LAST WEEK saw emergency services from across the Bases and within the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) take part in a large-scale exercise in Troodos to test the joint response in the event of a fuel leak and fire.

More than 50 people were involved in Exercise Lion Vouno II, which saw members of the RoC Fire Service, Cyprus Police and the Forestry Department, work alongside their Bases counterparts to get the situation under control in the most effective way possible.

During the scenario, which simulated a fire in a chalet, two people were seriously injured and required rescuing from the blaze and toxic fumes.

Squadron Leader Ema Bean, the Second in Command of Episkopi and Troodos Station, was the exercise lead and she explained how bringing together units from both the Bases and the RoC was important for the success of the joint effort. She said: “The collaboration between the Bases and the Republic of Cyprus is so important for the work we do in Troodos. It is important to remember that we have limited first line response capability in Troodos, so it is crucial that we are able to work successfully alongside the RoC emergency services when the time comes.

“We have an excellent relationship between ourselves and the grassroots first responders and there is so much respect which has been developed over many years. The Cyprus Police, the Fire Service and the Forestry Department are all excellent and have a great deal of expertise in handling situations like the one we exercised.

“The response from everyone involved on the day was absolutely fantastic and we are really happy with how it all went. “We have an LEC – Michael Pieris – who has been based in Troodos for many years and he has built up an outstanding rapport with the RoC emergency services. There is a lot of mutual respect there and you simply cannot buy that, it needs to be nurtured over time.”

Station Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Davison, who was on the ground watching the events unfold, revealed he found his front-line view most useful. He said: “This was an excellent exercise and usually if this sort of thing was to happen for real, I would be at Episkopi Station just receiving communication from the incident. This exercise allowed me to watch in real time as events unfolded.”

Dimitris Katsiflis, the Limassol District Group Manager for the Cyprus Fire Service, was equally enthusiastic about the exercise and the overall working relationship with his Bases counterparts. He said: “The exercise was very successful and we have very similar working practices to our colleagues in the Bases. “We cooperate very well with not only the Troodos Station, but with the other stations throughout the Bases and that is very important.”

COOPERATION: The Exercise saw Emergency Services from the Bases and the Republic of Cyprus working together
A Christmas message from CBF

As we approach Christmas and a well-earned break, may I take a moment to thank you most profoundly for all your hard work this year. I know that in each Station in the Sovereign Base Areas, the whole of this very special ‘one team’ has been doing hard yards across the breadth of our work. So, whether you are military or civilian, British or Cypriot, employee or contractor, young or old, be certain that I am hugely grateful for all you have done and continue to do for this extraordinary and expeditionary community.

Please do enjoy this special time with your loved ones and enjoy some rest. At the same time, do spare a thought for those here on island who will be working over the holidays to keep us safe and for those deployed overseas on operations (on land, in the air or on the sea). I trust you are all organised to be able to vote – hopefully through a proxy and, if not, by post. We are running a special trip back to the UK to ensure your vote counts, the deadline for that is tomorrow (December 6).

Follow this link to @ForcesRadioCY on Twitter for more information

Do please be wise on the roads and remember that the drink driving limit here is 30% lower than in the UK.

I wish you a very happy Christmas and a peaceful new year. See you in the sea for a Christmas morning dip!

Bases embrace road safety

Road Safety Week raises awareness about the importance of road safety as a whole. This year’s campaign looked at various aspects to get the message out to everyone living and working within the Bases community.

Command Master Driver, Warrant Officer Class 1 Craig McIntyre, has said this year’s Road Safety Week has proved a huge success in raising awareness about the numerous challenges facing road users. Running from November 19 and 23, BRAKE – the UK road safety charity behind the annual event – chose the tagline of ‘Step Up for Safe Streets’ for this year’s campaign and according to the Master Driver, it was embraced throughout the Bases.

Speaking after reflecting on the incredible support shown by military personnel, police and the civilian community, WO1 McIntyre explained how important the campaign is. He said: “Road Safety Week aims to raise awareness about the importance of road safety as a whole and this year we looked at various aspects to get our message out to everyone living and working within the community.”

And targeting everyone within the community was something the Master Driver placed great emphasis on.

He explained: “From a military perspective it would be easy just to focus on our military personnel but we have to remember that we have our families out here with us, using the roads, not just on camp but in the Republic of Cyprus and the SBAs too and that is an important point.

“Wherever you go in the world, people have different driving behaviours and we must ensure that people are made aware of that and given the right type of education to deal with it.”

To ensure that message reached a wider audience, the Master Driver said he worked very closely with the Sovereign Base Area Police which was hugely valuable.

He continued: “The police’s education programme was very useful because they went into schools to talk about the dangers surrounding improper behaviour on our roads.

