards*, p315.

¹¹² As above.

¹¹³ The caption to this photo reads: "Presented by the officers of TPMH to remember their nursing colleague Flight Lieutenant Fiona Johnstone PMRAFNS 25 July 1960 – 5 November 1986".

¹¹⁴ The plaque 'Fiona Johnstone Maternity Unit' is preserved in the RAF Akrotiri Museum as a mark of respect.

A NURSE'S DEATH: 1997

The passing of another midwifery member of TPMH staff, following a long and courageous battle against cancer, is commemorated on the second of the two bronze plaques in TPMH's Garden of Remembrance. This plaque stands under a large hibiscus bush, which had been presented as a token of gratitude by Mrs Jean Croft, Sharon's mother, and Flight Lieutenant Keith Bowles, her husband, at a memorial service¹¹⁵ on Saturday 27 September 1997 conducted by the Reverend (Wing Commander) Chris Long. It reads as follows:



“With heartfelt gratitude to the staff of The Princess Mary’s Hospital, Royal Air Force Akrotiri, from the family of Flight Lieutenant Sharon Louise Bowles (Croft) PMRAFNS for the tender care given to their friend and colleague in her last hours. 26 May 1997.”

A CONSULTANT'S DEATH: 2004

Surgeon Commander Keith Riden had been the resident maxillofacial consultant at TPMH for some three years from 2001 when he fell ill with cancer. He died in early 2004 in the UK. An olive tree (which is thriving) was planted in his honour at the side of the Outpatients Department. The whereabouts of the plaque that originally stood alongside this olive tree is unknown. When TPMH had to temporarily move inpatient services to the Limassol Medical Centre (now the Achillion) at the end of 2004, the military ward there was named the Riden Ward in his honour. One can still see ward items at TPMH with this name. For some time a plaque and photo were hung in his honour in the Operating Theatres – their current whereabouts are unknown.

THE HELIOS PLANE CRASH: 2005

On 14 August 2005, a TPMH ambulance driver from Akrotiri, Evripidis Pollicarpou, his wife and two of his three children were killed in a Boeing 737 crash near Athens (the Helios tragedy, in which 121 people died). His wife's brother, Harris, runs the Polis Taverna in Akrotiri, well known to successive generations of TPMH staff, and a photo of the dead family is given pride of place in this taverna. A copy of the letter that TPMH's Commanding Officer at the time, Wing Commander Cranfield, wrote to the remaining ambulance drivers – Andy, Andreas, Sandy and John – to express his sympathy has hung in the ambulance drivers' room ever since. Wing Commander Cranfield and many members of TPMH staff attended the

funeral of Evripidis and his family at the Kattoliki church in Limassol soon afterwards.

After years of legal proceedings, a court in Athens has only recently, on 20 April 2012, found the defendants (senior personnel in Helios) guilty, thereby leading to some form of closure for the relatives of the victims of this disaster¹¹⁶, though an appeal was due to be held on 10 September¹¹⁷.

DEATH OF A PHYSICIAN: 2007

A consultant physician at TPMH, Wing Commander Mak Khan, fell ill suddenly of an acute illness, and died after transfer to ITU at Limassol General Hospital on 1 March 2007 before a Critical Care Aeromedical Support Team (CCAST) flight could aeromedically evacuate him to the UK.

BABIES BOOKS OF REMEMBRANCE

The chapel in TPMH holds two remembrance books dedicated to the memory of babies who were stillborn or died soon after birth in this hospital. The 38 babies remembered in the first book died between May 1965 and July 1997 (the front page of this book is dedicated to those babies whose names are not recorded), and the six babies who died between July 2001 and May 2012 are remembered in the second book (*made by Lellos Bookbinders, Limassol, with calligraphy by Mike Harries, TPMH Librarian*). The entries were usually inscribed in calligraphy on the parents' behalf with their choice of prayer. These books will be given pride of place in St Paul's Church, RAF Akrotiri, on closure of the hospital.



TPMH Babies Book of Remembrance

¹¹⁵ Memorial held for TPMH nurse. *The Lion*, September 1997.

¹¹⁶ www.famagusta-gazette.com/helios-defendants-found-guilty-in-cyprus-worst-peacetime-disaster-p15159-69.htm

¹¹⁷ Helios victims' relatives to mark seven years. *The Cyprus Weekly*, 10–16 August, 2012, p7.

DHEKELIA MILITARY CEMETERY AND NEONATAL DEATHS



“An RAF family serving in Cyprus in 1962 suffered a stillbirth. In the late 1980s they contacted the headquarters in Cyprus to enquire about the location of the grave so that they could visit. They did visit and apparently were struck by the large number of children's graves in the military cemetery. In 2001 they wrote to the Minister for the Armed Forces through their MP on the subject.”¹¹⁸

The typical graveyard of a village parish church in the UK will contain a high proportion of graves of the very old and the very young, reflecting the normal mortality patterns of a civilian population. Dhekelia Military Cemetery is rather different, serving as it did during the 1960s a population of predominantly young, fit and healthy service personnel and their families¹¹⁹. As a result, visitors to this cemetery may at first be struck by the apparently high number of graves of babies and young children dating from this period. However, this reflects the almost complete absence of graves of older people that would otherwise balance the picture, rather than really indicating an unnaturally high infant mortality rate.

Nevertheless, in response to the retrospective concerns raised by these bereaved parents, in 2010 the MOD arranged for the infant mortality data to be subjected to analysis by an independent specialist in epidemiology¹²⁰.

¹¹⁸ Introduction to: Report on deaths of infants and children of military personnel in Cyprus 1960–1966. Professor SJW Evans, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. 23 September 2010. Report kindly provided to author by Tony Arber, Head of Secretariat & Finance, HQ Surgeon General on 7 September 2012.

¹¹⁹ Dhekelia Military Cemetery was constructed shortly after Cyprus became independent. Anyone dying in the British military community thereafter would have been buried in this cemetery rather than in Wayne's Keep Cemetery in Nicosia.

¹²⁰ Baby deaths investigation is concluded. *North Norfolk News* www.northnorfolknews.co.uk/

The aim of this was to establish whether the numbers were indeed higher than ought to have reasonably been expected, and thus whether further investigations might be required. This analysis compared the figures with equivalent neonatal (0–28 days) and post-neonatal (29 days – less than one year) data from England and Wales, and Scotland, covering the same period in the 1960s. The conclusion was that the neonatal and post-neonatal mortality rates in the British Bases in Cyprus in the 1960s, while slightly higher than that of the UK in the same period, were not significantly higher than would be expected for that time¹²¹.

There has been a considerable drop in neonatal and infant mortality rates worldwide since the 1960s¹²², from a worldwide average of 116 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 1960–1965, to a worldwide average of 47 infant deaths per 1,000 live births for 2005 – 2010¹²³, with great variation between less and more developed countries. The equivalent figures for the Republic of Cyprus are reportedly 40 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 1960–1965, down to an average of 4 infant deaths per 1,000 live births between 1995 and 2010¹²⁴.

The infant mortality rate in the Sovereign Base Areas would appear to be broadly comparable to the figures for Cyprus as a whole during 1960–1965.

THE SUNFLOWER MEMORIAL GARDEN

At the same time as the last British military midwives of the QARANC and PMRAFNS left TPMH after handing over to

SSAFA midwives in 2008, a memorial garden was set up by the Stillbirths and Neonatal Death Society next to St Paul's Church, RAF Akrotiri to hold memorials of stillborn and neonatal deaths at TPMH. It also provides a separate and easily accessible haven on the station for prayer or recollection. The two memorial plaques in TPMH's Garden of Remembrance will be re-located to this Memorial Garden on closure of the hospital.

TPMH CROSS

The cross at the tip of the headland of Cape Zevgari, just beyond the hospital, was placed there on Good Friday 2012 by TPMH handyman Michael Constantinou, after he carried it in solemn procession the length of Jubilee Way down to its final resting place, in remembrance of all who had died at TPMH, and in anticipation of remembering TPMH itself. He was accompanied by the author and Wing Commander Keith Gullidge, Officer Commanding Nursing.

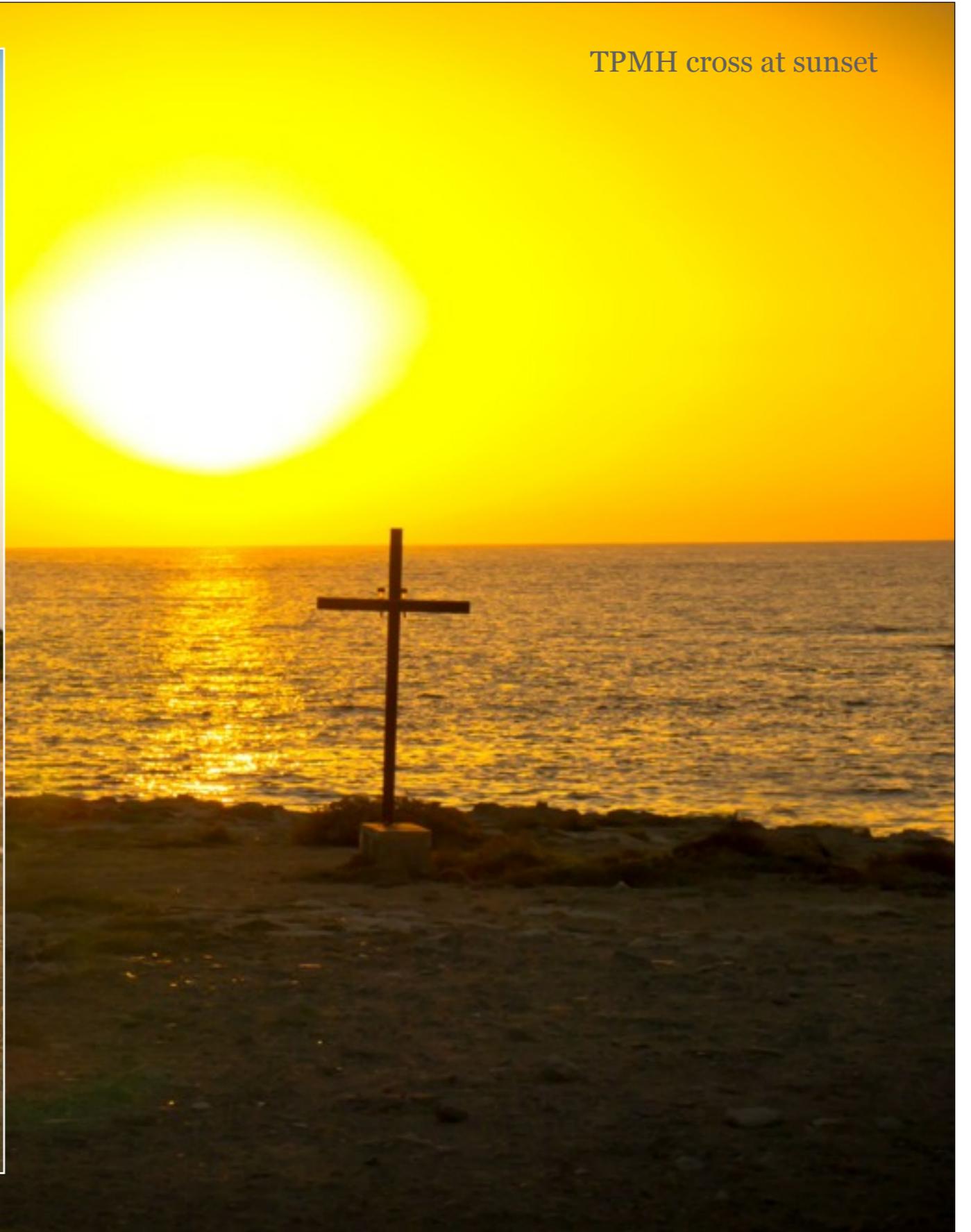
¹²¹ Report on deaths of infants and children of military personnel in Cyprus 1960–1966. Referenced above.

¹²² It is the neonatal mortality rate in particular that has fallen dramatically in the last 50 years, due to improvements in maternity care. Post-neonatal rates fell when cot deaths were reduced by changing the advised sleeping position for infants.

¹²³ www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infant_mortality

¹²⁴ www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_infant_mortality More recent analysis of the data from Cyprus by Professor Evans indicates that a more accurate figure for the infant mortality rate in Cyprus for the period 1960–1966, based on 14,000–15,000 births per annum, is just under 30/1,000.

