

THE BRITISH POLICE MEMORIAL, CYPRUS



It has taken fifty-five years to erect a memorial to those members of the Cyprus police forces who lost their lives during the EOKA troubles on the island between 1955 and 1959. This length of time is perhaps an indication of the complete indifference in which the subject is held by the establishment. This was emphasised by the refusal of any member of the British government to attend the unveiling of the memorial in Kyrenia, North Cyprus in November 2014.

Nevertheless, by the efforts of the Police Memorial Trust, this omission of a memorial has been rectified, by a magnificent triptych having been dedicated in the English Cemetery in Kyrenia, alongside the equally magnificent military memorial. Over the course of the Remembrance weekend 2014, receptions and thanksgiving dinners were held, culminating in the unveiling of the memorial.

The memorial remembers the names of the Greek, Turkish, Maltese, Maronite and British police officers of the British Colonial Police in Cyprus, as well as the names of those officers of the United Kingdom Police Unit who were seconded to Cyprus between 1955 and 1959.

Regrettably, only lack of space prevents all but the British officers named on the Memorial being listed here :

The British Colonial Cyprus Police

Philip Stephen Attfield, Superintendent, Thursday 1 March 1956
Thomas Mylrea, Special Constable, Wednesday 6 June 1956
Alfred Stewart Hallam, Special Constable, Thursday 15 November 1956
John Victor Miles, Special Constable, Thursday 15 November 1956
Frederick Raper, Inspector, Sunday 8 March 1958
William Henry Louis Dear, Superintendent, Thursday 17 April 1958
Donal Thurston Murray Thomson, Superintendent, Monday 1 September 1958

The United Kingdom Police Unit

PS Gerald Thomas Patrick Rooney (Kent Constabulary) Wednesday 14 March 1956
PS Reginald William Tipple (Metropolitan Police) Thursday 21 June 1956
PS Leonard Alfred Demmon, QPM (Metropolitan Police) Friday 31 August 1956
PS Cyril John Thorogood (Leicestershire and Rutland Constabulary) Friday 28 September 1956
PS Hugh Brian Carter (Herefordshire Constabulary) Friday 28 September 1956
PS Maurice Eden, GM (Metropolitan Police) Monday 17 December 1956
PS William Edward Critchley (West Riding of Yorkshire Constabulary) Saturday 8 June 1957
PS Arthur James Coote (Durham Constabulary) Sunday 9 June 1957
PS Charles Hector Brown (Cheshire Constabulary) Tuesday 14 January 1958
PS Stanley Woodward (Durham Constabulary) Monday 13 October 1958
PS William Sidney Gillett (Bristol City Police) Sunday 17 May 1959



This wooden bench was also dedicated at the same time, and is placed directly opposite the Memorial.

POLICING CYPRUS 1878-1959

In collaboration with Turkey, the British were first given administration over Cyprus (with its mixed population of Greek and Turk), by the Constantinople Convention of June 1878. Hence the Cyprus Military Police (CMP) was formed in September 1878, replacing the old system of *zaptiehs* who were mainly Turkish, and thus Muslim. Recruitment was sensibly thrown open to Christians, and so by December 1879, the force consisted of the Chief Commandant, seventeen officers, 200 mounted constables (although called Privates, being a 'Military Police') and 390 foot constables, distributed through six Districts of the island.



Sir Henry Brackenbury
Commandant 1878-1879

However, throughout 1879, it had been decided to raise an auxiliary police to relieve the CMP of such duties as escorts and prison duties. This corps became known as the Cyprus Pioneers. Yet within one year, although performing stupendous works, especially in the disastrous Limassol floods of 1880 and outbreaks of cattle disease in the villages, it was decided that the Pioneers, at that time numbering 440, were to be incorporated into the CMP. So by early 1881, the CMP consisted of one Chief Commandant, six local Commandants (one for each District), seven Inspectors, eight Sub-Inspectors, 273 mounted and 473 foot Constables, plus one Chief Warder and eighty prison Warders for the two island prisons.