“Children need to be made aware of the dangers, even if they are not driving themselves. We all walk on pavements and come into contact with vehicles daily, so we all need to be made aware.”

One aspect of Road Safety Week that WO1 McIntyre continues to highlight is the issue of speeding and the importance of eradicating this life-threatening activity.

“The key for me as the Master Driver is to get the message out there and ensure that people are hearing what we are saying. Unfortunately, it sometimes takes something serious to happen before some people take any notice, but we will continue in our efforts to get the message through.”
BFC / SBAA Social Media Roundup

1 PWRR - The Tigers
15 November at 16:19

Our football team have won their Army Cup second round clash against the Royal Lancers 3 - 2.

With a 3-2 win, we will most likely play another home game in the 3rd round. Well done lads.

.dealer sentenced to 25 months prison

A Greek Cypriot man living in Trachoni was jailed for 25 months in Her Majesty's Prison, Dhekelia last month, after being found guilty for possessing drugs with the intent to supply

The 36-year old was first arrested in June after a crime prevention patrol pulled two men over in their Paphos-registered car driving through the village in the early evening, writes Kristian Gray. Believing this to be suspicious, the officers carried out a thorough search of the vehicle and discovered what was later confirmed to be crystal meth hidden inside a straw.

After their arrest, one of the men confirmed where he had purchased the Class-A drug and police officers quickly launched a surveillance operation on the now convicted man's house.

In describing how the case and subsequent conviction unfolded, Chief Inspector Panicos Panayi revealed his officers were able to use the man's own technology against him. He said: “Firstly, this was an excellent investigation by the SBA Police from start to finish. The patrol officers felt a car registered in Paphos driving through Trachoni at that time of the evening was suspicious and obviously, those suspicions were proven correct. “After we were able to get information on where the men purchased the drugs, we quickly placed a house under surveillance. The house in question actually had its own CCTV – which is not uncommon for people dealing drugs – and we were able to use footage taken from his own cameras to help us secure the conviction.”

After searching the house, a small amount of drugs were seized alongside “drugs-related paraphernalia”, which the chief inspector revealed was enough to secure the conviction.

He continued: “The weight of evidence against him was compelling and we are very happy with this outcome and the lengthy prison sentence handed down to him.”

The problem of drugs within the Trachoni community has been well-publicised for some years now but thanks to the efforts of the SBA Police and the community itself, things are starting to change. The chief inspector said that three years ago the problem was at its peak but more recently, thanks to the joint efforts of the police and the community, they are starting to turn a corner.

He said: “The selling and use of drugs is clearly an issue which the SBA Police takes extremely seriously and we will operate a zero-tolerance approach to this crime. If people are caught undertaking in this illegal activity, they will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

“As a police force, we have worked tirelessly to combat this problem and after discussions with the community leaders in the village and with their full-support, we are now making inroads into tackling the problem.

“When dealers and users hear about lengthy convictions like this latest one, it makes a difference and will hopefully act as a deterrent to them.”
When Pudsey came to Cyprus

BFC welcomed the world-famous Pudsey Bear to Cyprus last month after the community raised £10,000 for BBC’s Children in Need. School children were joined by their teachers, parents, military and civilian units, to help contribute towards the staggering final total of almost £50,000,000. During his stay, Pudsey, who has been the official face of Children in Need for 34 years, flew with 84 Sqn, took part in a beach clean, marshalled in aircraft, helped sort post for personnel and their families across the island and trained with the Military Working Dogs. He also stretched his vocal chords with the Episkopi School choir, read books at Dhekelia Primary and did some exercise at Ayios Nikolaos Primary.
Flamingos wing their way back to Cyprus

S TAFF AT the Akrotiri Environmental and Education Centre have confirmed that approximately 11,000 flamingos have taken up residence at the Salt Lake site this year - one of the highest numbers ever.

The flamingos, which began arriving in October, ordinarily remain within the Sovereign Base Areas until at least January when their numbers are expected to peak.

Thomas Hadjikyriakou, the centre’s manager, explained how and why the flamingos keep coming back to Cyprus every year.

He said: “The flamingos that arrive in Cyprus choose the area due to its climatic conditions. As soon as we have rain on the salt lake they will begin arriving and will continue to do so until about January or February.

“Of course, if we still have rainfall and the salt lake remains full, the flamingos will stay even longer.”

And according to Mr Hadjikyriakou, the flamingos have a good system in place which tells them when they should start arriving on the island.

He continued: “The data on one of the flamingos that we have tagged tells us that it has been in Turkey for the past three years so we know they are pretty close. As a result, they are able to sense the change in climate which will give them an idea as to whether or not they should leave for Cyprus.

“They are also able to send groups over to look at the salt lake, almost like location scouts and if they see water, they can return to the larger group and basically report back to them.”

