

# BLUE BERET

## UNFICYP's Argentinian troops mark independence bicentennial

Every year on 9 July, Argentina commemorates one of its most important historical milestones – independence from Spain; 2016 is particularly special, marking 200 years of self-rule.

On the evening of 8 July, UNFICYP's Argentinian contingent organised a colourful reception to celebrate the event, hosting Force Commander Major General Kristin Lund, ambassadors and other distinguished civilian and military guests at San Martin Camp, Sector 1 HQ. Following a reception in the courtyard, a sumptuous dinner was served in the pool area, with Argentinian fayre, including empanadas, grilled lamb, veal and other traditional delicacies on offer. Over dinner, the guests were also treated to traditional song and dance performances, including the tango and the chacarera, performed by members of the contingent. At midnight, the start of the official bicentennial, troops and guests toasted Argentina and sang the country's national anthem.

On 9 July, the Commander of the Argentine Task Force in Cyprus, Lt Col Gustavo Adolfo Visceglie, led the Argentinian contingent in a parade to mark the official 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence at the main square of San Martin Camp. All staff of the San Martín and Roca camps then attended the hoisting of the Argentinian national flag. Military personnel of the Republics of Chile and Paraguay – also part of Sector 1 – also attended the ceremony, giving it a multinational and fraternal flavor. The ceremony was capped with a serving of traditional Argentinian chocolate.

### Argentina's path to independence

European explorers found their way to Argentina in the 16th century. It was later divided into different areas until 1776; over the next 50 years, the land that came to make up Argentina was gradually reunited.

Argentina's independence movement began in earnest on 25 May 1810, which is celebrated as Revolution Day. That date marked the beginning of a protracted military struggle, fought under the leadership of the revolutionary and military strategist Gen. José de Martín. On 9 July 1816, the Congress of Tucumán – the representative assembly – passed a resolution declaring the independence from Spain of the Provincias Unidas de America del Sur, which also included Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay.



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