TPMH cross at sunset



Happy memories

(August 1970) *“This was an unusually exciting month for the Nursing Officers Mess where on 8 August a wedding reception was held for Flight Officer M Snow PMRAFNS and Captain JD Harris, Canadian Contingent UNFICYP; and on 15 August a reception for Flight Officer JM Graham PMRAFNS after her wedding to Flight Lieutenant H Thomas of RAF Waddington. Both marriages were held at the Roman Catholic Church at Akrotiri.”*

*“I have many fond memories of the hospital – every day was different! Luckily, I met my wife there when she was the QARANC officer in charge of the Maternity Unit...”*¹²⁵

*“The team at TPMH were fantastic and after having a Caesarean Section it was like staying in a hotel with fantastic views. The best place to have a baby.”*¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Wing Commander Ken Pudney, Commander Troodos Garrison, married to Christine Rutherford, registered midwife. Personal reminiscence in email to author, September 2012.

¹²⁶ Lisa Glanville. Quote taken from facebook group ‘I gave birth at TPMH, RAF Akrotiri!’ www.facebook.com

¹²⁷ Left to right: Colonel David Vassallo (author, consultant general surgeon, and Clinical Director), Wing Commander Jem Wynne (father and Senior Dental Officer, RAF Akrotiri), baby Mary Assumpta (known as Polly, one of the last TPMH babies, born 0300hrs, Wednesday 19 September 2012), Emma Wynne (mother, en route home six hours after delivery), Group Captain Gordon Allison (the last Commanding Officer TPMH)



Mary Assumpta (Polly) Wynne, whose name commemorates The Princess Mary's Hospital¹²⁷

THE MATERNITY DEPARTMENT (WARD 4)

“I was lucky enough to be posted to TPMH when I was in the PMRAFNS as a Senior Aircraftswoman State Enrolled Nurse during 1972–1973 working on Ward 7 which was then female medical. In fact, during that time TPMH was thriving with Ward 8 being male medical, Wards 5 and 6 female and male surgical, one paediatric ward, a psychiatric area and of course maternity.

Unfortunately it was during this time that Sheila Noble and Helen Deery, both RAF nursing officers, were killed while travelling back to Cyprus after a holiday in Egypt.

During 1987–88 I returned as Nursing Officer in Charge of Maternity, we then had a staff of seven commissioned midwives and six enrolled nurses working on the ward.

Back in those days we were a lot busier than we are today as we had a far greater Service population...

I also knew Fiona Johnson – we did our midwifery training together at Newcastle General Hospital prior to her joining the RAF and me the Army.”¹²⁸

Research by TPMH midwife Paula Barlow, together with the Registrar for Births, confirms that there were 12,185 babies born at TPMH between 1 January 1967 and 31 December 2011 (revised data). Maternity records for 1963–1966 at the Registry for Births, Marriages and Deaths in the UK could not be examined due to pressure of work at this Registry. Nonetheless the author estimates that there would have been about 500 births per annum ¹²⁹ in those years.

In the first ten months of 2012 (to hospital closure on 1 November) there were a further 125 births, which means that about 14,000 babies have been born at TPMH during its existence.

The honour of being the last baby born at TPMH went to baby Reuben, born at 0040 Monday 29 October to Emma and Chris Thurgood (teachers at Episkopi Primary School). Their other son Henry had also been born at TPMH, in June 2010.

There was a huge drop in numbers in 1976 due to dependants having been evacuated back to the UK after the troubles of July 1974. There were also no deliveries at TPMH in 2005 as theatres had closed due to a failure of the air-conditioning system in November 2004. While the theatres were being refurbished, babies were born in the Limassol Medical Centre (now known as the Achillion, a private clinic). The operating theatres reopened at TPMH on 28 March 2006, and the first baby delivered thereafter was born four days later, on 1 April¹³⁰.

¹²⁸ Christine Rutherford, midwife (previously PMRAFNS, then QARANC, and now with SSAFA), email to author. She worked at TPMH for a total of 25 years, longer than any other clinical member of the staff there. However, Hani Awad, obstetrician, was the longest continuously serving clinical member of staff when he retired after 20 years on 28 September 2012, with Christos Eliades, paediatrician, then serving for one month longer. All were trumped though by Yiota Charalambous, typist, who had worked here for 29 years until the hospital closed.

¹²⁹ This conservative estimate is based on the fact that the TPMH Maternity records show there were between 532 and 694 babies born there each year between 1967–1975. Maternity services transferred to TPMH in May–June 1963 so that year about 250 babies would have been born there. See illustration on p84.

¹³⁰ *Cyprus Lion*, 7 April 2006.

A room with a view (Room 19, Ward 4, the room most often requested by new mums)



SSAFA MIDWIFERY TEAM 2012



Top (Back L-R) - Rosalyn Martin, Christine Rutherford, Mandy Hanson, David Smith
 Jayne Norton, Caroline Adams
 Maureen Walsh, Paula Barlow, Sandy Recknagel-Fessey
 Margaret Redford, Jane Moss
 Beatrice Smith, Alison McMullin, Tina Burke
 Rory O'Conoor, Hani Awad, Carol Hasell, Nimal Jayatilaka, Wg Cmd Keith Gullidge
 Bottom (L-R) - Mary Taylor, Fiona Donaldson-Myles, Rose Hockings-Lomax, Jo Wood, Christine Medhurst



The grateful parents of baby Alana Ashby (born 20 March 2002) donated funds to equip a low-tech room (officially named The Alana Room and opened on 7 February 2003) on Ward 4, complete with waterbirth pool and beanbags, adjoining a normal delivery room. A couple of photos of Alana at different ages greet people entering this room.

In the last full year of clinical work (1 August 2011 – 31 July 2012), there were 157 babies born at TPMH, 29 of them by Caesarean section (nine emergencies, 20 elective) (approximately 20% Caesarean rate). There was only one stillbirth during this year and no neonatal deaths, a marked improvement compared to the first year of maternity work at RAF Akrotiri, when there had been five stillbirths and four neonatal deaths (and 13 Caesareans) out of 255 births¹³¹.

¹³¹ Kew archives, February 1959. Report quoted in full earlier.

THE PAEDIATRIC DEPARTMENT

In September 1992, **Christos (Chris) Eliades**, a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, was appointed as the first consultant paediatrician at TPMH (while retaining his consultant post at the Polyclinic). Until then, children were cared for by the resident consultant physician, with quarterly clinics by a visiting military paediatrician (Wing Commander **Andy Mitchell**) from the UK. Until 1995, all neonatal emergencies were transferred by helicopter to a specialist hospital in Tel Aviv, Israel, but thereafter they were transferred to the island's Special Care Baby Unit at the Archbishop Makarios III hospital in Nicosia. The Paediatric Ward (Ward 7) at TPMH closed in 2005, with admissions thereafter going to the Polyclinic, though outpatient services were retained.

In 1997 Chris recruited another paediatrician, **Paris Iacovides**, also a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, to run outreach clinics in Dhekelia, which he did ably for 15 years before hospital closure. Chris remained the sole paediatrician at TPMH, until he recruited **Chris Koukkoullis** and **Kleopatra Savva** in 2010–2011 to supplement the on-call rota and outpatient services. Chris, who was to be a stalwart at TPMH for 20 years, was justly recognised by the Surgeon General for his services in paediatrics to the British Forces in Cyprus, with the notice appearing in the London Gazette of 7 November 2011 that he had been appointed as Serving Brother in the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, the investiture ceremony occurring in May 2012.



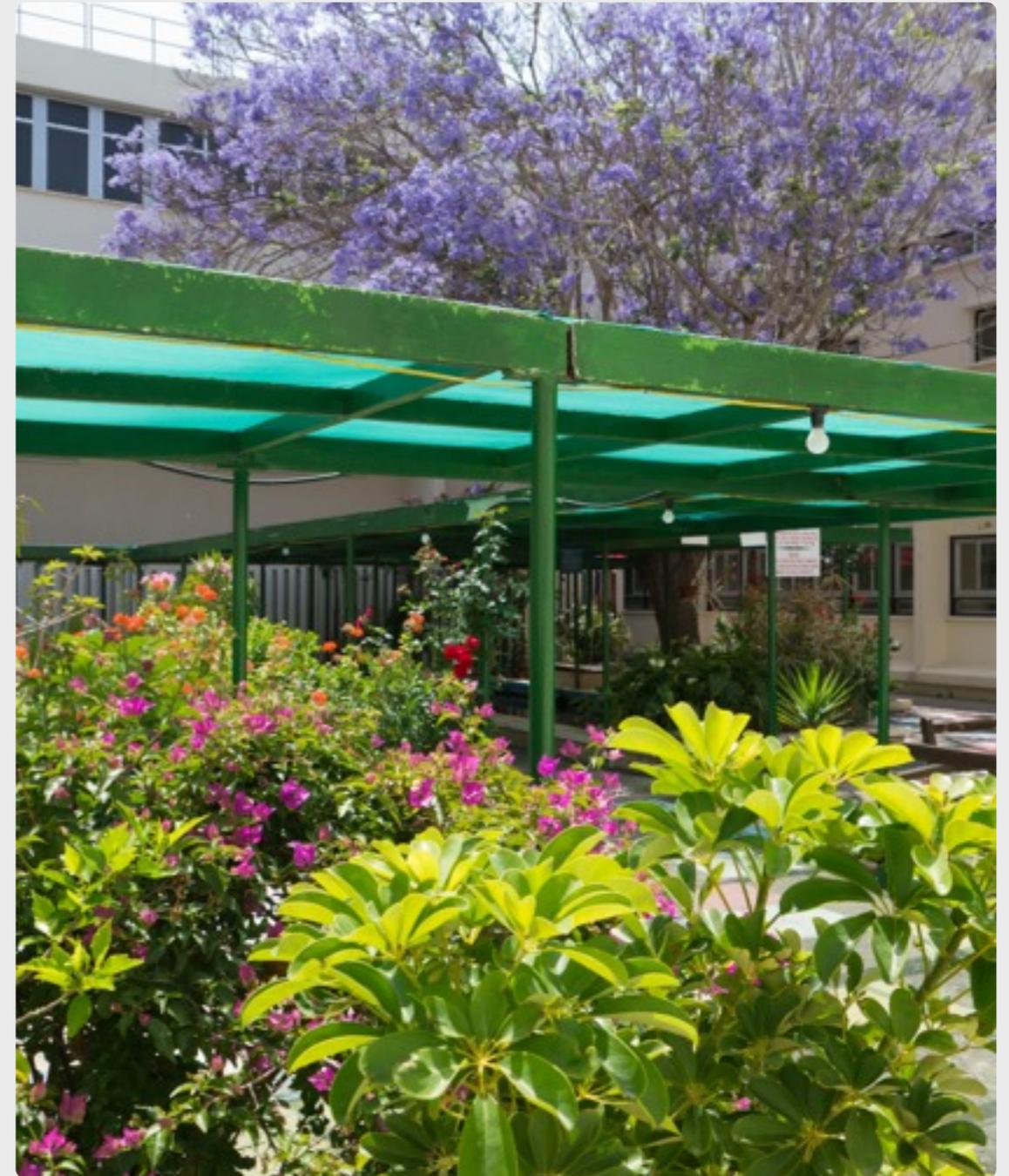
Chris Eliades being appointed as Serving Brother in the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, May 2012

THE HOSPITAL GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE

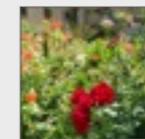
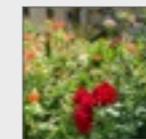
Centrally located within TPMH is a beautiful hospital garden, complete with a large koi fish pond, lovingly tended for the last 11 years by the hospital handyman, **Michael Constantinou**. This garden, with its luxurious jacaranda trees, large flowering bushes and brightly coloured paving slabs, is a haven of peace for patients and staff alike, as well as providing the venue for many social gatherings. The garden was furnished with a number of wooden benches in 1995 as part of a multimillion pound refurbishment of the hospital (including a total refurbishment of Ward 6¹³²) by Atlas Pantou Ltd, who also kindly donated two similar benches for the entrance to the hospital¹³³. The garden also holds two memorial plaques for hospital staff, described in Chapter 6.



The hospital garden of remembrance



A haven of peace and tranquility for patients and staff alike.



¹³² Grand Opening of Ward Six at TPMH. *The Lion*, 25 June 1995.

¹³³ TPMH Refurbishment. *The Lion*, 25 June 1995.

TPMH SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

Throughout the hospital archives and successive issues of *The Flamingo*¹³⁴ and *The Lion*¹³⁵ there is strong evidence of a thriving and happy sports and social life, with many hospital reviews and charity events together with achievements in both the CO's Cup on Akrotiri and interdepartmental events.