For the past three out of four years, the world-famous black flamingo has been spotted on the salt lake but according to the Environmental Centre manager, so far this year there has been no sighting.

He continued: “Obviously, we would be delighted to see the black flamingo return because it does generate a lot of interest as it is so rare.”

But whilst Mr Hadjikyriakou was keen to encourage people to visit the centre, he also warned ‘flamingo watchers’ to stay off the salt lake.

“It is so important that if people want to see the flamingos that they come to visit us at the centre,” he said. “If people try to walk on the salt lake and get close, it can destroy the natural habitat and we can’t allow that to happen.”

Ay Nik Primary remember in a creative way

O N REMEMBRANCE Day last month, children at Ayios Nikolaos Primary, their teachers and other guests, gathered together for a day of reflection as they unveiled a new remembrance bench in the school.

Every year, the school marks the special day in a ‘creative way’ and following on from last year’s ‘Ghost Soldier’ - made from sellotape and handmade, flowing poppies - the children submitted their idea of a remembrance bench to the School Council Task Group and it was subsequently voted the ‘pupil’s choice’.

The community project included military, staff, parents and children and was led by Lance Corporal Geoff Leech, who all pulled together to get the bench ready on time.

The remembrance service was taken by Reverend Matt Coles and the unveiling gave the school the opportunity to thank the military, staff and volunteers for all their hard work.
What’s On in BFC

Episkopi & Troodos

EPISKOPI CHRISTMAS FETE
Friday, December 6th, 14:00-17:30 at the Epi Centre in Dodge. Santa’s Grotto, €5 per child with a gift included. Face painter, indoor entertainment and raffle, followed by the tree lighting ceremony. For more information please contact the Community Support Team.

ST. JOHN’S SCHOOL PRESENTS CAFÉ NOEL
Thursday, December 12th, 19:00 onward An evening of festive music. Entrance is free however seats must be booked in advance by calling 2596 3888 or 2596 8023 or email jcrassdale@stjohnsschoolcyprus.com. Some refreshments will be provided on the night but feel free to bring a bottle/snacks. We will ask for a donation on the night toward running the event.

BFBS CHRISTMAS MESSAGES RECORDING
Monday, December 9th
BFBS will be at Akrotiri School to record Christmas messages to be broadcast over the festive period to those who cannot be home due to operations, commitments or other reasons. For more information call BFBS Cyprus on 2527 8518.

RAF AKROTIRI CHRISTMAS FAYRE
Tuesday, December 10th, 15:45 - 20:00 Gp Capt Snaith, will be switching on the Christmas Lights at 15:45hrs in the BFBS car park; accompanied by the Military Wives Choir and a very special guest - SANTA. Everyone is invited to join us and sing along, after which Santa and the choir will have a festive walk to the Chaplaincy Centre to open the fayre at 16:00.

There will be stalls, raffle prizes, face painting and glitter make up for the children, Performances from the Military Wives Choir and the RAF Voluntary Band.

Akrotiri

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EPISKOPI YOUTH CENTRE REINDEER EXPRESS
Monday, December 16th for North and South Paramali, Gibraltar and Kensington Estates. Tuesday, December 17th, Episkopi Garrison. Santa is coming to Episkopi! Don’t miss him. Santa and his helpers can deliver a present to your house. Make sure you get a booking form from either Episkopi Youth Centre or the Hive. For more information please contact Phil Dakin, Station Youth Worker on 9967 4239

SPACE THEATRE PRESENTS ROBIN HOOD THE PANTOMIME
Showings for UK passport holders and SBA pass holders are on: Friday, January 31st at 19:00, Saturday, February 1st at 19:00, and Saturday, February 8th at 17:00.

Showings for SBA pass holders only are on Saturday, February 1st at 15:00, Sunday, February 2nd at 15:00, and Friday 7th February at 17:00

GYM 2 GYM 2020
Saturday, February 15th. Walkers 08:00 start and Runners 09:00 start. The Gym 2 Gym event is open to all on island BFC personnel including UKBCs, LECs and dependants. Participants must be in possession of a valid in date gate pass for Epi and Aki in order to take part. Registration is open now at www.gym2gym.webs.com and the cost is €25. More information is available by visiting the website.

Junior Ranks Pilot Scholarship Scheme 2020 & Junior Officer Pilot Scholarship Scheme 2020
In association with the RAF Flying Clubs’ Association (RAFCT) The scheme invites applications from RAF Junior Ranks (Corporal and below) and Junior Officers (Ft Lt and below) to participate. 30 Junior Ranks scholarships and five Junior Officer scholarships will be awarded in 2020, each offering the chance to learn to fly and achieve solo standard in a light aircraft. Training will be conducted at a nominated RAF Flying Club. An online application process and full details of the JRPS can be found at www.JRFLY.co.uk Deadline for applications is January 31st 2020.