Harry Russell Bowlby
Commandant
1879-1880



Alexander Herman Adam Gordon
Commandant
1880-1884



James Henry Bor
Commandant
1884-1892



Arthur Edwin Kershaw
Commandant
1892-1905



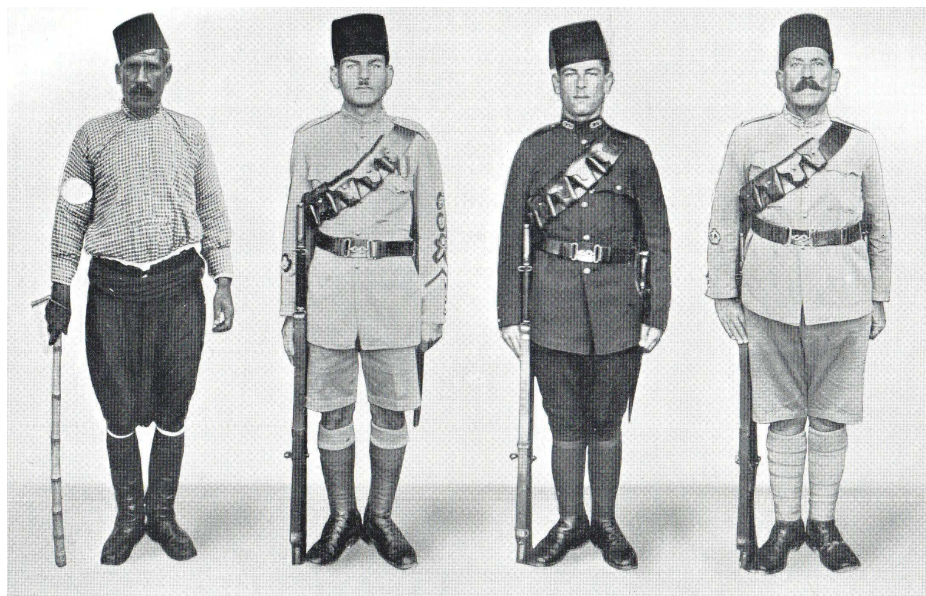
John Henry Learmonth
Commandant
1905-1913



Winniat Wentworth Durham Hall
Commandant
1913-1915

Thus formed, the CMP continued on into the twentieth century, and being a 'Military' police, was fully armed at all times, with Lee Enfield rifles. And being a military police also, the Chief Commandants as they were called, were all ex-military men as well. The uniform tended to reinforce this idea, with bandoliers, and military style uniforms, as well as keeping the Fez headgear of the old Muslim *zaptiehs*.

Because Turkey sided with Germany and its allies in 1914, Cyprus was annexed by the British in retaliation, and would eventually be granted Colony status. This made no difference to the police establishment, which continued as before. However, in 1923, another auxiliary force was established - the Rural Police. This would be akin to the old English office of Parish Constable, in other words, having jurisdiction only in his appointed village. By this means, the police hierarchy knew what was afoot at grass roots level, being kept informed by their 'eyes and ears' in the rural villages. In 1927, there were about 760 Rural Constables throughout the island.



RURAL CONSTABLE
WITH BADGE AND STAFF

PRIVATE
SUMMER UNIFORM
(KHAKE)

PRIVATE
WINTER UNIFORM
(BLUE SERGE)

DISTRICT SERGT.-MAJOR
SUMMER UNIFORM
(KHAKE)

But bubbling away beneath the surface ever since the early nineteenth century, was 'Enosis'. To the consternation of the Turkish Cypriots, it had always been the wish of the Greek Cypriots to unite with their 'motherland', Greece, and the movement called 'Enosis' (from the Greek Ένωσις – to make one, to unite), had been formed to agitate for exactly that - to unite with Greece, to form a 'Greater Hellas'. Major demonstrations in favour of Enosis had taken place since the 1880s, and had to be subdued by the CMP, often with loss of life, especially when it was realised that Britain would not lightly relinquish control of the island. A major riot in 1931 caused the British to exile several church leaders, as it was highly suspected that the Greek Orthodox Church on the island was involved in organising the disturbances. This action tended to send the movement of Enosis underground. But it was dormant, not dead, as the British would find out.



Albert Ernest Gallagher
Commandant
1915-1933



William Cyril Campbell King
Commandant
1933-1937



William Sutherland Gulloch
Commissioner
1937-1940

William King, was destined to be the last ex-army (Royal Army Medical Corps) Chief Commandant of the CMP. The great reorganisation of the British policing of her colonies undertaken in 1936 (along the lines of Sir Herbert Dowbiggin's Ceylon Police), resulted in the formation of the British Colonial Police. This then formed a unified disciplined whole, with standardised conditions of service, rates of pay, and so on, and not the disparate groups in each individual colony. So when William King retired in 1937, he was replaced by William Gulloch, a British Colonial Police officer, who was thus the first chief of police having no military background.

