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EXERCISE CYPRUS DIVER (DRAGON) POST EXERCISE REPORT 26 JUNE – 5 JULY 2011

File Reference: G7/7246/CYPRUSDIVER

Date: 5 July 2011



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Sgt T Gort
3 Troop
51 Parachute Squadron
23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault)
Rock Barracks
WOODBIDGE
SUFFOLK IP12 3LU

Telephone: (01394) 46 2551 Military: 94627 2551
Fax: (01394) 46 2534 Fax: 94627 2534
Email: 23ENGR-51ParaSqn-3TpSNCO@mod.uk



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POST EXERCISE REPORT (PXR) FOR EXERCISE CYPRUS DIVER (DRAGON) 26 JUNE – 5 JULY 2011

Introduction

1. **General.** Exercise CYPRUS DIVER (DRAGON) was a level 3 sub-aqua diving expedition by 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault) to Cyprus. The exercise took place during the period 26 Jun – 5 Jul 11 at Cyprus Joint Service Adventure Training Centre (CJSATC).
2. **Location.** Cyprus is located in the eastern Mediterranean. It is a sizeable island at 9250 square kilometres and has a coastline of 648 kilometres. The climate is typically Mediterranean, with hot summers and mild winters. Cyprus is a good place to learn to dive with some basic sites on offer, a number of wrecks and a few caves and tunnels. Most dive sites are only a few minutes boat journey away and there are a number of shore dives available. Whilst diving in Cyprus is not the best that the Mediterranean has to offer, the Zenobia is one of the best wreck dives in the world. The wreck is worth a trip to Cyprus and it needs to be dived more than once in order to gain an understanding and appreciate its size¹.
3. **Background.** The undersigned bid for 3 Army Sub-Aqua dive slots on behalf of 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault) and successfully secured the allocation on 12 Dec 10². The exercise was approved by HQ 5 Div³.

Aim

4. The aim of Exercise CYPRUS DIVER (DRAGON) was to introduce soldiers of 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault) to sports diving, taking them from novices to British Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC) Sports Divers. It also allowed existing divers from Exercise GIBRALTAR DIVER (DRAGON) to expand their diving knowledge and skills and work towards their next qualification post Op HERRICK 13. A summary can be found in Para 14.
5. The secondary aim was to allow The Royal Engineers Sports Diving Association (RESDA)⁴ to expand by recruiting and training new members prior to and during the exercise.

¹ <http://www.divesitedirectory.co.uk/cyprus.html>

² Email Lisa Saunders ATG(A)/Sgt Gort 12 December 2010.

³ NOTIFICATION OF OVERSEAS ADVENTUROUS TRAINING EXPEDITION CLEARANCE: EXPEDITION - DRAGON CYPRUS DIVER dated 3 May 2011.

⁴ www.RESDA.co.uk. Located at Gibraltar Barracks, Camberley.

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6. The aim of this PXR is to evaluate the exercise and identify any points which will help future exercises run more efficiently.

Execution

7. **Detached Duty.** All personnel were detached on temporary duty, (in accordance with Service Regulations for Adventure Training) whilst participating on this exercise. A nominal roll can be found at Annex A.

8. **Diving Regulations.** All diving was conducted in accordance with Joint Service Sub-Aqua Diving Regulations (JSSADR)⁵ and BSAC⁶ guidelines.

9. **Training Program.** Due to the diving conditions found in Cyprus, all personnel were required to be a minimum of BSAC Ocean Diver prior to the exercise to enable them to complete their BSAC Sports Diver in country. During the exercise there was also training towards BSAC Dive Leader and Advanced Diver qualifications; the priority however went to those requiring their BSAC Sports Diver qualification to allow them to gain the most from the exercise as all other exercise members have had previous diving experience. The first dive of the exercise was a shakeout dive conducted at Dhekelia Jetty. Each student was paired with an instructor and all the basic skills (mask clearance, demand valve retrieval, alternate source ascent and controlled buoyant lift) were reviewed. From here, a second days shore diving was conducted prior to 5 days boat diving and a further days shore diving. All Sports Diver students successfully obtained their qualification on the fourth day. A Diving Officers Report can be found at Annex B.

10. **Diving below 40m.** JSSADRs limit sub-aqua sports diving to 40m⁷. An application to dive below this depth was submitted by the undersigned and authorised by OC Joint Service Sub-Aqua Diving Centre (JSSADC) on 26 May 11.

11. **Duties.** During the exercise, there were various duties which needed to be completed. These included writing up the PXR diary, writing up the dive slates and running the compressor. The duties were split evenly amongst the exercise members. In addition, articles were written by Spr Finch and Capt Holgate for the Sapper Magazine and the Regimental Newsletter respectively.

12. **Non-diving days.** BSAC recommend⁸ that a non-diving day is taken following 3 days diving below 30m and that a period of 24hrs is taken prior to flying to reduce the risk of a decompression injury. A 24hr non-diving period was taken after the second dive on the fourth diving day. Diving re-commenced on the afternoon of the fifth day with diving operations ceasing after the second dive on the last full day of the expedition. The flight out of country was over 24hrs later. This time was used to hand over the dive store and allow members to enjoy the sights of Cyprus. In addition, water skiing was booked at the Dhekelia Water Sports Centre on 5 Jul 11 for 4 hours at a cost of €40 per hour. This was not included in the exercise costs. Dhekelia Water Sports Centre can be contacted on Military Network 94120 4733.

13. **Timings.** The Main Events Listing (MEL) can be found at Annex C. All personal from 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault) paraded outside the Guardroom at 0400 26 Jun 11, with the remainder either collected en-route or meeting the undersigned at the British Airways check-in desk at London Heathrow Airport.

⁵ JSSADR dated 1 Apr 10 amendment 1.

⁶ BSAC Safe Diving Practices.

⁷ JSSADR dated 1 Apr 10 amendment 1 Para 39.

⁸ BSAC Safe Diving Practices.

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Achievements

14. A total of 197 man dives were carried out, averaging 16.41 dives per person (all details can be found in the Diving Officers Report at Annex B). The following qualifications were achieved during the expedition:

- a. 5 x BSAC Sports Diver (SD) (one was a crossover from an Army Compressed Air Diver as part of the Statement of Alternative Training (SALT) process).
- b. 2 x BSAC Basic Nitrox (not including those who gained the qualification as per Para 14.a).
- c. 1 x BSAC Dive Leader (DL) (crossover from Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) Dive Master as part of the SALT process).

15. In addition, the following training was carried out:

- a. Sports Diver depth progression.
- b. Dive Leader depth progression.
- c. Dive Leader training. Due to the nature of the course, it was not possible to complete all the modules however all theory and practical lessons were completed. Only the dive planning, qualifying dives and exam remain.
- d. Advanced Diver training. Due to the nature of the course, it was not possible to complete all the modules however all theory and practical lessons were completed. Only the dive planning and qualifying dives remain.
- e. SADS training & dive planning for Advanced Divers.
- f. Twinset try-dives.

16. 4 x BSAC Ocean Diver qualifications were also achieved in the UK as part of build-up training prior to the exercise. These courses were conducted at the Army Sub-Aqua Diving Centre at Bovington. More students were due to attend the BSAC Ocean Diver courses in Bovington, and also at JSSADC in Plymouth however were unable due to medical reasons (see Para 41.b).

Safety

17. **Diving Safety.** The undersigned was the Sub-Aqua Diving Supervisor (SADS) who was the nominated safety officer for the duration. A full safety brief was given prior to the start of all diving, as well as a dive brief prior to each dive as per JSSADR⁹. All emergency numbers, insurance details, NOK forms & casualty assessment cards were placed in a dry bag on the boat in the event of an emergency.

18. **Approved Code of Practice.** On arrival, the undersigned had to complete an Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) Recreational Diving Project Plan¹⁰. No activities commenced until this happened. The file contained copies of all qualifications and memberships as well as dive slates. At the end of the exercise, the Sub-Aqua Wing and the undersigned kept a copy of the file.

19. **Booking out.** When conducting diving operations away from the Sub-Aqua Wing, expeditions are required to book in and out with Akrotiri Ops on Military Network 94120 6854. The

⁹ JSSADR dated 1 Apr 10 paragraph 19c.

¹⁰ 20100823-Exped Planning Letter enclosure 5.

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ops room has communications with the chamber and will inform the SADS of the chambers availability.

20. **Communications.** The boat had a handheld VHF radio and the skipper had his mobile phone. In addition, the SADS had his mobile phone to ensure communications throughout the diving activities. The Sub-Aqua Wing supplied short-range hand-held maritime VHF radios for emergency use however these were not used. Mobile phone coverage is excellent in Cyprus, which allowed the expedition to be able to phone details through in an emergency, however mobiles should still only be considered as an emergency back-up.

21. **Oxygen Equipment.** The Sub-Aqua Wing provided a D size (3l) and a ZX size (3000l) cylinder complete with ancillaries. This equipment was checked on arrival and before every dive by the SADS. On arrival, both sets were found to be in test. Future exercises should be aware that the D size cylinder can only support an oxygen demand valve and the ZX size cylinder can only support constant flow. Additional oxygen is provided by Ian McMurray of Octopus Diving Centre whilst using his boat. More information on the boat can be found in Para 53.

22. **Recompression Chamber.** There are 2 recompression chambers located in Larnaca; at the General Hospital and the Dive-In. The chambers were contacted for all dives below 30m or any involving decompression¹¹ as per Para 19. The next nearest chamber is situated in Limassol. The chambers can only be used on the production of valid European Diving Insurance; however plans are in place to allow Military personnel to be treated at Dive-In's chamber on behalf of the MOD. Individuals who purchased their own insurance were advised to check with their insurance companies that they would be sufficiently covered. Diving Insurance was purchased for the exercise; details of which can be found in Para 26.a. During the exercise the chamber located at the General Hospital was off line. The Recompression chambers can be contacted on the following numbers:

- a. Larnaca Recompression Chamber (General Hospital) on 00357 24630800.
- b. Dive-In Recompression Chamber on 00357 25320101 or Mobile Telephone 00357 99608123 (Clive Martin) and follow up with "urgent" as a text.
- c. Limassol Recompression Chamber on 00357 25755633.