Online Learning for ECDL Courses
During January 2020 personnel who sign up and complete their ECDL course before the end of March will be entitled to claim 20% cashback. The ECDL programme is open to all entitled BFC personnel; military, UKBCs, adult dependants (Over 18 years) and LECs. It is simple to sign up and pay for your course at your local Learning Centre and then recieve 20% cashback on completion of the qualification. (Before March 21st, 2020). For military personnel using their Standard Learning Credits, this qualification will be totally free. 50 slots are available island-wide.
**Dhekelia and Ayios Nikolaos**

**DHEKELIA STATION CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA**
Thursday, December 5th, 1500 onward.
Come along and support your community. Dhekelia Primary School and King Richard School stalls. At 16:00 there will be an ESBA schools concert and Christingle. From 17:00 onward there will be Santa’s Grotto, food, drink and rides, craft stalls and more. Free transport will be provided to and from all housing areas on base. Pick up/drop off point is opposite KRS.

**FAMAGUSTA TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS ARTS, CRAFTS AND GIFTS FAIR**
Saturday, December 7th 16:00 - 21:00
Paralimni Main Square
Over 100 stalls, with 1000s of gift ideas. Entertainment, facepainting, Santa, Mr Magic, dancing snowman, food and drink, Cypriot dancers and a choir.

**AY NIK FORCES STORE CHRISTMAS EVENT**
Tuesday, December 10th 11:00-15:00
Food demonstration and tasting, giveaways, Christmas raffle, in-store special promotions, Christmas carols. The children can write a letter to Santa with the help of the Christmas elf between 13:00 and 15:00.

**DHEKELIA BFBS VISIT**
Wednesday, December 11th, 10:00-11:30
BFBS will be at Dhekelia Station HIVE Office within the Amenities Centre. They are here to record Christmas messages to be broadcast over the festive period to those who cannot be home due to operations, commitments or other reasons.

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Wednesday, December 11th, 11:00-14:30.
Food demonstration and tasting, giveaways, Christmas raffle, in-store special promotions, Christmas carols. The children can write a letter to Santa with the help of the Christmas elf between 13:30 and 14:30.

**DHEKELIA CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS PARTY**
Sunday, December 15th
Party 1: 10:00 - 13:00
Party 2: 14:00 - 17:00
At the Zulu Club. Kids entertainment, Santa’s Grotto (including a gift from Santa), buffet. Tickets cost €5.

**AY NIK CAMEO COME AND MEET EVERYONE**
Every Thursday, 09:30 - 11:00
A great way to meet new people, the Cameo come and meet everyone is held in the Community Room. Refreshments are available and all funds raised go back into the community.

**RBL LARNACA CHRISTMAS PARTY**
Saturday, December 21st, 18:30 onwards.
Four course meal, entertainment provided by Nick Garvey, entrance by ticket only. Prices €18 for members and €20 non-members. Please purchase tickets prior to December 16th by contacting Julie at rbl.larnaca@gmail.com or by calling 9972 5818.

**RYA LEVEL 2 POWERBOAT COURSE**
Saturday, December 14th and Sunday, December 15th.
Dhekelia Services Sailing Club are running the above course. The cost is €150. Anyone interested please contact training@dhekeliasailing.com

**AY NIK MUSIC TOTS - EVERY FRIDAY 09:30-11:00 COMMUNITY ROOM , THE FORUM.**
Bring along your children up to pre-school age. Cost is €1 including a snack. For more info contact the HIVE.

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To advertise your community related event in this section, please contact the Cyprus Lion editorial team on 2596 2052 or email your submissions to sovereign.areas@outlook.com
Community Noticeboard

What are you up to? Do you have an event or a success to tell us about? Submissions to the Cyprus Lion are welcomed. Email your stories, images and announcements to sovereign.areas@outlook.com or call the Editorial Team on 2596 2052.

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Looking for employment on camp?

UK Dependant and Locally Employed Civilian roles can be found on the SBA Administration website: https://sbaadministration.org/index.php/m-vacancies

December 6th Deadline for General Election postal votes

Members of the Armed Forces and Crown Servants in Cyprus are strongly encouraged to use a proxy vote in the UK General Election. If however, you are using a postal vote, special trips back to the UK are being organised to ensure your vote counts, but you only have until Friday 6th December to get your postal vote into the BFPO system.

Follow this link to @ForcesRadioCY on Twitter for more information

Pregnant, got a baby or child under 5 years?

Have you got the electronic child health and development record yet?

SSAFA is encouraging all expectant and current parents/carers with children under 5 years of age to sign up to the eRedbook and to use this as their primary health and development record. You can record developmental milestones, weight, immunisations and any other important health and development information along with photos and never worry about misplacing it or packing it away in storage again!

