

# Cyprus National Guard Vehicles 1960 - 1975

The Cypriot National Guard was established in 1960 when Cyprus became an independent state. The first armoured vehicles were home made affairs based on various types of car and truck chassis as well as a few tracked vehicles based on construction machinery and one on the hull of a Valentine tank!



Photo:PIO Nicosia



Photo:PIO Nicosia

The first armoured unit was formed in 1964, equipped with a variety of wheeled armoured vehicles among which three Daimler Dingo scout cars. It is not known where these vehicles came from, but they had a number of modifications, including to parts of their upper superstructure, which seems to have been rebuilt to the original pattern but slightly higher. They also had a roof with two forward opening hatches for the crew and civilian type headlights and front bumpers. The external stowage boxes were not fitted. These vehicles made their first public appearance in 1964. They were finished in an overall dark tone, most probably a shade of bronze green and the only markings were a two digit number for each vehicle. Later on during a military exercise vehicle no 22 was seen sporting a marking only on the right upper superstructure, consisting of the Republic of Cyprus coat of arms with the Greek letters Ε.Φ., which are the initials of the National Guard on top, as seen in the photos above right. After 1964 a sand colour seems to have been adopted for vehicles and the Dingos were repainted in this shade which was probably very close to post war British mid stone or FS 30400. Car ΕΦ 886 appeared in a two tone scheme probably of dark green and sand (or perhaps local mud) as seen on the right.

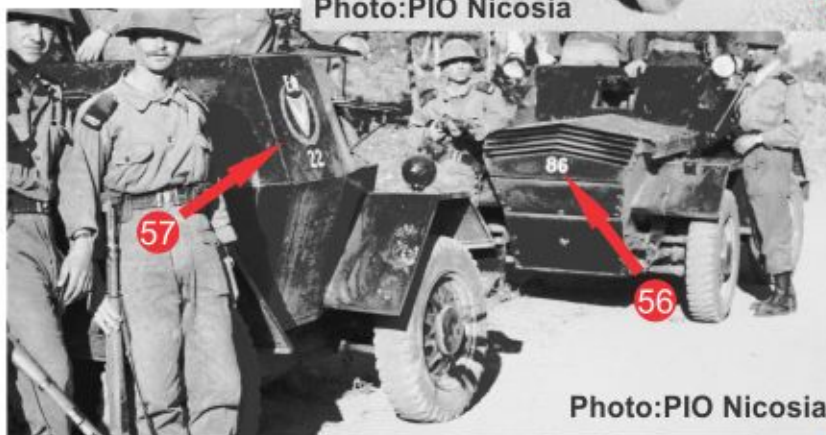


Photo:PIO Nicosia

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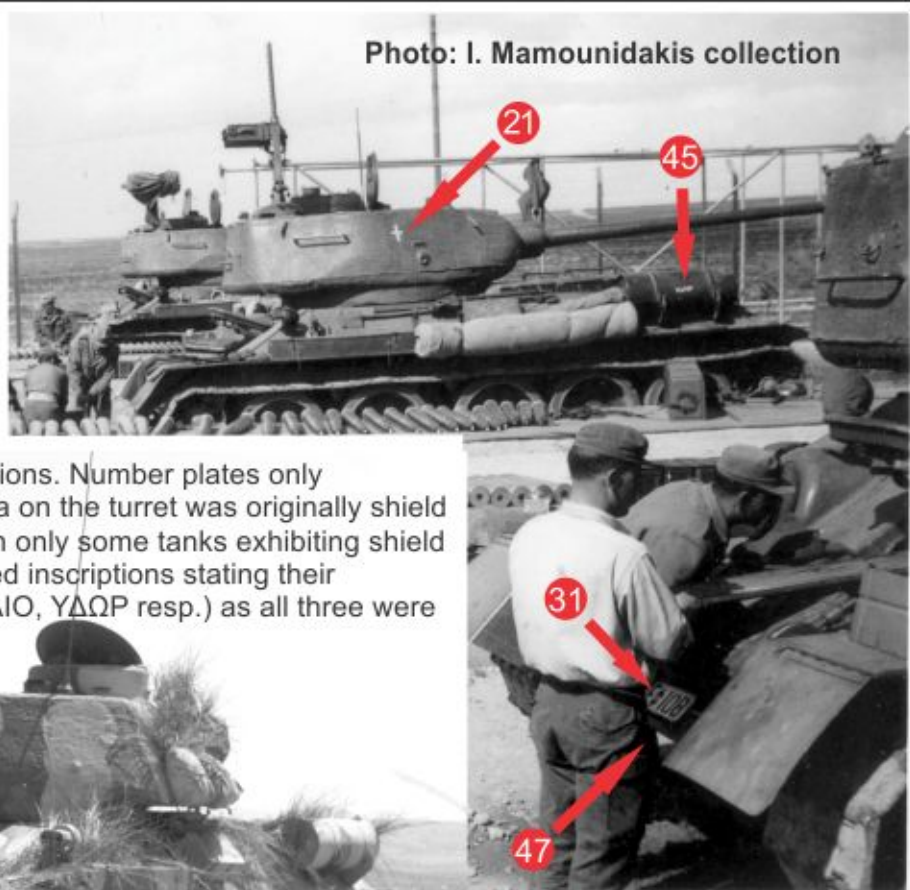