TPMH social events over the years – rowing and tennis

Ruby's Social Club, located in the depths of the hospital, has played host to a variety of events, many in fancy dress. Successive Sports and Social Committees have helped ensure continued high morale at TPMH, be it assisting departments or individuals in organising a Valentine's party or karaoke night in Ruby's to Christmas parties and charity events. However, it has been the staff at TPMH through the years that has kept the place alive with fun and laughter.



TPMH social events over the years – acting and Bed Push



being The Gallstones from the Operating Theatre department, though the fastest team was from the Station Medical Centre (see Chapter 8: Anniversary celebrations).

A very popular TPMH event is the annual Bed Push, where teams in fancy dress compete to push decorated beds around the hospital grounds, under a constant barrage of water bombs (very welcome in the summer heat). In 2012 the event was judged by the Commander British Forces Cyprus, the winner for the best decorated bed and team

¹³⁴ *Flamingo* was the RAF Akrotiri monthly magazine, first produced in 1968 www.rafakrotiri.co.uk/flamingo/flamingo1968.html

¹³⁵ *The Lion* (also known as the *Cyprus Lion*) was the weekly magazine of the British Forces in Cyprus.



Dhekelia to TPMH 1992 and 200 mile 24 hour challenge, 2011

TPMH 200 MILE CHALLENGE 2011

IN AID OF:
Royal British Legion
TPMH Patient's Comfort Fund

*Come and run a mile for charity!
or 2 or 3,4,6,10 24?????*

*For more information contact
Cpl Middleton on 97751143*

0800 10TH to 0800 11TH DECEMBER 2011

Advertising poster for TPMH 200 Mile Challenge, 2011, showing course for each one-mile lap

TPMH FINAL 200

24 Hour Run Challenge
Date: Thurs 25th Oct
Start time: 1300

You are invited to run or walk at any time for as long as you like.
A donation will be requested.

Competition from 1300-1800

Prizes for:

- Quickest mile
- Quickest team mile (team of 3)
- Most miles individual & team
- Bar & food will be available

Contact: David Bradshaw x5533 / 97733011 / physiodave@hotmail.co.uk
All proceeds will be donated to the Royal British Legion & selected good causes

Advertising poster for final TPMH 200 Mile Challenge, 2012

TPMH CHARITY – OPEN ARMS

This charity¹³⁷ was set up in 1999 by Daphne Hammond d’Outre, Rosie Bent and other TPMH patients with the initial aim of helping Service personnel, entitled civilians and their families who had been sent to the UK for specialist cancer treatment. In 2010, with the shrinking BFC population, its aim was expanded to help entitled personnel suffering from any serious illness while serving in Cyprus. It has provided an enormous amount of support to entitled personnel in Cyprus, often far away from the natural support network of family and close friends, since its foundation.

TPMH GOLF CLUB

Not many hospitals can boast that a golf course has been built around them, or that their Commanding Officer is also de facto president of a golf club. TPMH Golf Club was originally created as a three or four-hole rehabilitation facility for patients of the hospital. The creation and building of the club were largely due to the efforts of Sergeant Les Brown and Corporal Fred Instone, both from the hospital catering staff. The official opening day on 4 April 1971 was marked by a target and putting competition organised by the TPMH Golf Society, with 30 patients and staff competing for the ‘Mounsey Award’ donated by Group Captain Mounsey, Commanding Officer at the time.

The course was extended to a nine-hole, par 3 course between August 1971 and May 1972, and the TPMH Golf Society was then renamed TPMH Golf Club¹³⁸. The first recorded hole in

one was by Ted Bishop in 1980 at the Club’s first Open Competition, on the 9th hole (which is now the 7th). The course was gradually enlarged over the years, and the Mounsey Trophy is still played for annually over 27 holes of golf. Some of the holes have names reminiscent of their hospital heritage and proximity to the helipad, such as Windsock (the 2nd), Heli Pad (the 6th), Matron’s Garden (the 7th), and Casevac Hill (the 17th).

The interior of the clubhouse is decorated to resemble an English country pub. The course may not exactly be world-class, and the greens should more accurately be called browns, especially after the Mediterranean sun has shone on them all summer, but TPMH Golf Course does have a touch of panache. The views are superb from the hospital wards over



the course and across the blue seas of Episkopi Bay to the white cliffs beyond and the towering clouds over the hazy Troodos Mountains.

Casevac Hill (17th hole)

¹³⁷ Open Arms TPMH Cancer Patients Support Group

www.openarmstpmh.com

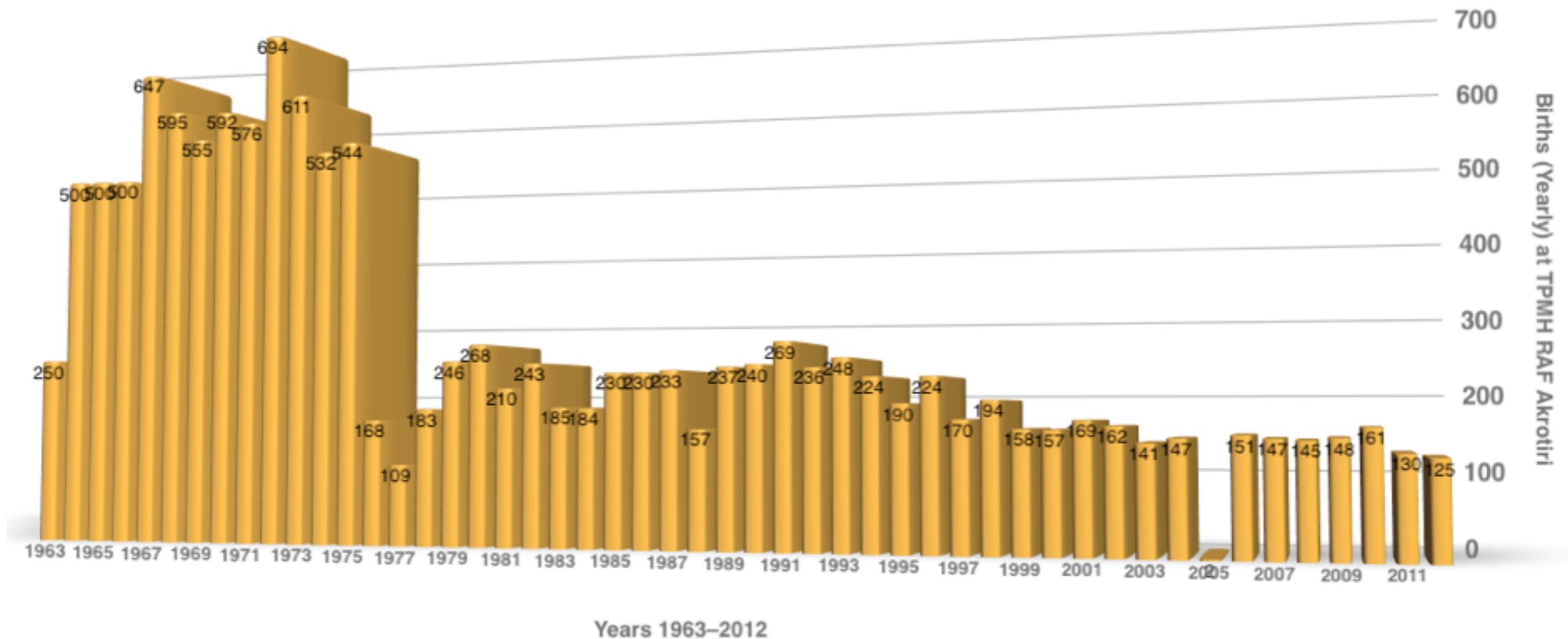
¹³⁸ www.tpmhgolfclub.com

The last baby born by Caesarean section at TPMH was Eleanor, daughter of Emma and Wes Matthews, delivered electively at 1052hrs on Wednesday 24 October 2012 on the last obstetrics list. Photo with theatre team, reproduced by kind permission of mother.



BIRTHS AT THE PRINCESS MARY'S HOSPITAL RAF AKROTIRI FROM 1963 – 2012

■ Births (Yearly) TOTAL BIRTHS 1963 – 2012 = 13917



Maternity services transferred to TPMH in May-June 1963. No data obtained for 1963–1966. Half year estimate Jun-Dec 1963. Author's estimate of 500 per annum 1963–1966 is based on data for 1967–1975. Approximately 14,000 babies were born at TPMH.

A trip down memory lane – the staff of the hospital

THE COMMANDING OFFICERS

To mention just a few:

Group Captain Geoffrey Dhenin: (May 1963 – December 1963) The first Commanding Officer. He was known as the doctor who flew through two mushroom clouds during nuclear tests in the 1950s. Eventually knighted and promoted to Air Marshal, Director General Medical Services (RAF)¹³⁹.

Group Captain Mike Pallister: (August 1978 – September 1980) *“My first Commanding Officer was Mike Pallister who after visiting the Israeli Defence Forces Medical Services decided that all medics should be armed. He was quite a good shot with the 9mm Browning pistol. To encourage people to shoot, he initiated a Hospital Shooting competition. There were teams of three and he usually had the MDSS lads on his team as they were about our only combatants at the time. Invariably his team always won! However one year he*

¹³⁹ Air Marshal Geoffrey Dhenin: Obituary. *The Daily Telegraph*, 11 May 2011.



The two Commanding Officer boards at TPMH



left me to organise the competition and I couldn't get anyone to join his team as he was quite vocal if people didn't come up to his standard! When I told him nobody wanted to shoot with him, he got really angry and said "If that's the case I will just shoot myself!" Obviously it went down in our Hospital Line Book!"¹⁴⁰

Group Captain Warwick Pike: (December 1990 – November 1992) Eventually promoted to Air Vice Marshal, and Director General Medical Services (RAF).

Group Captain 'The Laird' Alastair Reid: (June 2010 – 1 August 2012) The penultimate Commanding Officer. He was a keen actor and thespian who could recite Tam O'Shanter faultlessly, a keen cyclist and all-round sporting and fitness enthusiast. He took up triathlons during his time here, and led by example. He had the unenviable task of overseeing the plans for closure of TPMH and for transition to a new healthcare system.

Group Captain Gordon Allison: (1 August 2012 – present) The last Commanding Officer, and therefore the last Commander Medical British Forces Cyprus to also command a hospital. A gregarious and affable individual, he was the right man at the right time, leading healthcare for British Forces Cyprus into a new era.

¹⁴⁰ Ken Pudney, email to author, September 2012



Group Captain Reid, penultimate Commanding Officer TPMH, receiving 'The Laird' door plaque from Warrant Officer Ian Wilcox (Operating Theatres)

MATRONS / OFFICER COMMANDING NURSING

To mention just a couple:

Wing Commander Annie Reid: (1994–1998) Eventually promoted to Group Captain, Director Nursing Services (RAF) and Matron-in-Chief PMRAFNS. She was made an Officer of the Most Excellent British Empire (OBE) in 1998 for her services to the hospital during its transfer from the Defence Medical Services to the Defence Secondary Care Agency, as



well as for her devotion to charitable and community projects (having raised around 20,000 Cypriot pounds for local and military charities during her Akrotiri posting)¹⁴¹. She is remembered for her kind donation of a stained glass window, depicting the original hospital badge, for the entrance to the Officers' Mess, RAF Akrotiri. As a very fond favourite of

TPMH and RAF Akrotiri, she was suitably wined, dined and entertained by all the RAF nurses on island during her farewell visit to TPMH in May 2003¹⁴².

Wing Commander 'The Joker' Keith Gullidge: (2009–2012) Very involved in plans for impending closure of TPMH and keeping up morale in the meantime. He was also a running enthusiast, taking part in all three TPMH 200 events to raise funds for charity, even if he was almost crippled by the second (after running 56 miles in 24 hours). He leaves TPMH to become Officer Commanding Nursing at MDHU Peterborough.

THE LOCAL PEOPLE FROM AKROTIRI

Most of the Cypriot staff employed in TPMH live in the local village of Akrotiri. They have supported TPMH through thick and thin over many years and have a great sense of loyalty to the hospital. They are all greatly appreciated, even if they cannot all be mentioned here individually.

Mrs Lella Stallaki, Miss Tereza Gogoshian and Mrs Efrosini Georghiou: On 1 June 1990, these three civilian staff were bidden farewell and given Certificates of Service by the Commanding Officer after serving TPMH for 34 years, 29 years and 14 years respectively. They were also given farewell gifts by other members of staff and then given a reception at the TPMH Social Club. They didn't want to leave!¹⁴³

Mrs Ismini Neofidou: In 2003, the 40th anniversary year, one individual, Mrs Ismini Neofidou, retired from TPMH after working there for almost all of its 40 years. She had been a Health Care Assistant on Ward 6, and was the longest serving member of TPMH staff to that date¹⁴⁴. Only one person has



since served longer, **Agathoclis Kontolemis**, who retired after 41 years in 2008.