23. **Redundancy.** A redundant air source (3l pony cylinder minimum) was mandatory for all dives below 20m and dives involving wreck penetration. Only 10 pony cylinders were available during the exercise (see Para 49.e) however 2 exercise members hired manifolded twin cylinders at an additional cost (see Para 52).

24. **Supervision.** All SADS and deputy supervisors are now required to complete BSAC Dive Leader lectures DT2-DT7 annually to ensure that they are up to date on diving first aid. This also relates to those alongside the supervisor as solo supervising is no-longer allowed. Although not in the current Joint Service Regulations¹², this has been mandated by JSSADC¹³. On arrival, all BSAC Dive Leaders or higher were asked if they had completed the lectures and signed a waiver saying they had done so. Any personnel who were found to have not completed the lectures were made to do so on day 1. In addition, by the end of day 4, both BSAC Dive Leader students had completed the lectures.

25. **Incidents and Accidents.** A mandatory security brief was given by CJSATC prior to undertaking any activities. Due to the security risk in Cyprus, certain areas were OOB and these were explained on day 1. Any individual found in breach of these rules was warned that they would be RTU'd from the Sovereign Base Area back to the UK at the individuals own expense.

¹¹ JSSADR dated 1 Apr 10 amendment 1 Para 19e.

¹² JSSADR dated 1 Apr 10 amendment 1.

¹³ Bovi Bullitten dated 15 Mar 11 by OC JSSADC.

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26. **Insurance.** Service personnel taking part in Adventurous Training (AT) are engaged in the course of their normal duties and the MOD accepts vicarious liability for any negligent actions or omissions, which they may commit in the course of those duties. MOD will also provide for medical treatment for personnel whilst on AT including, if necessary, medical evacuation etc¹⁴. However the following insurances were **mandatory** for this trip.

- a. **Diving Insurance.** As per Para 22, a group insurance booking for exercise members was made at a cost of £186.53 with Travel For Scuba; a partner of the BSAC. Travel For Scuba can be contacted on 0845 2601628 (non-emergencies only). Maj Booker, Capt Rowe, SSgt Jones and Sgt Gort had their own Divers Alert Network (DAN) insurance.
- b. **Personal Kit Insurance.** Personnel were instructed to have adequate kit insurance to cover losses and breakages of all equipment used during the expedition.
- c. **Medical Insurance.** All expedition members were to be in possession of the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) before deploying on the expedition. The EHIC replaces the old E111 system and the EHIC cards expire 3-5 years after issue, so individuals were advised to check the dates carefully.

Medical

27. **MRS.** Whilst on duty in Cyprus all exercise members were medically covered by the Dhekelia MRS located within Dhekelia Station. All fresh cases during working hours must be reported in the first instance to the Medical Centre on Military Network 94120 4888 and must state that you are a visiting diver. The MRS was not used on this exercise.
28. **Vaccinations.** No specific vaccinations were required for this exercise, however all personnel were strongly recommended to ensure that their vaccinations were up to date.
29. **Sea Sickness.** Individuals who are prone to seasickness were advised to bring a personal supply of seasickness tablets. Stugeron is recommended for diving.
30. **Sun Protection.** Adequate sun protection must be taken as most of the day was spent out on a boat with no shade. This included sunglasses, sun hat and sun tan lotion (Factor 15+ recommended). A large number of exercise members suffered from sunburn at some point during the exercise.
31. **Doctor.** The exercise doctor was Maj Rich Booker RAMC. He brought a comprehensive first aid kit including treatment/prophylaxis for ear infections, seasickness, diarrhoea, sunburn etc. A Medical Report can be found at Annex D.

Service Support

32. **Transport.** A mini bus was booked through 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault) to transport all exercise personnel and equipment to and from Terminal 5 at London Heathrow Airport. All transport in Cyprus was booked through Transport Support Unit (TSU) Akrotiri on behalf of CJSATC. A Toyota Corolla and a Ford Transit mini-bus were provided for the duration of the exercise for official details to and from Dhekelia Station which was sufficient. The airport transfers were a separate matter. Although confirmed with TSU the day before each detail, the coach was an hour late arriving at Larnaca Airport and never arrived for our transfer from CJSATC back to Larnaca Airport. Eventually sorted, the undersigned rang British Airways to hold open the check-in desk and arrived at Larnaca airport with minutes to spare. A formal complaint is in the process of being written to TSU. According to CJSATC, this is not the first time transport has failed to arrive.

¹⁴ 2005DIN02-071 Dated May 05.

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TSU should think about revising their procedures or considering hiring a different contractor to prevent future incidents occurring. Future expeditions should be aware of this potential problem and be prepared to work around it. Contact details regarding transport are as follows:

- a. MTO 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault) on Military Network 94627 2426.
- b. TSU Akrotiri on Military Network 94120 5335.
- c. TSU Akrotiri (out of hours) on Military Network 94120 5722.

33. **FMT 600 and drivers licences.** A clean UK drivers licence and FMT 600 are required to drive in Cyprus. The morning after arrival the drivers were taken away to collect the vehicles. If drivers arrive in country without an FMT 600 they will be required to complete a matrix test. From a unit point of view, it is recommended that more Junior Ranks be placed on their minibus (D1) licence to facilitate AT. Had it not been for an older SNCO and an LE Captain, the exercise would have been unable to use the transport provided. This may happen in the not too distant future when those with 'grandfather rights' on their licence leave the service. The undersigned has already seen exercises come to a halt when no drivers can be found for the vehicles.

34. **Road Maps.** No road mapping is supplied by either TSU or CJSATC which can make navigation around the island a problem if no-one has exercised there before. A road map was purchased by the undersigned out of his own funds. An expedition pack is provided by the Sub-Aqua Wing (Para 55) however this only includes photocopies of charts which are not ideal for road navigation. A map (€2.50 from local shops) should be sought to help out future expeditions

35. **Flights.** Concessionary Non-Fare Paying (CNFP) flights were not chosen as they can be unreliable due to operational commitments. In the event of a flight being re-scheduled, exercise personnel would have been the lowest priority. The exercise leader booked flights via British Airways at a cost of £268.10 per person return. The details are as follows:

Ser	Date	Flight Number	Departure Time	Location	Arrival Time	Location
1	26 Jun 11	BA 662 (Traveller)	0850	London Heathrow Terminal 5	1525	Larnaca
2	5 Jul 11	BA 663 (Traveller)	1640	Larnaca	1940	London Heathrow Terminal 5

36. On arrival at CJSATC, the expedition was met by the Centre Warrant Officer (CWO), WO2 Rod MacLeod. He was welcoming and supportive of our needs.

37. **Baggage allowance.** British Airways baggage allowances are as follows. More information can be found at http://www.britishairways.com/travel/baggag/public/en_gb:

- a. **Hold Baggage.** British Airways standard baggage allowance is one bag per person weighing 23kg. If over the weight limit, a standard £40 charge each way will apply and a second bag will incur an extra baggage fee of £35 per bag each way. British airways do not provide extra sporting allowances. Any bags over 32kg will have to be shipped separately as freight or cargo. Due to a group booking, pre-booking of extra baggage is unavailable. A small amount of money was set aside to cover excess baggage.
- b. **Hand Baggage.** British Airways hand baggage allowance consists of 1 bag and 1 laptop-sized bag, handbag or briefcase. Standard hand baggage sizes and regulations apply.

38. **Accommodation.** Exercise personnel were accommodated within CJSATC HQ located within Dhekelia Garrison. All bookings are to be made through the Centre Facilities Manager on

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Military Network 94120 4951. Overall, the accommodation was superb and has benefited from recent funding to support Battle Back expeditions. Details of the accommodation can be found below:

a. **Sleeping quarters.** The expedition was allocated 2 multiple occupancy rooms. Each room consisted of 8 bed spaces, each with its own bed side light, plug socket, bed side table and wardrobe. The beds were new with proper mattresses and proper bedding, a large improvement on previous facilities and those that can be found at the expedition centre in Gibraltar. The accommodation was officially opened whilst we were there and separate female accommodation is currently in the process of being refurbished.

b. **Ablutions.** As per the sleeping quarters in Para 38a, the ablutions had just undergone a major refurbishment to facilitate Battle Back expeditions and were officially opened on 31 May 2011.

c. **Facilities.** Next to the sleeping quarters is a TV room which has sofas to relax on whilst individuals can watch Sky TV. There is also a large fridge and free WIFI which spreads across the whole building. A BBQ can also be utilised if future expeditions wish to do so.

39. **Feeding.** During the exercise all meals took place at Dhekelia Station cookhouse (a PAYD facility), less lunch, which was a packed meal collected at breakfast. The food in the cookhouse was of a good standard and the catering staff were very helpful and polite, the packed lunches are as you would expect! At the accommodation and the Sub-Aqua Wing there were filtered water coolers which provided unlimited drinking water. CILOR was not claimed. Packed meals were booked through CJSATC Centre Facilities Manager on Military Network 94120 4951.

40. **Clothing.** Civilian clothing was worn at all times during the exercise. The weather in Cyprus was in excess of 30°C so shorts and t-shirt were the order of the day. This was also fine for the evening although some preferred to wear trousers. The average water temperature in Cyprus during the exercise period was between 22-24°C so a shortie wetsuit was adequate although some preferred to wear a long suit.

41. **Documentation.** All exercising personnel must be in the possession of the following documentation:

a. MOD 90.

b. Current medical certificate (Annex 8C for all personnel (found at Enclosure 1) less Army Compressed Air Divers who needed to prove their in date medical in their military logbook). All medicals were booked by the undersigned whilst on Op HERRICK 13. The following issues were encountered when trying to complete the Annex 8C:

(1) A number of people did not attend (DNA) their medical appointment. Most of the DNAs were on the same day which resulted in time wasting of the Medical Centre staff. All names were given to the relevant SSMS for disciplinary action.

