

Record camera collection kept in Athens basement

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — This month, the movie camera collection of retired postman Dimitris Pistiolas made it into the Guinness World Records — for the eighth time.

Pistiolas owns the world's largest private collection of movie cameras — 937 vintage models and projectors. They are neatly arranged, dusted and labeled in his tiny basement, where they cover every inch of wall.

Pistiolas, now 78, started buying cameras at age 15 and never stopped. The basement museum is padlocked and visits are by invitation only.

"When I get a new camera, I feel like a little kid, like I've been given a Christmas present," he says. "The first thing I do is to restore it before I put it into the collection."

Ronald Grant, a director at the Cinema Museum in London, says it takes time and money to hunt such cameras down at fairs and auction rooms.

"There's a lot of investment there in time, and knowledge, and of course memory. Once you have a few hundred, then you have to remember, 'Have I got this one?'" Grant says. "You can't just buy these in a shop."

Born Greek, made in Canada

Just about every day the eight-year-old Greek boy would show up to watch his soccer heroes at practice. He may have just come from kicking a ball about in a game of street pick-up with his friends or he may be going off to do that after practice. Soccer was life to this boy in 1976. Still is.

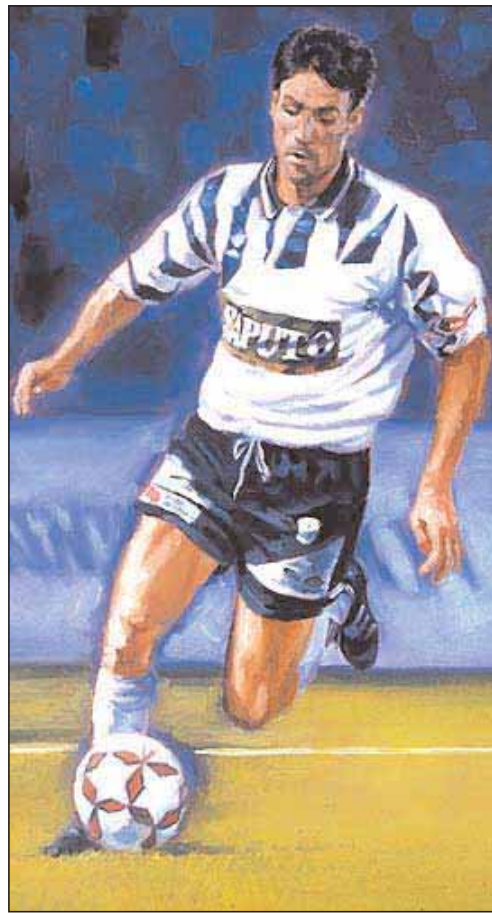
All the players knew him and grew to expect him to turn up at the small municipal stadium where Third Division club Iliasiakos played and trained in Zografou, a suburb of Athens.

When training for the day ended, it became a habit for young John Limniatis to join the pros for a kick about, some passing and, in particular, taking shots at 'keeper Nikos Sarganis.

Sarganis had started his pro life as a fullback, but was converted to such good effect that he became arguably the best 'keeper Greece has ever seen.

Now let's wind forward to the summer of 1987 where Canada, Greece and Peru were playing in an international round-robin for what Limniatis remembers as the Sir Charles Matthews Cup. It is an event for which I can find no records, but its final is one that is as clear as yesterday to Limniatis.

Back then, he was just 19 and had only recently launched his professional soccer career as a central defender or defensive midfielder with the fledgling Ottawa



Pioneers. This team was forced to play its first season at a small stadium tucked away in Aylmer because Frank Clair Stadium had artificial turf and grass was mandatory for the league.

Limniatis, a gritty player, had attracted enough attention to be picked for Canada and, even at 19, was among those picked for the penalty shootout that was to decide that cup final against the country where he was born.

So Limniatis steps forward to take his shot, looks up, stares right into the eyes

of the 'keeper. It was a shockingly familiar sight. This was the same Nikos Sarganis he had spent many an afternoon shooting at back home in Athens all those years ago.

Limniatis will not admit whether or not the situation got the better of him. In fact, he says Sarganis saved his shot because "he cheated. He moved early."

Limniatis was the only Canadian to miss. But his new country still defeated his original one.

That same summer -- quite probably as a result of attracting attention of scouts during the two games Canada played against Greece -- Limniatis signed a pro contract with Aris Salonika, a First Division side.

"Sarganis was captain of the Greek team, but when I went to play with Aris, he remembered me," he says. "He remembered the little kid who came to training."

Today, Limniatis can boast of a good many soccer achievements of his own, which is why this week he was named to the Canadian Soccer Hall of Fame.

"I was told it might be possible a few months ago, but when I got the call it was still a surprise," he told me on Thursday. "Even though I believe I deserve it." That is not a boast, it's a fact. His record bears that out.

Apart from the Ottawa Pioneers and his years in Greece, Limniatis played with the Montreal Impact, the Kansas City Attack, the Charleston Battery and 10 years with the national team. He was out of the game for a short time after his playing career ended before becoming head coach with the Lac St. Louis soccer association in suburban Montreal.



Beached whales die in Australia

About 150 whales have died after being stranded in a remote coastal area of the Australian island of Tasmania.

Many of the long-finned pilot whales, which were discovered on Saturday, had been badly injured by jagged rocks.

Rescuers did manage to shepherd about 30 whales trapped in shallow reefs to safety using a small boat, an official said.

Whales pass Tasmania as they migrate to and from Antarctic waters and stranding is not uncommon.

Last week 11 whales were rescued after more than 60 became stranded off another part of the island.

Local residents and experts had worked to help this group of whales, stranded near Sandy Cape in north-west

Tasmania, but most had been injured by rocks and reefs.

Another group of whales beached in Tasmania last week

Officials moved one stranded whale that was calling to a group offshore, in a bid to prevent further deaths.

"Unfortunately, that whale died but what happened then was those 30 whales milling around seemed more willing to move on and with a boat in the water we managed to shepherd them out of the bay," Warwick Brennan, a spokesman for the department of primary industries and water, told AAP news agency.

Pilot whales are among the smaller whales, growing to about 5m (16ft) in length.

Scientists are not sure what causes whales to beach.

Greek survivors of Mumbai attacks safe in Paris

Paris (ANA-MPA/O. Tsipira) - An airplane chartered by the French government arrived in Paris on Saturday carrying the 77 survivors of the attacks in Mumbai, including the two Greek citizens Ioannis Prokopiou and Alma Panagiotaki.

Prokopiou and Panagiotaki were met at Paris' Roissy Airport by Greek Consul Aikaterini Koika, and were due to return to Athens on another flight later in the day.

The two Greek citizens, as well as the other survivors, declined to make any statement to the media, while their expressed desire was "discretion" and their speediest possible return to Greece in order to forget "the nightmare in Mumbai".

A medical team and a psychological support team were waiting for the passengers at Roissy Airport, while it was apparent that the survivors' needs were mainly psychological support, given that only a young French woman had suffered a slight hand injury.

Prokopiou -- a businessman -- and Panagiotaki were staying at the Oberoi Hotel, one of the targets of the concerted attacks in Mumbai, and spent several hours as hostages before managing to escape. After which the Greek attache to India saw to their transport to Paris on the French airplane.