¹⁴¹ RAF Akrotiri News. *The Flamingo*, February 1998.

¹⁴² Karl Colehouse, 40th anniversary history.

¹⁴³ TPMH bids farewell. *The Lion*, 29 June 1990.

¹⁴⁴ Karl Colehouse, 40th anniversary history.

An appreciation: A particularly apt tribute was paid to the local staff by outgoing OC Hospital Support, Capt Colin Johnson RAMC, at his leaving dinner in the Aphrodite Steak House in Akrotiri on 1 March 2012, when his farewell speech was read out in Greek by hospital handyman Michael (Michalis) Constantinou (who moves to the Medical Provisioning Point on closure of TPMH). It is reproduced here in Greek and in translation, as a mark of appreciation of all Cypriot TPMH staff, past and present:

Θα ήθελα να ευχαριστήσω θερμά όλους τους Κύπριους πολίτες που εργάζονται στο TPMH για την καλοσύνη που μου έχετε επιδείξει όσο καιρο βρίσκομαι εδώ.

Το προσωπικό του στρατιωτικού τμήματος αλλάζει κάθε 2 ή 3 χρόνια και γίνονται μόνο μικρές ιαφοροποιήσεις στη δομή του αλλά είναι εσείς που δίνετε στο νοσοκομείο την προσωπικότητα του. Βρίσκεστε εδώ πολλά χρόνια και έχετε καταστήσει ένα όμορφο μέρος το οποίο μπορεί κάποιος να το επισκέπτεται και στο οποίο μπορεί να δουλεύει.

Η ομάδα των καθαριστών, των σεφ, των θυρωρών και της γραμματειακής υποστήριξης και φυσικά η ομάδα μου η οποία περιλαμβάνει τον Μιχάλη, τον Φίλιππο και την Μαρία μέσα στα τελευταία δύο χρόνια έχετε όλοι γίνει σαν την οικογένεια μου (αλήθεια εσάς σας βλέπω πιο συχνά από αυτήν).

Έχω απολάυσει πολλές ώρες μιλώντας μαζί σας, πίνοντας ζεστή σοκολάτα μαζί σας και το να μου έχετε διαβάσει τον καφέ! Θα σας πεθυμίσω όλους πολύ.

Σας ευχαριστώ θερμά για όλα και ειλικρινά ελπίζω πως, όταν κλείσει το νοσοκομείο θα κρατήσετε μόνο τις καλές αναμνήσεις που έχετε για τον τόπο αυτό και τέλος, ελπίζω πως θα είστε ευλογημένοι με ένα λαμπρότερο μέλλον.

Από τα βάθη της καρδιάς μου σας ευχαριστώ.



Michael and Anthea Constantinou, loyal and generous friends to many TPMH staff

“I would like to warmly thank all the Cypriot staff who work at TPMH for the kindness they have shown me during my time here. The military staff keep changing every two to three years with a few minor changes to its structure, however, it is you that give the hospital its personality. You have been here for many years and you have created a beautiful environment for someone to visit and work.

The cleaning team, the cooks, the maintenance staff, the clerks and of course my team which includes Michael, Philippos and Maria who have become like a family to me for the last two years (honestly, I see you more often than my family).

I have enjoyed many hours talking with you, drinking hot chocolate with you and reading my future in the coffee mug! I will miss you all very much.

I warmly thank you all for everything and sincerely wish that, after the hospital closes, you will only keep the good memories from this place and finally, I hope you all have a blessed and bright future.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank you.

Colin Johnson, 1 March 2012

THE CONSULTANTS

There have been many excellent consultants over the years. Nonetheless, many a TPMH Commanding Officer, while fully appreciative of his consultants’ clinical skills and other talents, must sometimes have thought that managing them was like herding cats, and perhaps wondered how much simpler life would be without one or two of them. Often eccentric and usually having strong personalities, occasionally irascible or exasperating, at times inadvertently upsetting staff or patients, but always committed to providing excellent care to their patients, they have added their distinctive flavour to the hospital’s character. This eclectic bunch of people, both military and civilian, has provided the backbone of the clinical service at TPMH (especially considering that for almost all of TPMH’s history the only junior medical staff was a surgical registrar), often going way beyond the call of duty, and they have contributed greatly to morale and to the ethos of the hospital.

While most consultants were posted into TPMH for two years or so, there were a lucky few who stayed longer, such as **Ole Olesen** (Danish orthopaedic surgeon, 2002–2012), or were locally employed, such as **Chris Eliades**, (Cypriot paediatrician, mentioned earlier) or who came on repeated tours or locums, such as **Mohammed Eldosoky** (Egyptian obstetrician, who had been coming to TPMH for 10 years) and **Umesh Attarwala** (Indian orthopaedic surgeon).

The unique nature of TPMH particularly appealed to consultants with an exotic background, who sought variety in life, or a different challenge to that of normal UK practice. The final anaesthetists at TPMH, all civilian, exemplified this: **Chris Daniell** had worked for 12 years with OXFAM and several years with the International Committee of the Red Cross, **Peter Rogers** had a passion for marine archaeology and had exchanged Portsmouth for Akrotiri, and **Fraser Lindsay** had the unique experience of being the last anaesthetist at three successive military hospitals when they closed or stopped surgical services – he came to TPMH from Gibraltar, having worked there at the Royal Naval Hospital and then the Princess Royal Medical Centre. **Nimal Jayatilaka**, one of the two obstetricians at TPMH, hailed from Sri Lanka, but was also a magistrate, a medical officer to the Army Cadet Force, ex-Territorial Army and a regular participant in the Nijmegen marches (his eighth being in August 2012 shortly before his 70th birthday).

Some consultants took full advantage of their living on an airbase to indulge their passion for flying. To mention but four of these Flying Doctors, there have been **Hani Awad**, Egyptian obstetrician, who came to TPMH as an RAF Squadron Leader in September 1992 and promptly helped found the Akrotiri Flying Club. He has enjoyed flying a Cessna 172 and latterly his home-built RV6A round the Mediterranean ever since. He retired as a civilian in September 2012. Next are **Tom Day**, Wing Commander, RAF Reservist and general surgeon, 2003–2011, who would fly his

own Comanche to Dhekelia to do surgical clinics there, and **Trevor Laundy**, physician, who came to TPMH on his first attachment as a locum physician in May 1981: “28.5.81 Squadron Leader T J Laundy attached as Relief Physician until 2 July.”

¹⁴⁵ He finally left TPMH as Group Captain on retirement from the RAF in March 2012, flying his Comanche back to UK as the first stage of a long-planned flight to Australia. Finally there has been **Philip Kollitsis**, British-Cypriot ENT Consultant to TPMH from 1996 to 2012, who learned to fly here and has enjoyed flying an Akrotiri Flying Club Cessna 172 for years.



Philip Kollitsis ENT Consultant

¹⁴⁵ Kew archives. At the end of this locum attachment Squadron Leader Trevor Laundy went to a local restaurant for a meze with a colleague and their wives. When he went to pay the bill he walked straight through the plate glass window, being extensively (but superficially) cut by the shattered glass. He was aeromedically evacuated to his parent Renal Unit bandaged from head to foot, prompting the head of his Unit to quip to a local newspaper, resulting in a story under the headline: ‘Locum doctors should be better supervised’.

THE NURSES AND OTHER STAFF

The hospital could not have functioned at all over the years

without the greatly appreciated contribution of its nurses and other staff, both civilian and military, too many to mention individually, but some of whose stories are recorded in this history. The staff of the hospital in 2012 worked in 'Top Corridor', Reception and Medical Records, Operating Theatres, Central Sterile Services Department (CSSD), Medical Dental Servicing Section (MDSS), Radiology, Physiotherapy, Defence Medical Welfare Services, Pharmacy and Medical Provisioning Point, Hospital Support Unit, Outpatients Department, Pathology Lab and the Catering Department, together with Ward 4 (Maternity) and Ward 6 (adult ward). Apart from a few locums such as Lieutenant Colonel **Tracy-Louise Appleyard**, consultant obstetrician, and Wing Commander **Jon Naylor**, consultant physician, who joined TPMH in the last few weeks, the names of those

who served at TPMH in its final three months are recorded individually at the end of this history. They represent all who



On the 29th of June 2012 a garden party was held at TPMH to commemorate the Queens Diamond Jubilee after personnel had been presented with their jubilee medals.

have served here before, including in departments no longer there, such as the separate medical, surgical, paediatric and aeromedical evacuation wards, and the maxillofacial department.



Visit of Princess Alexandra to TPMH, October 1972.



The Princess Mary's Hospital

16 July 2012



4th Row - Mr Sofocleous, Surg Cdr Dickson, Sgt Rhodes, Sgt Chitambira, Sgt Phelps, Cpl Elliott, LCpl Njie, Sgt Derbyshire, FS Fleet, Chf Tech Ford, FS McClean, Cpl Middleton, SSgt Wilson, JT Bradley, Cpl Crow, Sgt Townsend, Cpl Phillips
3rd Row - Mr Giorgalli, Mr Theodotou, Mr Williams, Mrs Yiannakou, Mrs Neocleous, Mrs Aristidou, Mr Omirou, SSgt Bradshaw, Cpl Rees, Cpl Lockwood, Cpl Mannion, Cpl Percy, Sgt Dunn, FS Jansz, Cpl Japp, Sgt Jones, Cpl Catherwood, Sgt Ward, Sqn Ldr D'Arcy, Mrs Sophocleous, Efstratiou, Mrs Constantinou, Mrs Sofroniou, Mrs Stankovic
2nd Row - Mr Florides, Mr Yiorkatzis, Mr M Constantinou, Sr Donaldson-Myles, Sr Recknagel-Fessey, Sr Martin, Sr Norton, Sr Hockings-Lomax, Sr McMullin, Sr Smith, Sr Rutherford, Sr Nearchou, Sr Warner, Sr McClean, Sr Quant, Sr Ireland, Sr Cooper, Sr Porter, Mrs Austin, Miss Thornton, Mrs Kapodistria, Mrs O'Loughlin, Mrs Gilbert, Miss Cooney, Mrs Menelaou, Mrs Georgiou, Mrs Michael, Mrs Clarke, Mrs Petrou, Miss Pantehi
1st Row - WO Wilcox, WO Hutchings, Mr Boswell, Dr Lindsay, Flt Lt Morris, Capt Thomas, Sqn Ldr Rose (OC Wd 6), Maj Clarke (OC Rehab), Wg Cdr Gullidge (OCN), Gp Capt Reid (CO TPMH), Col Vassallo (Clin Dir), Maj Nicholson (OCSU), Sqn Ldr Champion (OC CMHT), Maj Blair, Flt Lt Evans, Miss Chamberlain, Mrs Collings, Mrs Coe, WO Frank (HWO)

TPMH staff, 16 July 2012. This official photo was taken on the golf course next to the helipad, prior to the departure of Group Captain Alastair Reid, penultimate Commanding Officer.



The Princess Mary's Hospital

24 September 2012



3rd Row – SAC Hewton, Sgt Dunbar, Mr Boswell, Dr Rogers, Sgt Phelps, Mrs Kapodistria, Sgt MacPherson, Mrs Frangou, Mrs O'Neill, Sgt Ward, Mrs Ireland, Mrs Petrou, Sgt Newton, Mrs Stankovic, Mr Giorgalli, LCpl Ferguson, Dr Daniell, Sgt Dunn, LCpl Njie, Sgt Everiss, Mr Omerou.

2nd Row - Mr Florides, Miss Ross, Mr Aristidou, Mr Kelly, Mr Constantinou, Sgt Marson, Mrs Nearchou, LCpl Wood, Mrs Georgiou, Mrs Aristidou, Miss Thornton, FS Loh, Mrs Neokleous, Mrs Michael, Miss Cooney, Mrs Miltiadou, Mrs Charalambous, LCpl Japp, Mrs Yiannakou, Mrs Burke, Mrs Bulmer, Cpl Mannion, FS Jansz, Mrs Barlow, Cpl Rees, Mrs Constantinou.

1st Row – WO Hutchings, Capt Wiles, Flt Lt Morris, Capt Clarke, Maj Stacey, Sqn Ldr Rose, Maj Davies, Wg Cdr Gullidge (OCN) Gp Capt Allison (CO TPMH), Col Vassallo (Clin Dir), Maj Nicholson (OCSU), Mr Awad, Mr Jayatilaka, Wg Cdr Evriviades, Lt Col Appleyard, Maj Evans, WO Frank (HWO).

TPMH Staff, 24 September 2012, with the last Commanding Officer of TPMH, Group Captain Gordon Allison.

