

City militiaman back from peacekeeping force

Intell April 5/86

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Even on Cyprus UN duty he met Belleville folk

Even on peacekeeping duty on a distant island Robert Bradford met folk from his native Belleville. The encounters are among his recollections of Cyprus.

Bradford is in his third year of studying international politics and history at Queen's University.

The Cyprus stint also gave him first-hand experience of both subjects.

As a captain in the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment militia, he was assigned special duties with Canada's regular forces, serving with the United Nations peacekeeping contingent on the island.

Now recently returned from the six-month stint on the troubled Mediterranean island, he had time to both observe the political complications there and the UN role--and to soak up some of the historical atmosphere of a land which has had socially advanced settlement dating back to the times of ancient Egypt.

But, he also recalls his surprise at meeting a large number of former Belleville and Quinte area residents among the Canadian troops stationed there.

They included a number of former Hasty P militiamen who have now joined the regular forces.

But, they met in an uneasy setting.

Apart from radicals and moderates on all sides, Cyprus, after 22 years, remains a potential battleground for native Cypriots of both Greek and Turkish alliances, plus the respective mainland nationals of those two countries.

The fact that Canada, as well as other UN countries -- Britain, Republic of Ireland, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Australia and Austria have all been maintaining personnel there for a peace-

keeping force for more than two decades is growing into a matter of some speculation by those stationed there.

"We are all curious and wondering how much longer it can go on," said Bradford.

While routine military patrols and duties are performed daily, the entire six months was quiet, with "no tense moments" as far as Bradford was concerned.

He was the senior officer of the platoon-sized contingent of militia recruited from across Canada to bolster regular forces, but he did not command a platoon. He was stationed for liaison purposes with the U.N. central offices in the Cypriot capital, Nicosia. Other militia members were divided among Canadian units throughout the large area Canada's contingent is responsible for, performing duties for which it is specially trained.

"It was an interesting experiment," he said.

Among other opportunities, there was friendly interaction between the troops of the various nations manning the UN force, along with a chance to compare methods, equipment and capabilities.

Canadian troops serving with the UN share a pride in being part of a force which is doing a good job with a success rate and is so well administered, he said. But at the same time, they come to realize how different they, as Canadians, are.

Bradford had special praise for the support Canadian troops received in Cyprus, commenting that generally they seemed to be the "best" supplied.



ROBERT BRADFORD AND CYPRUS MAPS

Bradford, Robert

Intelligence, April 5, 1986