A New Year,
A New Secretary-General
A New Year, A New Secretary-General

January 2007

Tanzania’s Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Asha-Rose Migiro (pictured) has stressed he would strive to restore trust, both between Member States and the Secretariat, and between senior management and staff, strengthen institutional capacity, and change the working culture of the United Nations. “My goal will be to build a staff which is truly mobile and multi-functional, through greater emphasis on career development, training, accountability, and recognition of work performed at all levels,” he declared.

2007 – the year beckons – the question is, will it be a year of reckoning?

For the United Nations, we enter the New Year with high hopes, newly resolved to build on the foundations laid and expectations raised when the two leaders agreed last July to a process aimed at promoting a resumption of negotiations for a comprehensive settlement.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has stressed his determination to bridge the gap and span the divide of mistrust that for too long, in his view, has plagued relations between Member States and the Secretariat. A key to achieving this organisational overhaul and one of the SG’s stated aims is a reinvigorated staff and a Secretariat that is accountable.

In Nicosia, the New Year began auspiciously when the Turkish Cypriot authorities elected to remove the controversial bridge that for a long time had smothered efforts to get agreement between the two sides on opening a crossing point at Ledra Street in the heart of the old town.

Nicosia Mayor / Bridge Demolished

Now, with the bridge dismantled, perhaps we can look forward to Nicosia having its own passegeway of trust linking Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot aspirations in a practical and symbolic way.

A positive new year wish would be that the two sides resolve freely of themselves to step across the dividing line and get past grievances and recriminations firmly behind them in a resolute move forward towards that elusive ideal – a comprehensive settlement.

Tanzania’s Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Asha-Rose Migiro

Removal of the bridge in Nicosia

What’s In A Name?

Not long after Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon took office, his spokesperson Michelle Montas offered the following standard phrase to members of the UN press corps some help with Korean names. “To introduce how the new Secretary-General should be addressed, Korean names formally begin with the family name, followed by the given name, so his name should be stated as Ban Ki-moon. His surname is ‘Ban’, spelled b-a-n and pronounced ‘bahn’. His given name is ‘Ki-moon’ with a capital K, small i, hyphen and small ‘m-o-n’.

The accurate pronunciation of that would be ‘gee-moon’.

Not surprisingly, since she was dealing with the press, Ms. Montas’s comments elicited a further series of questions as indicated by the following exchange:

Question: A lot of people, even here at the UN, are saying Ban Ki, but you are telling us it’s Ban Gi?

Spokesperson: It’s “Bahn gee-moon”. He joked during his meeting with staff. He said he would not want to be called “Mr. Ban”, because he is not planning to ban anything. He is not going to ban any constructive dialogue with the staff – definitely not. So it’s “bahn gee-moon”.

Question: I just wanted to confirm on the pronunciation – maybe you can spell out: “gi” you are saying – not “k-i”?

Spokesperson: Yes, it is just the way I was told – it’s bahn gee-moon.

Question: We should use a “g” then?

Spokesperson: It’s pronounced “gi”.

January 2007 – The Blue Beret

Ban Ki-Moon Shapes His Team
The year 2006, marked by changes at the top including the arrival of new SRSG Michael Møller in January and new Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael José Barni of Argentina in early March, saw much progress achieved in making the mission a more coherent and effective one. The mission's components pulled together and in a time of need were able to deliver in a very complex emergency situation.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan met President Papadopoulos in Paris on 28 February to review the Cyprus situation and to look for ways to move the process forward in order to resume negotiation towards a comprehensive settlement. January saw the arrival of new SRSG Michael Møller as successor to Zbigniew Wlosowicz. Welcoming the challenge ahead, Møller told the Blue Beret: "A good job is one in which firstly one can apply some things learnt in the past, secondly learn something new, and thirdly have a feeling you are doing something useful." UNFICYP's Gender Focal Point, moderated a two-track process to launch bi-communal discussions on everyday life issues. The process was catalysed by Under-Secretary-General Gambari's visit to the island.