The National Guard received 32 T-34/85 tanks from the USSR. All were modernised, but exhibited different features such as different turret types and road wheel types in various combinations. Turret types were the Zavod 183 "Flattened" type of 1945 and the Zavod 112 "Composite type of 1945. In National Guard service the tanks had a .50 cal Browning heavy MG fitted to the turret roof. Originally this was at the rear over the twin extractor fan housing but later on the pintle was moved to the front of the hatches.

The tanks' finish was Dark Green and mud camouflage was applied for exercises and operations. Number plates only appeared on the tanks' front. The national insignia on the turret was originally shield shaped but soon changed to a square device with only some tanks exhibiting shield shaped insignia. The external tanks usually carried inscriptions stating their contents of fuel, oil and water (ΠΕΤΡΕΛΑΙΟ, ΕΛΑΙΟ, ΥΔΡΟ resp.) as all three were carried.

Photo: I. Mamounidakis collection



Above: An early photo of the tanks in service. All have shield shaped insignia and the .50 cal MG in its original rear position. Although not visible the bridge classification marking is applied to the lower glacis plate. Tank ΕΦ108 in the foreground would have the same insignia on its turret.



An early exercise with the tanks camouflaged with mud. All the markings have been obscured apart from the bridging class on the lower glacis. Photo:PIO Nicosia

Photo: S. Markides collection



Photo: I. Mamounidakis collection



Above: This tank was photographed in 1974 after the end of operations against the Turkish invasion forces. The national insignia on the turret outlined in white seems to have been used during this period.

Photo: S. Markides collection

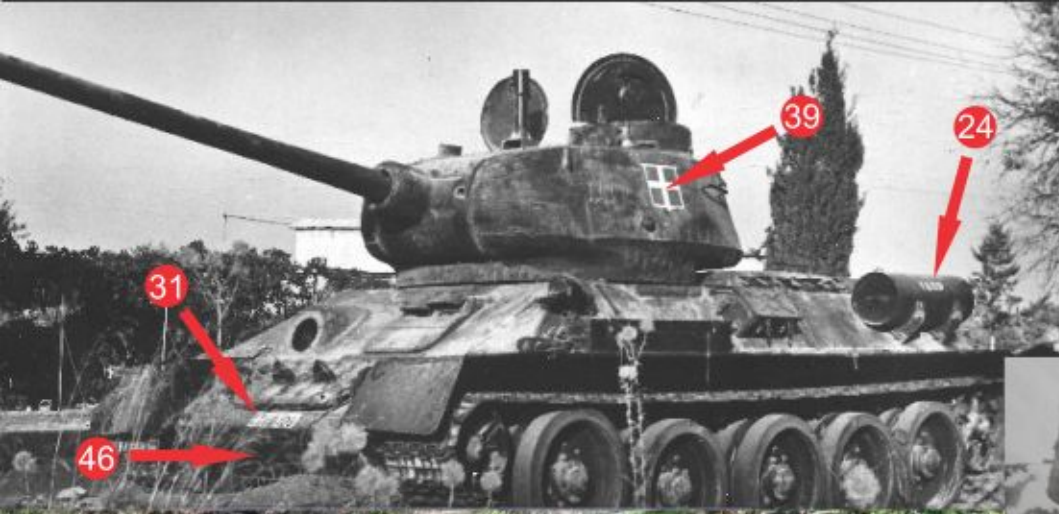


Left: This tank with patriotic slogans on the turret was probably photographed during the military coup that preceded the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in July 1974. The external tanks seem to have had the standard markings for their contents. Unfortunately the tank's number is not known.