To find out more, or to start using the eRedbook you can speak to your local SSAFA Midwife or Health Visitor or visit www.eredbook.org.uk

N.b. you will need to use the standard format (BF1) postcode.

Emergency Number

112

Fiscal Office Contact Numbers

Episkopi 2596 3342
Akrotiri 2527 6762
Dhekelia 2474 4078
Ay Nik 2474 4226

The Interserve Helpdesk Cover for 2019/2020 Christmas Period

Friday, 13th December 2019
Normal Working Hours will be 06.45 to 12.00
For Emergency requests after 12.00 call your local Out of Hours No. (see below)

Friday, 20th December 2019
Normal Working Hours will be 06.45 to 12.00
For Emergency requests after 12.00 call your local Out of Hours No. (see below)

Monday, 23rd December 2019
For emergency requests between 06.45 - 12.30 call 99670485
For Emergency requests after 12.30 call your local Out of Hours No. (see below)

Tuesday, 24th December 2019
For Emergency requests call your local Out of Hours No. (see below)

Wednesday, 25th December 2019
For Emergency requests call your local Out of Hours No. (see below)

Thursday, 26th December 2019
For Emergency requests call your local Out of Hours No. (see below)

Friday, 27th December 2019
For Emergency requests call your local Out of Hours No. (see below)

Monday, 30th December 2019
For emergency requests between 06.45 - 12.30 call 99670485
For Emergency requests after 12.30 call your local Out of Hours No. (see below)

Tuesday, 31st December 2019
For emergency requests between 06.45 - 12.30 call 99670485
For Emergency requests after 12.30 call your local Out of Hours No. (see below)

Wednesday, 1st January 2020
For Emergency requests call your local Out of Hours No. (see below)

Thursday, 2nd January 2020
For emergency requests between 06.45 - 12.30 call 99670485
For Emergency requests after 12.30 call your local Out of Hours No. (see below)

Friday, 3rd January 2020
For emergency requests between 06.45 - 12.30 call 99670485
For Emergency requests after 12.30 call your local Out of Hours No. (see below)

Monday 6th January 2020 (Cy Epiphany)
For emergency requests between 06.45 - 12.30 call 99670485
For Emergency requests after 12.30 call your local Out of Hours No. (see below)

Tuesday 7th January 2020
Helpdesk back to normal working operation

Out of Hours Contact numbers:

AKRÔTIRI 2527 6788
AY NIK 99692302
DHEKELIA 99419628
NICOSIA 99202634
EPISKOPO/TOOODOS 99681079

Helpdesk Numbers: MIL: +357 2596 2477 - Freephone: 80002400 (CY Freephone) -- for UK add +357-Not freephone --
Email: cyprus.helpdesk@interserve.mod.uk

*******Upon calling the Helpdesk the above information will be supplied
What’s On at the cinema

Showing at the Astra Akrotiri in December:
FROZEN II (U)
Why was Elsa born with magical powers? The answer is calling her and threatening her kingdom. Together with Anna, Kristoff, Olaf and Sven, she’ll set out on a dangerous but remarkable journey.

OTHER SHOWINGS THIS MONTH: Terminator: Dark Fate (15) / Knives Out (12a) Last Christmas (12a) / Charlie’s Angels (12a) / A Bad Moms Christmas (15) / Jumanji: The Next Level (Rating TBC) / Elf (PG) / Home Alone (PG) / The Polar Express (U) / STAR WARS: The Rise of Skywalker (Rating TBC)

For full cinema listings, please go to https://www.forcescinemas.com/akrotiri

Showing at the Key Dhekelia in December:
LAST CHRISTMAS (12A)
Kate is a young woman subscribed to bad decisions. Her last date with disaster? That of having accepted to work as Santa’s elf for a department store. However, she meets Tom there. Her life takes a new turn. For Kate, it seems too good to be true.

OTHER SHOWINGS THIS MONTH: Frozen II (U) / Knives Out (12a) / Abominable (U) / Housefull 4 (12a) / Charlie’s Angels (12a) / Elf (PG) / The Polar Express (U) / Le Mans ’66 (12a) / The Grinch (U) / Jumanji: The Next Level (Rating TBC)

For full cinema listings, please go to https://www.forcescinemas.com/dhekelia

Showing at the Mercury Ay Nik in December:
KNIVES OUT (12A)
When renowned crime novelist Harlan Thrombey (Christopher Plummer) is found dead at his estate just after his 85th birthday, the inquisitive and debonair Detective Benoit Blanc (Daniel Craig) is mysteriously enlisted to investigate.