It was Gulloch who transformed the Cyprus Military Police into the British Colonial Cyprus Police. Out went the Fez headgear and military style uniform, to be replaced by the standard British Colonial Police uniform of khaki shorts and jackets with black epaulettes, and black peaked caps, for summer wear; and police-blue tunics and trousers for winter wear. The rank structure was changed from military to police nomenclature, and the chief officer was now termed a Commissioner.

It was therefore with the British Colonial Police, that Cyprus entered the Second World War. No disturbances for Enosis occurred during this time, as there was full employment on the island as everyone had the common aim of defeating Fascism. But come 1945, all that changed.

Unemployment and discontent was now rife on the island, and the inevitable riots had to be quelled. This was fertile ground, and so the desire for Enosis soon surfaced again.

In 1948, a certain Michael Mouskos was consecrated Bishop of Kiteon, which is the diocese centred on Larnaca. Bishop Mouskos was totally and fervently committed to

Enosis, and soon started agitating for its implementation. But in 1950, the chronically ill Archbishop of Cyprus, Makarios II, died, and Michael Mouskos, Bishop of Kiteon, was elected as his successor, taking the title of Makarios III, which in accordance with the church/state balance on Cyprus, effectively put Archbishop Makarios as the political leader of the island.

Being very politically astute, Archbishop Makarios started calling internationally for Enosis, even taking his cause to the United Nations. Sensing a resurgence of Enosis, a Greek army officer, George Grivas, contacted Archbishop Makarios with a view to combining talents to achieve full Enosis, by violence if necessary.

Because of his priestly vows, Makarios resisted for two years, but eventually conceded to Grivas, when it became abundantly clear, that Great Britain would never relinquish control of the island. Thus, in January 1955, was born the organisation that the world now knows as EOKA (Εθνικὴ Ὀργάνωσις Κυπρίων Ἀγωνιστῶν – Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston - National Organisation of Cypriot Freedom Fighters), with the express intention of throwing off the colonial yoke, by violence if necessary, and uniting Cyprus with Greece.



***Jack Haliburton Ashmore
Commissioner
1940-1954***



***George Herbert Robins
Commissioner
1954-1956***



***Geoffrey White
Commissioner
1956-1958***



***John Edward Stevenson Browne
Commissioner
1958-1959***

The obvious target of EOKA was the police. Attacks on police stations and police officers began immediately, with officers being murdered. The Commissioner at the time, George Robins, soon realised that because of EOKA infiltration and intimidation, his Cyprus Police would be unable to cope. He appealed to London, and as well as the British military aid being sent to the island, a detachment of British police officers (all volunteers) was also sent, being known as the United Kingdom Police Unit (always called the UKU, not the UKPU). Eventually, 895 British police officers, both men and women, would serve with the UKU. When in Cyprus, they moved up a rank, thus a British Police Constable became a UKU Sergeant, and so on. The UKU were sent as a supplement to the Cyprus Police, and not a replacement.

The political situation and violence worsened, especially when in March 1956, the British exiled Archbishop Makarios on the condition that he did not return to Cyprus. Probably as a direct result, Robins was replaced by Geoffrey White, Chief Constable of Warwickshire in July 1956, who had great experience of terrorist attacks in wartime Italy.

Geoffrey White had been on a two year attachment, and was replaced by John Browne, the Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire, in January 1958. Mr Browne was to be the last Commissioner of the British Colonial Police of Cyprus, because in March 1959, Archbishop Makarios was allowed to return to Cyprus, and would become the first President of the newly established Republic of Cyprus the following year.

So the Cyprus Police and the UKU were disbanded, but the cost had been heavy. Many police officers of the Cyprus Police (Greek, Turk, Maltese, Maronite and British) had lost their lives, as well as eleven officers of the UKU. In October 1959, the new Republic of Cyprus Police under its first Chief Constable designate, Hussein Hassabis, took over the policing of the island.

Today, unhappily, Cyprus is split between the Turkish north, and the Greek south, each having its own police force. Great Britain has two military enclaves on the island, the RAF Station of Episkopi/Akrotiri near to Limassol, and the Army Garrison of Dhekalia near to Larnaca, which are policed by the Sovereign Base Areas Police, which correctly has Greek, Turkish and British officers.



Sources :

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COWLEY, Richard *Policing EOKA : The United Kingdom Police Unit to Cyprus 1955-1960* (Peg and Whistle Books, Kettering 2008)
GALLAGHER, A. E. 'The Development of the Police in Cyprus' in *The Police Journal*, Volume 1 number 3, July 1928, pp470-474

The Cyprus Police Museum, Nicosia (well worth a visit, under its Curator, PC Matheos Siamptanis) is thanked for the photographs of the Commandants and Commissioners