Anniversary celebrations

1972: 50 YEARS OF RAF HOSPITALS

The Princess Mary's Hospital can trace its lineage directly to the first RAF Hospital overseas, No. 23 British Combined Services Hospital in Baghdad, which had been taken over by the RAF from the Army in October 1922¹⁴⁶. This moved in early 1923 to the first purpose-built RAF Hospital overseas, the 500-bed RAF British General Hospital at Hinaidi, on the banks of the River Tigris, eight miles outside Baghdad.

The Hinaidi hospital moved in December 1937, to a new 500-bed large and airy hospital¹⁴⁷ at Sin el Dhibban, sixty miles from Baghdad, the new base initially being named RAF Dhibban. The camp was only a few miles from Lake Habbaniya and the River Euphrates, and was to become known as the Lido of the East for its excellent recreational facilities. The base was officially renamed RAF Habbaniya from 31 May 1938. The base and the hospital closed 20 years later, in 1958, when British forces withdrew from Iraq, and the hospital staff mainly moved to the RAF hospital in

Royal Air Force Hospitals 50th Anniversary Cover



Cover flown RAF Akrotiri to RAF Masirah in a Hercules CMk1 of 70 Squadron

Akrotiri, hence the direct lineage. The gate crests of the Habbaniya hospital, relocated to TPMH and described in Chapter 2, are a physical link to this illustrious past.

¹⁴⁶ Hinaidi Hospital, Baghdad, p59, in: Mary Mackie. *Sky Wards – a history of the Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service*. 2001.

¹⁴⁷ Habbaniya, p82, in: Mary Mackie. *Sky Wards – a history of the Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service*. 2001.

1973: THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF TPMH



Group Captain Donald (Commanding Officer), Wing Officer Gumley (Matron) and Air Marshal Ernest Sidney (Director General Medical Services RAF), with the 10th anniversary cake, 1973

1988: THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF TPMH

In honour of its 25th anniversary, the road leading to the hospital was named Jubilee Road by Deputy Commander British Forces Cyprus, Air Commodore Bob O'Brien, at a special ceremony on 19 November 1988, accompanied by rousing music from the military band of the resident infantry battalion, the Coldstream Guards.



Air Commodore O'Brien and Coldstream Guards band at the naming ceremony for Jubilee Way

Once the formalities were over, Mrs O'Brien started a fancy dress fun run back down to the hospital, the fastest runner being Sergeant Nicols, who was presented with the new Hennessy Trophy (thereafter intended to be awarded to the winner of future fun runs). The prize for best fancy dress went to the Elephant, alias Flight Lieutenant Stuart Cromie, and Sergeant Stuart Martin of TPMH.



The Elephant, alias Flight Lieutenant Stuart Cromie and Sergeant Stuart Martin of TPMH



‘The olive tree that will be there long after the hospital has gone’

The Commander of British Forces Cyprus, Major General JPW Friedberger CBE, then planted an olive tree at the front of the hospital to commemorate this anniversary, the comment in the press being that the olive tree should still be there long after the hospital has gone!¹⁴⁸ This olive tree was thriving at the time of hospital closure 25 years later.

¹⁴⁸ TPMH Jubilee. *The Lion*, no 45, 2 December 1988.

1993: THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF TPMH, AND A 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Two stained glass windows were commissioned in 1993 by the late Air Vice Marshal D J Davison QHS FRCS FRCSEd RAF (1932–1994) for the entrance hall of TPMH. The first, for the 30th anniversary of the hospital, has a Sun in splendour and a Rod of Aesculapius, with the dates 1963–1993. The second has the RAF Medical badge, with the dates 1918–1993, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the RAF Medical Services.

1998: THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY OF TPMH

The first history of TPMH was produced by Flight Sergeant G H Cuthbert PMRAFNS for this anniversary.

2003: THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF TPMH

The year 2003 was to be a double celebration. Not only was it the 40th anniversary year of The Princess Mary's Hospital, formally opened on 21 November 1963, but it was also the 80th anniversary of the formation on 14 June 1923 of the Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service.

Flight Lieutenant Karl Colehouse fully described the buildup to this very special occasion, and the 40th anniversary celebrations themselves, in the original edition of 'Strive to Heal' that was produced locally for this occasion, so those events are not described in detail here.

The anniversary itself on 21 November 2003 was celebrated with a day of formalities for the military and civilian staff, past and present, of The Princess Mary's Hospital, Royal Air Force Akrotiri. A small cohort of keen volunteers (Squadron Leader Tue, Jenny Naylor and Warrant Officer Alex Leivers) had refurbished the chapel, with Jenny embroidering the well-known Serenity prayer to hang opposite the altar.



The hospital chapel

A formal re-dedication of the TPMH chapel, by Major General Pearson, Commander British Forces Cyprus, in the presence of hospital staff, was followed by a service of re-dedication in the hospital gardens.



2008: 45 YEARS OF MILITARY MIDWIFERY AT TPMH

The military midwives at the RAF Hospital (Temporary), Akrotiri had commenced work in the Maternity Unit there in February 1958, and then transferred to TPMH in May 1963. This era came to an end in 2008, when midwifery services were transferred to SSAFA, after 45 years of military midwifery at TPMH, and 50 years at Akrotiri. A photo of the last seven military midwives, together with the Officer Commanding Nursing, Wing Commander Steve Beaumont, and Officer Commanding Theatres, Trish Tovey, hangs in the Day Room of Ward 4.



TPMH staff at service of re-dedication in hospital garden, 21 November 2003



‘End of an Era: Last of the Service Midwives at TPMH.’

A stained glass window, produced by Welby Glass of Limassol and dedicated to the memory of midwives of the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps and The Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service, was installed in the TPMH chapel. The window was blessed in a dedication ceremony on 28 November 2008, conducted by the Senior Chaplain for British Forces Cyprus, Padre Tony Gilbert¹⁴⁹. It is intended that this window be moved to St Paul's Church, RAF Akrotiri, when the chapel is decommissioned.



Stained glass window in the TPMH chapel, dedicated to military midwives. Note the Queen's Crown, as distinct from the King's Crown on the Habbaniya crest (see Chapter 2)

¹⁴⁹ Article in *Cyprus Lion* by Mike Harries, TPMH Librarian and artist, who proposed the idea of these commemorative windows and was instrumental in their creation.

2012–2013: THE FINAL YEAR AND 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF TPMH

After the success of the 40th anniversary celebrations, the now combined Sports and Social Committee of 2011–2012 had a hard act to follow in organising those for the 50th anniversary, especially with the Damocles sword of hospital closure hanging over them. However, in true TPMH style, the staff rose to the occasion by organising celebratory events throughout the year. These included a garden party, a Bed Push, a Queen's Jubilee medal parade, a helicopter flypast for a photo opportunity with the staff outlining the hospital initials, a party at JJ's Beach Club, and the new Commanding Officer's Dining in night for all staff at the Officers' Mess (on 19 October, just two weeks before his hospital closed on Thursday 1 November 2012). A farewell party at TPMH Golf Club, with a magnificent fireworks display, took place that evening, with a Closure Parade and final Garden Party the next day. A commemorative dinner for past Commanding Officers and remaining staff is scheduled for March 2013.

TPMH Dinner Night 2011: The Sports and Social Committee negotiated with the Sergeants' Mess to hold a 48th anniversary Dinner on 25 November 2011. This included a presentation by Major Nobby (Tim) Clarke (Officer Commanding Rehabilitation) on the history of TPMH, complete with embarrassing photos of staff, past and present. This was concluded by a short slide show appropriately accompanied by the Queen song *Don't stop me now, (cos I'm having a good time)*. The evening was enjoyed by all who attended.

TPMH Bed Push, 18 May 2012: After a short lapse, this hallowed annual tradition¹⁵⁰ was resurrected for 2011 and 2012, and opened up to teams from different units throughout RAF Akrotiri. The fastest team on each occasion, rather embarrassingly for TPMH, was the Station Medical Centre, which as a reward has now been tasked with organising future Bed Pushes once TPMH closes. At least the team that won the prize for best outfit in 2012 was a TPMH team, The Gallstones, from the Operating Theatre Department.

Sample rule: *“No 7: All teams are to enter into the spirit of the day and friendly competition, barracking, and lots of water is mandatory. Any sense of humour failures will be treated with ridicule and those found guilty will be fined for this gross misconduct.”*¹⁵¹

The author of these rules, Flight Sergeant Colin Mclean (in foreground, with sunglasses), was also the inspiration behind the winning Gallstones team¹⁵².

¹⁵⁰ The first recorded TPMH Bed Push, itself a renewal of an old RAF hospital tradition, was on 22 April 1995. (*The Lion*, summer 1995).

¹⁵¹ ‘The Offishal Internashional Rule Buke fur runnin a Hospital Bed-Push’ [sic] by Colin McClean, self-appointed world bed-push president, age 45 and ³/₄, copy held in RAF Akrotiri Museum.

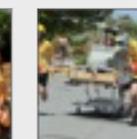
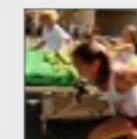
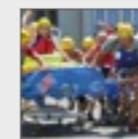
¹⁵² Coincidentally, the team that won the Best-Dressed Bed Award in the first recorded TPMH Bed Push in 1995 was inspired by the same theme: they were Ward 7 (Children’s Ward), dressed as the ‘Flintstones’.

¹⁵³ From left to right: Warrant Officer Ian Wilcox, Corporal Floyd Elliott, Sergeant Lindsay Ward, Lance Corporal Alison Japp, Squadron Leader Emma Redman (Officer-In-Charge Theatres), Sergeant Emma Newton, Flight Sergeant Colin McLean, Staff Nurse Carol Ireland, Flight Lieutenant Annette Morris.

TPMH Bed Push 2012



The Gallstones, best-dressed team 2012.¹⁵³



TPMH DISPLAY, RAF AKROTIRI MUSEUM

The original RAF Akrotiri Museum was housed in an old building near the Air Control Tower. After St Paul's Church ceased to be used regularly for its proper purpose (with services moving to the Chaplaincy Centre), half of the church was converted for use in 2012 as the new RAF Akrotiri Museum. It was formally opened on 4 October by the Chaplain-in-Chief of the RAF, Venerable (Air Vice Marshal) Ray Pentland. Pride of place is given to a large display of items from TPMH.



TPMH Display, RAF Akrotiri Museum.

TPMH MEMORABILIA

TPMH tie: (1 July 1968) *“The hospital tie was available for the first time in the hospital’s history. In the evening, Wing*

Commander PJ Batchelor (consultant in Otorhinology) was dined out according to hospital tradition with a kebab supper, at a meeting of the Kokinelli club. On this occasion he was presented with the first tie both to recognise his very valuable services on hospital social occasions and also to publicise the availability of this tie.” (Author’s request: does anyone still have an original TPMH tie?)

TPMH wall shield: This was an initiative by Corporal Neil Middleton (Ward 6 nurse) who was inspired by the ships’ shields belonging to his Royal Navy father. A limited number of these with the current TPMH badge were produced in summer 2012¹⁵⁴.



TPMH cummerbund: In early 2012, Warrant Officer Ian Wilcox (Senior Operating Department Practitioner and Warrant Officer In-Charge Theatres) designed an elegant cummerbund featuring the hospital badge for Officers and SNCOs to wear at Mess functions, and for other staff to wear at informal functions, or to have as a keepsake. The cummerbunds were produced by **Aitchboze** Enterprises and helped distinguish TPMH staff from those in other medical units.



¹⁵⁴ TPMH wall shields can be ordered from C H Munday Ltd, +44 (0)1428 714971, enquiries@chmunday.co.uk

TPMH print: Wing Commander Gora Pathak, consultant orthopaedic surgeon and regular visitor to TPMH, sketched a watercolour of the hospital in June 2011. A limited set of signed copies was produced to raise funds for Station Charities, RAF Akrotiri.

50th anniversary commemorative book: Wing Commander Gora Pathak very kindly granted permission for a photo of this watercolour to grace the front cover of the illustrated commemorative book and DVD recording highlights of the history of TPMH.



THE FINAL SALUTE

The 2012 Red Arrows in Akrotiri, Cyprus where the team are deployed on Ex SpringHawk fly over TPMH.