Unfortunately most photos that have been found of National Guards T-34 tanks during the 1974 fighting following the Turkish invasion show them after they were disabled and abandoned.

**Left:** Tank ΕΦ108 carried oversized shield shaped national insignia on its turret.



**Above:** Tank ΕΦ107 seems to have carried no national insignia on its turret.

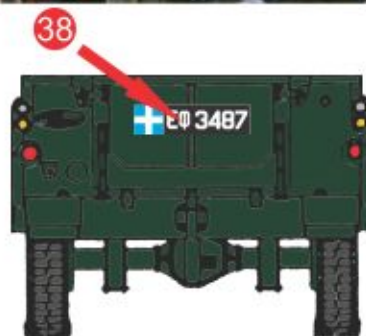


**Left:** Tank ΕΦ110 carried shield shaped national insignia on its turret including the turret rear.



Land Rover 109" Series IIA finished in overall dark green. **Note:** The two decals that make up marking 38 must be applied to a backing piece of plasticard before fitting to the model.

The colour profile of the Land Rover is based on a drawing by the late MC Bell by kind permission of his family.





In 1964 the National Guard received 32 BTR-152 APCs of both the V2 (no winch) and V3 (with winch). These vehicles served in the 286 Mechanized Infantry Battalion and the 21st Reconnaissance battalion. Initially they were finished in sand as shown in the colour photo and as described on page 1. On their first public appearance in 1965 they carried a shield shaped national marking on the front doors. This was later changed to a square. In 1972 they were repainted in dark green and when on exercises or operations were camouflaged using mud. Tire pressure markings do not seem to have been applied when the vehicles were finished in sand but were added when the finish switched to dark green.

