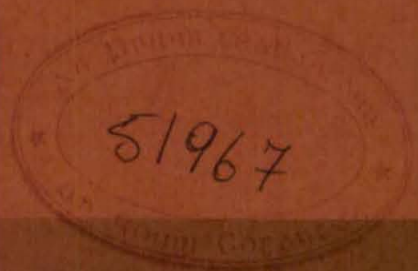


UNIT HISTORY

25 INF GP



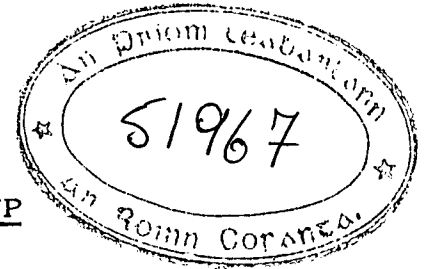
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LARNACA CAIRO SINAI

OCT 73 - MAY 74

CONFIDENTIAL



UNIT HISTORY - 25 INFANTRY GROUP

C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
Foreword	
Cyprus	1
Cairo	5
Sinai	9
Rabah	12
Negela	17
Diary of Events	21
Section Reports	24
Nominal Roll	43
Map of Middle East	Facing Page 1
Organisation Chart UNEF	Facing Page 5
Cease Fire Line, October 1973	Facing Page 9
Disengagement Lines, March 1974	Facing Page 17

HQ, 4 Infantry Brigade,
Custume Barracks,
Athlone.

3rd November, 1975

FOREWORD

The initial draft of this history was begun at Negela in the Sinai by Capt Kevin Duffy and Lieut Peter Young. Source materials were the unit journal, unit monthly progress reports, company and staff section reports.

Comdt Brian McDonnell, Capt Dan Rea and Capt Gerry Mulrooney supervised the preparation of maps and photographs and arranged the printing and binding of the final product.

On behalf of the personnel of 25 Infantry Group I offer all those associated with this production sincere thanks and congratulations.


The members of 25 Infantry Group are indebted to the Irish members of UNTSO who helped with advice and hospitality. In particular to Col Dick Bunworth, Chief of Staff UNTSO and his wife Joan, for their kindness and generosity; to Capt Joe Fallon and Capt Barry Studdard for their invaluable help at UNEF HQ, Cairo. A special thanks is due to the wives and families of Irish officers serving in Egypt and Israel whose homes were ever open to welcome personnel of the Group on leave from the desert.

Thanks are also due to the members of Army Headquarters for their genuine interest and concern for the welfare of the personnel of 25 Infantry Group. In particular to Col Carl O'Sullivan and Col Pat Dempsey whose visit to "the front" was a great boost to the morale of officers and men.

Personally I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation to all members of 25 Infantry Group without whose efficient and loyal service this history would not have been.

P. Allen

Lt Col


Officer Commanding, 25 Infantry Group

EGYPT AND LIBYA



CYPRUS

In August 1973 it was announced that Oglaiġh na hÉireann would organise and prepare a military unit of similar strength and organisation to 24 Infantry Group to be ready for dispatch to Cyprus in October 1973 to relieve 24 Inf Gp who were then serving on the island. Personnel for the new unit, designated 25 Infantry Group were provided from existing army units and staff. A new departure however was that the infantry company element consisted of personnel drawn almost exclusively from one battalion, the 12 Infantry Bn.

It was originally planned that the unit would concentrate in GORMANSTOWN for final preparations before departure for Cyprus. However due to administrative problems it was later decided to concentrate the unit instead at McGEE BARRACKS, KILDARE. Preliminary training and administration was effected in the home commands before concentration. On 3 OCT 1973 the Recce Party for the Group, consisting of OC Lt Col P. Allen, Coy Comdr Comdt F. Mallowney, Ops/Int Officer Capt D. Rea, QM/Welfare Officer Capt E. Horgan and BQMS Tierney, departed DUBLIN by civil flight for Cyprus. The 25 Infantry Group was officially activated on 15 OCT 1973 and on the following day the Adm and OP Party plus some HQ UNFICYP personnel left Dublin by Aer Lingus Charter. The main body followed one week later on 23 OCT and arrived in the middle of a typical warm mediterranean evening.

The handover between 24/25 Infantry Groups went smoothly and on 20 OCT the 25 Inf Gp assumed operational responsibility for Larnaca Sector. The mission of the Group was to implement the objectives laid down in the Security Council Resolution of 4 March 1964 namely: "In the interest of preserving international peace and security to use it best efforts; to prevent a recurrence of fighting, to contribute to the maintenance of law and order and to contribute to a return to normal conditions". The unit was based at the newly completed Inishfree Camp, Larnaca and manned OPs on the Artemis Road.

In the Middle East at this time, in contrast to the calm and quiet of Cyprus, the fragile peace between Arab and Jew had been shattered by the outbreak of Yom Kippur War on 6 Oct. The battle here had raged on two fronts, to the NORTH of Israel in the region of the Golan Heights and 250 miles to the SOUTH WEST, across the Suez Canal to Sinai. In the first phase of the war the stories of the two fronts were very different. In Sinai the Egyptians, after achieving almost total surprise in crossing the Canal had set about consolidating their hold over the whole of the EAST bank of the Canal. To the NORTH after five days of the most desperate and unrelenting battle the Israeli's forces had destroyed the Syrian armour and advanced eastwards over the Syrian defence lines towards Damascus. The first week of the war seethed too with action on

the diplomatic and political front in many parts of the world. An attempt, at ceasefire was unsuccessful. U.S. Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger then became intimately involved in the delicate negotiations to bring about a ceasefire. In the second week of the war the "oil weapon" began to bear against Israel. The Persian Gulf members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) announced on Wed 17 Oct a 70% rise in the posted price for crude oil and plans for a cut back in production. This was to have a major impact throughout the world.

On Monday 22 Oct following further intense diplomatic activity the UN Security Council passed Resolution No 338 which was co-sponsored by the US and the Soviet Union. This called for a ceasefire within twelve hours of the moment of the adoption of the Resolution. The ceasefire however did not hold and the Security Council convened for another emergency session on Tuesday 23 Oct and once more it was the two super powers who came up with a joint resolution. Resolution 339 confirmed its decision on an immediate cessation of all kinds of firing and all military action and urged that the forces be returned to the positions they occupied at the moment the ceasefire became effective. It also requested the Secretary General to take measures for immediate dispatch of United Nations Observers to supervise the observance of the ceasefire between the forces of Israel and the Arab Republic of Egypt. The new ceasefire was hopefully scheduled for 0500 GMT (7 a.m. in the battle zone) on Wed 23 Oct 73.

October 25th 1973 was the day of America's Nuclear alert, the day when the United Nations decided to send a peacekeeping force to the Middle East to supervise the ceasefire and it was the last complete day for the 24 Inf Gp in Cyprus. With the departure of the final elements of the 24 Inf Gp, the new unit began the settling in process and all ranks were fully committed checking stores, becoming familiar with the operational and resupply system and all the other activities which go hand-in-hand with the initial stages of a new tour of duty. The Group had among its ranks many old Cyprus hands and their experience and know how was of great assistance. Within a few days a routine had been established.

To celebrate the arrival of the complete unit in Cyprus Lt Col Allen held a dinner for his officers on Saturday night 27 October. It was a resounding success and much hidden talent came to light during the after dinner entertainment, none being more enjoyable than the combination of the Chaplain Rev Fr Bresnan and his harmonium. Then at the height of the festivities the Orderly Officer arrived to the Mess with an urgent message from the Chief of Staff in Dublin for the Group Commander Lt Col Allen. It read "Consideration being give, subject to Government and Dáil approval, which is likely to be affirmative, for movement of unit to new Force in Egypt. Confirmation soonest but plan for it". A planning conference was held immediately and the festivities were quickly forgotten.

Lt Col Allen was called to a conference at HQ UNFICYP NICOSIA, the following morning, while in Larnaca all were working feverishly to be ready for an immediate move to the Middle East.

The Austrian, Finnish and Swedish Contingent in Cyprus were also involved in the move. Lt Col Allen informed UNFICYP Chief of Staff at the Conference that his unit would be ready to move from 1200 hrs that day but that unless he received confirmation from Dublin that Government and Dáil approval had been given, it would NOT be possible for the movement of IRCON to take place as was being planned. The move was then postponed until Tuesday 30 Oct when this approval was expected. This proved to be a blessing in disguise for although the troops were disappointed at NOT moving immediately, it did give the group an opportunity to prepare in greater detail for the move.

Transport was obviously going to be of major concern and importance in the new mission area and so the Group planned to airlift as much as possible with them. HQ UNFICYP though sympathetic to the needs of the unit, felt it could NOT permit the running down of its own transport holding and imposed a limitation of ten landrover type vehicles to be taken. Lt Col Allen discussed the impending move with the Deputy Chief of Staff UNFICYP Col Clay Beattie, who had paid a quick visit to Cairo with the first chalk of troops for UNEF from Cyprus. Col Beattie assured Lt Col Allen that accommodation would be, initially at least, most satisfactory in a modern military barracks near the airport in Cairo. This was welcome news indeed. Lt Col Allen then pressed for a supply of safari camp beds, tentage and sleeping bags and was informed that these had already been sent with the earlier contingents and that we would get an allotment in Cairo.

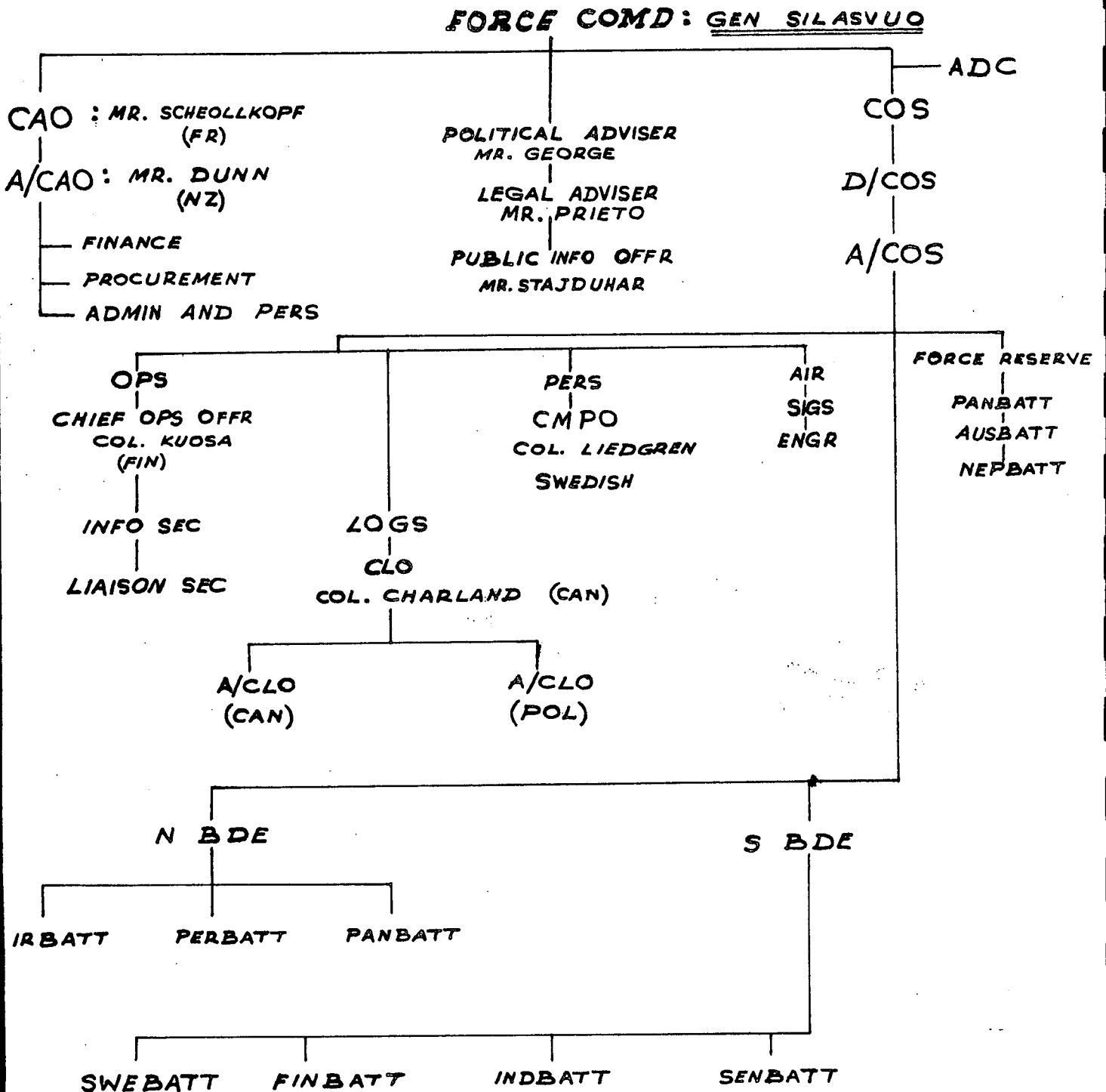
Dáil approval, as expected, was announced on Tuesday 30th October. The move out of Larnaca was accomplished in two phases. Phase one consisted of handing over UNFICYP responsibilities to the Force Reserve (16/5 Lancers) and the preparation of vehicles, equipment and personnel for the move. This work was carried out between 28-30 Oct. Phase two was the movement by road to RAF AKROTIRI on the night of the 30th Oct. The Force Commander Major General Prem Chand and Col Beattie arrived to INISHFREE Camp just before the move out to wish IRCON well in their task. This was much appreciated by all ranks.

