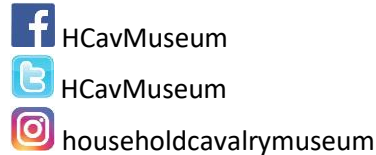




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TREASURES OF THE HOUSEHOLD CAVALRY

No: 10

EOKA & THE WAUGHS

Hello, and welcome back to Treasures of the Household Cavalry, the video podcast series that examines some of the remarkable items in the Household Cavalry's collection. Last week I looked at the Zetland Trophy. This week I want to take you to Cyprus in the mid-1950s where the Royal Horse Guards were deployed to assist with the suppression of a nationalist insurrection led by Colonel (later General) Grivas.

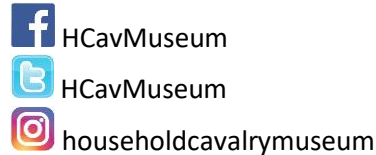
Grivas, shown here in the Most Wanted Men identification booklet issued to all British troops, was the military head of EOKA. This was the Greek Cypriot armed organisation that was dedicated to ending British rule of the island, achieving self-determination for the islanders and eventual union with Greece.

During their tour in Cyprus, which lasted from February 1956 to May 1959, The Blues lost 10 officers and men, including the Regimental Medical Officer, carried out a variety of different roles. These included separating the warring Greek and Turkish Cypriots, while



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also trying to root out EOKA, and patrolling on mules, in order not to alert village dogs. The regiment returned from Cyprus with some very curious spoils of war that are now in the museum. These spoils included not only the EOKA flags already shown but home-made guns and pipe bombs.

One of the Blues who was wounded in Cyprus was Cornet Auberon Waugh, shown on the left of this slide... Auberon, or 'Bron' as he was usually known, was a National Service officer and the eccentric son of the famously cantankerous novelist, Evelyn Waugh, shown on the right.

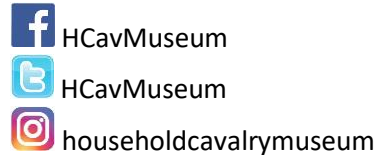
Evelyn had served with The Blues in the Second World War, having first been rejected for the Welsh Guards by Colonel 'Chicot' Leatham, who famously said of Waugh: 'I know an officer when I see one – and Waugh is a shit who wears suede shoes'... It was whilst on sick leave from The Blues in 1944 that Waugh wrote his most celebrated novel, *Brideshead Revisited*.

Fourteen years later, Evelyn's son Bron was posted to Cyprus, which his father contemptuously described as 'going to Cyprus to be stoned by schoolgirls'. These were words he must have regretted when Bron



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was badly injured while trying to clear the machine gun on his armoured car. In defiance of any training, he had received on the subject of clearing jammed guns, Bron seized the machinegun by the muzzle and shook it – until it fired six rounds through him, resulting in the loss of a finger, one lung, several ribs and his spleen. After months in hospital, during which he nearly died, Bron was medically discharged; he never fully recovered.

Despite his injury, Bron went on to make a successful career as a journalist, became famous for his column in *Private Eye* and led campaigns in favour of smoking and drinking and, somewhat eccentrically, against the consumption of hamburgers. Bron died at the early age of 61 in 2001, primarily as the result of his wounds and his smoking.

Unfortunately, this has to be the last in the present series of videos, not because there are no more Household Cavalry Museum treasures to describe, but because I have run out of images and, in lockdown, I can't access any more. So, until life returns to some sort of normality, the museum re-opens and I can get my hands on, amongst others things, the Chinese executioner's sword and Trumpeter Edward's



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tunic, I will be posting a new weekly series on the quirkier side of the histories of our regiments. In the meantime, stay safe and stay well.