OTHER SHOWINGS THIS MONTH: Le Mans ’66 (12a) / Doctor Sleep (15) / Frozen II (U) / Last Christmas (12a) / Knives Out (12a) / Abominable (U) / Charlie’s Angels (12a) / The Grinch (U) / The Muppet Christmas Carol (U) / A Bad Moms Christmas (15) / Elf (PG) / Jumanji: The Next Level (Rating TBC)

For full cinema listings, please go to https://www.forcescinemas.com/ayios-nikolaos

Showing at Episkopi Cinema Club in December:
ABOMINABLE (U)
When teenage Yi encounters a young Yeti on the roof of her apartment building in Shanghai, she and her mischievous friends, Jin and Peng, name him “Everest” and embark on an epic quest to reunite the magical creature with his family.

ALSO SHOWING THIS MONTH: The Addams Family (PG) / The Goldfinch (15) / ELF (PG), Terminator: Dark Fate (15) / Maleficent (PG) / Last Christmas (12A) / ELF (PG).

For full cinema listings see the Episkopi Community Support Facebook Page

BFBS tv

Your Christmas TV starts here

MAKING a welcome return to BBC One on Christmas Day is Gavin & Stacey, from Ruth Jones and James Corden, in which the nation will discover what has been happening to the Shipmans and the Wests in the last 10 years, as they all gather in Barry where Uncle Bryn is cooking Christmas dinner for over 13 people. This one-off special also stars Alison Steadman, Larry Lamb, Rob Brydon, Mathew Horne, Joanna Page, Julia Davis and Adrian Scarborough.

Doctor Who, starring Jodie Whittaker in the title role alongside Bradley Walsh, Mandip Gill and Tosin Cole, returns with a bang for a 12th series of new monsters and a fantastic line up of guest stars. Top Gear sets out on perhaps its toughest road-trip ever: A high-altitude voyage from Kathmandu, capital of Nepal, to the Forbidden City of Lo Manthang, a secretive kingdom perched high on the Tibetan plateau, on the far side of the Himalayas. A five-day expedition through the highest mountains, deepest gorges and harshest terrain on the planet.

‘Tis the season of Festive Football, and BFBS has some of the biggest games over the Christmas period for fans to enjoy. Highlights include Manchester City attempting to claw back the second-place position against top-tier rivals Leicester City, and south coast rivals Brighton and Bournemouth facing off. There’s not one, but two London Derbies as Spurs entertain Chelsea at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium before the Gunners do the same and host the Blues at the Emirates Stadium. And Liverpool play their final match of 2019 – a year in which they only lost one league match – against a game Wolves side. Plus, we’ll be showing more matches than ever before in our Boxing Day Feast of Football! With Spurs taking on Brighton, Bournemouth at home to Arsenal, Manchester United facing Newcastle United, and finally Leicester City against Liverpool.

For all your full BFBS Christmas TV listings, please go to www.forces.net/tv
The relationship between the Bases and the Cypriot community is one of the most crucial aspects of working life here in Cyprus and it’s the Area Offices on both the Eastern and Western SBAs that play perhaps the most important role in ensuring it remains a good one.

Maria Pieri-Kyiakidou, the Assistant Area Inspector in Dhekelia, who began working for the Area Office in 2001, is at the very heart of that relationship as she and her team balance serving the community, with implementing “a broad range of legislation and ordinance” throughout the SBAs.

The role, according to Mrs Pieri-Kyiakidou is “so rewarding” because every day throws up a new challenge and gives the Area Office the opportunity to make a difference right in the heart of the local community it’s there to serve.

Explaining the sheer breadth of the role, the Assistant Area Inspector said: “The Area Office and me personally, are involved with so many aspects of life, living and working within the Dhekelia region.

“We are here to serve the community and ensure their lives are not disadvantaged by living within the SBAs, instead of the Republic of Cyprus, but we are also responsible for implementing legislation and ordinance within the ESBA.

“That means we are involved in many different areas, including Non-Military Development, land issues, business licences, road maintenance and many, many other things on a daily basis.”

But perhaps the most important aspect of the job is managing and developing the relationship between the Bases, the SBA community and officials within the Republic of Cyprus.

After starting her career at the District Administration in Larnaca, Mrs Pieri-Kyiakidou was perfectly placed to take up that challenge when she began working for the Area Office almost 20 years ago.

She continued: “The job allows us to forge relationships on so many different levels. Daily, we are dealing with the local communities, the community leaders, district leaders and then at the very highest central level in the Cyprus Government. It is hugely challenging but it is a wonderful job.”

Implementing ordinance and legislation is not surprisingly a balancing act between keeping people happy and ensuring everyone is living by the same code and according to Mrs Pieri-Kyiakidou, that can be one of the most rewarding aspects of her job.