The journey to RAF AKROTIRI was accomplished in miserable weather, torrential rain with thunder and lightning. The long delays before the first plane left and the intervals between planes did not help either. The first chalk, with Lt Col Allen OC Group aboard eventually departed AKROTIRI for Cairo at 0330Z on the 31 Oct. There to see the first plane off was the Chief of Staff of UNFICYP Brig F. Henn. The remaining chalks departed at irregular intervals

throughout that day. The last plane of the IRCON airlift left Cyprus at 1450Z on 31 Oct. Along with the 127 personnel of the Group who departed for service with UNEF were two Irish MPC NCOs of HQ UNFICYP. A rear party of two NCOs BQMS Tierney and CQMS Darcey and two privates - Pte Keane and Pte Jordan were left behind in Cyprus.

UNEF ORGANISATION

MARCH 1974



CAIRO

The first IRCON chalk arrived at the heavily guarded CAIRO International Airport at 0700 hrs 31 Oct. To say the least, conditions on arrival were not what the Group had been led to expect. The movement and security of the stores and equipment taken with the Group from Cyprus was of immediate concern. Guards were mounted at the airport and en route from there to the Military Academy in Cairo. Each truck load had an armed escort, the reason being that the other contingents who had arrived earlier had 'lost' some of their stores, the trucks provided to carry stores for the Austrians and Swedes having "gone astray" on the short journey from the airport to the Academy.

There was no reception party to meet us at the Academy to allot accommodation or to apportion the limited stock of tentage, sleeping bags and safari beds. Much later we managed to acquire twenty safari beds and twenty five sleeping bags. The excellent accommodation which had been mentioned in Cyprus turned out to be filthy billets, infested, and certainly not fit for habitation. It was decided therefore to set up camp on a dusty square close to the other contingents who had also rejected the offers of these permanent buildings. At this stage the innate Irish facility for improvisation came to the fore - and a little "self help" was present too. Within a very short space of time "mog" tents and other essential items of equipment appeared as if by magic and few questions were asked as to how they were acquired. There was no rest for anyone that first day. As each flight arrived, the drill was the same; armed escorts on all trucks, guides to the Academy and the men went straight to work from the trucks. It was a long hot day and everyone was tired and weary when eventually darkness descended and a halt was called for the night. By that time enough tents had been erected to house all members of the group. But there was little else. No tables or chairs, so boxes and packing cases were used. No lights except for torches. Sleeping bags and camp beds were available only for the few. Lt Col Allen made a tour of the IRCON area that night, chatting, encouraging and advising the men.

The following morning Comdt B. McDonnell was appointed Camp Commandant and all set to improving our lot, none being more successful than our team of cooks who, under extremely adverse conditions performed wonders. Mealtimes nevertheless will hold vivid memories for all who experienced those early days in Cairo. Everyone ate together, out in the open, sausages and beans, stewed steak, "hard biscuits" and treated water was the staple diet. Then we had the "eleventh" plague to deal with - the countless millions of flies. Breakfast was not too bad, we seemed to be earlier risers than the flies. Dinner time too was cool enough to thin out the swarms of our tormentors but lunch time was just miserable.

The combination of flies and the British "Compo" rations made eating an unpleasant task and one did not look forward with pleasure to mealtimes but all ate to survive. There are many other memories of that stay in Cairo. The souvenir swapping with other contingents, the incessant bugle calls over the public address system of the Academy, coupled with the high pitched incantation from the minarets, the magnificent swimming pool in the Academy which helped to keep us cool during the day, the constant roar of aircraft, both civilian and military, taking off and landing. Though many tried NOT to think about it, one could not escape the fact that if the war broke out again, we were in the middle of a huge military complex with a civilian airport on one side and a military airbase on the other.

This United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) of which we were now part was very slowly getting off the ground. The first elements of the force had arrived in Cairo on 26 Oct, the day after the adoption of the Security Council's Resolution setting up the force had been secured. It consisted at this stage of contingents from Austria, Finland, Sweden and Ireland under the command of Major-General Ensio Siilasvuo of Finland. The task of the force was to supervise the implementation of the Security Council Resolution which "demands that immediate and complete ceasefire be observed and that parties return to the positions occupied by them at 1650 hrs GMT, on 22 Oct 1973". It was also to use "its best efforts to prevent a recurrence of the fighting and co-operate with the International Committee of the Red Cross in its humanitarian endeavours in the area".

On 1st November it was announced that the 25th Group was to be augmented from Ireland by an Infantry Company (plus). This new force concentrated in KILDARE on Saturday 3 Nov 73. Communications between Army HQ in Dublin and 25 Inf Gp were at this stage rather difficult. Telex was the best means but this was subject to unexpected delays. This was of vital importance with the date of departure of the augmentation group fast approaching and the demands for a rapid move coupled with the need for these extra troops to be as self contained as possible. The greater the rush now, the more likely was it that these new arrivals would be ill prepared and equipped.

On 2 November information was received from UNEF HQ that the 25 Inf Gp was to move across the Suez Canal into Israeli occupied Sinai and that the Group reinforcements from Ireland would be flown through an Israeli airport. This latter piece of information proved to be incorrect for the additional Company in fact flew into Cairo. A recce of the proposed new location for IRBATT was ordered by HQ UNEF. This recce party consisting of Lt Col Allen, Comdt Mullowney and Capt Rea, together with a medical NCO, signaller and three drivers set off with the mission of finding a route for the group through Egyptian and Israeli lines into RABAH, about 25 miles EAST of the Suez Canal in Israeli occupied SINAI.

The Group was also ordered to send a harbour party to ISMAILIA as stage one of the move of the group. The Recce party had no maps available to them and the only information available was that "minefields were extensive and unmarked in many of the areas where fighting had taken place".:

Lt Col Allen and his small group journeyed to ISMAILIA hoping to get across there. It was very late on arrival so they spent the night in Ismailia. Although all were tired and weary it turned out to be a very unrestful night due to sporadic shooting of tracer, flares and automatic fire during the hours of darkness. After an unsuccessful effort to cross the Canal in the vicinity of Ismailia early the following morning, the recce party moved northwards parallel to the line of the Canal and eventually found a crossing some two miles south of KANTARA and crossed on an Egyptian pontoon bridge at this point. It was difficult going at this stage across four miles of soft sand before reaching a solid surface again and what had once been the town of KANTARA, now just a rubble heap. At several points it was necessary to manhandle the landrovers and it became very obvious to all in the party that loaded trucks without sand tyres would be incapable of crossing this terrain. The recce party got through the Egyptian lines but try as they would they would not be permitted by the Israeli authorities to penetrate further into Sinai. They were in fact halted at a location which became known to IRBATT at a later date as OP Cork. As a result of this, orders were sent back to Cairo to halt the move of the harbour party. However on the return of the recce party to Cairo, Lt Col Allen learned that despite his orders to hold the harbour party there, UNEF HQ had insisted on the move of the harbour party to ISMAILIA. This was to have some awkward consequences.

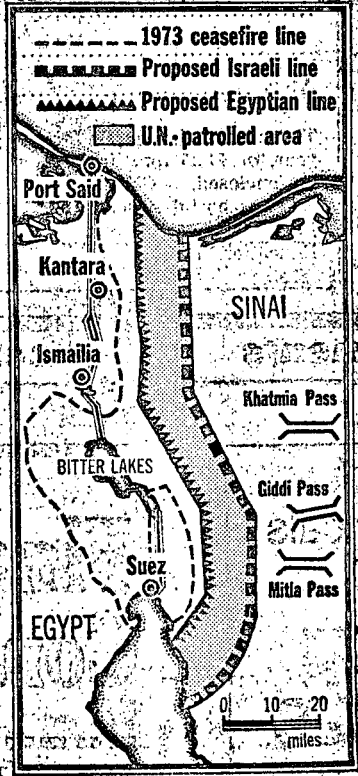
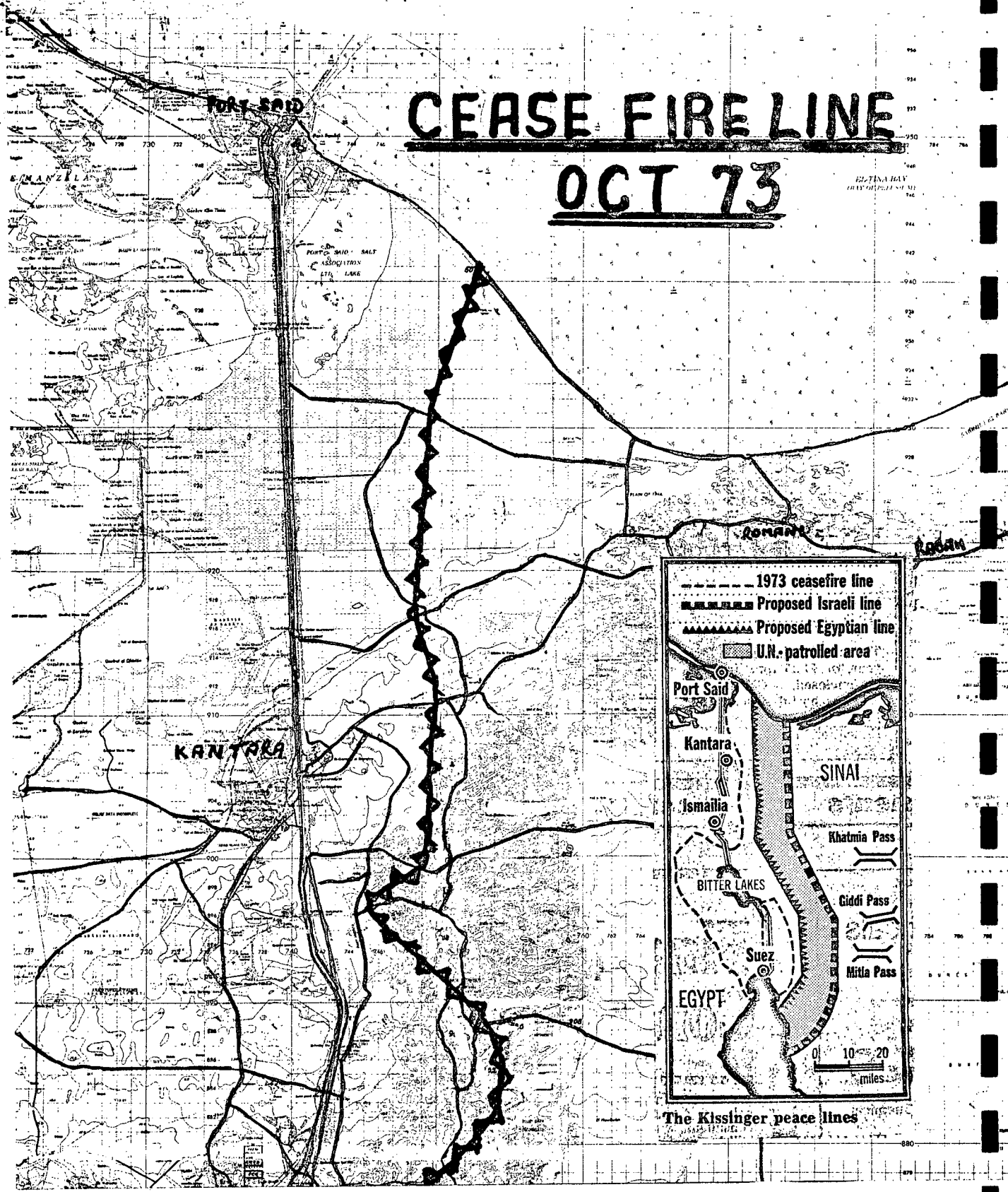
The augmentation group, which had been reviewed by Mr. P. Donegan, Minister for Defence, in McGee Barracks Kildare on Sunday 4th Nov arrived into Cairo by UN military aircraft on Mon 5 Nov. Unfortunately the group harbour party now in Ismailia, had taken all available tentage with them and so it was found necessary to accommodate the incoming group in a part of the Academy buildings which had been thoroughly cleaned and fumigated under the supervision of the M.O. - Capt Chris Brown. All members of the new force came under command OC 25 Inf Gp on arrival in Egypt. The total strength now of the 25 Inf Gp (augmented) serving in Egypt was 258 all ranks plus 2 MPC from HQ UNFICYP.

At 2300 hours on 7 Nov orders were received for the Group to move at 0700 hrs on the following morning EAST of the Canal to RABAH. This move had to be cancelled at the last moment due to difficulties with the Israeli authorities and to the fact that the harbour party was still in Ismailia. Eventually it was settled that the group could use a route well to the SOUTH of Ismailia to cross the Canal. This was arranged for 9 Nov. The Force Commander - General Siilasvuo visited the Irish Camp on the afternoon of 8 Nov and addressed the

assembled officers and men. He referred to his long association with Irish troops on UN missions and spoke of the high standard set by previous Irish Contingents he had met. He wished God speed to the 25 Inf Gp and reminded all ranks that on the morrow they would be the first UNEF troops to cross into Israeli occupied Sinai.