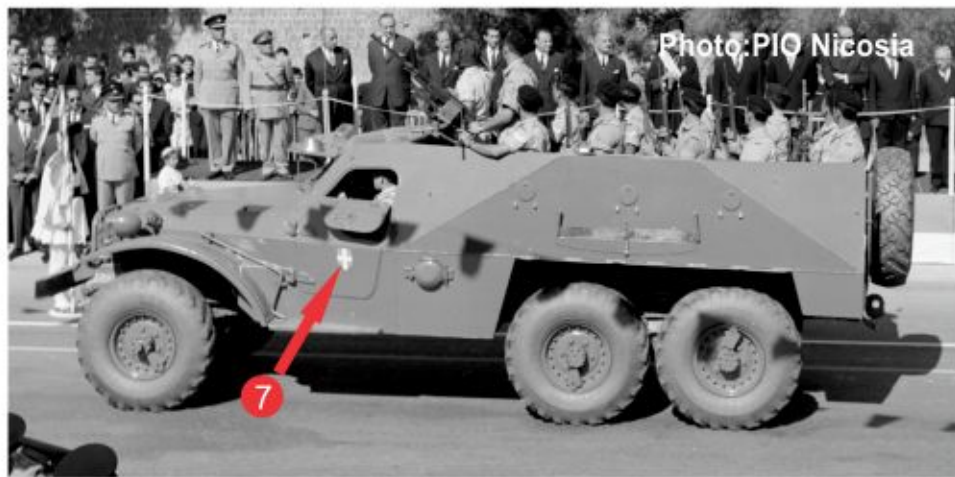


Photo:PIO Nicosia

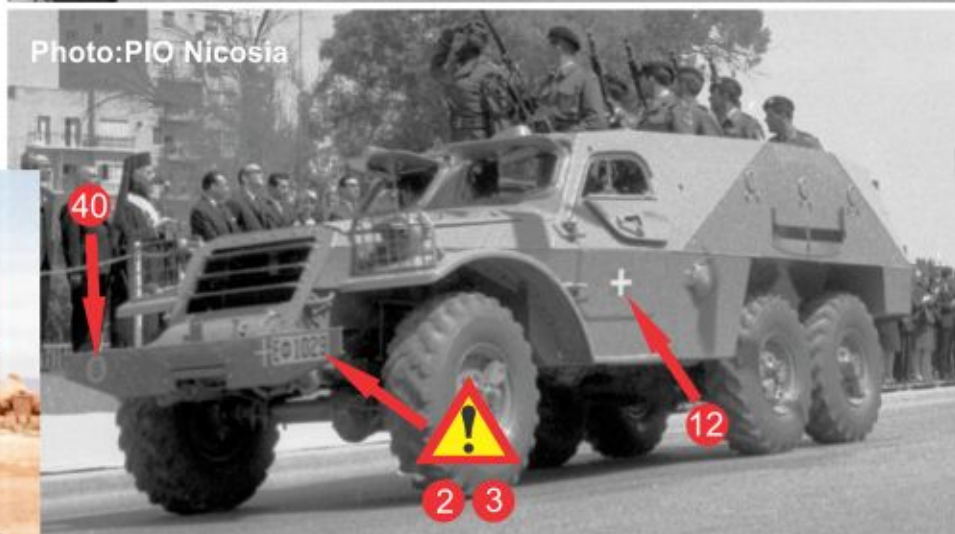


Photo:PIO Nicosia



Photo: S. Markides collection

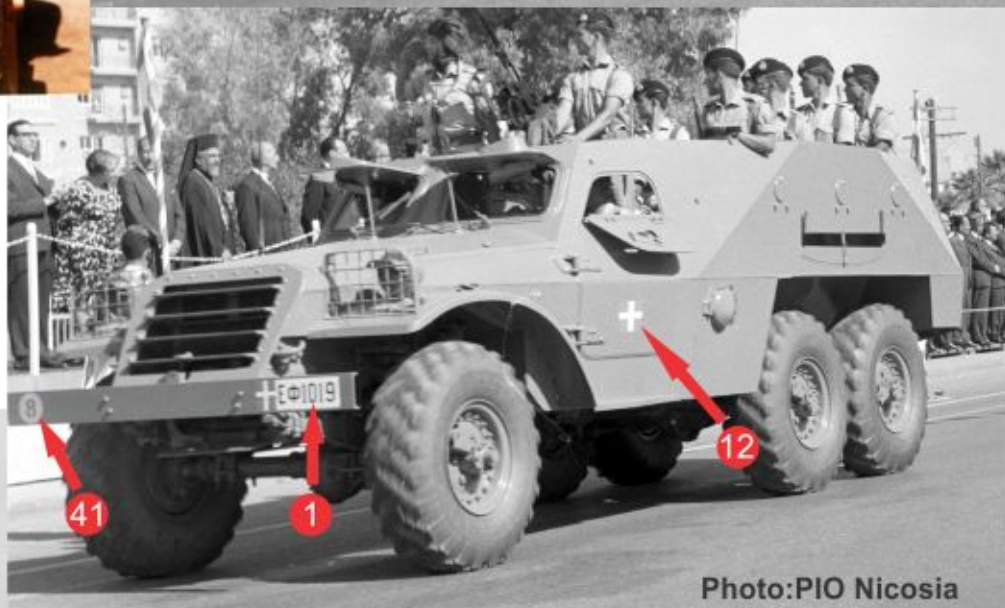
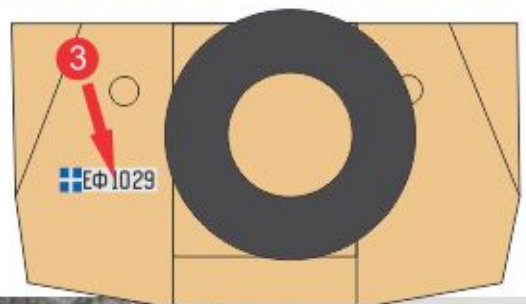
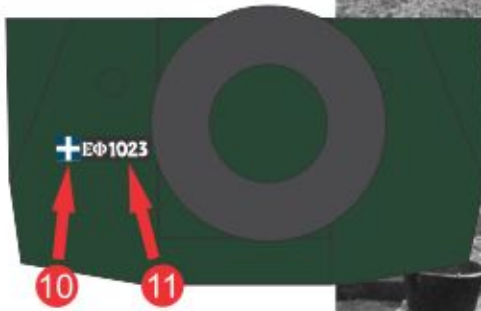