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In between, Under-Secretary-General Gambari’s visit to the island was the catalyst for the 8 July agreement, a two-track process to launch bi-communal discussions on everyday technical issues plus an exchange of lists of substantive issues for review by working groups from the two sides and subsequent approval by the two leaders. In later, US Gambari wrote to the leaders urging them to continue efforts to resolve. At the year’s end, their principal aides remained engaged in discussions in SRSG Møller’s office about how to move the process forward in order to resume negotiation towards a comprehensive settlement. January saw the arrival of new SRSG Michael Møller as successor to Zbigniew Wlosowicz. Welcoming the challenge ahead, Møller told the Blue Beret: "A good job is one in which firstly one can apply some things learnt in the past, secondly learn something new, and thirdly have a feeling you are doing something useful." UNFICYP's Gender Focal Point, moderated a two-track process to launch bi-communal discussions on everyday life issues. The process was catalysed by Under-Secretary-General Gambari's visit to the island.

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Second Mediterranean Model UN Session

On 12 January, Chief of Mission Michael Møller was the keynote speaker at Nicosia’s English School, which organised the 2nd Mediterranean Model UN session.

The Chief of Mission said he was pleased to participate and to open the Model United Nations session. He hoped it would become “a yearly tradition expanded to include students from many other Mediterranean countries and especially also students from Turkish Cypriot schools.”

He listed the goals and benefits for the participants – the promotion of diversity, belief in human rights, eradication of racism, the elimination of antagonisms, improved understanding of current international affairs, unity, peace and security, and the respect of international law and justice. These are all fundamental cornerstones on which every individual should build his or her profile as an active participant in the life of the societies they live in, he said. This is, of course, particularly true if you intend to make a career in public service. And it is even more true for the citizens of this wonderful, but divided, country that we live in.

Andromachi Sofocleous, Secretary-General of the Mediterranean Model UN, thanked the SRSG for attending, saying his contribution added a great deal to the integrity and status of the conference. The event was covered by several local TV stations.

CM meets with Nicosia Mayor

On 15 January, SRSG Møller met with the newly elected Mayor of Nicosia Eleni Mavrou at the Mayor’s Office in central Nicosia.

They exchanged views on working relations between the two communities of Nicosia regarding the Nicosia Master Plan including the city’s sewerage system. They also discussed how to improve communication within the framework of these programmes.

Mayor Mavrou asked for Mr. Møller’s support regarding the proposed cleaning up of the buffer zone, and the maintenance of dangerous buildings in the area.

Bridge Demolished

Ledra Street’s controversial bridge, erected on the north side of the buffer zone over a year ago on 27 November 2005, was finally dismantled on 11 January 2007 after much media excitement over the holidays. The bridge had been installed to facilitate the passage of pedestrians through what was hoped would be the opening of the sixth and most significant of crossing points between the sides.

The actual opening of a crossing point at Ledra Street much media excitement over the holidays. The bridge had been installed to facilitate the passage of pedestrians through what was hoped would be the opening of the sixth and most significant of crossing points between the sides.

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Using the Power of Film to Promote Reconciliation

Young people are the future of Cyprus. Yet recent studies show that it’s precisely this current generation of young Cypriots that seem to be losing interest in co-existence with their peers from the other community. This trend highlights the need for increased opportunities for young people from across the island to meet each other and work together. Increased contact can assist in breaking down stereotypes, prejudices and pre-conceived notions of “the other”.

And this is why UNDP’s programme Action for Cooperation and Trust has invested heavily in projects which focus on bringing young Cypriots together from all communities through youth camps, educational forums and sports activities.

The latest avenue for youth involvement in the reconciliation process is the launch in January of the “Young Film Makers project”. The project seeks to tackle indifference and promote civic engagement amongst Cypriot youth, by giving them a unique opportunity to develop an idea for a short film and then make it happen. UNDP has teamed up with the TV and Radio Unit of Intercollege, which will provide high class technical support, training, mentoring, plus digital cameras and top-of-the-range editing equipment.