CEASE FIRE LINE

OCT 73



The Kissinger peace lines

SINAI

The 25 Infantry Group left Cairo for Sinai, as planned, at 0700 hrs 9 November 1973. It was still quite cold at this stage of the morning and those seated in the back of the Egyptian trucks were well muffled up. The route led through the heavily fortified positions of the Egyptian 2nd Army, on the road to Suez. As far as the eye could see, on both sides of the road were artillery, self propelled guns, tanks, half tracks and dug in platoon and company positions. Missile bases and dummy bases were spread throughout the lines and at the first halt, those at the rear of the convoy witnessed the firing of some missiles at an Israeli aircraft, with some accuracy too. It was not long afterwards that IRBATT crossed into Israeli occupied territory at what was later to become world famous as Kilometre 101. Here to meet the Group and escort them to Rabah was Comdt Kevin Deeney of UNTSO. Scenes of desolation and destruction were to be seen along the route. Dotted all over the desert were burnt out tanks, half tracks, lines of trucks utterly destroyed, crashed aircraft and the roadway pitted with bomb craters. The smell of death pervaded the whole battlefield and a chilling sight was that of a human arm projecting out of a line of shallow graves. All this was indeed a sobering spectacle and brought home forcibly to the personnel in the convoy just what war meant. A short meal break was taken outside the town of Suez. Here we learned that the town itself had been bombed and strafed only four hours previously. The crossing of the Suez Canal was finally made North of the Great Bitter Lake close to the old UNTSO OP named SILVER. On the other side of the canal were similar scenes of desolation and destruction. One notable difference however was in the deployment of the Egyptian and Israeli forces. Whereas the Egyptians concentrated on rigid defensive positions, with long lines of trenches heavily manned, the Israeli's were completely mobile, with concentrations of armour at Strategic positions and very little infantry except for those mounted on APC and half tracks. Nearly every vehicle too on the Israeli side seemed to have a radio. Continuing along the road to the EL TASA Road junction the column then turned NORTH along the desert road to BALUSA, ROMANI and finally at 1715 hrs 9 NOV reached RABAH. A major achievement indeed for the transport section who had to contend with driving on the right hand side of the "road" in ZIL trucks whose road worthiness was always in doubt, They were positively dangerous vehicles, but as no others were available it was simply a question of making do with them or NOT getting to Rabah.

It was close to darkness when the group arrived at Rabah and tents had yet to be set up. The fact that these same tents withstood a sandstorm some few weeks later was proof positive of the quickly learned expertise of the Group in pitching tents. The personnel of the 25 Inf Group were warmly welcomed by the UNTSO staff to Rabah and a pleasant meal provided before all adjourned for a well earned sleep.

Rabah at this stage was just a name to IRBATT, somewhere in the Sinai Desert. It was, the group quickly discovered, the UNTSO Control Centre for the UNTSO OPs on the EAST side of the Canal and was occupied in 1969 when the UNTSO Control Centre in the town of KANTARA finally became untenable during the war of attrition. The Camp or more correctly, compound, was completely wired off, and centred on the renovated buildings of the old railway station located about five miles from the Mediterranean Sea and some twenty five miles EAST from Kantara and the Suez Canal. The station was on the old CAIRO DAMASCUS railway line which had been completely destroyed as far east as EL ARISH, capital of the Sinai, during the first Arab/Israeli conflict. A roadway, the only one, just outside the confines of Rabah Camp ran EAST/WEST and was the coastal road for Sinai running EAST to EL ARISH, KHAN, YUNIS and GAZA. Narrow and undulating, frequently impassible during the sandstorm season, it was built by the British during the first Great War. It was in constant use now by the Israelis moving tanks, petrol and supplies up and down the lines at all times of the day and night. From our readings too we learned this was an historical area, here Napoleon's army concentrated for the advance on Palestine, which culminated at the siege of Acra. There were many Bedouins around this area and these were to become common sights in the months ahead as they tended their herds of camel, goat and sheep.

The UNTSO Control Centre at RABAH had facilities for approx twenty observers. The arrival of the 25 Inf Gp, followed by elements of the PERUVIAN Battalion severely taxed these facilities. Relationships with UNTSO did cause problems both on an administrative and operational level. The tasks of IRBATT on arrival at RABAH were, to establish a base camp, to establish positions between the cease fire lines in the area between ISMAILIA and PORT FOUAD and to actively patrol this sector. Unfortunately the terms of reference of UNEF and UNTSO were not clearly defined at this stage, resulting in UNMOS patrolling and maintaining positions in IRBATT sector, duplicating the functions of IRBATT to a small degree.

On 11 November the Group commenced reconnaissance patrols in the area. The fulfilment of the operational tasks was made difficult by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) requirement to have an IDF liaison officer with all vehicles and personnel travelling WEST of ROMANI and also their insistence in having a liaison officer on all UNEF positions serviced from Israeli controlled area. Because of these restrictions it was obvious that any positions to be established by IRBATT could NOT be located in "NO MANS LAND" but would have to be in the Israeli controlled area. UNEF HQ CAIRO instructed that these limitations be accepted and so work parties were sent out to begin construction on two platoon position. On 2 Dec 73 A Coy moved to occupy these positions. One platoon, under Lt Ray King went to UNEF posn 501 (originally called OP CORK and better known to the troops by that name). Another platoon

with Lt Noel Langan in command, to UNEF position 502 (OP KERRY) while Company Headquarters and Lt Peter Young's Platoon occupied UNEF position 503, on a site of yet another disused railway station on the Cairo-Damascus line, about one mile North East from 501.

UNEF position 501 was sited slightly forward of the Israeli FDL, beside the road running from KANTARA to EL ARISH. On 5 Dec the position was extended to include a road checkpoint and this point became the main access crossing point between Israeli occupied territory and Egypt in the area. During the recent war this general area had been the scene of some very heavy fighting and close to the OP was the wreckage of eleven T 62 tanks. The ground was pockmarked around with bomb craters and the danger of UXB's was very real indeed. The Israeli positions nearby were surrounded by huge walls of sand, which had been bulldozed into position and heavily defended, with tanks and half tracks at the ready. The tents used by IRBATT on the OP were all dug in immediately and a shelter was constructed and stocked with emergency rations.

UNEF position 502 (OP KERRY) was approximately ten(10) miles South of 501 and was located at the forward edge of an Israeli salient which reached into the Egyptian lines. It was only a few kilometres from the Canal and clearly visible from the OP was a ship which had been marooned in the Canal since 1967. There was a small Israeli position beside the OP, while the Egyptians manned positions to the NORTH, SOUTH and WEST. It was a good thing none of the troops suffered from claustrophobia.

The OPs were manned both day and night and reported all infringements of the ceasefire agreement back to Headquarters at RABAH. Shootings were the most common type of infringement. After a fortnight 'B' Company replaced 'A' Company on the OPs and this was to be the pattern for the remainder of the six months, with the companies rotating approximately every fourteen days. A routine was quickly established on all the OPs. Breakfast at 0730 hrs. Then to work to carry out much needed improvements to the OPs, dig the tents in further, construct a shelter, the importance of which quickly became obvious. The arrival of the ration truck just before lunch always provided a pleasant break for NOT only did it bring fresh rations, water and canteen supplies but also mail and newspapers from home. Lunch was at 1230 and this was followed by more work on the positions. Dinner was normally served at 1700 hrs after which all except those on duty relaxed by playing cards, volleyball or reading. On the OP itself one man was on observation duty all day with reliefs every two hours while at night time one NCO and one man remained on duty all night. Platoon commanders and platoon sergeants had to spend some time initially in training all in the platoon to give quick, thorough and accurate reports of any infringements of the ceasefire. By insisting on high standards of reporting from the beginning, platoon commanders soon had a reliable system in operation and could be confident that reports emanating from their posts would stand up to the closest scrutiny.

RABAH

The 25 Inf Gp's strength was added to on 2 Dec 73, by the arrival to Rabah, from Cyprus, of Capt T. Moriarty - Welfare Officer, BQMS Tierney and Pte Jordan of the rear party of the original group and C/S Donnelly and Pte McCormack of the Irish Liaison office staff HQ UNFICYP. On 10 Dec, Capt Duffy, ILO, and the balance of the rear party, CQMS Darcey and Pte Keane, joined the Group. Capt Nott, Legal Officer and Capt Martin, Medical Officer came to the unit via Cairo on 20 Dec 73. Capt Martin returned to Ireland on 30 Dec 73 leaving the overall strength of the unit 269 all ranks.

Hand in hand with the operational task in Sinai went the equally arduous, if not as dangerous, task of acquiring rations and supplies and of the development to the base camp at Rabah. All these tasks were hampered from the very beginning by the acute shortage of transport and by the lamentable state of the few trucks the unit had acquired in Cairo. How the transport section managed to keep these trucks on the road remains a mystery to the present day. But keep them they did despite the fact that rations and stores had to be drawn from Tel Aviv, Cairo and Jerusalem, journeys of approx five hours duration, over, in part, the most appalling roads. The Quartermaster too, Capt Ned Horgan, and his staff performed near miracles in these early days. Pack rations were the initial diet in Rabah but not for long. The 'Q' staff quickly organised a supply of fresh meat, vegetables and other delicacies through SHEKEM, the Israeli equivalent of the British NAFFI. Materials for improvements to the base camp and OPs were in short supply but the Engineer Section showed great ingenuity in constructing DTL's, shower units and ablutions. A cookhouse was constructed too and lighting installed for all the tents at Rabah. Furniture was at a very great premium and so disused Israeli mineboxes became highly prized and were quickly converted into tables, lockers and into some very fancy chairs.

Christmal loomed up suddenly and a committee under Comdt Brian McDonnell, 2I/C of the Group made elaborate plans for the great day. A five-a-side soccer championship organised and run since early December was building up to a grand finale and everyone awaited the playing of the final on Christmas Day. Forty tickets were acquired for Midnight Mass at Bethlehem on Christmas Eve. So great was the demand for these tickets that it was found necessary to organise a draw to select the participants. Plans for the festivities received a boost by the arrival of eagerly awaited National Stores from Ireland and by the delivery of some other national stores which had been packed and forwarded to Israel by the Group rear party when they were in Cyprus. The Harmonium from the Church at Inishfree Camp, Larnaca was one of the prized items to arrive.

The festivities began really when the lucky few departed by hired bus at 1400 hrs Christmas Eve for Bethlehem. Lt Col P. Allen and Rev Fr P. Bresnan led the party. After a stop in Jerusalem for dinner, the group continued on to Bethlehem. There for a short while in the floodlit square they mingled with people from all over the world, buying souvenirs, listening to the various foreign choirs singing in the square and just meeting and greeting people who came up to speak to them. They were the only UN Contingent represented there in any number. There was a wonderful festive spirit there that night, yet an atmosphere of joyful devotion prevailed. The attendance at the televised Midnight Mass was the climax of the visit. The Group left Bethlehem at 2.30 a.m. on Christmas morning and arrived back tired and happy to Rabah at 7 a.m., all agreeing it was an experience never to be forgotten.

The Christmas Day programme proved very successful. The crib, constructed by Sgt Folan was set up near the Camp Church and was much appreciated and admired. After Mass nearly all who were not on duty took the plunge at the Christmas Swim. The C/O set out to visit the men of 'B' Coy at their headquarters and at positions 501 and 502. He had lunch with Comdt Paddy Kelly, Lieut John Byrne and the men of No 4 Platoon before returning to Rabah and the exciting programme which had been prepared. The five-a-side soccer final was played amid a welter of excitement. The colourful Engineer team finally emerged victors from a most gallant team drawn from No 1 Pl A Coy. A tug-of-war between IRbatt and the Canadian attachment in the camp followed and as the saying goes "many hands make light work" and sure enough IRBATT proved this to be so. The Christmas Dinner itself will long be remembered for its excellence and all available officers and senior NCOs served the full meal. This was later followed by dinner for the officers and and senior NCOs at the Officers Mess. A Camp Fire and concert, attended by all including a representative group from the IDF at Romani, who had come specially to wish IRBATT a Happy Christmas, concluded the festivities for the night. A similar programme was organised for B Coy on New Year's Eve, after they had rotated from OP duty.

Rest and recreation for the troops was a matter which greatly concerned OC Group and his staff. But there were major difficulties. The UN daily per diem allowance, unchanged from Cyprus, was totally inadequate due to the big increase in prices in Israel compared to Cyprus. Transport was almost non-existent except for essential runs and so it was only occasionally that troops could be taken to Jerusalem or Tel Aviv. Getting them back was yet another problem due to the unreliability of the few trucks available. This could and did prove crucial to the troops, as having to stay even one extra night in a hotel was very expensive and the men had to meet these costs out of their own pockets. But we did make our own entertainments. The Soccer League and Volleyball Championship were very popular, Chess

competitions, card drives and films got under way, talent competitions and of course - eyes down for Bingo, with that all-star caller "The Bleeder" in action.

The Camp at Rabah continued to expand and with the arrival of the first elements of the Northern Brigade it was quite clear that the compound in Rabah would soon be overcrowded. IRBATT therefore decided to move out. After a recce it was decided to site the new IRBATT Camp at NEGELA which was yet another disused railway station about five miles EAST of Rabah. Permission to occupy NEGELA was sought from both UNEF HQ and the IDF and this was granted in mid December. Work began immediately to clear the buildings of sand, some of which were almost completely covered. Irbatt had no machinery for the task and a loan of some IDF equipment fell through due to it being required elsewhere. Troops in on rotation from OPs went to the new Camp site daily and slowly but surely it began to shape up. Comdt Brian McDonnell, 2I/C and Comdt J. Burke, Engineer were in charge of its development. After many disappointments Comdt Burke succeeded in hiring two bulldozers from civilian contractors to press on with the work. But fickle fortune decreed further trials as the first bulldozer arrived to within half a kilometre of NEGELA only to fall off the transporting vehicle and was found to be unserviceable when recovered. The sand inside the buildings had to be shifted manually and it proved to be a backbreaking task. It was a credit to the dedication and endurance of all concerned that the job was completed so quickly and so well. The bulldozers when they did begin work eventually cleared approx twenty thousand cubic metres of sand from around the buildings.