(2) An expedition member was unable to attend his pre-booked medical appointment so he changed it to a time convenient for himself. Although he had an appointment card, when he turned up for his re-scheduled appointment, it was not booked on the system thus leaving him unable to complete his diving medical.

(3) An expedition member booked his renewal medical for the week before the expedition. When he went for his run-ups, the nurse noticed that the vitalograph had not been booked by the reception staff. The undersigned then had to wait for a free slot so it could be done before seeing the doctor.

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(4) The above 3 sub-paras resulted in BSAC Ocean Diver courses at Bovington and JSSADC in Plymouth going spare as by the time some of the failings were identified, it was too late to refill the spaces. In addition, it made it extremely hard to fill all of the expedition slots at the last minute. Although an incident may have started from an administrative error, the repercussions lead to soldiers not gaining their medical, leaving them unable to deploy onto the expedition. From previous expeditions, the undersigned has experienced complications in gaining diving medicals from a number of different Medical Centres. Expedition organisers are advised to book medicals as far in advance as possible to prevent any issues affecting the expedition. All medical documentation¹⁵ regarding diving medicals can be found on the Defence Intranet for guidance. The undersigned provided all exercise members a copy of the Annex 8C which was attached to the Administration Instructions. This can then be given to the Medical Centre by exercise participants in order to obtain the correct documentation.

- c. BSAC qualifications or equivalent (minimum of BSAC Ocean Diver).
- d. Proof of current BSAC membership (3 months free membership should be given to those attending a BSAC Ocean Diver course at one of the military centres).
- e. Logbook (included in costs for those on the BSAC Sports Diver course).
- f. Proof of insurance (if providing own insurance).
- g. Passport (valid until at least 6 months after the trip returns).
- h. Valid EHIC (as per Para 26.c).
- i. FMT 600 and driving licence (if applicable).
- j. Personnel arriving without the above documentation will not be allowed to dive but will still have to pay any costs incurred.

42. **Funding.** Each individual had to make an initial personal contribution of £150 plus BSAC membership of £42-£62 depending on diver grade (less those who gained their BSAC Ocean Diver at a military centre as per Para 41.d). A partial refund of around £15 was given back after the expedition once all the bills were paid. The following funds were sourced to help offset the exercise and the undersigned is extremely grateful to those who helped this expedition happen. A financial summary can be found at Annex E.

- a. £1800 was granted from HQ 5 Div.
- b. £450 was granted from 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault).
- c. £450 was granted from RE Corps funds.
- d. £450 was granted from the Berlin Infantry Brigade Memorial Trust Fund. A refund of £50 was given back at the end of the exercise.
- e. £25 per person was granted by the individuals parent Squadron.

43. **Finance.** Cyprus' currency is the Euro.

44. **LSA.** SADS and instructors are entitled to claim LSA for the exercise¹⁶. These are

¹⁵ 2007DIN06-116 Medical Certification for Service Sports Divers, BR1750A Chapter 8 and the medical certificate at Annex 8C to this document.

¹⁶ JSP 752 (Tri-Service Regulations for Allowances) Chap 5 - Para 05.0107c.

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annotated on the nominal roll at Annex A. Incidentals Allowance, Subsistence Allowance and Local Overseas Allowance (LOA) are not permissible.

45. **Mobile Phones.** Mobile phone coverage was excellent for the whole exercise, although international roaming was required. Because phones were only required for emergencies, issued phones were not taken.

46. **Local Knowledge.** The local military diving club (ESBA Sub-Aqua Club) is located directly behind the Sub-Aqua Wing. The club meets every Tuesday at 1930.

Equipment

47. **CJSATC Facilities.** The Sub-Aqua Wing at CJSATC is located outside of the wire adjacent to Watson's Mole where 62 Sqn RE used to keep the Military Working Boats. Now 62 are no longer there, CJSATC have utilised the real estate for expeditions. In addition to the facilities already listed, the following are available to expeditions (note: the classroom and equipment store are dry areas only and no food is to be consumed in them for hygiene reasons):

- a. Dedicated equipment storage (Para 48).
- b. Shared shower and toilet facilities.
- c. Dedicated outdoor equipment preparation/briefing area.
- d. On-site sheltered water-training area (weather dependant).
- e. A classroom and planning area.
- f. A projector for use with a laptop (laptop and training materials not supplied).

48. **Diving Equipment.** Twelve sets of diving equipment were supplied by the Dive Wing including dive computers, however some individuals decided to bring personal dive kit and signed a declaration stating that it was serviceable and in date¹⁷. All equipment was signed for on arrival, and checked on completion. All of the Sub-Aqua Wing staff were friendly and approachable and helped the expedition run additional training wherever possible. Extra equipment loaned to the expedition included a mannequin for first aid and Basic Life Support (BLS), parallel rule and dividers for teaching dive planning, distance reels, and shot weights and lifting bags for search and recovery exercises. A personnel equipment list can be found at Annex E. Praise must be given for the quality of some of the kit, in particular:

- a. **Buddy Commando Buoyancy Control Devices (BCDs).** These were either the Commando or Explorer models and were nearly all brand new.
- b. **Apeks XTX regulators.** DIN regulators were provided for the main cylinder and pony cylinder. All appeared brand new and a necklace was provided for the pony regulator to be stored under the neck. The only suggestion would be to have a different colour face on the pony regulator as it currently looks identical to the main, and a shorter HP hose on the pony content gauge as it has to be routed behind the pony clamp to tidy up the excess hose.
- c. **Suunto Vyper dive computers.** Twelve computers were provided and all had new batteries fitted.
- d. **Wetsuits.** There was the choice between 3mm shortie wetsuits and 6mm full wetsuits; either Northern Diver or Beaver. These are available in a variety of sizes and more are

¹⁷ JSSADR dated 1 Apr 10 paragraph 19f.

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available from the main store if the suits in the expedition store are the wrong sizes.

e. **Fins.** A variety of fins were available from Beaver and Mares and these included the 'standard' style fins and jet fins. Most of the fins were fitted with spring straps which made them a joy to use.

f. **Nitrox cylinders.** More information regarding the use of Nitrox can be found in Para 57, however the undersigned is extremely grateful to the Sub-Aqua Wing for supplying 8 Nitrox cylinders filled with 32% so that the students had the chance to experience the benefits of Nitrox.

49. **Equipment Shortfalls.** Despite the praises in Para 48, the equipment shortfalls are as follows:

a. **Delayed Surface Marker Buoys (DSMBs).** The DSMBs issued varied from AP Valves/Buddy self-sealing to Beavers. The AP Valves/Buddy DSMBs are probably some of the best on the market and are a joy to use, however the cheaper DSMBs are harder to use. This is not only an issue from a safety point of view but it also makes it more difficult for the students to learn when all the equipment is different. In addition, only 6 of each (red and yellow) were available for issue. Some of the instructors brought their own and the remaining shortfall was made up by the Sub-Aqua Wing however it is recommended that 12 are available so that **all** divers can carry a DSMB.

b. **Reels.** The reels issued were primarily Northern Diver and as per Para 49.a, only 6 were available. Again, the Sub-Aqua Wing supplied a few extra so there was 1 reel per DSMB however it is recommended that 12 are available so that **all** divers can carry a DSMB and reel. The Northern Diver reels worked well however they varied from 30m – 80m in length. The 30m reels are ideal for DSMB's but the 80m reels are too large, however they are ideal as distance reels. On a number of occasions the 80m reels jammed as there is too much line and this could cause casualties if it jams whilst deploying a DSMB, sending the user straight to the surface. If funds are available, more 30m reels should be bought.

c. **Torches.** Twelve Q40 torches are issued as part of the expedition store. Although they all work, they are not very powerful and are not really suitable for penetration inside the Zenobia wreck.

d. **Cylinders.** Twenty four cylinders are issued as part of the expedition store. Unfortunately, due to the Dive Wing having a number of cylinders away for servicing, 1 of the cylinders issued was a 10l which was not ideal. In addition, a cylinder valve broke on the Saturday of the exercise. Had it not been for 2 exercise members hiring manifolded twin cylinders at an additional cost (see Para 52), diving over the weekend would have been ruined for one individual. An extra couple of cylinders should be made available to prevent future incidents. The undersigned is aware of the cylinder restrictions due to servicing and is sure that future expeditions will not be affected once the cylinders have returned.

e. **Pony Cylinders.** Only 10x 3l pony cylinders were available to the expedition as the Dive Wing only had 10 pony clamps. Had it not been for 2 exercise members hiring manifolded twin cylinders at an additional cost (see Para 52), individuals would have had to strip their kit down on the dive boat to allow all personnel to have redundancy on their diving equipment. This is far from ideal, especially as the dive boat is fairly small and the seas can be choppy in the afternoon.

50. **Fault Reporting.** All faults were reported to the Sub-Aqua Wing staff as soon as they occurred to avoid any unnecessary bills being raised. The Dive Wing tried their best to help us as much as they could and were generally excellent. The deficiencies or damages amounted to:

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- a. 1x broken fin strap – nil cost.
- b. 1x broken wetsuit zip – nil cost.
- c. 1x broken mask – nil cost.
- d. 1x broken regulator necklace – nil cost.
- e. 1x broken BCD dump – nil cost.
- f. 1x broken cylinder valve – nil cost.
- g. 1x leaking DSMD – nil cost.

51. **Equipment Hire.** Manifolged twin cylinders and stage cylinders were hired through Octopus Diving Centre for 2 individuals who were suitably qualified. The individuals supplied their own wing, backplate and all regulators. The owner, Ian McMurray can be contacted on 00357 24646571 or via email on octopus@spidernet.com.cy.

52. **Boats.** The expedition was provided with 5 days boat hire by Octopus Diving Centre. All costs are paid for by CJSATC and this includes 2 dives a day; 1 of these dives can be utilised at night. The owner, Ian McMurray can be contacted as per Para 51. Expedition leaders should contact Ian at the earliest opportunity to arrange the dates that you wish to use the boat. Future expedition leaders should be aware that failure to give 28 days' notice when cancelling an expedition may result in a bill of €270 per day to reimburse CJSATC their costs.