The youth of Cyprus has been invited to submit ideas for short films of between five-to-ten minutes, through an island-wide competition. The winning ideas will be taken forward by the project and finalists will be awarded a “scholarship” providing financial support and access to the tools needed to make their film. Open to 18-30 year olds, competition ideas can be about anything that is important to young people on the island, whether it’s individual or social issues, from the protection of the environment to inter-generational dialogue.

Entries will be judged by a selection panel made up of film critics, youth representatives and educators. Competition entries can come in the form of video clips produced by digital cameras or home videos. The competition is open to anyone, from the dedicated film student, the gifted novice or the young person who’s never picked up a camera in their life. At the end of the day, UNDP is looking for the power of an idea which can capture the spirit of the generation and which has the potential to send out a strong message about co-existence and cooperation between Cypriots.

UNDP aims to select 10 people from each community, and take their ideas to the film-making phase. This will take place between May and June 2007, following six to eight weeks of training. Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots who have similar ideas will be encouraged to support each other in making their respective films. However, if two finalists from different communities choose to work together on a single film, this will also be endorsed and supported. As a whole, all finalists will be urged to share ideas and support each other.

Finalists will be encouraged to use their native language. Films made by Turkish Cypriots will have Greek subtitles and films made by Greek Cypriots will have Turkish subtitles.

The films will be shown at a Film Festival at the end of 2007 where a judging panel, made up of renowned commentators in the world of the arts and journalism, will choose winners for various categories. Some of the films may also be considered for international competitions, and UNDP-ACE will also look at how the films can be widely shown across Cyprus in cinemas and at schools or universities.

“Project seeks to combine youthful energy with the profound power of the film medium,” said Jaco Cilliers, UNDP-ACE Programme Manager. “It will aim to stimulate an innovative social commentary on the issues which affect modern Cypriot youth and society at large. It aims to give Cypriot youth a voice and empower them to express themselves through film”.

The deadline for entries for the Young Film Makers Competition is 22 February 2007. For more information, please contact Christopher Louise at +357 22 874777 or look at www.undp-act.org

Do you have a great idea for a short film? Here’s your chance to make it!

Undp-act invites Cypriots aged 18-30 from all parts of the island to submit their ideas for short films – as long as the idea is about an issue that is important to you. We want to hear about it!

If you want to take the competition seriously then your script should have an idea of where you want your film to go. You will need to outline the story, characters and your vision for the finished film. We will provide the support you need to make it happen.

Do you want to have the chance to take part in the Young Film Makers competition? What better way to express yourself in a medium which has the unbridled energy to provoke, to entertain, to inform and to bring about change.

So if you want to take the competition seriously then your script should have an idea of where you want your film to go. You will need to outline the story, characters and your vision for the finished film. We will provide the support you need to make it happen.
The Blue Beret – January 2007

The Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus

CMP Profile

I. History

“The Committee shall look only into cases of persons reported missing in the intercommunal fighting as well as in the events of July 1974 and afterwards.” (Article 7, Terms of Reference of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus).

As a result of the violence generated during those unstable times, a total of 502 Turkish Cypriots and 1493 Greek Cypriots were officially reported as missing by both communities to the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP). Following a number of recent identifications, the total number of missing Greek Cypriots currently stands at 1468.

II. Origins

From 1975-1977, a number of inter-communal meetings on the problem of the missing persons were held but made no significant progress. Between 1977 and 1981, negotiations took place in Nicosia, Geneva and New York for the establishment of a Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP).

Between 1975 and 1979 the UN General Assembly (GA) adopted three different resolutions on the missing persons in Cyprus, calling for the establishment of an international body to tackle this humanitarian problem. Subsequently, the GA adopted two additional resolutions in 1981 and 1982, respectively, welcoming the establishment of the CMP and urging the CMP to proceed without delay in carrying out its mandate.

The CMP was established in April 1981 by agreement between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities under the auspices of the United Nations. It is the only institutionalized, bi-communal committee in Cyprus.

III. Structure and Mandate

The CMP is composed of a Member appointed by each of the two communities and a Third Member, selected by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. CMP decisions are taken by consensus. The chair is rotated monthly.