During the month of Jan 74 there was a significant increase in activities by Egyptians and Israeli forces and both positions 501 and 502 came under fire several times. On 12 Jan the Egyptian forces fired at a bulldozer which was working in the Israeli position beside position 502. A burst of fire passed through a tent occupied by Lt Noel Langan, Sgt Mickey Sheehan and Cpl Mick Fleming. One round actually went through the pillow that Sgt Sheehan was resting on. On 14 Jan three sagger anti-tank missiles were fired at some Israeli half tracks behind posn 501, manned by Lt Ray King and his platoon. One of the missiles passed directly over the OP. On 16 Jan the most serious incident to date occurred. Israeli positions in the vicinity of posn 502 came under Egyptian mortar fire. However, the shooting was none too accurate and a bomb landed only fifty yards from the platoon cookhouse. Lt Tom Creaton of B Coy was in charge at this stage. He ordered his platoon into the bunkers when this happened and for the next three hours the bombardment continued with approx fifteen rounds landing in the platoon position. Fortunately no one was injured, although all the tents on the OP were ripped by shrapnel and the landrover located on the OP was damaged. This

dangerous situation continued until 18 Jan when the Israeli and Egyptian Chiefs of Staff signed the agreement on the disengagement of forces. Overnight the situation was defused and calm was restored.

The visit of QMG, Col C. O'Sullivan and Director of Operations, Col P. Dempsey, on a fact finding mission to the Middle East had been mooted for early Jan 74 but at the request of the Force Commander UNEF, Maj Gen Siilasvuo, it was postponed until mid Jan. The visit commenced on Tue 15 Jan 74 and the VIPs were met on arrival at Cairo Airport by the Chief of Staff UNEF Col P.D. Hogan and Lt Col P. Allen. They had a meeting with Maj Gen Siilasvuo at UNEF HQ Cairo the following morning and were briefed by members of his staff on the whole UNEF operation. The same morning they paid a courtesy visit to General NAGIB HAFIZ, Chief of ARE Liaison staff and Brigadier FARIE EID, Senior Egyptian LO for UNEF. They were then taken on a tour of SHAMS CAMP (one of Cairo's race courses) the main UN Base, where representatives of the Polish and Canadian Contingents briefed them on the logistical arrangements for the force. The QMG & D Ops departed Cairo for NICOSIA on the night of Thursday 17 Jan.

While in Cyprus they availed of the opportunity to meet the Force Commander UNFICYP, Maj Gen Prem Chand and his Chief of Staff Brig Henn. They flew into Tel Aviv (Ben Gurion) Airport on Fri 18 Jan. That afternoon they paid a courtesy call on the Chief Israeli Liaison Officer, Lt Col Levison in Jerusalem. On Sat morning, 19 Jan, they were briefed at UNTSO HQ Jerusalem and were entertained to lunch there by the UNTSO Chief of Staff, Col R. Bunworth.

On Mon 21 Jan 74 the main item on their itinerary began when they visited 25 Inf Gp at Rabah. They travelled by road from Jerusalem in heavy rains and encountered a minor sand storm en route. In fact the weather was to be very disappointing throughout their entire visit. On arrival at Rabah the QMG inspected a Guard of Honour which was commanded by Lt Peter Young. After lunch the VIPs received their first IRBATT briefing from the OPS/INFO team of Capt Dan Rea and Capt Gerry Mulrooney. This was followed by a tour of the Camp at Rabah and a visit to the proposed new camp site at Negela.

Tuesday morning commenced with a courtesy visit to the senior Israeli L.O. at Romani, Col Avivi. The remainder of the day was spent visiting B Coy, who were then the Coy located on the FDL's between the Israeli and Egyptian lines. On returning to Rabah a visit to a nearby Bedouin encampment was arranged for them. Lt Col Allen and the officers of the Group entertained the QMG and D. Ops to dinner on that Tuesday night. Among the other guests were Brig Gen Ibanez O'Brien (Peru), OC Northern Brigade UNEF and his Brigade Major, Lt Col H. McDwyer, Col Avivi and Major Eli Doley

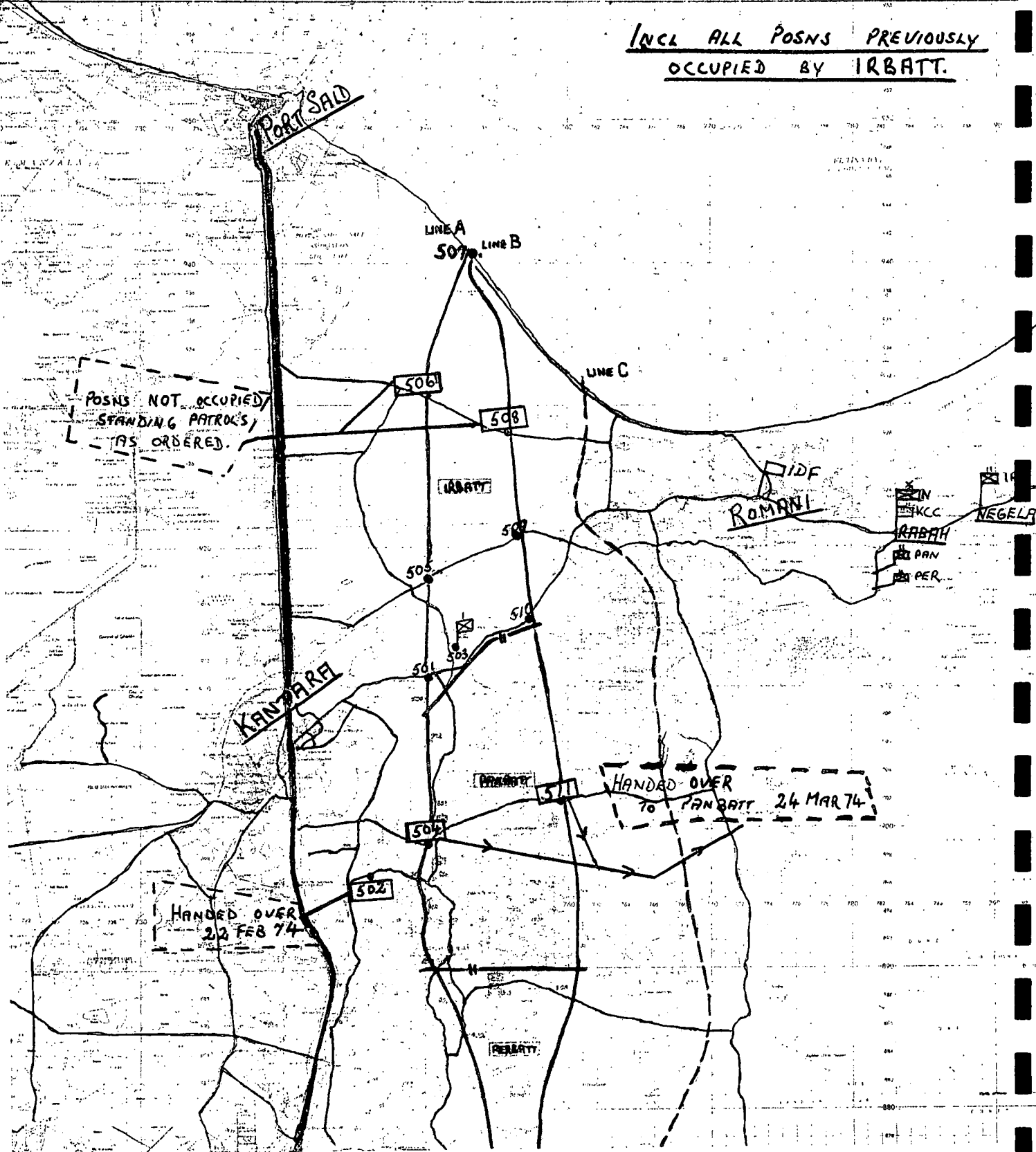
of the IDF, Comdt Bernadini (France) and Capt P. O'Connor representing UNTSO. Col Sanchez, Peruvian Bn Comdr was also present as was Major Pete Vlossach (Canada). During the dinner Lt Col Allen made, on behalf of the 25 Inf Gp, a small presentation to both Col O'Sullivan and Col Dempsey to mark the occasion of their visit.

On Wed morning 23 Jan, Lt Col Allen was called to UNEF HQ Cairo to attend a F.C. Conference in connection with the disengagement of forces which had just been signed. Comdt Brian McDonnell, 2I/C Group, continued the briefing of the VIPs and that afternoon accompanied them to Tel Aviv where a visit to the Israeli Army Chief of Staff Rav-Aluf David Elazar had been arranged for them. Afterwards they went to Jerusalem and held a cocktail party for all the Irish serving with UNEF and UNTSO. On Thu 24 Jan the VIPs returned to Cairo via Cyprus. Here they met again with the Force Commander and then met Mr. Schoellkopf the Chief Administrative Officer UNEF. They departed Cairo for Dublin on Sun 26 Jan.

UNEF

DEPLOYMENT SITUATION AS OF 1200 GMT 27 MARCH 1974

INCL ALL POSNS PREVIOUSLY OCCUPIED BY IRBATT.



NEGELA

At the end of Jan 74 the Unit was still based at Rabah Camp but steady progress was now being made in the development to Negela Camp. The Disengagement Agreement which had just been signed between the Egyptian and Israeli Forces was implemented in five stages, the first three involving redeployment SOUTH of the IRBATT Sector. The disengagement, codenamed OPERATION CALENDAR began on 25 Jan with the Israeli forces deploying southwards from their positions south of the Cairo-Suez road. The disengagement in the IRBATT Sector commenced on 13 Feb when two new positions 505 and 507 on the Alpha (Egyptian Line) were occupied. Posn 505 was located in the NORTH of the IRBATT Sector on a small expanse of sand that was almost completely surrounded by salt flats, which at this stage were covered in water. Resupplying this position proved a very difficult task. Position 507 was initially in the middle of the forward Egyptian positions on the Mediterranean coast but was later moved to a position between the opposing forces. To the WEST of this OP was the famous Israeli position codenamed "BUDAPEST", which was the only position on the BARLEV line to withstand the Egyptian attack during the Yom Kippur War. The Egyptians had attacked along the hundred yards wide expanse of sand between the sea and the salt flats and the wreckage of tanks, APCs and trucks were still all there to be seen. This OP was located on the beach and became one of the most popular posts in the Sector. Posn 501 was moved back a few hundred metres to be on the new FDA line and it was heart-breaking for the troops to leave such an excellently constructed position and to have to start all over again. Another posn 504, had been set up before the disengagement and was positioned NORTH of 502.

On 21 Feb three positions were occupied on the Bravo (Israeli) Line - 509, 510 and 511. Of these the most important was 510 as it became the checkpoint for transport going through the Buffer Zone. Posn 502 was handed over to the Peruvian Bn on the 22 Feb. The disengagement was completed without incident and ahead of schedule on 4 Mar. In a reshuffle of UN Forces in the Zone IRBATT handed over posns 504 and 511 to PANBATT (Panamanian Bn) on 24 Mar and for the remainder of the tour our southern boundary was a line one kilometre SOUTH of the road from posn 501 to posn 510.

IRBATT also provided escorts for the body recovery teams who were searching for bodies in the battle zone. This operation, code-named OMEGA was later taken over by UNTSO.

After disengagement had been completed IRBATT controlled the main route between Jerusalem and Cairo and was given the additional tasks of supervising the exchange of prisoners of war, the handing over of bodies, and the passage from one side to the other of

students or other civilians. All these activities took place at a crossroads south of posn 503. Medically the Group had a fine record throughout the tour, proof positive of the excellent preventive medicine of the M.O. and his staff. Sickness experienced during the tour could be divided into two main groups, injuries mainly from sports and gastro-intestinal. Diarrhoea was a problem after arrival to Rabah from Cairo. Colds and sore throats became common with the arrival of the cooler weather in Jan/Feb. Fortunately there were no really serious injuries or illnesses.

The transport situation was at this stage bordering on the impossible and repeated reports to UNEF HQ were having little results. Finally UN HQ arranged for five trucks and drivers from AUSBATT to be attached to IRBATT at the end of Feb. These proved to be invaluable and the Ausbatt drivers integrated extremely well with the Group. Among the many uses the Austrian trucks were put to were for the drawing of railway sleepers from the Buffer Zone. These were for the construction of hard standings and roadways in the new camp at Negela. Sgt Maj Paddy Norris and his "Sleeper" runs soon became part of the lore of the 25 Inf Gp.

The clearance of sand from the buildings and their surrounds at NEGELA was completed towards the end of Feb and B Coy then moved there from Rabah on 22 Feb 74. Sleepers were now arriving in ever increasing numbers and the construction of a hard standing for the transport section, near to the entrance of the Camp was soon completed. This was a strenuous task indeed for not only had the sleepers to be dug up from the old disused railway line, they had to be manhandled into the trucks, taken off and manhandled into position and each of them, weighed some two cwts. It was estimated that about four thousand sleepers were recovered and moved the twenty miles to Negela Camp from the Buffer Zone.

A large consignment of National Stores arrived in Cairo on 18 Feb 74. This was most welcome and included tables and chairs, desert boots, sun glasses and a quantity of cream crackers which proved highly popular. The arrival of the furniture and other stores gave a boost to the development at Negela. In addition the foundation for a cookhouse/dining/recreation complex was laid and DTLs and shower facilities were constructed.