Photo:PIO Nicosia



Photo:PIO Nicosia

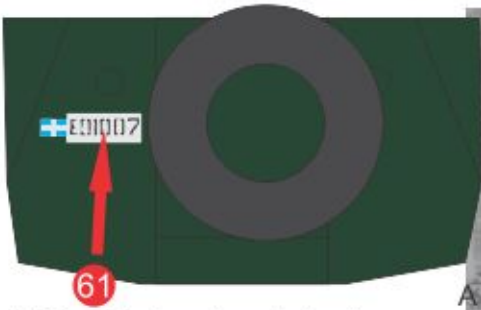




A BTR-152 during the fighting following the Turkish invasion in 1974. Note the mud camouflage on the Land Rover in the background.



Photo:PIO Nicosia



BTR-152 abandoned due to mechanical failure during the fighting following the Turkish invasion in 1974. The tires were looted by civilians after the end of the hostilities.



Photo: S. Markides collection



Photo: 286 MTP Vet's Assoc.

Note: The position of the rear number plate is the same as on the vehicles above.

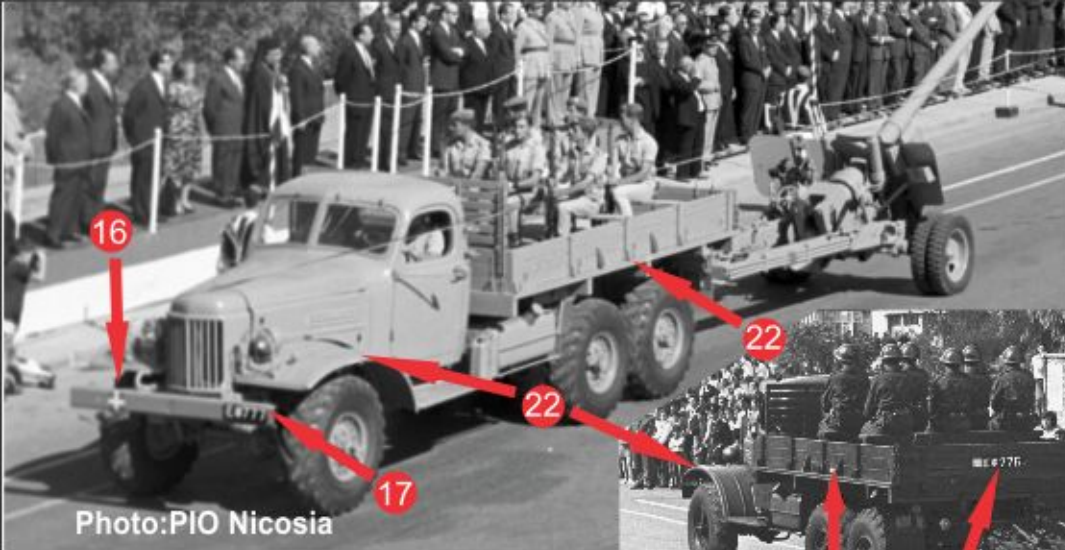


Photo: Petros Savidis collection

Above: BTR-152s camouflaged with mud during exercise "Evagoras 1973". Even the tires have been camouflaged.







The ZIL 157 truck was used to tow the 100 mm Model 1944 gun. These were both finished in sand until 1972 when the finish became dark green. The position of the various markings was the same for both colour schemes.