Terms of Reference of the CMP call upon the Committee to look into the cases of persons reported missing in the inter-communal fighting as well as the events of July 1974 and afterwards. The mandate of the CMP is purely humanitarian: establish the fate of missing persons. The Committee does not attempt to establish the cause of death or attribute responsibility for the death of missing persons (Article 11, CMP Terms of Reference).

The 31 July 1997 Agreement between the leaders of both communities provides for the exchange of information regarding known burial sites and the return of remains of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot missing persons.

IV. Resumption of work

On 30 August 2004, the CMP agreed to consider how to expand the Committee’s scope of activity and responsibility, in accordance with the proposals formulated by the Secretary-General in his two letters to the two leaders of December 2003 and August 2004, calling for the resumption of the work of the CMP, namely:

a. To conclude the remaining investigative work on both sides on the basis of an agreed, comprehensive timetable.

b. To agree on the modalities for the implementation of the 31 July 1997 Agreement, in accordance with the Terms of Reference of the CMP of April 1981.

V. Project on the Exhumation, Identification and Return of Remains of Missing Persons

The principal objective of this project is, within the framework of the CMP, to exhume, identify and return remains of people reported missing as a consequence of the tragic events of 1963-1964 and 1974. This will enable relatives of the victims to recover the remains of their loved ones, arrange a proper burial and close a long period of anguish and uncertainty. It is hoped that the healing of old wounds will in turn favour the overall process of reconciliation between both communities. The latter will be further encouraged by the bi-communal nature of the project, which involves the important participation of bi-communal scientific teams at all stages of the process.

This project reflects the positive spirit which exists within the CMP since it resumed its activities in 2004, as well as its determination to investigate and establish the fate of some 2,000 missing persons – using various scientific disciplines – by locating, exhuming and finally identifying their remains.

The project includes an Archaeological Phase (Phase I), related to the exhumation of the remains of missing persons, an Anthropological Phase (Phase II), related to the analyses of the recovered remains in the CMP’s anthropological laboratory, and a Genetic Phase (Phase III), related to the comparison of blood samples collected from the victims’ families with samples from the remains, in order to identify them. It also provides for the Return of Remains (Phase IV), aiming at helping families of both communities cope with the difficult task of coming to terms with their loss.

VI. Progress report

Collecting blood from relatives of missing persons

The Turkish Cypriot laboratory (Dr. Burhan Nalbantoğlu, Hospitals) involved in DNA extraction continues to collect blood samples from relatives of the Turkish Cypriot missing persons for later identification purposes.

The DNA profiles of the relatives of the Greek Cypriot missing persons were established a few years ago.

Exhumation

To date, the remains of some 207 individuals have been exhumed from different burial sites located all over the island.

CMP Anthropological Laboratory

The building and equipping of the CMP anthropological laboratory within the United Nations Protected Area (Old Nicosia Airport) was finalised by the end of August 2006, when it started to be operational.

Since then, the anthropological laboratory has analysed the remains of some 106 individuals in an attempt to obtain tentative identification before bone samples are sent to the DNA laboratory.

DNA analysis

DNA extracted from the skeletal remains will be compared with the DNA of the relatives of the missing persons. The DNA identification process will be carried out by a bi-communal team of scientists in the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics in Nicosia.

Identification process

When the DNA identification process is conclusive and corroborated by the anthropological analysis, formal identification is reached.

Return of Remains

It is hoped that the first positive identification will be obtained soon and that therefore the first remains of identified individuals will be returned to families of missing persons in 2007.

Bi-communal Teams

The entire project is carried out by bi-communal teams of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot scientists who are playing an important role throughout the project.

International archaeologists and anthropologists from Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF) are coordinating and training the bi-communal teams of Cypriot scientists involved in the exhumation, anthropology and DNA work. Ten Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots are carrying out exhumations on both sides of the Green Line while four others are working at the CMP anthropological laboratory in the UNPA.