Image by Cpl Graham Taylor (RAF) taken from a Griffin helicopter of 84 Sqn. 05 May 2012



THE FINAL FAREWELL

The Princess Mary's Hospital
firework display at farewell party.
Image by Ren Lang 01 November 2012



Conclusion

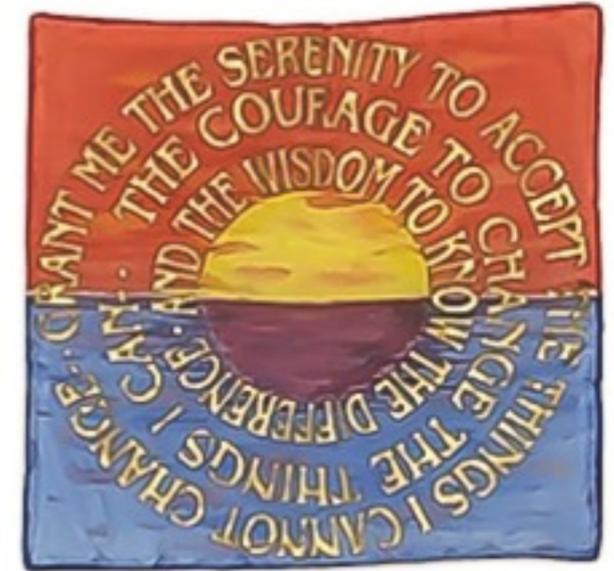
STRIVE TO HEAL

TPMH has lived up to its motto 'Strive to heal' and served its patients well over its 50 years. Many people will have happy memories of this hospital and of their time in Cyprus. Hopefully this history will give them something additional to remember and to be proud of.

While many may have misgivings about the wisdom of closing a military hospital in such a strategic location, especially given the history of this unstable area, the current civil war in Syria with the potential for a larger conflagration, and further uncertainty in the whole of the Middle East, the die is cast. The time has come to move on, while commemorating the past. As the military staff redeploy from November 2012 to NHS hospitals or other military units in the UK, and civilian staff move to pastures new, including the Akrotiri Station Health Centre to hopefully continue some outpatient services from there, the Ygia Polyclinic has taken on the baton from TPMH to provide secondary health care to the British Forces in Cyprus. A new era beckons!

A PRAYER FOR TPMH STAFF AND PATIENTS

This prayer is taken from the embroidery design by Jenny Naylor for the 40th anniversary re-dedication of the TPMH chapel, which visitors have meditated on for the last 10 years. The author hopes that readers of this history will find it as helpful as he has in these changing times:



*“Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.”*

Acknowledgements

To Carrie Tomlinson BA (Hons) Combined Arts, and Master of Social Science in Heritage Management, for helping with necessary research for this history, for her advice and support, and for creating the TPMH Display at the RAF Akrotiri Museum.

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To Lieutenant Colonel Alan Miller RE, the author's brother-in-law, and Michael Willday, a good friend, for their encouragement and much appreciated suggestions for improving this history.

To Andrea Vassallo, editor and the author's daughter, for much appreciated help in editing this history.

To the Photographic Section RAF Akrotiri.

To BFBS and Granada TV for permission to use their footage.

To Wing Commander Gora Pathak, orthopaedic surgeon and artist, for kind permission to reproduce his watercolour print of TPMH as the cover image of this work.

To Mike Harries, artist and ex-TPMH librarian, for kind permission to reproduce his watercolour print of TPMH on the dedication page of the table of contents.

To The RAMC Charity (Drummond Committee), Army Medical Services Cyprus Amenities Fund, PMRAFNS Association, the members of The Royal British Legion Club - Limassol, Sodexo, Akrotiri Ladies Events Committee, Royal Air Forces Association Aphrodite Branch, SSAFA Akrotiri, PRI Troodos Station, Hellenic Bank Akrotiri, Wing Commander Ken Pudney and Major Jason Thomas for their very generous donations towards the cost of producing the commemorative book and DVD.

To John Moen, Managing Director www.worldatlas.com for permission to reproduce two maps in this work

To all others who have generously offered loans or subsequent donations, help and advice in the compilation of this work, especially the Station Commander RAF Akrotiri, Group Captain Linter.

Last, but not least, to my wife Trisha, and to Ren Lang's wife Andrea, for their forbearance, love and unfailing support during the gestation of this commemorative work. Thank you.

The author apologises for any errors or omissions in this history.

The author would be delighted to receive further contributions to enhance this history. He can be contacted via djvassallo@aol.com

Commanding Officers of TPMH

Gp Capt G H Dhenin	May 1963 – December 1963
Gp Capt G R Bedford	December 1963 – November 1966
Gp Capt T H Redfern	November 1966 – October 1969
Gp Capt J A B Mounsey	October 1969 – October 1972
Gp Capt J G Donald	October 1972 – January 1976
Gp Capt I M Ogilvie	January 1976 – March 1977
Gp Capt D O Williams	March 1977 – August 1978
Gp Capt M A Pallister	August 1978 – September 1980
Gp Capt R C Davie	October 1980 – October 1982
Gp Capt R Chapple	October 1982 – March 1985
Gp Capt E P Collins	March 1985 – July 1987

Gp Capt K S Prior	July 1987 – June 1988
Gp Capt S A Cullen	June 1988 – December 1990
Gp Capt W J Pike	December 1990 – November 1992
Gp Capt J T G Rogerson	November 1992 – September 1994
Gp Capt P K L Coles	September 1994 – September 1996
Gp Capt S R C Dougherty	September 1996 – February 1999
Gp Capt J M Jones	February 1999 – December 2000
Gp Capt D L McConnell	December 2000 – April 2003
Gp Capt R J M Broadbridge	April 2003 – July 2005
Wg Cdr A Cranfield	August 2005 – December 2006
Gp Capt I T Jenkins	December 2006 – May 2008
Gp Capt J E Gaffney	May 2008 – June 2010
Gp Capt A N C Reid	June 2010 – August 2012
Gp Capt G E Allison	August 2012 – 2013

Matrons of TPMH¹⁵⁵

Wg Off J E M Kennedy ARRC SCM	1963 – 1965
Wg Off ?	1965 – 1967
Wg Off ?	1967 – 1969
Wg Off Lumley	1969 – 1971
Wg Off Metcalfe	1971 – 1973
Wg Off K Gumley	1973 – 1975
Wg Off O’Kelly	1975 – 1977
Wg Off I J Harris RRC SRN SCM	1977 – ?
Wg Off Smedley	?
Wg Off Zena Cheel	1978 – 1980
Wg Cdr Connie Bull	1980 – 1982
Wg Cdr E Sandison (Liz)	1982 – 1984
Wg Cdr A B Golding	1984 – 1985
Wg Cdr Rosie Partington	1985 – 1986

Wg Cdr Rowena Manning	1986 – 1988
Wg Cdr Val Hand	1988 – 1989
Wg Cdr S Utley	1989 – 1990
Wg Cdr Maggie Pedder	1990 – 1992
Wg Cdr Angie Schofield	1992 – 1994
Wg Cdr Annie Reid OBE ARRC SCM	1994 – 1998
Wg Cdr Lesley Chew RRC	1998 – 2000
Wg Cdr Jackie L Gross	2000 – 2002
Wg Cdr Wendy Williams	2002 – 2003
Wg Cdr Steve Beaumont	2003 – 2007
Wg Cdr Lawrence A Massey	2007 – 2009
Wg Cdr Keith A Gullidge	2009 – 2012

¹⁵⁵ Largely taken from list compiled by Flight Sergeant Cuthbert for 35th anniversary history, 1998.

The Last Staff of TPMH, August – October 2012

Personnel	OFFICERS	SNCO	JNCO	OTHER	TOTAL
RAF	8	18	14		40
ARMY	9	5	8		22
NAVY					0
UK Based Civilians (UKBC)					15
UK Dependants (UKD)					23
SSAFA					21
Locally Employed Civilians (LEC)					43
					164

POST DESCRIPTION	TRADE/BRANCH	RANK	NAME	FORENAME	SERVICE
EXECS CORRIDOR					
Commanding Officer TPMH		Gp Capt	Allison	Gordon	RAF
Clinical Director		Col	Vassallo	David	Army
Officer Commanding Nursing (OCN)	PMRAFNS	Wg Cdr	Gullidge	Keith	RAF
Deputy OCN	QARANC	Maj	Davies	Ian	Army
Officer Comd Support Unit (OCSU)	RAMC	Maj	Nicholson	Mark (Nick)	Army
Locums Clerk		Mrs	O'Neill	Anne	UKD
Previous Locums Clerk		Mrs	Clarke	Louise	UKD
HOSPITAL SUPPORT (HS)					
Officer Comd Hospital Sup (OC HS)	RADC	Capt	Wiles	Paul	Army
JNCO Registry	AGC (SPS)	LCpl	Njie	Omar	Army
Chief Clerk	Pers (Spt)	Cpl	Catherwood	Lorraine	RAF
Information Systems Manager		Mrs	Pantehi	Maria	LEC
HS					
Hospital Liaison Officer		Mrs	Kapodistria	Michele	LEC
HS (OTHER)					
Handyman		Mr	Constantinou	Michael	LEC
HS (SUPPLY)					
		Mr	Florides	Philippos	LEC
WARD 2					
BUDGETS					
Budget Manager		Miss	Chamberlain	Sarah	UKBC
Budgets Clerk		Mrs	Turner	Alanna	UKD
PHYSIOTHERAPY					
OC Physiotherapy	RAMC	Maj	Bennett	Hannah	Army
Remedial Instructor	Physical Trg Instr	FS	Leach	Philip	RAF
Senior Physiotherapist		Mr	Bradshaw	Dave	UKBC
VARIOUS					
Risk manager		Mrs	Collings	Terri	UKBC
Clinical Measurements		Mr	Boswell	Lee	UKBC
WARD 3 - WELFARE					
	(DMWS)	Mrs	Austin	Hazel	SSAFA
	DMWS	Mrs	Thornton	Amanda	SSAFA

WARD 4 - MATERNITY					
Midwifery Manager		Mrs	Hasell	Carol	SSAFA
Midwife		Miss	Wood	Joanne	SSAFA
Midwife		Mrs	Smith	Beatrice	SSAFA
Midwife		Mr	Smith	David	SSAFA
Midwife		Mrs	Burke	Tina	SSAFA
Midwife		Mrs	McMullin	Alison	SSAFA
Midwife		Mrs	Hockings-Lomax	Rose	SSAFA
Midwife		Ms	Moss	Jane	SSAFA
Midwife		Miss	Norton	Jane	SSAFA
Midwife		Mrs	Recknager-Fessey	Sandra	SSAFA
Midwife		Mrs	Rutherford	Christine	SSAFA
Receptionist		Mrs	Hanson	Mandy	SSAFA
Team Leader		Mrs	Martin	Rosalyn	SSAFA
Team Leader		Mrs	Adams	Caroline	SSAFA
Team Leader		Mrs	Barlow	Paula	SSAFA
Team Leader		Mrs	Donaldson - Myles	Fiona	SSAFA
ESBA midwife		Mrs	Walsh	Maureen	SSAFA
ESBA midwife		Mrs	Medhurst	Christine	SSAFA
ESBA midwife		Mrs	Redford	Margaret	SSAFA
WARD 6 - GENERAL WARD					
OIC Ward 6	PMRAFNS - Nurse	Sqn Ldr	Rose	Nina	RAF
	QARANC - Nurse	Cpl	Elliott	Floyd	Army
	PMRAFNS - Nurse	Cpl	Pritchard	Ashleigh	RAF
	QARANC - Nurse	Cpl	Pearcy	Michelle	Army
	PMRAFNS - Nurse	FS	Loh	Joosee	RAF
	PMRAFNS - Nurse	Cpl	Ross	Stephanie	RAF
ITU Nurse	PMRAFNS - Nurse	Sgt	Lynn	Fiona	RAF
	PMRAFNS - Nurse	Sgt	Derbyshire	Gillian	RAF
	PMRAFNS - Nurse	Sgt	Kinsey	Rebecca	RAF
	PMRAFNS - Nurse	Cpl	Hymes	Nikki	RAF
	PMRAFNS - ITU Nurse	Flt Lt	Evans	Paul	RAF
	PMRAFNS - Nurse	Cpl	Clarkson	Louise	RAF
DOIC Ward 6	QARANC - Nurse	Maj	Thomas	Jason	Army
Staff Nurse		Mrs	Quant	Janet	UKD
Staff Nurse		Mrs	Sleight	Evelyn	UKD
Staff Nurse		Mrs	Cooper	Marcia	UKD
Staff Nurse		Mrs	Mooney	Samantha	UKD
Staff Nurse		Mrs	Porter	Geraldine	UKD
Bank Nurse		Mrs	Rhodes	Debbie	UKD
Bank Nurse		Mrs	Wright	Karen	UKD
Bank Nurse		Mrs	Clarke	Rebecca	UKD
Bank Nurse		Mrs	Flynn	Laura	UKD
Bank Nurse		Mrs	Smith	Katie	UKD
X-RAY					
SNCO I/C	RAMC - Radiographer	SSgt	Bradshaw	Tracey	Army
	Medical - Radiographer	Sgt	Derbyshire	Christopher	RAF
Sonographer	Sonographer	Mr	Pearson	Keith	UKBC
OPERATING THEATRES					
OC Operating Theatres	PMRAFNS - Nurse	Sqn Ldr	Redman	Emma	RAF
Anaesthetist	Consultant	Dr	Daniell	Chris	UKBC
Anaesthetist	Consultant	Dr	Lindsay	Fraser	UKBC
Anaesthetist	Consultant	Dr	Rogers	Peter	UKBC