A major problem during the month of March was the deterioration in the mail services run by the Canadians. There were many complaints for all ranks over the long delays in incoming and outgoing mail. Otherwise there were many improvements. Negela was quickly taking shape and the remainder of the Group had moved from Rabah to the New Camp on 20 Mar 74. Trees were planted (Comdt John Burke's pride and joy) around the new Camp to provide

future protection from sand storms and shifting sands. Ice was supplied daily to the Camp and to the OPs. There was no shortage of films and Bingo and further heats of the talent contest kept everyone occupied during the long evenings. And the weather improved too and temperatures in excess of 90° F were recorded on a few occasions.

Of course St. Patrick's Day did not go unnoticed. The day began for IRBATT with a Commanding Officers Parade at Negela and a ceremonial raising of the National Flag. This was followed by an open air Mass. A big disappointment was the non-arrival of shamrock from Ireland. As facilities were limited at Negela, the official IRBATT reception for over one hundred and thirty guests was held in Rabah. The guests included the F.C. Maj Gen E. Siilasvuo, many of the Contingent Commanders serving with UNEF, IDF representatives, UNTSO representatives and the local Beduoin Sheikh. The meal, a buffet, was served out of doors and was a great success due in no small measure to the support given to IRBATT by An Bord Baine. Five minutes after everyone had finished their meal the weather changed dramatically and the rains came. Just as the local Sheikh had predicted, a wonderful weather forecaster. Fortunately indoor accommodation had been prepared and the party continued uninterrupted, until many of the guests had to leave to make the last crossing of the day in the Buffer Zone to get West of the Canal.

A sports was organised and run for the troops that afternoon in Negela. Included also was a Gaelic match and it proved most enjoyable. A buffet-style dinner for all personnel of the Group took place at Negela at 1800 hours after which a short film show of Irish interest was shown. All then reassembled again for a St. Patrick's Night Concert - the highlight of which was the final of the group talent competition. Judges for this competition included Col R.W. Bunworth, Chief of Staff UNTSO and Brig Ibanez O'Brien, OC Northern Brigade. Sgmn Sean McCarthy proved a worthy winner, closely followed by Cpl Joe Bowes.

The remainder of March and the month of April was spent in further developing the Camp at Negela. The Commanding Officer sought suggestions for naming the new Camp and finally selected "BENBURB". At a special Mass Parade on Easter Sunday, 14 Apr 74, the new Camp was blessed and formally named Benburb Camp. Occupation of Benburb Camp represented a major physical achievement by all ranks of the 25 Inf Gp but all were aware that efforts now would lessen the load on the incoming Group who would have to endure the excessive heat of summer.

The Group had performed well in Cyprus, overcome many adversities in Cairo and carried out their mission in Sinai with distinction.

As the day for the arrival of the 26 Inf Gp drew close many fare-well parties were held at Company, Platoon and Section levels. It would be difficult to single out any Company, Group or Section as having been more outstanding than the other. All had contributed to the making of the 25 Inf Gp. It was a happy unit and all who served in it built bonds of friendship which will endure throughout the years. Those were the days.

/EOC

DIARY OF EVENTS

- 12 Aug 73 It was announced that Óglaigh na hÉireann would replace 24 Inf Gp in Cyprus with another similar Unit, 25 Inf Gp.
- 29 Sep 73 25 Inf Gp concentrated at Kildare.
- 3 Oct 73 Group Recce Party departed Ireland for Cyprus.
- 15 Oct 73 25 Inf Gp activated.
- 16 Oct 63 CHALK 1 - departed Dublin for Cyprus.
- 20 Oct 73 25 Inf Gp assumed operational responsibility of Larnaca Sector Cyprus from 24 Inf Gp.
- 23 Oct 73 CHALK 2 - departed Dublin for Cyprus.
Last elements of 24 Inf Gp departed Cyprus for Ireland.
- 25 Oct 73 The Security Council Resolution 340 establishing a UN Emergency Force in the Middle East was passed.
- 27 Oct 73 Irish Government agreed in principle to the 25 Inf Gp being moved from Cyprus to be part of the new UNEF in the Middle East.
- 30 Oct 73 Dáil Éireann approval for this move was announced.
- 31 Oct 73 25 Inf Gp, less a rear party of four(4), departed RAF Akrotiri for Cairo for service with UNEF.
- 1 Nov 73 It was announced that Óglaigh na hÉireann would organise and prepare a military group of one Inf Coy (plus) for despatch to Egypt to augment 25 Inf Gp.
- 3 Nov 73 This new Coy plus concentrated at Kildare.
- 4 Nov 73 Coy reviewed by the Minister for Defence, Mr. S. Donegan at McGee Bks., Kildare.
- 5 Nov 73 CHALKS 1 and 2, New Force - departed Dublin for Cairo. All members of the New Force came under command OC, 25 Inf Gp on arrival in Egypt.
- 1/9 Nov 73 25 Inf Gp (IRBATT) based in the Military Academy, Cairo.
- 8 Nov 73 Maj Gen Siilasvuo (UNEF Force Commander) addressed IRBATT prior to their departure EAST of the Suez Canal.
- 9 Nov 73 At 1135 hours GMT, IRBATT advance party crossed the Canal, being the first UNEF troops to do so. They arrived at RABAH, in the Sinai Desert at 1800 hours GMT.
- 11 Nov 73 Main body IRBATT arrived at Rabah.
- 13 Nov 73 Rear party IRBATT arrived Rabah.

- 2 Dec 73 A Coy IRBATT moved to FDL area, manning three positions (UNEF positions 501, 502 and 503).
- 5 Dec 73 UNEF position 501 was expanded - to include a road checkpoint.
- 14 Dec 73 B Coy relieved A Coy.
- 25 Dec 73 Christmas Day celebrations.
- 31 Dec 73 A Coy relieved B Coy.
New Year's Eve celebrations.
- 14 Jan 74 B Coy relieved A Coy.
- 15/26 Jan 74 Visit of QMG (Col C. O'Sullivan) and D. P&O (Col P. Dempsey) to the Middle East).
- 16 Jan 74 UNEF positions 501 and 502 which has come under fire at various times during Jan had their most serious incident. Ten rounds of mortar landed within position 502, causing damage to tents, ponchos and sleeping bags.
- 18 Jan 74 The Israeli and Egyptian Chiefs of Staff signed the agreement of Disengagement of Forces.
- 25 Jan 74 Implementation of the disengagement begun.
- 28 Jan 74 UNEF position 504 was established by IRBATT.
- 29 Jan 74 UNEF assisted in the recovery of bodies in the Suez Canal area (Operation OMEGA) IRBATT provided escorts for the body recovery teams.
- 8 Feb 74 A Coy relieved B Coy.
- 13 Feb 74 The disengagement (Operation Calendar) was in five stages. IRBATT was involved in stage four which commenced on 13 Feb, and finished 21 Feb.
- 13/21 Feb 74 On 13 Feb IRBATT occupied positions at line 'A' as follows (see Map):
Posns 505 and 501 (withdrawn East to GR 4421) and posn 507. On 21 Feb IRBATT occupied positions at line 'B' as follows (see Map):
Posns 509, 510 and 511.
At 211600 Feb, IDF withdrew and the UNEF Zone was handed over.
- 22 Feb 74 Posn 502 was handed over to PERBATT and IRBATT's bdy was road from posn 504 to 511 inclusive (see Map).
- 28 Feb 74 B Coy relieved A Coy.

- 14 Mar 74 A Coy relieved B Coy.
- 17 Mar 74 St. Patrick's Day celebrations.
- 20 Mar 74 Last elements of IRBATT depart Rabah Camp. Full occupation of Negela Camp (now named Benburb Camp) by 25 Inf Gp.
- 24 Mar 74 UNEF Zone occupied by nine(9) of the ten(10) UNEF Battalions. These were deployed from North to South as follows: IRBATT, PENBATT, PERBATT, SWEDBATT, INDBATT, GHANBATT, AUSBATT, SENBATT and FINBATT.
- 28 Mar 74 B Coy relieved A Coy.
- 10 Apr 74 A Coy relieved B Coy.
- 14 Apr 74 Camp at Negela officially named Benburb Camp.
- 22 Apr 74 B Coy relieved A Coy.
- 24 Apr 74 Commanding Officer's Farewell Dinner.
- 26 Apr 74 CHALK 1 - 26 Inf Gp arrived Ben Gurion Airport. CHALK 1 - 25 Inf Gp (mainly A Coy) departed Ben Gurion for Ireland.
- 3 May 74 031500 May, 26 Inf Gp assumed operational responsibility for IRBATT Sector UNEF Buffer Zone.
- 7 May 74 CHALK 2 - 26 Inf Gp arrived at Ben Gurion Airport. Final elements of 25 Inf Gp departed from Ben Gurion Airport at 2010 hours on completion of the Group's tour of duty with UNEF.

'A' SECTION

The 'A' Staff, though small in number, had to deal with a great variety of problems during its six months service. In Cyprus it had quickly taken over from 24 Inf Gp and had soon established an effective system of administration. The sudden change of location of the Unit from Larnaca to Cairo and thence to the Sinai Desert placed an extra burden of work on the 'A' Section. In addition, due to the rapid nature in which UNEF was established, many administrative teething problems arose. Instructions and regulations for the new force were, of necessity, issued piecemeal and even as the tour of the 25 Inf Gp drew to a close, procedures, instructions and regulations of 'A' matters were still being thrashed out.

Pay was a matter of concern to all and the system of payment changed several times. The Adjutant, as Group Cashier, became something of an expert in finance having to deal with Cyprus Pounds, Sterling, Egyptian Pounds, Dollars and finally Israeli lire during the tour. When matters finally settled and the UN per diem allowance was paid in Israeli lire twice monthly (15th and last day of month) the Adjutant had still the task of getting UN payrolls prepared, sent to Finance Officer at UNEF Jerusalem, cheque collected for pay and last but by no means least, cashing of cheque at Bank in Jerusalem (a round trip of 360 miles). The Adjutant also operated a Dollar A/C in Jerusalem to deal with Group Credits from Ireland. Finally he also dealt with pay of civilian labour in Camp.

Post was another major problem for the 'A' Staff. Our constant moving had resulted in at least four changes of address which of course did not help matters and even shortly before the Units departure home, post was arriving to personnel of the Group at Cyprus, Cairo and UNTSO. The postal system finally settled upon was that for post out the Group received from UN a supply of stamps free, based on the rate of five stamps per man per week. This was a generous allowance. The mail was stamped by the Orderly Room Staff and handed to the Canadian Postal Staff in Rabah three times per week. The Canadian Postal Staff collected mail from Jerusalem and delivered to us also three times a week. This system was not working too well coming to the end of the 25 Inf Gp's tour and it appeared likely that changes in the system would have to be made as of course post was a major morale factor in the Unit.

The various changes in location, poor accommodation and in inadequate supply of stationery did not help in the smooth running of the Section. Office equipment too suffered in the many moves

but the small dedicated 'A' Staff overcame all these difficulties and many more besides. Their good humour and willingness at all times to get the job done resulted in an up-to-date handover to 26 Inf Gp with procedures established and working for the many problems that arose in the administration of the Unit.

'Q' SECTION

The 25 Inf Gp began its tour of duty with UNFICYP, where the logistic back-up provided mainly by the British was excellent. In the early days of UNEF there was NO logistic support and each Battalion had to be self-sufficient. For the first two months there was little improvement in this situation. Supplies then slowly became available during the latter half of the tour. The Canadian and Polish Contingents were tasked with providing logistics for UNEF.

Most of the stores and equipment received by the Group were either brought over by the Group from Cyprus or were received from Ireland. The Canadian 73 Supply Coy at Camp SHAMS, Cairo, while responsible for supplying all stores, had only limited stocks available and could not meet the requirements of Units deployed.

In UNEF, supplies were made available by the UNEF procurement Section. This was a civilian establishment based in Cairo with a sub-section in Jerusalem. The procurement sub-section in Jerusalem was authorised to purchase stores, only when these stores were NOT available from Cairo. However, this Section proved to be very helpful and an amount of stores were acquired through them.

Storage facilities were poor. Most stores were accommodated in tents without hard standing. On our move from Rabah to Negela a building was made available as a rations stores but other storage accommodation was under canvas.

Rations available to UNEF were of three types:

- a. Fresh Rations: These were got from Shekem, which also supplied the Israeli Army. They were collected three times each week from Tel Aviv. IRBATT provided staff for the supply base at Tel Aviv for the first few weeks but this was later operated by Canadian Movement Control detachment. Items available included meat, milk, vegetables, fruit, etc. The quality of rations available from this source was of a very high standard.
- b. Dry Rations: Dry rations were purchased by UNEF procurement in Cairo and supplied by 73 Canadian Supply Coy. Items available included tea, sugar, etc. and all tinned food. They were collected twice monthly from Cairo and delivered by Polish second-line transport to a delivery point in the UNEF Buffer Zone. From there, the rations were transported by IRBATT transport. Some difficulties were experienced with supplies from this source.

- c. Pack Rations: A reserve of about twenty days compo pack rations were held at Unit level. Each OP was also equipped with an emergency reserve. OP 507, which was in an isolated location, used pack rations supplemented by some items of fresh rations. A small daily percentage use of pack rations was also found desirable to provide a regular turnover of packs.
- d. The ration scale was based on the Canadian ration and compared favourably with the Irish ration scale. Food supplied available to 25 Inf Gp were satisfactory.