Another team of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot scientists is going to carry out the DNA identification process at the Laboratory of Forensic Genetics at the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics in Nicosia.
A Corner of Friendship in Cyprus

Marios and Maria Kattou live in the small village of Evrychou, situated on the road leading to Troodos. They are the owners of the "Marios Tavern". But for Argentinian Contingent, Marios and Maria are the owners of the "Corner of Friendship", a place where many Argentinians have found sincere warmth and affection since first arriving on the island in 1993.

Marios and Maria have been married for 45 years. They have five children and nine grandchildren. Marina, their youngest daughter, lives with them and is also part of this story.

Marios has been working in Skouriotissa, Sector 1, since 1963 when the camp accommodated the workers of a copper mine. In 1974, the camp buildings were taken over by the Danish Contingent. They stayed there until 1993 when the Argentinian Contingent took over, renaming it San Martín Camp.

Marios has been present during all these changes, from the copper mine, then as a cook with the Danes and now as the head cook with the Argentinians. Marina is a kitchen assistant, and Maria also works in Sector 1 in various assignments around the camp.

After their daily duties in Sector 1, Marios, Maria and Marina run their tavern in the evenings. Since 1993, hundreds of Argentinians have made their way there in off-duty hours. The family has a way of making any visitor feel very welcome and comfortable.

Through the years, many celebrations have taken place in the tavern, including private parties, farewell dinners and even medal parade receptions!

Capt. Mauricio Silvestre

Marios, Marina and Maria

Marina and Maria say they love receiving Argentinian peacekeepers in their house, located next door to the tavern. They feel there is a mutual spirit there, a very similar mentality. Often, Sector 1 personnel who have got to know the family just pop in for a visit, maybe even a cup of tea. "We feel very comfortable with Argentinians – they are respectful of our family and our customs," says Maria. Marina adds: "It is very easy to make friends with them, particularly the younger soldiers, who seem to enjoy a house like ours to come to while they’re so far away from home".

After almost 14 years, more than 5,000 Argentinian men and women have passed through Cyprus and many of them still remember the three "Ms". During the recent festive season, more than 20 former peacekeepers telephoned them from Argentina, which clearly shows the friendship that exists. The family, too, remembers many who have visited them in the past, including the present Force Commander Maj. Gen. Barni and his family back in 1997.

Marios, Maria and Marina have received many invitations to visit their friends in Argentina, but as yet, they have not quite made it. However, they have so many offers of accommodation from one end to the other of this immense country that once they arrive, they will never need to search for a roof over their heads!

The friendship shown by the Kattou family to the Argentinian Contingent is a very clear sign of the generosity and kindness of the local population.

Sector 1 has no hesitation in recommending Marios Tavern to all colleagues! If you would like to try the speciality of the house, "kleftiko", you will need to book ahead, so call 22-932 357 for a meal to remember!

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COP Woodpecker

An exercise took place on 25 January in Sector Orión buffer zone area near OPT 22 more specifically beside Agios Nicolaos village ruins. More than 80 UNFICYP soldiers from Sector 1, UNPOL 1 (Linou), SCAT 1 (Mammari), MFR (HQ UNFICYP) UN Flight and the FMPU took part in the exercise, along with MFR’s Tacticas. The objective was to reinforce and practice integration between the three pillars.

The scenario created was the intrusion of “civilians” who wanted to farm inside the buffer zone. A Sector 1 patrol detected the intrusion. They approached the area and requested the “civilians” to show their permission to farm. Not only was this request refused, but a very aggressive attitude against the UN was adopted.

Sector 1 then called UNPOL and SCAT in order to set up an ICP (Incident Control Point) in the problem area. Between themselves, the three pillars decided on their course of action, which was to block the “farmers” with UN vehicles.

However more “civilians” then entered the buffer zone in order to support the “farmers”. Consequently escalation of the situation. Therefore Sector 1’s reserve was called to the scene and its preparation was undertaken that it may be called upon very soon, if the situation worsened.

Meanwhile the “civilians” continued with their aggressive and violent attitude, sector requested crowd control procedures, but the trouble escalated even further, so then MFR’s problem was finally realised. The MOLO team, Sector Liaison Officer and was attempting to negotiate a stop to the hostilities.