53. **Hydrographic Charts.** The following hydrographic charts were bid for on the JSATFA for planning purposes, however were not used:

- a. Chart 775 – Cape Arnauti to Cape Limniti and Cape Aspro.
- b. Chart 848 – Ports in Eastern Cyprus.
- c. Chart 849 – Ports in Western Cyprus.
- d. Chart 851 – Cape Kiti to Cape Eloea.
- e. Chart F6149 – Akrotiri and Dhekelia Sovereign Base Areas.

54. **Planning Equipment.** A planning folder was provided on day one to help plan all of the dives. The folder is a little out dated and not all of the dive sites could be found in it. Also, a map as per Para 34 should be included. Within the equipment store a handheld GPS and a depth 'pinger' were available. Ian McMurray of Octopus Divers also has a wealth of knowledge of the local dive sites.

55. **Compressor.** A doubled filtered air compressor was available at the Sub-Aqua Wing for use by the exercise. All exercise members were fully briefed on how to operate the machinery and signed a declaration sheet which formed part of the ACoP.

56. **Nitrox.** Due to the new HSE regulations regarding air purity¹⁸, Nitrox may only be used if the centre can prove they meet BS 8478. All MOD centres should be able to meet this standard however the Nitrox provided by civilian centres would require testing. A Factair F2235 Dive Check kit was unavailable from Bicester Loan Stores so one was obtained by ASADA 2 days before the expedition. Prior to collection of the test kit, users must carry out online training

¹⁸ JSSADR dated 1 Apr 10 amendment 1 Paras 65-67.

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(www.factair.co.uk) to prove that they are competent with the equipment. On completion of the training, a certificate can be printed out and this should accompany the user when they collect the kit. A copy of Octopus's air test certificate can be found at Annex G. Bicester and ASADA can be contacted on one of the following means:

- a. Paul Steer, ATG(A) Loan Pool LO at Bicester Loan Stores on Military Network 94240 2180 or Mobile 07717 424077.
- b. Capt Stewart, ASADA Equipment Officer on Military Network 94342 3927 or Mobile 07775 904658.
- c. For definitive advice on Air Purity Testing, the SME is Nick Harrington, DSOAT Fleet Command on Military Network 93832 4137 or Mobile 07795 012561.

Command and Signal

57. **Point Of Contact.** The point of contact for the exercise was Sgt Gort. In his absence Capt Holgate was the nominated 2IC. They can be contacted on one of the following means:

- a. Capt Holgate on Military Network 94627 2558 or Mobile 07787512081.
- b. Sgt Gort as per this document or Mobile 07968 148261.

58. **CJSATC.** CJSATC can be contacted on one of the following means:

- a. WO2 (QMSI) MacLeod, CJSATC CWO on Military Network 94120 4788.
- b. Sgt (SI) Southern-Naylor, Chief Instructor Sub-Aqua Wing on Military Network 94120 4867.

Acknowledgements

59. The undersigned would like to thank the following for their assistance during the exercise:

- a. All personnel as per Para 42 for their generosity for funding the exercise.
- b. 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault) for allowing individuals time off to attend the exercise.
- c. All the members of CJSATC for their helpful approach throughout the exercise and for making us feel welcome from the start.
- d. Maj Booker, Capt Rowe, SSgt Jones and RESDA for their instructional support during the exercise.
- e. ASADA for the use of their Factair F2235 Dive Check kit.
- f. Ian McMurray of Octopus Diving Centre for his help during the exercise.
- g. And finally, all exercise members for their professional conduct and outstanding diving ability.

Summary

60. Exercise CYPRUS DIVER (DRAGON) was a challenging but rewarding exercise to Cyprus. All exercise members participated in dives in challenging conditions to ensure that we made

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maximum use of our time in country and in doing so obtained experience towards their next qualification. An exercise diary can be found at Annex H. Although within the PXR there are various constructive criticisms, these are included to aid future planning and did not take the shine off an otherwise polished exercise. Although CJSATC have outstanding facilities, a little more funding towards equipment at the Sub-Aqua Wing would turn the Wing into a class leading diving centre. It is hoped that this PXR will give future participants a realistic expectation of what they might encounter as previous PXRs that were read by the undersigned did not reflect the exact experience. The second of 2 DIVER series expeditions, the undersigned hopes the Regiment will allow further expeditions over the coming years and allow a bid for an Army expedition slot in 2012. Any queries regarding the exercise should be directed to the undersigned in the first instance.

[Original signed]

T P GORT
Sgt
for CO

Annexes:

- A. Exercise GIBRALTAR DIVER (DRAGON) – Nominal Roll.
- B. Exercise GIBRALTAR DIVER (DRAGON) – Diving Officers Report.
- C. Exercise GIBRALTAR DIVER (DRAGON) – Main Events List.
- D. Exercise GIBRALTAR DIVER (DRAGON) – Medical Officers Report.
- E. Exercise GIBRALTAR DIVER (DRAGON) – Financial Summary.
- F. Exercise GIBRALTAR DIVER (DRAGON) – Personnel Equipment List.
- G. Exercise GIBRALTAR DIVER (DRAGON) – Factair F2235 Dive Check Results.
- H. Exercise GIBRALTAR DIVER (DRAGON) – Exercise Diary.

Enclosures:

- 1. Annex 8C: Medical Certificate of Fitness for Service Sport Diving.

Distribution:

OC CJSATC.
OC JSSADC.
G7 AT 5 Div.
RE HQ.
Berlin Infantry Brigade Memorial Trust Fund.
D Trg Sp HQ ATG (A).
ASADA Expedition Officer.
RESDA Diving Officer.
All exercise members.

Copy To:

CO 23 Engr Regt (Air Asslt).
2IC 23 Engr Regt (Air Asslt).
OC 12 HQ & Sp Sqn.
OC 9 Para Sqn.
OC 51 Para Sqn.
OC REME Wksp.
RCMO 23 Engr Regt (Air Asslt).
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**Annex A to
G7/7246/CYPRUSDIVER
Dated 5 July 11**

EXERCISE CYPRUS DIVER (DRAGON) - NOMINAL ROLL

Ser	Number	Rank	Name	Sqn/Dept	Qualifications		Instructor Qualifications
					Pre-exped	Post-exped	
1	553766	Maj	Booker	16 Med Regt	BSAC AD, Diving Doctor		BSAC TIE
2	557469	Capt	Holgate	12 HQ & Sp Sqn	PADI DM	BSAC DL & gained BSAC Nitrox qualification	
3	566442	Capt	Rowe	BOWTAC (Jt)	BSAC AD		BSAC OWI
4	25060716	SSgt	Jones	7 Para RHA	BSAC AD	Gained BSAC Nitrox qualification	BSAC OWI
5	25068101	Sgt	Gort	51 Para Sqn	BSAC AD, SADS		BSAC AI
6	25056660	Cpl	Clark	WKSPs	BSAC SD		
7	25207101	LCpl	Hickman	12 HQ & Sp Sqn	BSAC SD		
8	25201436	LCpl	Gardner	51 Para Sqn	Army Compressed Air Diver	BSAC SD	
9	25218725	Spr	Barnard	51 Para Sqn	BSAC OD	BSAC SD	
10	30011546	Spr	Finch	51 Para Sqn	BSAC OD	BSAC SD	
11	30020254	Spr	Nelson	9 Para Sqn	BSAC OD	BSAC SD	
12	25225901	Spr	Oxborrow	51 Para Sqn	BSAC OD	BSAC SD	

EXERCISE CYPRUS DIVER (DRAGON) - DIVING OFFICERS REPORT

1. During the exercise, all dive slates were written up daily and are held with the undersigned. A summary can be found below:

Date	28 June 2011	27 June 2011	28 June 2011	29 June 2011	30 June 2011	01 July 2011	02 July 2011	03 July 2011	04 July 2011	05 July 2011	Total Dive Time (Mins)														
Dive Number		Dive 1 Dhekelia Jetty	Dive 2 Dhekelia Jetty (heated water)	Dive 3 Dhekelia Jetty	Dive 4 Dive 2 Dhekelia Jetty	Dive 5 Dive 3 Dhekelia Jetty	Dive 6 Dive 1 Fraggle Rock	Dive 7 Dive 2 Poveration Reel	Dive 8 Dive 3 Dhekelia Jetty	Dive 9 Dive 1 Zenobia	Dive 10 Dive 2 Zenobia	Dive 11 Dive 1 Chapel Rock	Dive 12 Dive 2 Chapel Rock	Dive 13 Dive 3 Dhekelia Jetty	Dive 14 Dive 1 Zenobia	Dive 15 Dive 2 Zenobia	Dive 16 Dive 1 Zenobia	Dive 17 Dive 2 Alexandria	Dive 18 Dive 3 Dhekelia Jetty	Dive 19 Dive 4 Dhekelia Jetty	Dive 20 Dive 1 Zenobia	Dive 21 Dive 2 Zenobia	No Diving		
Dive Objective		SO2 DO2	SS1	SO1, DO3	SO4, DO3	SO3, DO1, DSMB practice	SO5, DO4, DSMB practice	Night Dive	25m Depth Progression	A01, DO6, Search and Recovery exercise	AO2, DO7	Twinset Familiarisation Dive	30m Depth Progression, 35m Depth Progression, DO6	DO7	40m Depth Progression, 35m Depth Progression, DO7	Twinset Try Dives	Night Dive								
Maj Booker	39 3.6m	35 5.2m	45 8.0m	35 4.1m	27 16.7m	9.9m	25.5m	37 25.5m	24 25m	26 21.2m	26 20m	31 35.1m	31 35m	31 27m	30 27m	30 27m	35 30m	30 30m	30 30m	25 25.2m	28 28m	32 25.1m	34 29.2		
Capt Holgate	31 4m	20 6.5m	3 5.3m	40 6.9m	30 16m	32 10.3	27 4.6m	22 28m	31 27.7m	26 21.2m	26 20m	26 35.1m	26 40.5m	26 29m	27 29m	27 29m	25 30m	28 30m	13 30m	13 5.2m	25 24m	28 27.7	29 27.7		
Capt Rowe	31 3.9m	20 6.5m	15 5.5m	31 5.0m	22 15.8m	30 9.7m	24 4.2m	32 25.3m	32 25m	32 17.1m	32 15.6m	36 2.0m	36 2.0m	48 30m	48 30m	48 30m	48 30m	48 30m	18 28m	28 28m	33 28m	36 26m	36 26m		
SSgt Jones	24 3.4m	28 6.2m	30 2.0m	17 6.0m	32 16.1m	32 10.1m	25 4.4m	30 30m	31 28m	30 15.3m	30 13m	31 35.7m	31 35.7m	31 27.7	34 27.7	34 27.7	32 30m	32 30m	15 20m	15 20m	32 25.5m	35 25.5m	35 25.5m		
Sgt Gort	17 3.9m	19 6m	30 2.0m	6 3.4m	40 17.4m	29 10m	22 3.9m	32 29m	24 26m	26 20.9m	26 20m	10 2.0m	10 2.0m	28 28m	28 28m	28 28m	48 30.5m	48 30.5m	18 28m	18 28m	25 25	28 28m	29 28m		
Cpl Clark	39 3.9m	35 5.6m	46 7.8m	35 4.4m	30 15.7m	29 9.8m	29 5.7m	22 23.8m	31 27.9m	30 15.6m	32 12.8m	31 12.8m	31 12.8m	31 12.8m	27 27.6	27 27.6	25 30.1	25 30.1	25 25	25 25	29 29	29 27.8	29 27.8		
LCpl Hickman	39 3.9m	35 5.6m	46 7.8m	35 4.4m	30 15.7m	29 9.8m	29 5.7m	22 23.8m	31 27.9m	30 15.6m	32 12.8m	31 12.8m	31 12.8m	31 12.8m	27 27.6	27 27.6	25 30.1	25 30.1	25 25	25 25	29 29	29 27.8	29 27.8		
Spr Baird	24 3.4m	28 6.2m	30 2.0m	17 6.0m	32 16.1m	32 10.1m	25 4.4m	30 30m	31 28m	30 15.3m	30 13m	31 35.7m	31 35.7m	31 27.7	34 27.7	34 27.7	32 30m	32 30m	15 20m	15 20m	32 25.5m	35 25.5m	35 25.5m		
Spr Finch	17 3.9m	19 6m	30 2.0m	6 3.4m	40 17.4m	29 10m	22 3.9m	32 29m	24 26m	26 20.9m	26 20m	10 2.0m	10 2.0m	28 28m	28 28m	28 28m	48 30.5m	48 30.5m	18 28m	18 28m	25 25	28 28m	29 28m		
Spr Gardner	31 3.8m	31 5.8m	30 2.0m	40 6.5m	32 16.3m	30 9.8m	27 4.2m	32 25.3m	23 23.8m	23 17.1m	23 13.3m	28 28	28 28	28 28	27 26.8m	27 26.8m	24 30m	24 30m	20 29m	20 29m	29 29	29 28.6m	29 28.6m		
Spr Nelson	17 3.8m	19 6m	30 2.0m	6 3.4m	40 17.4m	29 10m	22 3.9m	32 29m	24 26m	26 20.9m	26 20m	10 2.0m	10 2.0m	28 28m	28 28m	28 28m	48 30.5m	48 30.5m	18 28m	18 28m	25 25	28 28m	29 28m		
Spr Oxborough	3.4m	6.2m	2.0m	5.8m	5.2m	17m	10.2m	5m	25.7m																

2. Cyprus is a good place to learn to dive with some basic sites on offer, as well as progression onto the simple wrecks then onto the more adventurous Zenobia and exploring caves and tunnels. Most dive sites are only a few minutes boat journey and there are a number of shore dives available. With clear water warmed to 15 - 28°C, spectacular scenery and wrecks, Cyprus is an ideal dive destination for all grades of diver. The expedition dived the waters between Larnaca and Ayia Napa. A description of the sites we dived are as follows (more are available):



a. **Dhekelia Jetty.**

Type of dive: Shore.

Depth: 2-8m.

Description: An ideal site for training and 'shakeout' dives. There is a wreck of a British Army Ferret armoured car. The jetty itself is in a poor state of repair, as a consequence of this the area underneath it is out of bounds. CJSATC Sub-Aqua Wing and ESBA Sub-Aqua Club are located at the jetty.



b. **Fraggle Rock.**

Type of dive: Wreck dive.

Depth: 13-17m.

Description: This site is reached by boat; there is a sunken barge, artificial reef and a Scout helicopter (although very small due to corrosion) at the site. The barge was one of many transporting rocks to the PowerStation when it is believed to have collided with another and sunk. A dive for all grades and an ideal training site.



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c. PowerStation Reef.

Type of dive: Reef dive.

Depth: 3-12m.

Description: This site is reached by boat; the site consists of a rocky reef with small caves and swim throughs. Good for navigation and SMB handling exercises. This site is reached by boat.



d. Zenobia

Type of dive: Wreck dive.

Depth: 17-43m.

Description: The Zenobia weighs 10,000 tons, is 172 meters long and 28 meters wide. On board there are more than 100 lorries and cars, many of these can be found outside of the ship. It sank on its maiden voyage on 7 June 1980 just outside Larnaca Marina. A dive for all grades, however penetration should be carried out with caution. Recce dives before penetration would be advisable. There is an additional set of orders applicable to diving at this wreck¹⁹. This site is reached by boat.



e. Chapel Rock.

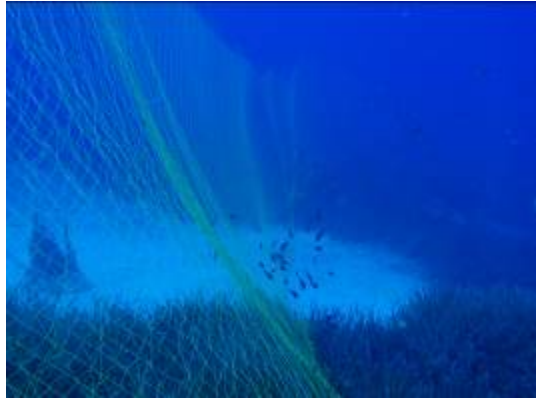
Type of dive: Reef dive.

Depth: 6-22m.

Description: A shore-based site in the Cape Greco area, this one is on the lee shore from Tunnels and Caves so if you can't get in on one you should be able to at the other. Entry to the water involves a trip down a fairly steep stairway so be prepared for the climb back up them after the dive! A good 'grot dive and ideal for navigation exercises, using pilotage and compass work. Note: There is a large net around the 20m area which extends for a considerable distance. After 150m, we could not see the end. Popular with tourists and party boats.

¹⁹ 20100823-Exped Planning Letter enclosure 6.

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f. **Alexandra.**

Type of dive: Wreck dive.

Depth: 26-32m.

Description: Not far away from the Zenobia, this is a wooden fishing boat which sank 3 years ago. Not in the guide books but a lovely dive.



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**Annex C to
G7/7246/CYPRUSDIVER
Dated 5 July 11**

EXERCISE CYPRUS DIVER (DRAGON) – MAIN EVENTS LIST

Ser	Date	Time	Activity	Location
1	Sun 26 Jun	0400	Parade	Guardroom, Rock Barracks
2	Sun 26 Jun	0430	Depart Rock Barracks	Rock Barracks
3	Sun 26 Jun	0700	Meet remaining personnel	British Airways check-in desk, London Heathrow Terminal 5
4	Sun 26 Jun	0850	Fly to Larnaca	London Heathrow airport
5	Sun 26 Jun	1525	Arrive at Larnaca	Larnaca airport
6	Sun 26 Jun	1600	Move to CJSATC, Dhekelia Station	Larnaca airport
7	Sun 26 Jun	1700	Arrival briefs, take over accommodation	CJSATC HQ, Dhekelia Station
8	Sun 26 Jun	Eve	ST1, ST2, DT1, AT1	Accommodation block
9	Mon 27 Jun	AM	Take over vehicles, take over dive store, check equipment, ACoPs	CJSATC Sub-Aqua Wing and MT
10	Mon 27 Jun	PM	Shake out dive	Dhekelia Jetty
11	Mon 27 Jun	PM	SO2, DO2	Dhekelia Jetty
12	Mon 27 Jun	Eve	ST3, ST4, DT2, DT3, DT4, AT2	Accommodation block
13	Tue 28 Jun	AM	SS1, DT5, DT6, DT7	Dhekelia Jetty
14	Tue 28 Jun	AM	SO1, DO3	Dhekelia Jetty
15	Tue 28 Jun	PM	SO4, DO3	Dhekelia Jetty
16	Tue 28 Jun	Eve	ST4, ST5	Accommodation block
17	Wed 29 Jun	AM	SO3, DO1, DSMB practice	Fraggle Rock (boat dive)
18	Wed 29 Jun	PM	SO5, DO4, DT10, DSMB practice	Power Station (boat dive)
19	Wed 29 Jun	PM	ST6, SD exam	Accommodation block
20	Wed 29 Jun	Eve	Night dive	Dhekelia Jetty
21	Thu 30 Jun	AM	25m Depth progression	Zenobia (boat dive)
22	Thu 30 Jun	PM	24hr no diving	Accommodation block
23	Thu 30 Jun	Eve	Exped meal out	Larnaca
24	Fri 1 Jul	AM	24hr no diving	Accommodation block
25	Fri 1 Jul	PM	AO1, DO6, search and recovery exercise	Chapel Rock
26	Fri 1 Jul	PM	AO2, DO7	Chapel Rock
27	Fri 1 Jul	PM	Twinset familiarisation dive	Dhekelia Jetty
28	Sat 2 Jul	AM	30 and 35m Depth progression, DO6, DT11	Zenobia (boat dive)
29	Sat 2 Jul	PM	DO7	Zenobia (boat dive)
30	Sat 2 Jul	Eve	DT9	Accommodation block
31	Sun 3 Jul	AM	35 and 40m Depth progression, DO5, DO7	Zenobia (boat dive)
32	Sun 3 Jul	PM	Diving	Alexandra (boat dive)
33	Sun 3 Jul	PM	Twinset try dives	Dhekelia Jetty
34	Sun 3 Jul	Eve	AT3, AT4	Accommodation block
35	Mon 4 Jul	AM	Diving	Zenobia (boat dive)
36	Mon 4 Jul	PM	Clean dive store	CJSATC Sub-Aqua Wing
37	Mon 4 Jul	Eve	DT8, DT12, AD exam	Accommodation block
38	Mon 4 Jul	Eve	Exped meal out	ESBA
39	Tue 5 Jul	0700	Hand over dive store	CJSATC Sub-Aqua Wing
40	Tue 5 Jul	0900	Water skiing, wake boarding, banana boats (3hrs).	Dhekelia Water Sports Centre
41	Tue 5 Jul	1300	Hand over accommodation and vehicles	Accommodation block and MT
42	Tue 5 Jul	1530	Depart CJSATC	CJSATC HQ, Dhekelia Station (delayed due to transport)
43	Tue 5 Jul	1610	Check-in	Check-in desk Larnaca airport