“The perfect day for me is when everyone is happy with an outcome. The community is so important to the Administration and when we are able to get a simple ‘thank you’ for the work we have done, it makes it all worth it.

“We are on the front line and want to make sure that everyone gets equal treatment and that is why we invest so much time in attending local community events to show our support, be that in a physical or financial way and the amount of feedback that we get shows it is greatly appreciated.”

Listening to the enthusiasm in her voice as she speaks about her role, it’s clear that after almost 20 year working for the Area Office, her passion is as strong as ever and that can only be of benefit to the Bases and the Cypriot community.

Bases Faces

BFC and the SBAA are a diverse workforce, with both military and civilians working alongside one another. At its heart, is the Locally Employed Civilian community including Maria Pieri-Kyiakidou, who works at the SBA Area Office in Dhekelia.

CLUB IN FOCUS - Akrotiri Boxing Club

RAF AKROTIRI Boxing Club comes under the RAF Boxing Association who are affiliated with England Boxing. We have five qualified coaches and four of them are from the RAF Fire and Rescue Service based in Akrotiri.

We have around 42 members from the RAF, the Army, dependants and children. Our members have a range of experience from novice to elite level boxers who have competed or are currently competing for the RAF, down to ‘keep-fitters’ who attend the sessions as they just enjoy the training.

We are currently in the process of registering some of the junior boxers and obtaining medical clearances for them to box competitively.

Our sessions for adults are held on a Tuesday night (boxing fitness) from 18:00-19:15 and Thursday (technical training) from 18:15-19:30. Our children’s sessions for age 8 (Year 3) upwards are from 17:15-18:15 on a Thursday. All our coaches hold the required safeguarding qualifications and DBS clearances.

Children boxing at RAF units is a relatively new concept and we are hoping to have a select few of our junior boxers competing in a skills bout (no winner) at our station show in May 2020.

The club’s main objective is to continue providing support to competitive RAF boxers who wish to represent the RAF in competitions, and continuously developing our dedicated team of coaches. Additionally, we aim to provide the opportunity to Service members’ children who wish to box and train in an excellent facility, and develop their self confidence and fitness.
Tartan Army donates to RDA

The Tartan Army Children’s Charity (TACC) visited Riding for the Disabled in Episkopi’s Happy Valley recently to donate £5,000 to the worthy cause.

The Tartan Army, the name given to Scotland football fans, is known all over the world for its passionate support of the national team. TACC, an official offshoot of that, is a registered charity which “aims to support disadvantaged children in Scotland and overseas”.

Riding for the Disabled, which provides riding instruction for people with disabilities, is reliant on donations to continue its outstanding work and this latest contribution will enable the charity to purchase a new pony. Dorothy Wilson from the charity explained.

She said: “TACC have previously donated to Riding for the Disabled in Scotland and Davy Provan, who is a Scot living in Cyprus, suggested RDA Episkopi, “We are aware of the benefits this can bring to children, so I contacted Wendi Quinn from the RDA to ask if they had any project that might meet our criteria for a donation.

“The money was raised through the sale of t-shirts, fundraising from “The Kiltwalk”, charity events, the TACC lottery and donations from Scotland supporters. “Our overseas donations started in 2006 with a project called “Tartan Kiev” and donations have been made in countries where the Scotland national team have played qualifying matches ever since.” Also present for the donation was British High Commissioner in Cyprus, Stephen Lillie, who said: “We welcome the Tartan Army Charity to Cyprus and would like to express our admiration and respect for their great work, helping children in need around the world. President for the RDA, Hilary Thomson, speaking to Sky Sports News in Happy Valley, explained how much of an impact the donation would make to the charity.

She said: “Riding for the Disabled is a charity totally reliant on donations and volunteers, so it is just wonderful to have this fantastic donation of £5,000 so that we can buy a new pony. “The right type of pony is quite difficult to find, but we think we have found one in England and we are going to have it shipped over, which is obviously an expensive business and we are just thrilled to be able have this money.

Limassol squeeze a victory over BFC

The BFC squash team are in training to take on Limassol on December 9 after they were narrowly beaten 29-26 during their latest on-court match-ups.

The BFC and Limassol teams know one another well and meet up to three times a year to test themselves against some great players on both sides.

Their latest encounter, which saw 15 competitive matches take place, was only separated by a few points and according to WO1 Charles Walbrook from Episkopi Station, the two sides have always been evenly matched.

He said: “It was an outstanding night of squash, linking into the local community with our friends and witnessing some great battles on court.

“The regular meeting has continued to be a challenge for all of the players for the past five years and we look forward to it in the program because the competition is always extremely close. But he was also keen to point out that although every competitor wants to be on the winning side, the most important thing was being part of the team ethos which BFC promotes.