	RAMC – (ODP)	Sgt	Newton	Emma	Army
	Medical - ODP	Sgt	MacPherson	Jamie	RAF
	Medical - ODP	FS	McClellan	Colin	RAF
	RAMC - ODP	LCpl	Japp	Alison	Army
		Mrs	Ireland	Carol	UKD
	PMRAFNS - Nurse	Flt Lt	Morris	Annette	RAF
	Medical - ODP	SAC	Hewton	Matthew	RAF
	Medical - ODP	Sgt	Ward	Linsey	RAF
Bank Staff	Bank ODP	Mrs	Eggl	Jennifer	UKD
Bank Staff	Bank Theatre Nurse	Mrs	Warner	Christine	UKD
OUTPATIENTS DEPARTMENT (OPD)					
OPD Manager	PMRAFNS - Nurse	FS	Fleet	Simon	RAF
Nurse		Mrs	Nearchou	Jackie	LEC
Sexual Health	QARANC - Nurse	Sgt	Dunn	Tina	Army
Pre-Assessment Nurse		Mrs	Laundy	Gill	UKD
	QARANC - HCA	LCpl	Ferguson	Lever (Tex)	ARMY
	QARANC - HCA	LCpl	Wood	Michelle	Army
Dietician		Mrs	McDonald	Nicole	LEC
CONSULTANT STAFF(+ anaesthetists)					
General Surgeon (also Clinical Director)	Consultant	Col	Vassallo	David	Army
Physician	Consultant	Gp Capt	Laundy	Trevor	RAF
Physician	Registrar		locum		Army
Orthopaedics	Consultant	Dr	Olesen	Ole	UKBC
Obstetrics and Gynaecology	Consultant	Sqn Ldr (Rtd)	Awad	Hani	UKBC
Obstetrics and Gynaecology	Consultant	Dr	Jayatilaka	Alwattage (Nimal)	UKBC
Paediatrician	Consultant	Dr	Eliades	Chris	LEC
Paediatrician	Consultant	Dr	Savva	Kleopatra	LEC
Paediatrician	Consultant	Dr	Koukkoullis	Chris	LEC
ENT	Consultant	Dr	Kollitsis	Philip	LEC
Oral	Consultant	Dr	Kallis	Stavros	LEC
MEDICAL RECORDS DEPARTMENT					
Medical Records Officer (MRO) Hospital WC	RAF Medic	WO	Frank	Mandy	RAF
Deputy MRO	RAF Medic	Sgt	Rhodes	Karl	RAF
		Mrs	Georgiou	Vasiliki (Vaso)	LEC
	RAF Medic	Cpl	Lockwood	Polly	RAF
	RAMC - CMT	Cpl	Phillips	Ashley	Army
	RAMC - CMT	Cpl	Marsh	Richard	Army
	RAF Medic	Cpl	Rees	Angela	RAF
	RAF Medic	Cpl	Skerrett	Stephanie	RAF
	RAF Medic	Cpl	Veall	Gareth	RAF
		Mrs	Petrou	Elina	LEC
		Mrs	Michael	Elaine	LEC
Hospital Liaison Officer	HLO(Secondary Duty)	Mr	Karasavvas	Andros	LEC
	HLO(Secondary Duty)	Mrs	Kate	Moughan	LEC
	HLO(Secondary Duty)	Ms	Grange	Zoe	LEC
	HLO(Secondary Duty)	Mr	Charalambous	Despo	LEC
	HLO(Secondary Duty)	Mrs	Parpotta	Dora	LEC
	HLO(Secondary Duty)	Mr	Haperis	Kyriacos	LEC
Typist		Mrs	Stankovic	Elena	LEC
Typist		Mrs	Charalambous	Yiota	LEC

PATHOLOGY LAB (PATH LAB)					
OC Path Lab	Medical - Lab Tech	WO	Hutchings	Andrew	RAF
Lab Tech	Medical - Lab Tech	FS	Doherty	Andrew	RAF
Lab Tech	RAMC - BMS	Sgt	Chitambira	Herbert	Army
Lab Tech	RAMC - BMS	Sgt	Batumbu	Samuel	Army
		Mrs	Fleet	Sharon	UKD
Lab Tech	Medical - Lab Tech	Sgt	Phelps	Christopher	RAF
MEDICAL PROVISIONS POINT (MPP)					
OC MPP	RAMC	Capt	Clarke	Stephen	Army
		Mr	Chadwick	John	UKBC
		Ms	Cooney	Sharon	UKBC
		Mrs	Bulmer	Emma	UKD
		Mr	Kelly	Rob	UKD
		Mr	Giorgalli	Tasos	LEC
		Mr	Yiorkatzi	Nikos	LEC
	Medical - Pharm Tech	Cpl	Mannion	Claire	RAF
	Medical - Pharm Tech	Sgt/FS	Jansz	Marie-Clare	RAF
		Mrs	Woods	Beverley	UKD
Pharmacist		Mrs	Coe	Maria	UKBC
DEPT COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH					
OC DCMH	PMRAFNS	Sqn Ldr	Masawi	Solomon	RAF
DOC DCMH	QARANC - Nurse	Maj	Blair	Simon	ARMY
		Mrs	Barnes	Sharney	UKD
	Medical - Nurse	Sgt	Jones	Lara	RAF
	Medical - Nurse	FS	Phoenix	Adele	RAF
	Reception/Typist	Mrs	Gilbert	Charlotte	UKD
CENTRAL STERILE SERVICES DEPT					
		Mrs	Menelaou	Panayiota	LEC
		Mrs	Papadopoulou	Mary	LEC
		Mr	Williams	Mike	UKBC
MEDICAL DENTAL SERVICING SECTION					
SNCO I/C	Gen Tech E	Chief Tech	Ford	David	RAF
	Gen Tech E	Cpl	Greenshields	Stephen	RAF
	Gen Tech E	JT	Bradley	Gary	RAF
	Gen Tech E	Cpl	Crow	Matthew	RAF
SODEXO STAFF (assigned to TPMH)					
	Theatre Porter	Mr	Aristidou	Theodotou (Theo)	LEC
	Cleaner	Mrs	Aristidou	Anna	LEC
	Cleaner	Mrs	Constantinou	Neophyta	LEC
	Cleaner	Mrs	Efstratiou	Loukia	LEC
	Cleaner	Mrs	Frangou	Vaso	LEC
	Cleaner	Mrs	Omerou	Anastasios	LEC
	Cleaner	Mrs	Sophroniou	Chryso	LEC
	Cleaner	Mrs	Tsitouri	Fanio	LEC
	Manager	Mrs	Yiannakou	Paraskevi	LEC
	Cleaner	Mrs	Neocleous	Eleni	LEC
	Cleaner	Mrs	Militiadous	Lenia	LEC
	Chef	Mrs	Konnari	Sophia	LEC
	Chef	Mrs	Pelekanou	Maria	LEC
	Mess hand	Mrs	Stylianou	Eleni	LEC
	Mess hand	Mrs	Demetriou	Giorgoulla	LEC
	Mess hand	Mrs	Sofocleous	Christina	LEC
	Cashier	Mrs	Mesimeri	Anastasia	LEC

Staff who left in 2012 who had worked for TPMH for over 5 years +		
Name	Role / Department	Years at TPMH
Yiota Charalambous	Typist / Outpatients	29
Vaso Georgiou	Receptionist / Outpatients	23
Christos Eliades	Consultant Paediatrician	20
Hani Awad	Consultant Obstetrician	20
Jackie Nearchou	Nurse Manager / Outpatients	20
Anna Aristidou	Sodexo staff	18
Anastasios Omerou	Sodexo staff	18
Christine Rutherford	SSAFA Midwife (ex-military)	19 continuous (25 in total)
Philip Kollitsis	Consultant ENT	16
Lee Boswell	Clinical Physiologist	16
Skevi Yiannakou	Sodexo staff	16
Theo Aristidou	Theatre Porter / Sodexo staff	16
Paris Iacovides	Consultant Paediatrician, Dhekelia	15
Chryso Sophroniou	Sodexo staff	15
Fanio Tsitouri	Sodexo staff	14
Tina Burke	SSAFA Midwife (ex-military)	13
Elaine Michael	Receptionist	12
Keith Pearson	Ultrasonographer	12
Michael Constantinou	Handyman	11
Ole Olesen	Orthopaedic Consultant	11
Neophyta Constantinou	Sodexo staff	11
Loukia Efstratiou	Sodexo staff	11
Michele Kapodistria	Hospital Liaison Officer	10
Elena Stankovitch	Typist / Outpatients	10
Teri Collings	Patient Safety Manager	10
Maria Coe	Pharmacist	10
John Chadwick	Pharmacy Technician	10
Nicos Yiorkatzi	Medical Provisioning Plant	10
Sharon Cooney	Pharmacy Technician	10
Joanne Wood	SSAFA Midwife (ex-military)	10
Beatrice Smith	SSAFA Midwife (ex-military)	8
Elina Petrou	Receptionist	8
Vaso Frangou	Sodexo staff	8
Eleni Neocleous	Sodexo staff	7
Stavros Kallis	Maxillofacial consultant	6
Yiota Menelaou	Medical Packer / CSSD	6
Paula Barlow	SSAFA Midwife	5
Carol Hasell	SSAFA Midwife	5
Rosalyn Martin	SSAFA Midwife	5

Kitchen staff are acknowledged in the pdf section on the DVD.



The author Colonel D J Vassallo at the entrance of TPMH.

Bibliography

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Mihranian B, Rallis Z, Loizou P. Cyprus Stamps 1880 – 2004: Linking History and Culture. Cyprus Department of Postal Services, 2005.

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O'Malley, Brendan & Craig, Ian. The Cyprus Conspiracy – America, Espionage and the Turkish Invasion. I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, London, 1999.

Papadakis, Yiannis. Echoes from the Dead Zone – Across the Cyprus Divide. I.B. Tauris, 2005.

Stiles, Richard. Mayhem in the Med: A Chronicle of the Cyprus Emergency 1955–1960. Savannah Publications, 2009.

Operational Record Books (F540s), The National Archives, Kew:

AIR29/2789: RAF Hospital, Akrotiri, January 1956 – December 1960

AIR29/3287: RAF Hospital, Akrotiri, January 1961 – December 1965 (closed to the public)

AIR29/3861: RAF Hospital, Akrotiri, January 1966 – November 1970

AIR29/4273: RAF Hospital, Akrotiri, 1971 – 1975

Operational Record Books (F540s), still at TPMH [October 2012], to be relocated to Air Historical Branch:

February 1974 – May 1981

June 1981 – April 1984

April 1984 – December 1985.

Author's Note: The F540s for TPMH for 1981 and 1982 are currently [October 2012] with the Corporate Memory reviewers, waiting clearance to be released into The National Archives after the statutory 30 years. The F540s from 1983 to 1995 are still held by the Air Historical Branch¹⁵⁶. The author has not had access to any of these F540s in compiling this history. After 1996 TPMH did not keep monthly summaries of its activity for compilation in F540s, possibly as a result of the transfer of responsibility for the hospital from the RAF to the Defence Secondary Care Agency in 1996.

Other materials:

DVDs: see commemorative DVDs for iBook/PDFs/further reading on the first disk, and films with TPMH photographic archive on the second disk.

TPMH Photographic archives: Four volumes of photo archives and extra images from TPMH, from the mid-1950s to 2012, are held at the RAF Akrotiri Museum. The photos were collated by Squadron Leader Swain, ITU nurse.

The Flamingo magazine: see separate listing.

Newspaper cuttings: a file of laminated newspaper articles about TPMH is held at RAF Akrotiri Museum.

Relevant medical journal articles:

Malpass CP, Winter JS. A report on missile injuries in Cyprus 1974. *British Journal of Surgery*, 1976, 63:482–487

Printer KD. Obstetric Record of the Cyprus Emergency July 1974 to July 1975. *J Roy Army Med Corps* 1977;123:142–147.

Day TK, Veen H. Getting the best of both worlds – clinical excellence at a peripheral unit. *J Roy Army Med Corps* 2008;154(1):41–46.