The MOLO team, at the meantime, had contacted the Sector Liaison Officer and was attempting to negotiate a stop to the hostilities.

During this period of confrontation, a peacekeeper was “injured”. Sector 1’s JOC requested a UN Flight CASEVAC. While the helicopter was on its way, the victim was transported by ambulance to the helipad at OPT 22 and then evacuated.

Towards the end of the exercise, the MOLO, Liaison Officer and leader of the “demonstration” finally reached an agreement, so the “violence” stopped and the incident de-escalated. The “peacekeepers” began to withdraw from the scene, and later UNFICYP returned to base.


A debriefing followed with all present invited to comment. Sector 1 was complimented on the success of the exercise, in particular Maj. Peter Fouquet, who was the overall commander. Mauricio Silvestre
UN Flight Medal Parade

On 13 December, a Volleyball Championship was played in the UN Flight hangar. Teams from HQ, Sector 1, Sector 2, Sector 4, and UN Flight took part.

The day-long tournament ended at 5:30 p.m. OC UN Flight Lt. Col. Fernando Simo presented trophies to the winning team, Sector 4, second place Sector 1, and UN Flight, which took third place.

The ceremony was conducted by OC UN Flight Lt. Col. Fernando Simo who noted that more than 500 Argentinian Air Force personnel have served with UNFICYP since September 1994. “We have completed more than 14,000 flight hours and transported over 37,000 passengers with one of the best safety records in UN aviation history,” he said.

C.M. Moller recognised UN Flight’s vital role in providing UNFICYP with air advantage and excellent medical evacuation capabilities. “The quick response in carrying out flights during the Lebanon crisis was the most outstanding example of Argentina and UN Flight’s readiness to help where needed”.

Following the ceremony, a reception was held in the hangar. OC UN Flight expressed his appreciation to all those who attended and shared their time with the proud medalists.

New Faces

Kent Harrington has a Masters Degree from Western Illinois University in Law Enforcement and Justice Administration. He is a graduate of the United States Army Command and General Staff Officers Course from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He has completed work towards a second Masters Degree at Texas A & M University Corpus Christi in Secondary Education and is currently working towards Certified Protection Professional certification with the American Society for Industrialized Security.

Kent enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1977 as a Military Policeman and was commissioned as a Military Police Officer in 1984. His assignments included Military Police Platoon Leader, Company Commander, Operations and Training Officer, Military Observer for the United Nations in Cambodia, Adjutant, and Executive Officer. He retired at the rank of Captain in 1995.

Since then he has served in the Department of Law Enforcement at Western Illinois University; the Kwajalein Police Department in the Marshall Islands; the United Nations in Kosovo; the Illinois Police Corps; and the Texas Police Corps. His last assignment was with the United Nations in Afghanistan.

Capt. Mark Honeybunn, 39 Regiment RA, was posted to the MFR in September 2006 as a Platoon Commanding Officer. In December 2006, Mark organised and ran the UNFICYP Rugby 7s Tournament this month, and has been heavily engaged in captaining and leading the Nicosia Barbarians Rugby Team.

Kent had a number of multi-national appointments; with NATO in Sarajevo (FRY), Croatia (Zagreb), SHAPE (Belgium) with the Combined Joint Planning Staff, HQ Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (Germany), AFNORTHWEST (England) and HQ AFCENT (Germany). He also deployed with the UN to Bosnia in 1995. Included in his military service is over 10 years stationed in a number of British Garrisons in Germany. Although no stranger to the UN, this is his first time in Cyprus.

Kent is married to Karen and they have two children, Rakeb (2) and Nathan (4).

Time passes very quickly in Cyprus. Only a short while ago, Ross Wikware first stepped into his office at UNFICYP as the new Security Officer back in October 2004. Two years and three months on, he has handed in his Laisser Passer and traded in his white UN Corolla for a season’s ski pass at Sunshine Village, only 15 minutes from the condo Ross and his wife Patricia own in Canmore, Alberta. Aside from seeking the good life, the time was ripe for Ross to head back to Canada and try his hand at a joint business venture in the world of Information Technology.