Photo:PIO Nicosia

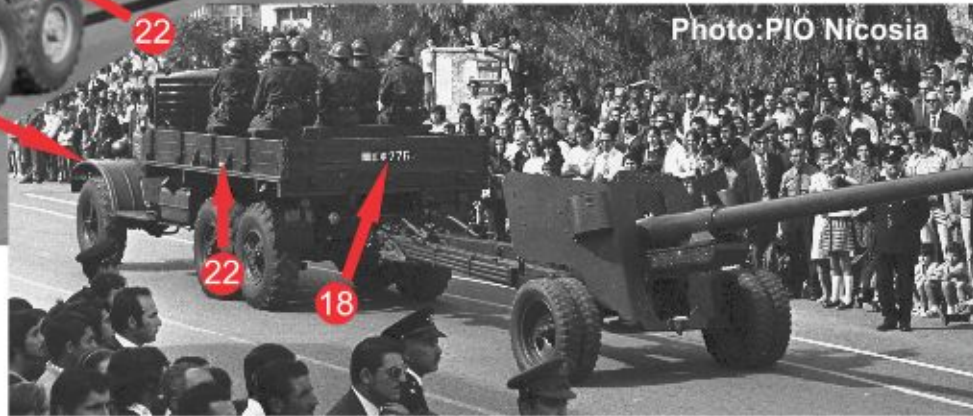


Photo:PIO Nicosia

Tire pressure markings were present on both finishes.



Photo:PIO Nicosia



The Austin K5 was used as a portee for the Maxson quad .50 cal mounting. Originally finished in sand, as pictured here, the trucks were repainted in Dark Green in 1972, with their markings remaining mostly the same. The Maxson mounting was always finished in Dark Green.

Marmon Herrington MkIVf armoured cars were the first proper armoured vehicles to be supplied to the Greek Cypriot National Guard by Greece. Although they first appeared in Dark Green they were soon repainted in Sand. Their markings remained the same when they were repainted Dark Green in 1972. Note the addition of the folding three-piece turret hatch, a Greek modification.

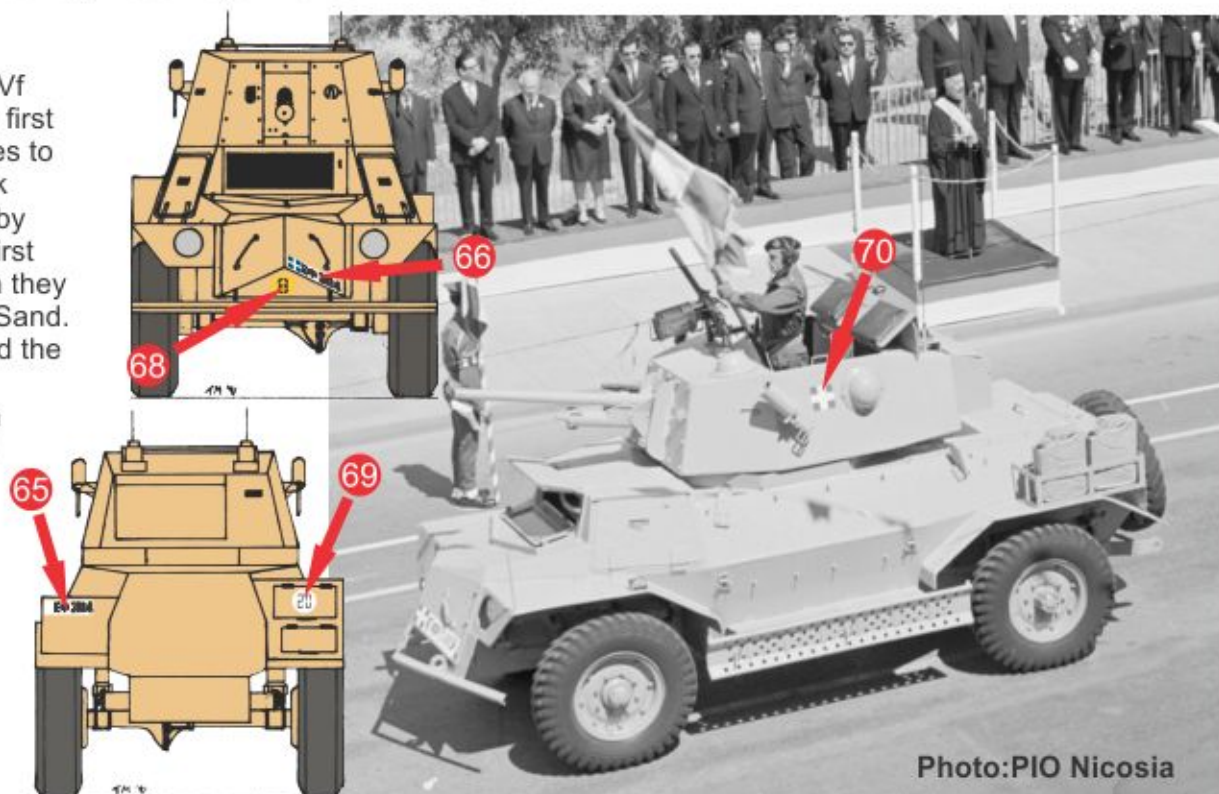
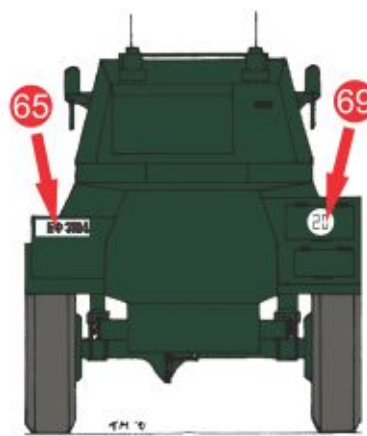