Most of our catering difficulties were due to the lack of field training of our cooks. Cooking equipment was satisfactory during the second half of the tour. It consisted of M 59 petrol cookers, Hydro field petrol cookers and gas breakfast cookers. An assistant QM, it was felt, would have been a big asset to the Group as he could have concentrated on all aspects of rations and catering.

The only refrigeration in use by the 25 Inf Gp were twelve small gas refrigerators. They were very suitable for us on the Posts. There was an additional minimum requirement for large size refrigerators and deep freezer/cold storage, for use in ration stores and other locations. Unfortunately they were not available through UNEF sources during our tour. There was a sufficient stock of insulated food containers, and some of these were used as ice containers at the forward posns. Ice was available for daily delivery to base camp and to forward positions. There was also a requirement for a refrigerated truck. This was requisitioned from UNEF, but up to the time of our departure it had not been made available.

With the exception of 84 mm A/Tk ammunition, all high explosive ammunition was left behind in Cyprus in the ammunition sub depot Dhekelia. Arrangements were made to have this returned to Ireland.

Very little barrack services were supplied by UNEF. Any equipment received was sent from Ireland and this situation is liable to continue for some time. Accommodation stores were not available from UNEF. An adequate supply of beds and mattresses were recommended to be brought from Ireland by 26 Inf Gp. The sleeping bags in use with the Group required dry cleaning at the end of the tour. There were no wardrobes available. Provision of these would have done a lot to increase the comfort of the troops. In the interim, personnel of 26 Inf Gp were advised to equip themselves with a good quality plastic travelling wardrobe. The provision of the services which we take for granted at home caused many a headache for the 'Q' Staff.

Laundry. The laundry service was never very satisfactory throughout the tour. We think the story of the officer who paid for his laundry with a tin of tobacco and got one grapefruit as change will stand up to examination.

Tailor. The tailor was provided by contractors from El Arish and he gave a satisfactory service.

Barber. The Barber was provided by the same contractors, who also provided a shoe repair service.

Gas. Refilling of gas cylinders was eventually arranged for collection in Gaza.

In addition to the normal issue of clothing and equipment the 25 Inf Gp received from Ireland a special personal issue of one pair of desert boots, sand goggles and polarised spectacles. This was in response to an urgent request to Dublin by the Group on arrival in the new mission area from Cyprus.

The 'Q' Branch were confronted by a large variety of problems during its tour of duty. Many of these were caused by the fact that the Unit had a number of moves, from Ireland to Cyprus, Cyprus to Cairo, Cairo to Rabah, and finally Rabah to Negela. Some of these moves were made at very short notice and difficulties were aggravated by a lack of logistics back-up at the higher level in the new mission area. Operational conditions with UNEF were more difficult, supply problems greater and storage facilities inadequate. All these factors combined to place a much higher work load on the 'Q' Staff, both from the accountability and supply point of view. It is a tribute to their determination and zeal that the Group was so well served in all 'Q' matters.

ENGINEER SECTION

Engineer support for UNEF was supplied by the POLISH Contingent. The Chief Engineer was Polish and he had available to him a Polish field Squadron. While this was primarily geared towards the combat role it did include some tradesmen (25) and plant. These Polish engineers were not allowed to operate on Israeli held territory, as a result N. Bde was completely dependent upon its own resources.

The Bde organisation makes no provision for a Bde Engineer or Bde Engineering troops, the only resources available were those engineers forming part of the three Bns. While 25 Inf Gp did have a reasonable complement of tradesmen (13), the other Contingents came unprepared for constructional work and had a very limited general engineering capability.

Due to his previous experience in this field, the Group Engineer acted as advisor on and co-ordinator of engineering activities in the Bde. He also controlled the supply and distribution of engineering materials within the Bde.

The Canadian Supply Coy was responsible for the supply of engineering materials. However, during our tour they had negligible stocks. Materials had to be obtained from Jerusalem or Tel Aviv on requisition through the UNEF Procurement Officer in Jerusalem. Materials were scarce and extremely expensive in Israel, e.g. 1 metre of 4" x 2" cost £1 sterling and were subject to heavy import duties and taxes. While every effort was made to satisfy the Bdes needs and emergency requirements were generally met, delays on bulk orders occurred while seeking the most favourable terms and exemption from duty. Difficulties were also experienced in communicating with Arab and Israeli traders, in the identification of alternatives for items not available and in transportation.

25 Gp Engineer had authority to expend £200 per month on emergency purchases in El Arish for the Bde. This sum was not being fully expended since authorised, due to the extreme scarcity of engineering materials in that town.

The quality of the materials, particularly plumbing, so far obtained was much inferior to that of the items used by COE in Ireland. This necessitated constant maintenance and frequent replacement of fittings such as stop cocks etc. Prepared timber was unobtainable and finishing and shaping for window frames etc. was by separate contract.

The transporting of the materials, when obtained proved a major problem due to the time/distance involved (El Arish - $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours; Tel Aviv and Jerusalem - 5 hours each way) and the scarcity of vehicles. While the transport of other Contingents had on occasions to be used they did not prove very satisfactory due to difficulties of communication and control.

The pursuit of materials absorbed a disproportionate amount of Group Engineer's time.

No UNEF controlled plant was available to the Bde due to the non-acceptability of the Polish Contingent on Israeli held territory. A request to the Poles to release some plant for operation by us was refused.

The bulk of the heavy plant in Israel had been mobilised for use by the IDF. Only after considerable difficulty was some Arab owned plant obtained for the clearance of the new Camp site at Negela..

A number of contracts for work beyond the capabilities of the Contingent engineers were negotiated in El Arish, these included the clearance of 20,000 cubic metres of sand from Negela and the preparation of timber. Negotiations were lengthy and invariably included the offer to reprice if necessary, to undercut any other contractor.

25 Gp Engineer on arrival recommended to HQ UNEF the early provision of prefabricated buildings as both desirable and economical. This was accepted and is at present being discussed with representatives of UN HQ, consideration is initially being given to the housing of N Bde. The minimum cost of buildings alone, unerected, to house IRBATT and to provide all facilities, canteens, messes, workshops, etc. would be 400,000 dollars.

Pending the provision of such camps, HQ UNEF were requested to purchase some locally produced prefabricated buildings to meet the immediate needs of Bde HQ and Units. These particular prefabricated buildings had considerable limitations and only a very limited number were available.

During the short stay in Cairo, the Section provided lighting to the tented accommodation and rehabilitated and maintained the ablutions and toilets in the allotted portion of the Academy. Training in mine warfare was also provided for the Gp.

Both at Rabah and the Coy OP the Section provided the normal Camp facilities, ablutions, showers, DTLs and lighting, in addition a Dexion based cookhouse preparation and serving room was erected. Training in mine warfare continued and the Coys were assisted in

the clearance of OPs and the construction of shelters. During this period also, advice, guidance and assistance was provided to the other Contingents of the Bde. These had arrived without tools or tradesmen and lacking in experience in UN operations.

It was unfortunate that during this the early and normally most productive period of a tour, that the Section should have suffered from a lack of security of tenure and a shortage of materials. While all structures were designed for easy removal and minimum loss of materials, much of IRBATTs work in Rabah was of little benefit to the Unit when it moved to Negela.

During the month of January 1974 the major engineer work effort was devoted to the development of the Camp site at Negela. Wiring, renovation, and the provision of doors and windows for all buildings commenced. Soakage pits and septic tanks were cleared. By mid February, DTL's, showers and ablutions were provided to permit partial occupation of the Camp. By the end of February a foundation (by contract) 38m x 9m was laid for a future cookhouse/dining/recreation complex. Full occupation of the Camp at Negela was made by 25 Inf Gp on 20 March 1974. The Engineer Section was fully employed right up to the time of rotation in developing the Camp still further and making every effort to lighten the work load, in this respect, for the 26 Inf Gp.

The Engineer Section played a vital role in the life of the 25 Inf Gp. They worked hard and played hard. Their parties and distinctive dress on such occasions, their all star five-a-side soccer team and their good humour and capacity for work will long be remembered by all who served with 25 Inf Gp.

SIGNAL SECTION

When the decision was taken to augment the 25 Inf Gp for service in the Middle East a number of additional signallers, including the Signal Officer were chosen. These extra personnel assembled in Dún Mhic Aoidh, Kildare, on 3 November 1973, and prepared to move to an unknown destination in the Middle East on 5 Nov. The short time available was utilised in gathering equipment, stores and documents. Little information about the area of operations or likely task was available, so the Section planned to be as self-sufficient as was possible in the time available to them. Everything therefore which was required towards this end was sought, but of course certain items were not readily available "off the shelf". Any deficiencies, it was planned, would be despatched to the Unit as soon as possible.

On arrival in Cairo it became apparent that no immediate logistic support would be forthcoming from UN. The first few days in the new mission area were spent in integrating with signal personnel already with the Group, checking stores, charging batteries, establishing a COMCEN, fitting out Radio vehicles and training personnel in the use of the equipment.

On 9 November 1973, the advance party 25 Inf Gp moved across the Suez Canal into the Sinai Desert. A rear party manned the COMCEN in Cairo monitoring progress. On arrival in Rabah, some thirty kilometres to East of the Canal, it was found that a number of communication assets existed there. The location was itself a good one from the signal point of view, the UNTSO Radio Station (K.C.C.) was established there and these were some 80 ft lattice masts available there. Immediately the new group COMCEN was established and this was to remain in Rabah until 20 March 1974. The tasks of this COMCEN was to communicate with the rear elements in Cairo and to provide message handling facilities and communications for group activities. The first month in Rabah was spent in receiving the forward area, establishing stores and workshop facilities, investigating 2nd line maintenance possibilities, and procuring a supply of films.

The Canadian Signal detachment located in Rabah were most helpful in this respect. Our first positions were established on 2 Dec 1973 and a Coy HQ COMCEN using AN/VRC 46 equipment was established at UNEF position 503 on the same date, with each of the other positions established using AN/PRC 77 equipment. Communications were unusual in that no line communications existed and the PRC 77 or AN/VRC 46 were in constant use and found to be reliable. With the disengagement talks reaching a successful conclusion it appeared that the Group would acquire an additional five positions, which would have resulted in the Group's Radio equipment being fully committed on the ground. These proposed positions were carefully

receded and found to be within 77 Set range of the Coy HQ. However, circumstances changed, and instead the number of positions to be occupied by our Group were reduced.

Work now progressed in earnest on the new Camp at Negela and a new COMCEN was established there, opening on 20 Mar 74. The accommodation for this COMCEN at Negela was far superior to that available at Rabah. It was now housed in a solid building instead of the tentage which was all that was available in Negela. In addition some hard "sleeper" work (gathering of disused railway sleepers) provided flooring for the stores and workshop tents.

From the communications point of view this whole operation was unique insofar as the sole communication means was radio. It was not feasible to lay line due to shortage of cable itself and also of doubts about maintenance of line due to restrictions on freedom of movement and heavy military traffic. The Radio equipment proved its reliability during the tour of duty and the personnel of the Signal Section performed no less efficiently carrying out its many and varied tasks with dedication and good humour - so necessary in a mission of this type.

TRANSPORT SECTION

The lack of transport was one of the major problems experienced by the 25 Inf Gp during its service in the Middle East. In Cyprus the Unit had enjoyed a very adequate first line transport and repair service. It also had second and third line transport, with repair facilities readily available and a streamlined logistics back-up. All this was to change drastically on the transfer of the Unit from UNFICYP to UNEF.

UNFICYP HQ permitted only 10 Landrover type vehicles to be taken from Cyprus and after moving from Cairo to Rabah, UNEF HQ supplied eight ZIL Russian trucks. All the trucks were in an exceedingly poor condition. There were no log books, hand books, manuals or spare parts available. Tyres were bald and the general overall appearance of them was a true reflection of the various systems under the bonnet, wiring, petrol, water, etc. This was to be the sum total of Unit transport for most of the tour and it just was not adequate for Unit requirements thus putting a tremendous strain on the whole Transport Section.

Vehicles in the Unit covered an average of 40,000 miles per month. The ZIL trucks gave cause for grave concern but due to the essential needs of the Unit they had to be kept on the road. A requisition for technical stores was submitted to HQ UNEF early in the tour but nothing was supplied. Fortunately some spare parts for the Landrovers had been brought from Cyprus but these were exhausted by Christmas. By Jan 74 the transport situation had deteriorated still further, due to the failure of the UN to supply any serviceable heavy lift vehicles and to the complete lack of logistics back-up which curtailed preventative maintenance on the meagre transport held by the Group.

After many requests for extra transport UNEF on 23 Jan 74 supplied five additional Russian trucks - all of which were found to be unserviceable. The situation was now so bad that OC 25 Inf Gp set up an Inspection Board to examine the position. They found that out of a total of thirteen trucks on charge to the Unit only two were useable and even these, the report said, were unsafe. The report was submitted to UNEF HQ but no transport was forthcoming except an additional three jeeps. Matters had now become so serious from the transport point of view and consequently from the operational point of view, that eventually UNEF HQ arranged that four Austrian trucks be loaned to us. On 20 March, five FINBATT 2½-ton trucks were also loaned to us. One week before rotation UNEF HQ Cairo announced the availability of trucks for the Group, too late to be of any assistance to us, but at least wonderful news for the incoming 26 Inf Gp.

The Transport Section had a most difficult and frustrating tour in the Middle East. They performed miracles with the completely inadequate transport at their disposal. The fitter group, in particular, deserve special mention for their long hours of dedicated service to keep the wheels rolling. This six months in the desert is a period that will be long remembered by all who served in the Transport Section of the 25 Inf Gp.