When I first met Ross, only six months into his term with UNFICYP, I assumed he had been around for years. He already had his hand in a number of impressive projects and was a source of wisdom on issues ranging from UN policy to where to locate the best “meeze” on the island. Ross managed to outdo his job as OIC of SIS, the point of accepting tasks that, simply put, no one else wanted. Among his many accomplishments are the design of a new security plan for the mission; being the driving force behind a $2.3 million dollar security facilities enhancement project; assuming the roles of SEA and Conduct and Discipline focal points; and playing a key role in the evacuation of last year’s UNFICYP staff from Lebanon.

Ross’s dedication and high standards did not go unappreciated. He will be dearly missed by CAO Frank Clancy, by his motor cycling mates and by his deep sea diving buddies. Doubtless, he and Patricia will be entertaining a long list of visitors from Cyprus in the years ahead. Many thanks for deciding to make a stop-over in Cyprus Ross!”

Capt. Mark Honeybunn, 39 Regiment RA, was posted to the MFR in September 2006 as a Platoon Commanding Officer. Engaged in the training and deployment of his platoon across the island. A talented rugby player, Mark organised and ran the UNFICYP Rugby 7s Tournament this month, and has been heavily engaged in captaining and leading the Nicosia Barbarians Rugby Team.
Flying Santa drops in on Pyla’s Children

On 22 December, UNFICYP gave Santa Claus and one of his elves a lift via a patrolling helicopter to visit the schoolchildren of Pyla. Hundreds of excited Turkish and Greek Cypriot kids greeted his landing and waited patiently to receive their presents. Afterwards, both Muhktaars, Parent-Teacher Association Heads, Principals, parents and the UN had coffee and cake while all the children played together at the Greek Cypriot School. The joyous event celebrated the true spirit of the holidays in a bonding display of goodwill, sharing and friendship. Civil Affairs Political Officer Sally Anne Corcoran hopes to have more activities of this nature in 2007, with the aim of bringing all the Cypriot children together in an atmosphere of camaraderie and trust.

The children of Cyprus are its future, and we are helping to lay a good foundation when we invest in them and bring the two communities together.

Christmas at HQ

It was Christmas Day at HQ UNFICYP. Early in the morning, officers of the MFR toured their soldiers accommodation blocks with the start to the day – “gunfire” tea (tea with whiskey) and Irish coffee, accompanied by bacon rolls and sausage baps or rolls. This British Army tradition caused some initial confusion among MFR’s Argentinian, Hungarian and Slovak soldiers. When they were woken up by a banging on their doors, some thought it was another exercise, cruelly timed. Instead, they found their OC standing outside, ready to serve them breakfast!

After the “gunfire”, MFR’s British soldiers organised a trip to their fellow Brits at the Ledra Palace for a carol-singing session in the carpark. The padre, Capt. Liam Smith, was灌入several different versions of the song sheets, resulting in assorted versions of the same carol being sung at once!

The next British tradition was at lunchtime when HQ UNFICYP and MFR soldiers entered the International Cafeteria to find all the tables re-arranged in banquet style with festive table cloths decorating them and the officers waiting to serve them the first course – soup. For the main course, Chief of Staff Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell and Maj. Stan Stanton served meat carved on the hotplate.

Following lunch, the Argentinians in particular were baffled even further by the Christmas crackers which adorned the table. Once explained exactly what to do with them, they joined in the fun and a good time was had by all.

Later in the afternoon, films were shown in the bar, followed by tea and a quiz in the evening. Much was done to make the soldiers feel as comfortable as possible at this special time of year.

During the PIO Christmas breakfast, where members of the department entertained their guests with carols suitably adapted for the occasion, £170.00 was collected.

The money will be donated this month to the Kemal Saraçoğlu Leukaemia Trust for Children in the north and the Cyprus Association for Autistic Persons in the south.
Mi Casa, Tu Casa!