He continued: “It’s all about teamwork, coaching and development and of course the banter.

“I want to say congratulations to Limassol for their outstanding performance, they defeated a very strong BFC Squash team.”

Olympic hero visits BFC

Former Olympic bronze medalist boxer Anthony Ogogo visited British Forces Cyprus last month to spend time with military units, the Akrotiri Boxing Club and the local Bases schools.

Ogogo, who made his name as a middleweight at London 2012 where he was part of the all-conquering Team GB alongside former unified heavyweight world champion, Anthony Joshua, was making his first trip to BFC and he clearly made the most of it.

Posting regularly on his social media during the visit, it was clear he enjoyed every second of the experience as he spent time at schools, units in RAF Akrotiri and an evening with Episkopi’s 2 Mercians.

Speaking to his 130,000 social media followers, he praised the children of Akrotiri Primary School during his time there.

In a post on Twitter, he said: "Because the kids were so well behaved as I took them through their P.E class I promised to answer any questions they may have. Wow, I didn’t see those questions coming. Top marks for Mrs Clarke’s class for their wild imaginations. The most common question, “how strong are you?” You should’ve seen their faces when I said I could lift the whole school above my head.”

Headmaster at the school, Ben Turner said: “It was a privilege to have boxing legend Anthony Ogogo visit our school. He was an inspiration and a natural with children.”

And in reference to a flight with RAF Akrotiri’s own 84 Squadron, the former boxer spoke of his delight, he told Twitter; “Had one of the best days ever. Out in Cyprus on a morale boosting tour of the military, visiting schools & speaking to the troops, telling them my story. Presenting awards to real life heroes. It’s been nothing short of amazing, I got to ride in a Royal Air Force helicopter.”

Photo: SAC Phil Dye

Photo: SAC Phil Dye
The first Chief Constable’s Cycle Challenge to help 10 Cypriot children in need of medical care and two schools specialising in working with children with special needs, has raised an astonishing €22,000.

The charity event took place over two weekends in November. It saw SBA Police officers led by Chief Constable Chris Eyre, cycle through the local communities in both Eastern and Western Sovereign Base Areas raising money for the worthwhile causes.

The SBA Police prides itself on the close bond forged between the force and the local community and this latest fundraising effort was another great example of that.

The first cycle, which took place in the WSBA, saw those taking part make 12 stops within the community before arriving at the Akrotiri Police Station 55 kilometres later and according to the Chief Constable, the response he received during the challenge, was an overwhelming experience.

He explained: “I was honoured to lead the Chief Constable’s charity cycle through the villages of the Western Base Area and I am thrilled that the money we raised will be put to great use. When we got to the M1 Police Station, six hours after we started, we had raised €7,000 to get treatment for three Cypriot children with cancer and to help two schools for children with special needs – a great achievement by everyone involved.

“Throughout the day I was humbled by the generosity and welcome we received in the villages. In some locations, there were more than a hundred people waiting to greet us with drum bands, Greek dancing, school choirs and community leaders. The kindness and generosity shown by nursery groups, infant schools, scout troops, secondary schools, community councils, churches, clubs, local businesses and community groups was truly inspirational.”

In the ESBA, where the police added a further €15,000 to its total on November 23, the money will be donated to seven Cypriot children who require medical treatment.

And on top of the fundraising efforts, Chief Constable Eyre was also keen to stress that the event was very personal for the entire police force after they lost a fellow officer in a recent road traffic collision.

He continued: “Once again this was a great honour for me to lead the charity cycle through the villages of the Eastern SBAs. This event was held under the auspices of the First Lady, Mrs Andri Anastasiades, to whom we are very grateful.

“We held this ride for three reasons. We wanted to promote our ‘step up to safer streets’ campaign to educate children on the importance of road safety and the police officers also wanted the event to be in memory of our dear colleague, Savvas Constantinou, who recently died in a road traffic collision, and we all wanted to show our enduring commitment to our communities by raising money for the benefit of local children.”

The ESBA leg of the challenge saw riders cover a further 34 kilometres, making eight stops along the way and much of that was with the support of the late PC Constantinou’s family.

The chief said: “Throughout the day we were accompanied by PC Constantinou’s wife and in the village of Xylotymbou, we were joined by his extended family. ‘It was a privilege to show them the love and respect Savvas’ colleagues held for him.”

And in addressing the vast sum raised for the children, he said: “To see that amount of money raised by our officers and with support from local communities and businesses to help seven Cypriot children receive specialist medical treatments is an amazing result that will make a real difference to those children and their families.”

What are you up to? Do you have an event or a success to tell us about? Submissions to the Cyprus Lion are welcomed.
Email your stories, images and announcements to sovereign.areas@outlook.com or call the Editorial Team on 2596 2052.