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44	Tue 5 Jul	1640	Fly back to UK	Larnaca airport
45	Tue 5 Jul	1940	Arrive at London Heathrow airport	London Heathrow Terminal 5
46	Tue 5 Jul	2015	Depart back Rock Barracks	London Heathrow Terminal 5
47	Tue 5 Jul	2330	Exercise disperses	Rock Barracks

EXERCISE CYPRUS DIVER (DRAGON) – MEDICAL OFFICERS REPORT

Introduction

- 1. General.** Exercise CYPRUS DIVER (DRAGON) was a Level 3 sub-aqua diving expedition to Cyprus organised as part of Operation HERRICK 13 post operational stress management by 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault) based in Woodbridge, Suffolk over the period 26 June – 5 July 2011.
- 2. Population at risk and control measures.** The expedition was composed of 12 service personnel. Diving medicals, qualification records books/cards and dive logs were all checked prior to the start of diving activities by the SADS. All diving was conducted IAW JSSADR. All personnel were briefed at the beginning of the expedition of the need to use sunblock, practice good hand hygiene and rinsing their ears with fresh water after dives. The expedition was accommodated at Dhekelia Garrison which benefits from a comprehensive MRS situated within the camp perimeter. Diving activities took place initially at the CJSATC Sub-Aqua Wing located a few hundred metres outside the main gate of the Garrison before moving to the wreck of the Zenobia, located within a nautical mile of Larnaca Harbour. Larnaca harbour is approximately 10 km by road from Dhekelia Garrison. In order to provide responsive medical support a comprehensive medical kit was taken by the expedition Medical Officer.
- 3. Medical kit.** Appendix 1 details the medical equipment. The medical kit was packed in a civilian medical bag and transported in a black holdall to avoid attracting unwanted attention. Future expeditions could reduce the scaling, which may be useful to keep within the ever stringently imposed airline baggage allowances. Controlled drugs were not taken.

Medical Incidents – Diving Related

- 4. Skin rash.** This patient presented shortly after his second dive of the day with abdominal pain and skin rash. His dive profiles were unremarkable apart from one fast ascent warning. Symptoms started during the dive but before ascent. On examination there was an urticarial type rash over his abdomen and back. The rest of the examination, including neurological examination was unremarkable. Due to the warm weather he had chosen to dive without a wetsuit or other skin protective clothing. His buddy was unaffected. Two other divers within the expedition group reported a similar but less extensive skin rash on areas of exposed skin after the same dive. The possibility of a cutaneous DCI was discounted and the preferred diagnosis was skin rash due to abrasion with buoyancy compensator or marine envenomation. He was treated with antihistamine gel and instructed to seek further advice if his symptoms worsened. The rash resolved and he felt better although chose to refrain from diving on the final diving day of the expedition. Expedition personnel were advised to wear a shortie wetsuit or rash vest to protect skin even when thermal protection was not required.
- 5. Ear pain.** This patient presented with ear discomfort and inability to clear his ears requiring him to abort a dive. Otoscopy revealed an intact tympanic membrane. He was diagnosed with a middle ear or sinus infection. Decongestant spray was only partially effective in permitting him to clear his ears and he was unable to dive for the final two diving days of the expedition.

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Medical Incidents – Non Diving Related

6. **Laceration toe.** This injury was sustained by stubbing it into kerbing around the marina. The wound was minor and managed with cleaning with freshwater and taping closed. The patient was able to continue diving.

7. **Puncture wound foot.** This injury was sustained on a rocky entrance to a shore dive. On examination there was no sign of local infection. The wound was managed with simple wound care. The patient was advised to seek further medical advice when back in the UK if he was concerned about the possibility of a retained foreign body but was able to continue diving.

8. **Sunburn.** Despite frequent applications of sun protection there were a few minor cases of sunburn. No diving days were lost due to sunburn, although I notice that few personnel wore any headdress. Future expeditions may wish to consider sourcing expedition floppy hats as a novel and functional change from the traditional expedition T-shirt.

Summary

Due to the good behaviour by expedition personnel serious medical problems were avoided. The presence of an expedition Medical Officer provided responsive '24-7' medical support, avoided any dependency on the local MRS, and kept expedition personnel diving.

[original signed]

R J BOOKER
Major
Medical Officer
16 Medical Regiment

Distribution:

Exped OC – for inclusion in PXR
Ops Officer 16 Medical Regiment

Appendixes:

1. Medical Equipment List

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**Appendix 1 to
Annex D to
G7/7246/CYPRUSDIVER
Dated 5 July 11**

EXPEDITION MEDICAL KIT – EXERCISE CYPRUS DIVER (DRAGON)

Ser	Item	Out	In	Remarks
1.	Trauma Kit			
2.	Non-sterile gloves	12		
3.	Combat Application Tourniquet	2		Shark bite or prop laceration
4.	Trauma Shears	1		
5.	Vitalograph Emergency Aspirator	1		portable suction
6.	Lubricating jelly sachets	5		insertion of NPA
7.	Nasopharyngeal airways	2		size 6 & 7
8.	Oropharyngeal airways	2		size 2 & 3
9.	Pocket mask	1		with O ₂ port and 1-way valve
10.	Bag-valve mask with tubing	1		
11.	Oxygen			Provided in theatre
12.	First Field Dressing	1		
13.	Triangular Bandages (woven)	2		
14.	Crepe bandage 15 cm x 4.5 m	1		
15.	Crepe bandage 7.5 cm x 4.5 m	1		
16.	SAM splint	1		
17.	Analgesia			
18.	Paracetamol 500 mg tabs	50		
19.	Aspirin 300 mg tabs	16		Also for suspected ACS
20.	Paracetamol 500 mg/Codeine 30 mg	20		Analgesia and hypnotic
21.	Ibuprofen 600 mg tabs	50		
22.	Diclofenac 100 mg suppositories	3		Suspected renal colic
23.	Antibiotics PO			
24.	Azithromycin 250 mg	6		2 g stat dose for STI
25.	Doxycycline 100 mg tabs	14		1 BD for pneumonia, STI
26.	Erythromycin 500 mg caps	28		1 QDS for penicillin allergic
27.	Ciprofloxacin 500 mg caps	20		1 BD for marine, diarrhoea, UTI
28.	Co-Amoxiclav 500/125 mg tabs	21		1 TDS for wound inf
29.	Metranidazole 400 mg tabs	21		1 TDS for presumed anaerobic inf
30.	Penicillin VK 500 mg tabs	44		1 QDS for suspected bacterial tonsillitis
31.	Topical Treatments			
32.	Clotrimazole 'Canesten' 1% cream	1		
33.	Miconazole 0.16% spray	1		athletes foot
34.	Mupirocin ointment	2		wetsuit rash
35.	Fusidic Acid / Hydrocortisone	1		skin infection
36.	Betametazone valerate 0.1% cream	1		local inflammatory reaction
37.	Sodium Chromoglycate 2% eye drops	1		
38.	Beechams/Lemsip	5		
39.	Local anaesthetic lozenges	5		
40.	Injectable Drugs			
41.	Epinephrine 1:1000 1ml amps	5		delivery as 0.5 mls im
42.	Chlorphenamine 10 mg injectable	1		
43.	Ondansetron ampoules	3		Severe nausea and vomiting
44.	Cefotaxime 2 g dp for inj	1		iv/im in suspected meningitis
45.	Intravenous Equipment			
46.	Sterile wipes	30		
47.	Cannula 18 G green	2		Medical
48.	Cannula 16 G grey	2		Trauma

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49.	0.9% Normal Saline 20 mls	6	flush and diluent
50.	Water for injection 5 mls	4	reconstitution of dry powder inj
51.	Cannula dressing e.g. 'Vecafix'	3	
52.	Syringe 10 mls	1	
53.	Syringe 5 mls	1	
54.	Syringe 2.5 mls	2	
55.	Needle 25 G orange	3	infiltration of local anaesthesia
56.	Needle 23 G blue	3	delivery of im injections
57.	Giving set	2	
58.	Normal Saline 500 ml	2	
59.	Other Drugs		
60.	Dioralyte Sachets	5	
61.	Omeprazole 20 mg tabs	28	
62.	Salbutamol 100 mcg inhaler	1	
63.	Loperamide 2 mg tabs	30	Travellers diarrhoea only
64.	Loratidine 10 mg tabs	30	non-sedating antihistamine
65.	GTN spray 400 mcg	1	
66.	Wound Care		
67.	??G Blue IV cannula	2	Wound irrigation
68.	30 ml syringe	1	
69.	Betadine dry powder spray	1	
70.	Lidocaine 1% with adrenaline 20 mg / 2 mls amps	5	
71.	Suture set	1	
72.	Scalpels	2	Disposable 10 blade
73.	Blades	2	15, stitch cutter
74.	Sterile gauze	2	
75.	Suture, Ethilon 6/0	1	
76.	Suture, Ethilon 5/0	2	Face
77.	Suture, Ethilon 4/0	3	Body
78.	Suture, Viacryl 3/0	2	deep/bleeding
79.	Hydrocolloid adhesive 11 x 11 cm	2	sloughy wounds
80.	Mepore 9 x 15 cm	2	
81.	Mepore 9 x 10 cm	4	general wounds
82.	Mepitel 8 x 10 cm	3	burns
83.	Inadine non adherent dressing	1	
84.	Steristrips pack	2	
85.	Wound Glue "Liquiband"	2	
86.	Plasters (pack assorted sizes)	1	
87.	Compeed	6	
88.	Burn cool dressing	1	?compressor burns
89.	Finger dressings	2	?compressor burns
90.	Eye plasters	2	
91.	Micropore tape	1	
92.	Zinc oxide tape	1	
93.	Black insulating tape	1	
94.	Diagnostics		
95.	Stethoscope	1	
96.	Auriscope/otoscope	1	North American Rescue Products
97.	Thermometer	1	
98.	Urine test strips	10	
99.	Pen torch	1	
100.	Indelible pens	3	Cas marking
101.	Patient Report Forms	5	
102.	Special To Diving		Increased quantities from usual expedition scaling
103.	Cinnarazine (Stugeron®) 15 mg tabs	84	Sea sickness