MEDICAL SECTION

The Medical Section consisted of one Medical Officer, three Sergeants and three Privates. The NCOs and men were divided into three teams. One consisted of one Sergeant in charge and a private/ambulance driver in the Group HQ. The other two teams were on fortnightly rotation of duties, and while on OP duties were temporarily attached to the companies though still responsible to the Medical Officer. Thus there was always a Sergeant immediately available at the Coy HQ in the Buffer Zone and a Private Medical Orderly in the most distant platoon post.

The Medical tent in Group HQ consisted of an examination and treatment area, a sick bay with space for four patients and a stores and quarters for the Medical Section itself. There was a Medical Aid Post in the Coy HQ in the forward area. Hospital facilities were in Cairo or Jerusalem. The official UNEF hospital was the Italian Hospital, Cairo, and there were plans to open a Polish field hospital also in Cairo. However, 25 Inf Gp were located East of the Suez Canal as it was found more convenient to use facilities in Jerusalem and the MO arranged that patients could be admitted to St. Joseph's Hospital, Jerusalem. This was a modern hospital in the Arab quarter, run by a French religious Order and had the added attraction of having a number of Irish nuns on the staff. Optical and Dental services were also arranged in Jerusalem and proved satisfactory. The disadvantage of Jerusalem (or Cairo for that matter) from the patients point of view was that of having to travel a distance of almost two hundred miles to get to hospital. There were, however, facilities in the medical centre in Rabah Camp and also in our new camp, Benburb Camp at Negela for treating almost all acute medical diseases and minor surgical conditions. More seriously injured personnel could be dealt with in an emergency. The Israeli Army offered helicopter evacuation for any serious cases. There was equipment in the medical centre in Camp for oxygen administration, artificial respiration, fluid transfusion and emergency blood collection and transfusion. There were however, no aids to diagnosis, such as X-ray or laboratory facilities. This meant that diagnosis had to be purely on clinical grounds.

Sickness experienced during the tour could be divided into two main groups: injuries (mainly from sports) and gastro-intestinal. Injuries consisted mainly of sprained ankles and damage to knees (playing of games on sand). Diarrhoea was a problem up to Christmas after arrival to Rabah from Cairo. There were some bad cases which had to be admitted to sick bay. Colds and sore throats became common with the arrival of cooler weather in Jan/Feb.

This was inevitable with minimum night temperatures of below 40°F with a relative humidity of 80-90° and comparatively high daytime temperature. A problem encountered in our area of operations by UNTSO and by the British in World War II period was infective hepatitis, a liver disease, sometimes fatal, caused either by contaminated water supply, or by contaminated fresh fruit and vegetables. This problem cropped up in one Contingent West of the Suez Canal and as a precautionary measure all ranks in the Unit were injected. Anti-malaria tablets were of course taken by all personnel on a daily basis.

IRBATT was well served by its **Medical** Section and the low incidence of illness in the Unit throughout its entire service in the Middle East was indeed proof of the excellent work and dedication of the M.O. and his diligent Section.

WELFARE SECTION

The Welfare system in operation with 25 Inf Gp differed from the system which obtained in Cyprus in two major aspects. Firstly, the provision of welfare facilities was purely a Unit responsibility with final accountability to the QMG rather than to Army Canteen Board. Secondly, canteens and Officers Messes were operated centrally, there were no separate company canteens. Prices were the same in all locations and all profits went into a central fund.

The staff consisted of the Welfare Officer and a CQMS. In addition two Corporals and one Private were supplied by the Inf Coys to run the canteen and to help in the collection of supplies. All were drivers. This team was responsible for purchasing and collecting of goods, running the canteen and NCOs Mess, issuing supplies to the coy on OP duty and general welfare accountancy.

The bulk of canteen supplies were got through the UNTSO PX and Shekem. Some items such as minerals and writing material could be purchased at more advantageous prices on the local market.

Supplies from the UNTSO PX were extremely haphazard in the beginning due to the fact that it was not geared to deal with large numbers and to some extent to a lack of co-operation on the part of some members of the UNTSO staff.

Initially, imported beer was available in very limited quantities but supplies were adequate at the time of rotation. Supplies of cigarettes were adequate but we had to accept half to one third of our requirements in American brands. These were not popular with the troops. Irish spirits were not available and only limited supplies of other brands could be purchased. Attractive items such as cameras, watches, radios, etc. were available to UNTSO personnel only. Towards the end of our tour a small number of cameras were made available to UNEF, but prices appeared to be higher than similar items would cost through ACB or Command Welfare Boards in Ireland. Toilet requisites, tinned foods, etc. were purchased on the local market but prices were very high.

Payment for all purchases from UNTSO PX and Shekem was on a cash with order basis in Israeli currency. Limited credit facilities were available for some types of minerals purchased locally. Generally, prices of all items including duty free goods were considerably higher than in Cyprus. The average overall increase was about 20% and rising up to the end of our tour.

There were no delivery facilities as in Cyprus. All supplies had to be collected from suppliers at El Arish, Jerusalem or Tel Aviv.

The system of cash purchasing of supplies which had to be operated necessitated a large cash investment. Thus most of the capital available was tied up in stock. Profits were satisfactory and kept to a reasonable level but because of general financial system in operation not much of the profits were readily available initially for welfare projects. A tape recorder and some sports equipment were purchased. Welfare funds were also used for the payment of overnight accommodation and meals for personnel who went to Jerusalem to collect PX supplies as UNEF refused to pay because they considered that these journeys were not in accordance with their understanding of UNEF duty.

Varieties of currency in circulation (Irish, English, Cypriot, Egyptian, Israeli, US and Canadian) in the early stages proved a major headache. To add to the problem, purchases from UNTSO PX had to be paid for in US dollars, while purchases from Shekem and local traders had to be paid for in Israeli currency. Since mid-Jan UNTSO PX accepted payment in Israeli currency, as per diem allowance was then being paid by UN in Israeli currency. This eased the problem very considerably.

Efforts were made to provide rest and recreational facilities for troops away from the operational area. Due to the high cost of meals and accommodation this proved impossible from individual and unit resources. The individual's per diem allowance was not adequate, because of high prices, to cover normal requirements. In addition, because of the system of cash purchasing of canteen requirements very little of canteen profits were available to cater for a big undertaking of this nature. A submission was made to CAO UNEF by OC 25 Inf Gp for financial assistance in setting up rest and recreational facilities. This was done at a very early stage in our tour but while some promises were made nothing happened during our stay in the Middle East.

Only one tour was organised. This was to Bethlehem for Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. Forty-one, all ranks, participated. Members of the Unit showed little interest in organised tours, the reason being twofold. Firstly the costs were very high compared to Cyprus and in addition many of the personnel had come on tours to the Holy Land from Cyprus when serving with a previous overseas Group.

The main indoor activities available to the troops were films and bingo. There was an average of four films per week (courtesy of the Canadian element who were stationed in Rabah). Bingo was run by the Chaplains two nights per week. A highly successful talent competition was organised with heat winners going forward to the grand final run as part of the St. Patrick's Day celebrations at Negela. Reading material was very essential particularly for troops engaged on OP duty. Fortunately a good supply was sent out to us from Ireland.

An active sports committee functioned in the Unit and co-ordinated sport on a group basis. Soccer and Volleyball were the main sports catered for. Two top class five-a-side Soccer tournaments were run giving much enjoyment to both participants and spectators.

OPS/INT SECTION1. General

The Ops/Int Section during our tour of duty with UNEF consisted of two officers and four NCOs (one officer and two NCOs arriving with the Augmentation Group to Cairo on 5 Nov 73). As can be seen from the general section of this history, the situations and problems which faced the Ops/Int personnel were many and varied.

2. Operational Procedure

- a. Throughout our tour it was necessary to "man" the Ops/Int centre at all times. To achieve this a "watchkeeper" system was introduced and one officer and one NCO were on duty on a 24-hour basis. The addition of the Group 2I/C and Group Signals Officer to the watchkeeping staff, meant that the incidence of duty for both officers and NCOs was one in four.
- b. The COMCEN was co-located with the Ops/Int centre both in Rabah and later in Negela, and the radio link to the forward company was "remoted" to the Duty Officer's desk. By the use of rebroadcast facilities at forward Company Headquarters it was possible to speak directly to the forward positions if the need arose.
- c. Reports of incidents were sent from the forward positions via Company Headquarters to the Group Ops/Int centre. Throughout our tour with UNEF the 25 Inf Gp dealt directly with UNEF HQ in Cairo on all operational matters, although in the latter stages we also sent copies of Routine Reports, Sitreps, etc. to our Bde HQ. Sitreps were required by UNEF HQ three times daily - 0200, 1000 and 1800 hours.

3. Freedom of Movement

- a. This was a recurring problem throughout our tour. Neither party was prepared to allow complete freedom of movement to UNEF and this necessitated continuous liaison with both IDF and ARE. Even the basic need of daily servicing of our forward positions required the arrangement of an IDF Liaison Officer.
- b. The most serious aspect of the restriction on movement was the IDF refusal to allow us to make direct contact with the ARE controlled area. Naturally this restriction did not apply after the establishment of the Buffer Zone, but when both sides were in direct confrontation it

caused us many problems. We were not allowed establish positions in the ARE controlled area, and in order to establish contact with the Egyptian Forces in our Sector, a Swedish company was deployed in the area opposite our forward company. While in the main this arrangement was satisfactory, it was rather cumbersome for negotiations of a critical and urgent nature such as the arranging of a ceasefire.

- c. This system continued until late January when the Swedish positions were withdrawn. However, during the period from then until the disengagement we were allowed patrol to the Egyptian area without complaint from the IDF.

4. UNEF

- a. At the start of the mission UNEF HQ was very much over-worked and the operational situation was very confused. From 1-9 Nov 73 we were based in Cairo, awaiting clearance to move to Rabah. We were allotted a Sector, but no information was available at UNEF HQ about the situation in this area. No maps of the area were available, and the maps we eventually used for our move to Rabah were "borrowed" on a visit to UNTSO Control Centre in Ismailia.
- b. The division of responsibility between UNTSO and UNEF was not properly co-ordinated. UNTSO patrols operated throughout our Sector without reference to OC, 25 Inf Gp, although a clear direction was given that OC 25 Inf Gp had operational responsibility for the Sector.
- c. A similar diplomatic rather than military reasoning pertained to the establishing of the Brigades. Because of language and staff shortage problems the Bde HQs during our tour did not assume operational control of their Sectors. However the skeleton Headquarters were established and while we continued to deal with UNEF HQ on all operational matters, difficulties sometimes arose due to conflicting instructions being issued by Bde HQ. This problem was recognised by the Force Commander and on 30 March 1974 an instruction was issued by him defining the functions and responsibilities of Brigade Commanders while retaining command and control of Battalions at UNEF HQ.

5. Training

Due to the amount of work which faced the men of the 25 Inf Gp, even during their two weeks in the main camps in Rabah and Negela the time available for training was always at a premium. Normally training was organised on a company basis but the Gp IO arranged a shortcourse for all on the identification of mines.

NOMINAL ROLL 25 INF GP UNEFHQ COY

<u>No.</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>N A M E</u>	<u>Parent Unit</u>
0.6386	Lt Col	P. Allen	3 Garr MPC
0.7900	Comdt	B. McDonnell	Air Corps
0.7434	Comdt	J.A. Burke	2 Fd Engrs
0.8042	Capt	D.G. Johnston	4 FAR
0.8141	Capt	E. Horgan	Dep Cav
0.8073	Capt	D. Rea	Military College
0.7760	Capt	J.G. Mulrooney	Military College
0.8085	Capt	J.F. Brennan	Depot Sigs
0.8282	Lt	D. Conway	3 Garr S&T
0.8447	Capt	C. Browne	No 2 Hosp Coy
0.7558	Capt	T.J. Moriarty	QMGs Br. AHQ
800307	Sgt	Burke, T.	Military College
805918	Sgt	Byrne, L.	4 Garr AOC
809558	Sgt	Clarke, P.	2 Garr AOC
96627	Sgt	Connolly, M.	Depot Sigs
815159	Sgt	Connolly, P.	Depot AMC
819719	Sgt	Cotter, J.	Depot Sigs
823323	Sgmn	Cummins, D.	2 Fd Sigs
815237	Pte	Connolly, J.	Depot Engrs
814109	CQMS	Darcy, R.	1 AA Regt
822448	Cpl	Daly, P.	2 Garr MPC
823785	Pte	Earl, V.	4 Garr S&T
816485	Sgt	Foran, N.	4 Maint COE
820489	Sgt	Forde, M.J.	1 Fd Sigs
803960	Cpl	Edwards, F.	2 Garr MPC
91803	Coy Sgt	Gibney, E.	4 Garr MPC
823462	Pte	Grant, F.	Depot Engrs
816076	Sgt	Gethings, P.	2 Bn
820383	Pte	Grant, W.	11 Fd S&T
822206	Pte	Goddard, P.	2 Hosp Coy