Photo:PIO Nicosia





This patriotic slogan was seen on a Marmon Herrington MkIVf armoured car in 1974. Local mud was used as camouflage both on exercises and operations often obscuring all the vehicle's markings.



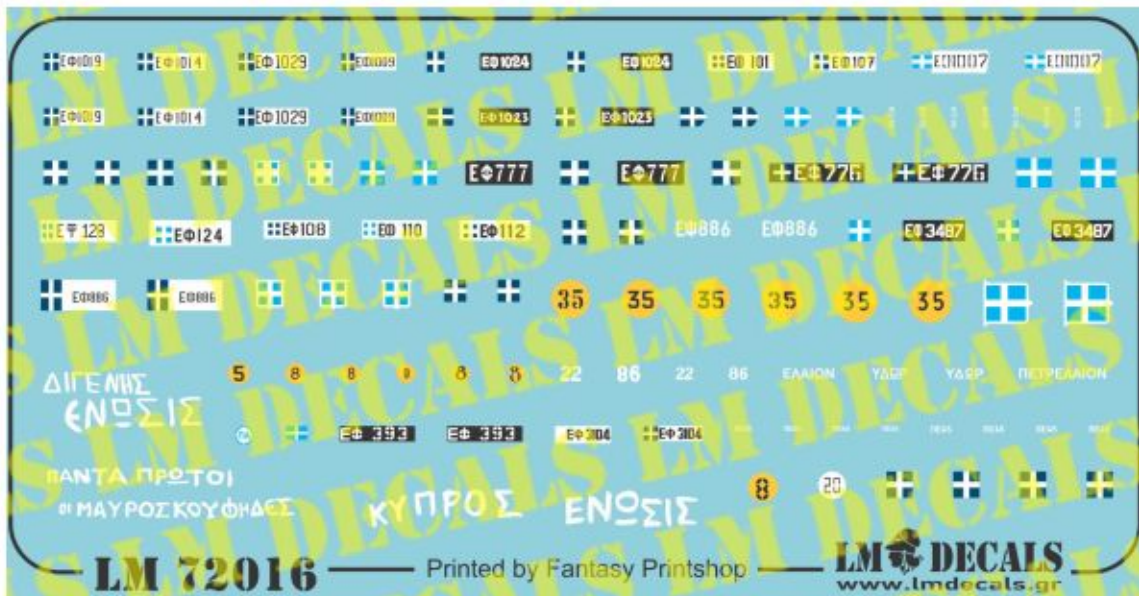
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## ATTENTION!

This symbol indicates that alternative markings are applicable in this position **OR** that the same marking is applicable to more than one colour scheme.



## NOTE

The marking below has been printed on a digital Sol-ink printer by DecalPrint.de. The modeller should treat this with extra care and cut as close as possible to the design because the carrier film extends over the complete decal paper.



## Disclaimer

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