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104.	Framycetin/Gramicidin ear/eye drops	6		treatment of otitis externa/conjunctivitis
105.	Gentamicin/Hydrocortisone ear drops	2		treatment of otitis externa
106.	Xylometazoline nasal spray	3		Local decongestant
107.	Pseudoephedrine tablets	48		Systemic decongestant
108.	Special To Female			Not required on this expedition
109.	Clotrimazole 500 mg pessary	1		
110.	β -HCG test strips	1		
111.	Levonelle 2®	1		Emergency contraception

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**Annex E to
G7/7246/CYPRUSDIVER
Dated 5 July 11**

EXERCISE CYPRUS DIVER (DRAGON) – FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Expenditure		Income	
Flights:		Non Public Funding:	
Flights	£3217.20	Personal Contributions	£1215.98
Excess Baggage	£210	23 Engr Regt PRI	£450
		9 Para Sqn PRI	£25
Insurance	£186.53	51 Para Sqn PRI	£125
		12 HQ & Sp Sqn PRI	£50
BSAC Diver Packs	£218.25	WKSP PRI	£10
Equipment Hire	£260	Public Funding:	
		G7 AT	£1800
Nitrox	£144	BIBMTF	£400
		RHQ RE	£450
BSAC Membership Refunds	£290		
Total Expenditure	£4525.98	Total Income	£4525.98

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**Annex F to
G7/7246/CYPRUSDIVER
Dated 5 July 11**

EXERCISE CYPRUS DIVER (DRAGON) – PERSONAL EQUIPMENT LIST

1. The following items of diving equipment have been made available to the expedition by CJSATC:

Ser	Item	Quantity	Remarks
1	15l cylinder	3	
2	12l cylinder	20	
3	10l cylinder	1	
4	3l pony cylinder	10	
5	Buddy Buoyancy Compensation Devices (BCDs)	12	
6	Regulator sets for use with main SCUBA equipment	12	
7	Regulator sets for use with pony cylinders	12	
8	Basic equipment (mask, fins, line cutters, weight belts and snorkels)	12	
9	Various lead weights		
10	Dive computers	12	
11	6mm one-piece wetsuits	20	
12	3mm 'shorty' wetsuits	20	
13	Wetsuit booties	0	Available if reqd
14	Hoods	0	Available if reqd
15	Gloves	0	Available if reqd
16	Mini Q40 Torches	12	
17	Surface Marker Buoys (SMBs)	3	
18	Reels	6	8 issued
19	Red/orange DSMB	6	8 issued
20	Yellow DSMB	6	8 issued
21	Dive bags	12	
22	Net bags	12	
23	Compasses	12	
24	Distance reels	2	Issued on request
25	10kg shot weight and lift bag	1	Issued on request
26	Dive planning equipment	1	Issued on request
27	First aid manikin	1	Issued on request
28	Exped pack	1	

2. All exercise participants were required to bring the essential equipment listed below. Any personal diving equipment brought must be in a serviceable condition as per Para 48 of this instruction:

Ser	Item	Quantity	Remarks
1	Reading materials/DVDs	As reqd	
2	Swimwear	1	
3	Wash kit	1	
4	Towel	2	Including a spare for during the day
5	Civilian clothing	As reqd	
6	Warm clothing	As reqd	For evenings
7	Laptop	1	Instructors for teaching
8	Camera	1	

EXERCISE GIBRALTAR DIVER (DRAGON) – FACTAIR F2235 DIVE CHECK RESULTS

1. A Copy of the air test certificate from Octopus Divers can be found below:



SAFE AIR TESTER - RESULTS

User Name and Address <i>TIM GORT DUE EXPED</i>		
Details of System / Equipment & Test Location: <i>STAGE CYLINDER, OCTOPUS DIVER</i>		
TEST	RESULT	**REQUIREMENT / NOTES
1a) Ambient temperature	— °C	
*1b) Airline temperature	— °C	
* 2) Test point volume	— L/min	Depend on RPE
3a) System pressure (Airline)	— BAR	Tester gauge
3b) Cylinder pressure (H.P.)	<i>170</i> BAR	Cylinder contents gauge
4) Oxygen (O ₂)	<i>21.5</i> %	20-22% by volume
5) Carbon Monoxide (CO)	<i>0</i> ppm	5ppm (5ml/m ³) max
6) Carbon Dioxide (CO ₂)	<i>500</i> ppm	500ppm (500ml/m ³) max
7) Oil mist	pass / fail	0.5 mg/m ³ max
8) Odour	pass / fail	Without significant odour or taste
9) Water Vapour (H ₂ O)	<i>25</i> mg/m ³	H.P. Cylinders 40-200 bar 50mg/m ³ max. above 200 bar 35mg/m ³ max. Cylinder Charging Compressor 25mg/m ³ max.
*9a) Pressure dewpoint (refer to graph overleaf)	— °C	Airline below 40 bar Pressure dewpoint to be 5°C below likely lowest ambient temperature. Where temperature is not known then pressure dewpoint should not exceed -11°C.
Date: <i>30/6/11</i> Test: Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory Test Engineer: <i>Tim Gort.</i> Signed: Next Test Due:		Engineer Contact Details: <i>TIM GORT</i> Company: <i>23 GNGR REGT</i> Tel: <i>00447968148261</i>

*Airline Only

**Requirements according to BS EN12021

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2. Photographic proof of the test can be found below:



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EXERCISE GIBRALTAR DIVER (DRAGON) – EXERCISE DIARY

Sunday 26 June (By LCpl G Gardner)

Today is the day we all start our journey to Cyprus. We all met at the Guardroom at Rock Barracks at 0400 and it was a good job I texted Finchy because he would still have been in bed; like he did when we was lobbing. We finally arrived at Heathrow airport and before you know it we were AIRBORNE!

We had a little wait for our coach at Larnaca airport which wasn't too bad, we took the time to soak in the sun and watch several flights come in and eye balled all the sexy ladies arriving for Ayia Napa.

After a short wait at the airport we eventually arrived at Dhekelia Barracks where we all settled down, got briefed up about the barracks and Cyprus itself and were told to watch out for Russians! After a few BSAC Sports Diver lectures, a few of us decided to put some trapping gear on and headed into town for a few beers.

Monday 27 June (By Spr Nathaniel Oxborrow)

Cyprus is warmer than England: Pearlescent beads of salt collect on everyone's forehead. Though none so much as that which gathers upon Spr Finch's. As a particularly large bead races down his non-existent chin he exclaims, to nobody's surprise but his own, that he is in fact nervous about diving to the claustrophobic depth of 35m.

As day two arrives a painful amount of time earlier than it should, due to the gift of jet-lag; some roll, most casually sit up and the few move little more than a few inches in protest and disbelief of the temerity the sun seems to have mustered in its daring raid on their faces. A slow morning ensues. Appropriate pre-dive admin needs to be sorted before anybody can get their toes wet; kit issue, paperwork and briefings. As the temperature rapidly rises to around 35°C the expedition cannot wait to dip its eagerly anticipating face into the waters of Cyprus. It's worth it, for the moment the water swallows you with a crash of senses that recede to an overwhelming and solitary sense of peace as you allow yourself to sink into the blue transparent world underneath.



Maj Rich Booker giving a brief to his students prior to the shakedown dive



Sgt Tim Gort; 'STOP'

We got two dives in today. We learnt a lot more about diving and got a suntan (read sunburn). It's been a good day, a productive day.

Tuesday 28 June (By Spr Daniel Nelson)

The day started once again down at Dhekelia Jetty as it did the previous day. Our first dive of the day was to practice diver rescue drills. The drills were pretty straight forward, but when you had to tow your partner in the water, that was bit of a lick. I wasn't best pleased when I was being towed

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by Spr Finch and he had to put his mouth over my nose, he had hacking breath! Once we had completed the drill we then went on to do it in the open water instead of the calmer water of the bay. This was horrible as every time Spr Finch went to give me breaths he would near enough drown me.



Sgt Tim Gort demonstrating rescue skills on Capt Mark Rowe to the SD students



Sports Diver students practicing their rescue skills in the open water

After lunch we went on to our third dive of the day. On this dive we practiced more drills such as deploying DSMB and underwater navigation. I found the navigation fairly easy but this was due to how clear the water was. I also found deploying the DSMB pretty easy but as I released the DSMB, the line became snagged around my reel. I soon cleared the line from the reel and the DSMB hit the surface with no problem. After that we finned around and exited the water. This brought our day to an end.

Wednesday 29 June (Spr Dane Finch)

Everyone was excited for Wednesday because, we knew, we were finally diving somewhere other than around the jetty. After a short while of humping and dumping kit, we were on route to do our deepest dive yet. With a full day out on the boat, everyone's tanning techniques were changing rapidly with t-shirts, caps and sun cream being applied at a rapid rate of knots due to the amount of already burnt skin.