<u>No.</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>N A M E</u>	<u>Parent Unit</u>
824471	Pte	Halligan, O.	1 Fd COE
820404	Pte	Hughes, M.	Depot AMC
815451	Sgt	Houlihan, P.	E Comd HQ
813112	Sgt	Harte, J.	4 Fd COE
814345	Sgt	Hartley, L.	3 Fd COE
814019	Pte	Henneberry, J.	Depot S&T
98393	Sgt	Jordan, J.	2 Garr MPC
825543	Cpl	Kelly, F.	2 Fd S&T
804721	Sgt	Kilgannon, P.	4 Garr AOC
815234	Sgt	Kirwan, P.	5 Fd Coy MPC
803104	Cpl	Kavanagh, F.	2 Fd S&T
820988	Pte	King, E.	2 Fd S&T
820064	Pte	Kavanagh, C.	Depot AMC
811164	Cpl	Leggett, F.	21 Bn
823107	Pte	Larkin, J.	2 Bn
809420	Sgt	Lenihan, J.	2 Hosp Coy
813997	Sgt	Mullane, M.	1 Fd S&T
824031	Cpl	McCaul, B.	W Comd HQ
817490	Cpl	Manogue, M.	4 Garr MPC
818987	Pte	Mulvaney, J.	4 Fd COE
822412	Sgmn	Murray, P.	Air Sqn Sigs
816109	Sgt	Murphy, W.	HQ CTC
822004	Pte	Moynihan, T.	1 Fd COE
813370	Sgmn	Mullins, N.	1 Fd Sigs
822219	Pte	Murphy, U.	1 Fd Sigs
818807	Pte	McCarthy, U.	1 Fd Sigs
87182	BSM	Norris, P.	2 Bn
805317	Sgt	O'Reilly, W.	Military College
816425	Sgt	O'Meara, F.	4 Mot Sqn
816476	Pte	O'Brien, M.	Depot Engrs
816423	Pte	Quinn, P.	Depot COE

<u>No.</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>N A M E</u>	<u>Parent Unit</u>
819677	Sgt	Reidy, P.	3 Garr S&T
817230	Sgt	Rochford, T.	1 Fd Coy COE
821129	Cpl	Reaney, J.	3 Garr MPC
821025	Pte	Roche, D.	1 Fd Sigs
812183	Cpl	Sheehan, T.	Depot Sigs
810829	Sgt	Sheehan, J.	1 Hosp Coy
815055	Cpl	Scott, J.	1 Fd Sigs
824513	Pte	Sherry, C.	5 Bn
80698	BQMS	Tierney, G.	18 Bn
823107	Cpl	Wilson, M.	2 Bn
818925	Pte	Webster, R.	1 Fd Sigs
805794	Sgt	Phelan, J.	Depot Sigs
818124	Pte	Reidy, N.	4 Fd COE
819171	Pte	Conway, J.	4 Fd COE
824020	Sgmn	Bolster, D.	1 Fd Sigs
810695	Sgt	O'Shea, W.	3 Garr MPC
811881	Sgt	Mullery, W.	Depot MPC
	Rev Fr	Bresnan, P.	Cathal Brugha Bks
	Rev Fr	Matthews, C.	Baldonnell
	Capt	W.A. Nott	AHQ
814135	Coy Sgt	Donnelly, J.	4 Mot Sqn
817941	Pte	McCormack	Depot S&T
810695	Sgt	O'Shea, W.	3 Grn MPC
814863	Cpl	Nolan, J.	Depot MPC
816674	Cpl	Higgins, J.	3 Garr MPC
0.7548	Capt	K. Duffy	1 FAR

A COY

0.7636	Comdt	F.L. Mallowney	12 Bn
0.8150	Capt	M. Cregan	12 Bn
0.8226	Lt	P. Langan	12 Bn
0.8039	Lt	P. Young	12 Bn
0.8325	Lt	R. King	12 Bn

<u>No.</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>N A M E</u>	<u>Parent Unit</u>
802882	Coy Sgt	McSweeney, C.	12 Bn
93538	CQMS	McGivney, F.	12 Bn
821530	Sgt	Haslam, M.	12 Bn
817954	Sgt	Kelly, P.	12 Bn
808336	Sgt	Sheehan, M.	12 Bn
821174	Cpl	Barry, D.	12 Bn
98400	Cpl	Bowes, J.	CTD (South)
806191	Cpl	Burke, E.	12 Bn
823222	Cpl	Burke, M.	12 Bn
813843	Cpl	Byrne, T.	1 Mot Sqn
824744	Cpl	Collins, N.	12 Bn
823154	Cpl	Culligan, M.	12 Bn
820930	Cpl	Dennehy, C.	1 Fd S&T
821154	Cpl	Fleming, M.	12 Bn
819414	Cpl	Gill, W.	1 Mot Sqn
821277	Cpl	Hawkins, L.	12 Bn
817586	Cpl	Hayes, J.	1 AA Regt
819443	Cpl	Hayes, P.	12 Bn
801418	Cpl	Kennedy, N.	12 Bn
816841	Cpl	O'Brien, J.	12 Bn
824198	Cpl	O'Connell, M.	14 Bn
99166	Cpl	O'Connor, M.	14 Bn
815623	Cpl	O'Donoghue, J.	15 Bn
812486	Cpl	O'Keefe, T.	1 Mot Sqn
817314	Cpl	O'Rourke, M.	1 FA Regt
820217	Cpl	Power, J.	12 Bn
812831	Cpl	Ryan, C.	12 Bn
812065	Cpl	Sheehan, L.	CTD (South)
820642	Cpl	Tierney, D.	1 Fd Sigs
824054	Pte	Brett, W.	12 Bn
824783	Pte	Brinn, J.	12 Bn
822786	Pte	Butler, J.	12 Bn
822479	Pte	Byrnes, H.	1 Fd Sigs

<u>No.</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>N A M E</u>	<u>Parent Unit</u>
811795	Pte	Carmody, W.	1 Fd COE
824476	Pte	Conway, P.	12 Bn
821664	Pte	Coughlan, T.	12 Bn
822791	Pte	Cremins, P.	12 Bn
824245	Pte	Delaney, C.	3 FAR
823519	Pte	Deveraux, M.	4 Bn
822429	Pte	Duffy, M.	12 Bn
823562	Pte	Fahey, P.	12 Bn
805487	Pte	Fitzgerald, J.	12 Bn
824318	Pte	Fox,	1 Fd Sigs
822673	Pte	Frawley, W.	12 Bn
823685	Pte	Gilbert, J.	12 Bn
824664	Pte	Glenny, T.	12 Bn
825605	Pte	Griffin, M.	12 Bn
821401	Pte	Griffin, S.	12 Bn
825485	Pte	Hayes, D.	4 Bn
824312	Pte	Hogan, G.	12 Bn
823194	Pte	Hallinan, P.	1 Fd S&T
824939	Pte	Jordan, W.	12 Bn
823349	Pte	Joyce, J.	12 Bn
823489	Pte	Keane, M.	3 Garr S&T
824825	Pte	Lynch, W.	12 Bn
819111	Pte	Molloy, J.	12 Bn
824035	Pte	McBride, W.	12 Bn
810969	Pte	McGrath, W.	12 Bn
823053	Pte	McMahon, R.	12 Bn
825829	Pte	Naughton, T.	12 Bn
822938	Pte	Nolan, S.	1 Fd Sigs
820916	Pte	Noonan, G.	12 Bn
824481	Pte	O'Brien, W.	1 Fd S&T
818760	Pte	O'Connell, M.	1 Fd Sigs
819198	Pte	Donovan, P.	4 Bn

<u>No.</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>N A M E</u>	<u>Parent Unit</u>
823487	Pte	O'Mahoney, D.	3 Garr S&T
822482	Pte	O'Shea, E.	12 Bn
825885	Pte	O'Sullivan, W.	3 Garr S&T
823408	Pte	Peters, M.	12 Bn
820307	Pte	Phelan, L.	4 Bn
814987	Pte	Power, G.	3 Mot Sqn
824100	Pte	Price, N.	CTD (South)
825528	Pte	Punch, G.	12 Bn
824261	Pte	Quigley, J.	12 Bn
815576	Pte	Ryan, E.	12 Bn
819769	Pte	Ryan, M.	12 Bn
824643	Pte	Ryan, J.	12 Bn
822511	Pte	Ryan, A.	12 Bn
822795	Pte	Shanahan, C.	12 Bn
824645	Pte	Shanahan, M.	12 Bn
824520	Pte	Sheedy, D.	12 Bn
825683	Pte	Smalle, A.	12 Bn
823889	Pte	Sweetman, R.	12 Bn
822250	Pte	Shaw, T.	4 Bn
824859	Pte	Treacy, W.	12 Bn
824028	Pte	Varian, J.	3 Garr S&T
824190	Pte	Walsh, B.	12 Bn

B COY

0.7535	Comdt	P.J. Kelly	23 Bn
0.8201	Capt	S.P. Downes	17 Bn
0.8221	Lt	J.J. Byrne	GTD CTC
0.8323	Lt	T. Creaton	4 Bn
0.8285	Lt	P.J. Hayes	5 Bn
812446	Coy Sgt	O'Boyle, P.	W Comd HQ
98955	CQMS	McNamee, G.	4 Fd S&T

<u>No.</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>N A M E</u>	<u>Parent Unit</u>
817108	Sgt	Mullarkey, J.A.	W Comd HQ
803253	Sgt	Moroney, J.	4 Bn
818044	Sgt	Murphy, S.	3 Bn
811647	Sgt	McPhillips, S.	5 Bn
815662	Cpl	Barrett, P.	5 Bn
809554	Cpl	Breen, T.	GTD CTC
823886	Cpl	Brennan, J.	4 Fd S&T
819633	Cpl	Corrigan, A.	2 Bn
819909	Cpl	Cox, P.	GTD CTC
817711	Cpl	Cunningham, T.	4 Fd Sigs
814080	Cpl	Herron, T.	4 Garr S&T
809710	Cpl	Howard, F.	5 Bn
819592	Cpl	Kelly, J.	Depot Arty
814684	Cpl	Linnane, M.	GTD CTC
425332	Cpl	Lynch, M.	6 Bn
815770	Cpl	Moore, C.	1 Armd Car Sqn
819902	Cpl	McSweeney, M.	4 Bn
815776	Cpl	O'Brien, E.	2 FAR
816991	Cpl	O'Brien, W.	11 Bn
821423	Cpl	O'Keefe, D.	4 Bn
817486	Cpl	O'Sullivan, J.	4 Bn
814121	Cpl	O'Sullivan, D.	4 Bn
821115	Cpl	Rogers, M.	W Comd Trg Depot
818970	Cpl	Reynolds, K.	4 Bn
818838	Cpl	Whearity, P.	2 Bn
821494	Cpl	Whitty, F.	2 FAR
813830	Cpl	Wykes, W.	6 Bn
820762	Pte	Abbet, D.	2 Bn
820331	Pte	Anderson, J.	Depot Arty
823136	Pte	Barkey, J.	4 Fd Sigs
825591	Pte	Berkery, M.	4 Bn
821464	Pte	Brady, O.	5 Bn

<u>No.</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>N A M E</u>	<u>Parent Unit</u>
811111	Pte	Broderick, B.	4 Garr S&T
822553	Pte	Browne, C.	2 FAR
821840	Pte	Buſtan, G.	4 Bn
814784	Pte	Byrne, E.	2 Bn
818817	Pte	Byrnes, J.	4 Bn
827250	Pte	Cahill, J.	5 Bn
819685	Pte	Cleary, C.	2 FAR
818535	Pte	Coffey, D.	Military College
825642	Pte	Conroy, J.	4 Bn
820075	Pte	Coughlan, J.	Depot Cav
825592	Pte	Curran, A.	4 Bn
822064	Pte	Delahunty, M.	4 Bn
818303	Pte	Delaney, P.	3 Bn
815513	Pte	Dillon, J.	2 Bn
821690	Pte	Donnelly, M.	2 Bn
825966	Pte	Drake, J.	4 Bn
819308	Pte	Fallon, P.	4 Garr S&T
824900	Pte	Foran, C.	5 Bn
822360	Pte	Fox, P.	5 Bn
806009	Pte	Gaffey, T.	4 Hosp Coy
820073	Pte	Harte, P.	4 Garr S&T
818592	Pte	Holligan, R.	Depot S&T
818598	Pte	Hughes, C.	Depot S&T
812827	Pte	Kavanagh, L.	2 FAR
821642	Pte	Kenny, D.	5 Bn
819083	Pte	Matthews, F.	Depot Arty
825391	Pte	Molloy, M.	4 Bn
826175	Pte	Mulcahy, P.	Depot Sigs
820227	Pte	Murphy, D.	GTD CTC
820029	Pte	Murphy, M.	GTD CTC
820850	Pte	McNamee, J.	1 Armd Car Sqn
810716	Cpl	Noctor, B.	3 Bn
813529	Pte	Norton, R.	2 FAR

<u>No.</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>N A M E</u>	<u>Parent Unit</u>
808386	Pte	O'Brien, J.	3 Bn
815912	Pte	O'Brien, J.	5 Bn
826672	Pte	O'Brien, J.	2 Bn
816846	Pte	O'Connell, J.	HQ CTC
823578	Pte	O'Connor, P.	4 Fd Sigs
823399	Pte	O'Flynn, J.	4 Bn
815453	Pte	O'Grady, P.	4 Bn
816591	Pte	O'Neill, J.	5 Bn
823842	Pte	O'Reilly, M.	4 Fd Sigs
825569	Pte	O'Sullivan, D.	4 Bn
826949	Pte	Rowe, M.	2 FAR
825228	Pte	Scanlon, J.	4 Bn
825589	Pte	Sherlock, D.	4 Bn
823250	Pte	Spillane, D.	4 Bn
818212	Pte	Strappe, M.	4 Bn
821057	Pte	Sutton, C.	4 Bn
825785	Pte	Thompson, F.	4 Bn
822236	Pte	Timmons, M.	3 Bn
820345	Pte	Tobin, P.	HQ CTC
817120	Pte	Tobin, W.	Depot Cav
823601	Pte	Twohig, T.	4 Bn