PDFs from J Roy Army Med Corps included in DVD with permission.

Websites: see separate listing.

¹⁵⁶ Letter from Stuart Hadaway, AHB2(RAF), Air Historical Branch, to Wg Cdr Tomlinson, OC Ops Wing, COSU HQ, RAF Akrotiri. Ref: D/AHB(RAF)/8/35 Dated 14 February 2012.

Articles about TPMH in The Flamingo¹⁵⁷ and The Gryph¹⁵⁸

THE FLAMINGO

June 1968, p7	Group Captain H B Kelly MVO (<i>on election to the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians</i>)
August 1968, p24	Blood donors wanted
March 1974, p9	Inside PMH (We're after your blood) (<i>appeal for blood donors</i>)
May 1974, p9	Inside PMH, by Actinon (<i>Maternity Unit brides and brides-to-be, things one hears, sports...</i>)
June 1974, p9	Aeromed, by Actinon (<i>a tribute to all involved</i>)
June 1974, p48	Inside PMH (<i>blood donor awards, social news</i>)

July 1974, p21	Inside PMH, or, The Akrotiri Lancer (<i>still by Actinon</i>)
August 1974, p13	Inside PMH (<i>news, but not about events in July!</i>)
September 1974, p21	Inside PMH (<i>'Well, that was the month that was... and I don't think any of us are going to forget July 1974 in a hurry.'</i>)
November 1974, p27	Inside PMH, by Idi da Rub (<i>on departure of Actinon to UK.</i>) (<i>'Hello dere folks...' Rugby, football, cricket...</i>)
December 1974, p10	Inside PMH, by Idi da Rub (<i>'Hello dere again folks...' Rugby and hockey this time...</i>)
December 1974, p35	A short history of the RAMC, by Hygiologist
February 1975, p22	Inside PMH, by Idi da Rub (<i>'Hello dere folks an' a Happy Noo Year... We puttin' on de worl' famous hospital cabaret again...</i>)
March 1975, p6	PMH Topics – by Cpl Bill Rogers (<i>on departure of Sgt Bill McKay of Physio, alias Idi da Rub, 'returning to his native colony'</i>)

April 1975, p10	PMH Topics (<i>soccer, skiing, horse-riding and postings...</i>)	November 1975, p19	TPMH Topics – by Cpl Bill Rogers (<i>a farewell</i>)
April 1975, p19	Award of blood donor badges	February 1976, p7	TPMH Topics – A cut above the rest (<i>slogan on new hospital T-shirt. Farewell to Group Captain Donald</i>)
May 1975, p9	PMH Topics (<i>various!</i>)	April 1976, p17	TPMH Topics (<i>pen picture of new Commanding Officer, Group Captain Ogilvie</i>)
May 1975, p19	Award of commendations to personnel of The Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Hospital Akrotiri (<i>to Cpl Dickson, SACW Needham, Cpl Lane and Mrs Lella Stellaki</i>)	June 1976, p22	TPMH Topics – The origins of the RAF Medical Branch
June 1975, p13	PMH Topics (<i>'Whether we like it or not, TPMH is our place of work, also a home of sorts. And it is unique – never was there a hospital like TPMH.'</i> Cpl Bill Rogers)	December 1976, p11	TPMH presentation (<i>to Mrs Elli Vassiliou, nursing auxiliary</i>)
July 1975, p9	PMH Topics – by Jim O'Keeffe (<i>'the blarney taking over this column for one issue'</i>)	April 1977, p3	Presentation Ceremony at TPMH (<i>to Chief Technicians Snuggs and Davies</i>)
October 1975, p7	TPMH Topics	April 1977, p6	New hands at the helm (<i>pen pictures of new Commanding Officer, Group Captain Williams, and new Matron, Wing Officer Harris</i>)
October 1975, p19	DGMS Visit (<i>by Air Marshal Sir Geoffrey Dhenin, first Commanding Officer of TPMH, and President of the RAF Sub Aqua Association</i>)	October 1977, p21	News from TPMH – The Princess Mary's RAF Hospital Golf and Social Club, Akrotiri (<i>after renovation in August</i>)

February 1980, p5	Life-saving equipment comes to TPMH Akrotiri (<i>donation by the Royal Navy of the new cluclas-type recompression chamber</i>)	November 1991, p23	RAF Akrotiri hosts freed hostage – Jacki Mann (<i>includes photo</i>)
Summer 1983, p11	Have a happy summer	January 1992	Akrotiri takes centre stage in release of Terry Waite (<i>includes photos with TPMH staff</i>)
Summer 1983, p41	The 1983 TPMH Garden Party	October 1992, p3	Foreword by Commanding Officer TPMH (<i>Group Captain Pike</i>)
Summer 1983, p42	Well done Nick (<i>presentation of Long Service and Good Conduct Medal to Sgt Nick Lowe</i>)	September 1993, p11	TPMH 30 years Anniversary
Winter 1986, p2–3	The terrorist attack on RAF Akrotiri – 3 August 1986 Heroine of the Day – Rebecca Malpass	August 1994, p23	The Princess Mary’s Hospital – Mary’s News and Reviews
Winter 1986, p5–7	Helicopter Accident. In memoriam – Fiona Johnstone. Peter Barwell. Cpl Martin Cook	August 1994, p30	TPMH Golf Club News
Summer 1987	May – Royal Visit (<i>by Princess Alexandra</i>)	August 1994, p37	The Tornado Accident (<i>unfortunately a fatal one</i>)
Summer 1988	January – A touch of Glasnost (<i>rescue of Alexander Parchame nco, injured Soviet seaman, including photo with rescuers</i>)	February 1995, p18	The Princess Mary’s Hospital – Mary’s News and Reviews
September 1991, p22	Out and About (<i>visit by Lady Harding to TPMH Maternity Unit</i>)	February 1995, p22	Golf Club News (NB Later Golf Club articles not all referenced)
		March 1995, p15	Emergency blood donor panel (<i>‘Mine’s blue, what’s yours?’</i>)
		March 1995, p22	The Princess Mary’s Hospital – Mary’s News and Reviews

June 1995, p22	The Princess Mary's Hospital – Mary's News and Reviews (<i>with details of the inaugural TPMH bed push, with Ward Seven winning the best dressed bed award as the Flintstones</i>)	May 1996, p30	The Princess Mary's Hospital – Mary's News and Reviews (<i>handover to the DSCA, Annual Charity Bed Push, and Rose Bed Dedication Ceremony in memory of Flying Officers Helen Deery and Sheila Noble</i>)
September 1995, p26	The Princess Mary's Hospital – Mary's News and Reviews	May / June 1997, p19	All stitched up – the news from TPMH (<i>ranging from Pushing the Bed out [congratulations to the Spouse Girls and the Immaculate Deception Maternity Unit] to Oh ...Bleep! [‘There are concerns about the hospital bleep system – it seems to be working...’]</i>)
November 1995, p21	The Princess Mary's Hospital – Mary's News and Reviews	July 1997, p19	All stitched up – a caustic look at life at The Princess Mary's Hospital by Annie Sthetic and Connie Traction.
December 1995, p21	The Princess Mary's Hospital – Mary's News and Reviews (<i>including ‘One Step Beyond’ – a sponsored abseil</i>)	October 1997, p19	All stitched up – the news from TPMH (<i>including news about the First Royal Air Force Beach Hospital</i>)
April 1996, p30	The Princess Mary's Hospital – Mary's News and Reviews	December 1997, p25	All stitched up – the news from TPMH (<i>including Seasonal Goings On – and a request to the Maternity Unit to provide a Christmas Baby, so no slacking girls...</i>)
May 1996, front cover	Farewell to TPMH (<i>cover photo of military band marchpast, as the RAF hands over to the Defence Secondary Care Agency</i>)		

February 1998, p8–9	Top State honours received by two key RAF figures in Cyprus (<i>on Wing Commander Annie Reid becoming an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE)</i>)	April 1999, p11	All stitched up – TPMH bid farewell to Group Captain Dougherty (<i>with a surprise, once in a lifetime, performance of The Review</i>)
March 1998, p14	All stitched up - a caustic look at life down at The Princess Mary's Hospital by Annie Sthetic and Connie Traction.	November 1999, p4	Terry Waite returns to RAF Akrotiri
May 1998, p18	All stitched up (<i>again</i>)	Families Day 2000, p15	The hospital on the headland
June 1998, p15	All stitched up (<i>with comments on the annual TPMH Fun Run</i>)	July 2002, p5	TPMH – New labour rooms at TPMH (<i>and advert for TPMH Emergency Blood Donor Panel</i>)
July 1998, p23	Akrotiri divers raise funds for TPMH charity event (<i>a sponsored walk, underwater, from the ARABS Beach Club to the Mole</i>)	February 2003, p18	Makeover Time at Ward 4 at TPMH!
October 1998, p9	TPMH boosts fun in the sun (<i>distribution of funds to local charities</i>)	March 2003, p6	Oh Baby, it's perfect! (<i>the story of the newly opened Alana Room, 'an oasis of tranquillity', in the Maternity Unit</i>)
November 1998, p7	Illegal immigrants land at RAF Akrotiri (<i>75 refugees were rescued by helicopter from a boat that had beached at the bottom of the cliffs below TPMH, having made for the distinctive red cross</i>)	July 2003, p42	EKO Open (Hellenic Petroleum) at TPMH Golf Club
		August 2003 (final issue), p9	The Princess Mary's Hospital (Environmental Awareness Day)

THE GRYPH (FIRST ISSUED IN SEPTEMBER 2003)

September 2003, p49	Open Arms (The TPMH Cancer Patients' Support Group)
October 2003, p6	Formal Opening Ceremony (<i>of the new Community Mental Health Team offices at Cliff House, by Group Captain Annie Reid, Director Nursing Services RAF, Matron-in-Chief PMRAFNS, and previous Matron of TPMH</i>)
October 2003, p28	SANDs reborn at TPMH (<i>fund-raising activities by the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society [SANDS] Support Group, with photo of midwives</i>)
June 2004, p35	Made in Cyprus! – A look at the antenatal and postnatal care available in BFC... Part 1
July 2004 (missing)	Made in Cyprus! – Part 2
August 2004, p8	Made in Cyprus! – Part 3
September 2004, p26	TPMH Marksman

September 2004, p33	Made in Cyprus! – Part 4
November 2004, p32	TPMH Golf Club – Sam's Motor Trophy 2004
May 2005, p4–10	History of RAF Akrotiri 1955–2005
August 2005, p40	TPMH Marathon (<i>the first</i>)
September 2005, p11	'Prevention is better than cure' at TPMH

¹⁵⁷ *Flamingo* was the RAF Akrotiri magazine, first produced in April 1968 on the 50th anniversary of the RAF, www.rafakrotiri.co.uk/flamingo/flamingo1968.html. It later became the magazine of the Western Sovereign Base Area, its final issue being in August 2003. The author obtained these references from the nearly complete bound set at the RAF Museum Akrotiri.

¹⁵⁸ *The Gryph* succeeded the *Flamingo* as the monthly magazine for the Western Sovereign Base Area, its name recalling the Griffin vultures at Episkopi and the new helicopters at RAF Akrotiri. Its first issue was in September 2003 and it ceased production in January 2006.

Websites

1. The Princess Mary's Hospital (official website) www.aepiis/tpmh/default.asp

2. RAF Akrotiri (official website) www.aepiis/akrotiri_stn/default.asp

3. QARANC website, www.qaranc.co.uk/ this has a section about hospitals in Cyprus:

TPMH www.qaranc.co.uk/theprincessmaryshospital.php

BMH Dhekelia www.qaranc.co.uk/bmhdhekelia.php

BMH Nicosia www.qaranc.co.uk/bmhnicosia.php

4. PMRAFNS website, www.raf.mod.uk/PMRAFNS/ this has a section on RAF hospitals:

RAF Hospital Akrotiri www.raf.mod.uk/PMRAFNS/history/rafhospitalakrotiri.cfm

5. The Royal Air Force Association in Cyprus, Aphrodite Branch www.rafacyprus.co.uk/

6. RAF Akrotiri Revisited www.rafakrotiri.co.uk/

7. British Forces Broadcasting Service (Cyprus) for films on TPMH www.bfbs.com/news/regions/cyprus

8. British units serving in Cyprus 1955–1959 www.britains-smallwars.com/cyprus/cyprusunits.html

9. The British Cyprus Memorial 2009 www.BritishCyprusMemorial.org/roll

10. The Expedition on a Historic Wreck in Cyprus, November 2010, I Dive Tec Rec Center Plc www.i-dive.com.cy and www.turkiye-wrecks.com/kocatepeeng.html