We squeezed 2 dives in during the day only to look forward to our final lesson, followed by our final exam, where LCpl G Gardner, a fully trained Army Diver with over 70hrs of diving experience, scrapped through. Everyone passed and we were now fully qualified BSAC Sports Divers.



Capt Mike Holgate practicing line laying; no comments on the snorkel please!

With not much time to ourselves, we were very soon back on the minibus heading down the jetty for our first night dive. Blokes were tired and only a small amount of enthusiasm was in the air, but for a lot of the divers, the night dive turned out to be a very pleasant, peaceful dive with a lot to see. And then with a short drive back to our beds, we slept well.



LCpl G Gardner practicing his DSMB deployment



Cpl Andy Clark in one of the tunnels at PowerStation Reef

Thursday 30 June (By Spr Barney Barnard)

The morning started like any other morning except for the fact that on this day the newly qualified BSAC Sports Divers were no longer in need of their baby sitters/instructors; we were free to wonder the depths on our own and so we did. With the legendary wreck of the Zenobia awaiting us we arrived at set off to Larnaca Marina, to meet Ian and his boat that would lead us to the wreck.

The Zenobia lay on its side under some forty metres of water, with the highest points of the wreck being only seventeen metres from the surface. As this was our first dive as new Sports Divers we were restricted to a depth of 25m which still allowed us half of the Zenobia to explore and play around with.

On the surface the group were split into buddy pairs (the minimum that divers can dive) and then sent on our way with a guided trip round the wreck with an instructor leading the way and showing us where we could go and where not to go. The second dive had the same restrictions of no lower than 25m and to return to the boat with a third of your gas supply left, easier said than done for the new divers as the wreck held many wonders and temptations to lead you off the set schedule.

The experience of our instructors and the training that they had instilled into us however overcame the need to stray out of our plan. Once the dive was over and all were aboard the boat, we headed back to shore telling of our experiences that we had inside and outside of the wreck.

One of the newly qualified BSAC Sports Divers described the expedition as the best AT he'd ever done, so decided to take a permanent reminder of the trip back with him (see photo).



LCpl G Gardner, Sprs Barny Barnard, Dane Finch and Danny Nelson



Capt Mike Holgate on the shallower prop of the Zen



The 'Zenobia' on the 'Zenobia'

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Friday 1 July (By LCpl Jase Hickman)

After a good night's rest and a late start due to our compulsory 24hrs no diving, we were all up and ready for another days diving. Today we were doing two dives at a site called Chapel Rock; a popular tourist spot which also accommodates a decent dive site. The site was surrounded by fantastic rock features which were great for jumping off.

After an afternoon of diving, Capt Mike Holgate had an assessment for rescue management. He had to do a full Controlled Buoyant Lift (CBL rescue unconscious causality from the bottom) followed by a blow and tow and then manage a rescue scenario where he had to control the rescue of a troubled diver. At the same time Cpl Andy Clark and I were getting assessed on oxygen provision and BLS skills. All rolled into one, it was a pretty successful scenario and Mike comfortably passed with ease along with Andy and I.



Sgt Tim Gort teaching search and recovery techniques to Capt Mike Holgate

After a decent afternoon of diving it was time to unwind. Thankfully there was a free BBQ laid on for the Garrison which we gladly attended. The food and entertainment which was laid on was pretty good and washed down with a few beers it was time to hit the sack and look forward to tomorrows diving on the Zenobia on Nitrox.

Saturday 2 July (By Cpl Andy Clark)

An early start at Dhekelia Jetty saw the expedition heading to Larnaca Marina for another days diving on the infamous Zenobia. The day saw several progressions with Cpl Andy Clark, LCpl Jase Hickman and SSgt Mark Jones all completing 35m dives. 30m progressions were also achieved by the newly qualified BSAC Sports Divers.



Capt Mark Rowe decompressing

In the afternoon, most members of the expedition had their first taste of Nitrox which would help to shorten decompression times. A reasonably early finish allowed Capt Mark Holgate and SSgt Mark Jones to complete their BSAC Nitrox course (crossing over from PADI). The Dive Leader trainees continued their classroom lectures before everyone retired to the bar to catch the David Hays fight.

Sunday 3 July By (By SSgt Jonah Jones)

Today was another fantastic sunny morning. After a disappointing nights boxing, off we set again for Larnaca Marina to get back out on our favourite wreck; the Zenobia. On arrival at the dive site all was as calm as a mill pond. We knew that in minutes, the hordes of Russian divers and snorkelers would invade the site so the first wave of divers was wet in lightening time! The first dive saw Maj Rich Booker and I smashing down to the keel at the bow end to 40m to complete my depth progression. Cpl Andy Clark and LCpl Jase Hickman also had rescue



Capt Mike Holgate on his twinset trydive

scenarios to deal with at the end of their 35m dive, which they lapped up with no problems, bringing them ever nearer to being fully qualified Dive Leaders! Sgt Tim Gort and Capt Mark Rowe

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came up from their dive with massive grins after one of the best wreck dives they had ever in their long diving careers.

After a short lunch of sweaty cheese sandwiches we kitted up again and set off for a new wreck; the Alexandria. A little known fishing boat which sunk only 3 years ago a short distance from the Zen. Whilst on the 30m wreck a number of the lads got attacked by what we can only assume were jelly fish, and not the human variety we hope! Both Spr Finch and LCpl Gardner came out of the water complaining of sharp stinging pains all over their torsos! Capt Mike Holgate and I finished the day with a twin set try dive courtesy of Capt Mark Rowe and Sgt Tim Gort.

Monday 4 July (By Capt Mike Holgate)

The last day of diving on Ex CYPRUS DIVER (DRAGON) 2011 and it finished on a high. The usual rigmarole of collecting kit from CJSATC at Dhekelia and the transit to Larnaca Marina to meet up with our boat skipper Ian McMurray went smoothly (we had been practicing it for the last 4 days!). With a hasty rebalancing of dive buddies due to Spr Molly Oxborrow and Spr Dane Finch crying off because of 'Man Flu', the group slipped moorings and headed out to the Zenobia. A hot, still morning, the Zenobia II (Ian's boat) was the first on site. With no one else around, the first wave of 8 divers kitted up and rolled into the water. As this was the last day, Sgt Tim Gort made the decision to limit everyone to a maximum depth of 30m and NO decompression. Lead by myself, the 8 Sports Divers and Dive Leader trainees fought against the ripping sub-surface current to reach the stern of the Zenobia and the door access to the accommodation deck. Switching torches on and slipping into the narrow, now horizontal, doorway the eight-some weaved their way under and over the remains of the corridors. Exiting the deck via the restaurant the group headed down into the crane shaft and into the cargo deck, touching 30m in the process. After exiting the wreck, a hard fin got the team to the shot lines for the ascent.



Capt Mike Holgate exiting the 'letter box'



Capt Mike Holgate and LCpl Jase Hickman, 12 HQ & Sp Sqn in the restaurant

Wave 2 was the 'Twin Set Boys' Sgt Tim Gort and Capt Mark Rowe, heading down to the middle car deck; just under an hour passed before they surfaced and we returned to the Marina to exchange cylinders for the final dive.

The last dive of the expedition was preceded by another reorganisation of buddies when LCpl G Gardener (Army Advanced Diver!) refused to dive; something about ears lacking moral fibre. Wave 1 saw the Sports Divers descend back down to the Zenobia to do a swim through of the bridge followed by photos in one of the lifeboats under the directing skills of Capt Mark Rowe. Cpl Andy Clark and Maj Rich Booker headed off and explored the bow of the wreck before returning back to the shot.

The final wave of the day saw Sgt Tim Gort lead LCpl Jase Hickman and I down into the inky depths of the middle car deck. Fighting the current, albeit not the rip-roarer that was present on the first dive, the threesome descended into the chicane entrance and the pitch black of the middle car deck. Heading towards the bow and spotting a number of trucks (and the blue Lada!) the three returned to the entrance to wriggle their way out of the 'letter box' before heading through the accommodation deck up to the top of the wreck. Photo opportunities were scuppered by hoards of

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fish thinking they had food so with all hopes abandoned of getting that last 'ally' shot, the last three divers of Exercise CYPRUS DIVER (DRAGON) 2011 headed to the surface to begin the journey back to the Marina.

Tuesday 5 July (By Sgt Tim Gort)

Although we were due to fly home today, there was no rest for the wicked as we headed over to the Dive Wing to start the de-kit process; all accounted for there were a few breakages (wear and tear not malicious) but no bill was raised. From here we headed over to the Water Sports Centre for 3hrs of enforced fun; banana boating, stealth rings and wake boarding. Some preferred however to even up their tan on the loungers.

Back to the CJSATC HQ and MT at 1300 to hand over the accommodation and vehicles, we waited in the TV room for our transport to the airport. And waited. And waited... Seconds turned into minutes turned into hours, we were desperately running out of time to catch our transport to the airport. After many frantic phone calls, it transpired the coach had been booked by MT but not actioned by the civilian contractor. With minutes to spare we arrived at Larnaca Airport and caught the return flight back to miserable Blighty. The flight was pleasant enough; the food was good and BA offer free drinks (inc alcohol) throughout the flight. The highlight however was when an announcement came over the tannoy asking if there was a doctor on board. All expedition members made it very clear (loudly) that Maj Rich Booker was a doctor so off he went to fulfil his oath.



Maj Rich Booker showing how it's done

Back in the UK, transport was waiting. We said goodbye to Capt Mark Rowe and headed back to Woodbridge via Colchester.

Overall, Exercise CYPRUS DIVER (DRAGON) was a successful and enjoyable trip. Following on from Exercise GIBRALTAR DIVER (DRAGON) last year, this was the second in hopefully a number of DIVER expeditions for 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault). Personally, I would happily dive with any of the exercise members again and I hope that they continue their new hobby into the future. All members from 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault) conducted themselves in the professional manner which I would expect. I look forward to going back to the Zen in the future and explore some of the other wrecks that we didn't get the time to see.

Safe diving.....

