

# The Blue Beret

## March 2007

**Nicosia  
Mayors  
Salute  
Women's  
Day**





## THE BLUE BERET

Published monthly by the:

Public Information Office  
United Nations Peacekeeping Force in  
Cyprus  
HQ UNFICYP  
PO Box 21642  
1590 Nicosia  
Cyprus

Tel: 2261-4550/4416/4408

Fax: 2261-4461

E-mail: unficyp-blue-beret@un.org

blueberetcyprus@hotmail.com

Website: www.unficyp.org

### Editorial Team

Brian Kelly

Miriam Taylor

Netha Kreouzou

Sgt. Jozef Kocka (Photographer)

Anne Bursey

Capt. Štefan Zemanovič

### Unit Press Officers

**Sector 1** Capt. Mauricio Silvestre

**Sector 2** Capt. Ellie Haywood

**Sector 4** Capt Miloš Segeň

**MFR** Lt. Tom Bell

**UNPOL** Sgt. Vanessa Stone

**UN Flt** 1/Lt. Nestor Marelli

**FMPU** Capt. Miroslav Svorník

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## Editorial

The highlight of this eventful month was undoubtedly the fall of the wall.

However commendable the Greek Cypriot decision to remove the long-standing wall dividing Ledra Street, its significance as a confidence-building measure can only be gauged properly after a crossing point opens at the heart of old Nicosia's main commercial thoroughfare.

Nicosia's status of "last divided capital" is surely a distinction worth shedding for all sorts of practical commercial and touristic reasons. More importantly, the opening of a crossing point in the old town would represent a concrete gesture of intent on the part of the two sides to move towards reunification of the island's capital.

It would also serve as a boost for on-going efforts to adopt the technical committees and bi-communal working groups called for in the 8 July process as a way of restarting full-fledged negotiations for a comprehensive settlement. The Security Council acknowledged as much when it joined others in the international community and applauded the removal of the wall, as well as the earlier dismantling by the Turkish Cypriots of the wall and pedestrian bridge on the north side of the buffer zone in the same area.

In a similar vein, UNFICYP is at the ready to facilitate, support and sustain the momentum of both processes, knowing that each represents a vital gateway to progress and a more hopeful future.

All Cypriots stand to benefit, should the Ledra Street crossing open, since this would restore the heart of the historic and much loved old town, in the process generating a new and much needed energy to the Cyprus dialogue.

# Security Council Welcomes Fall of the Wall

Members of the Security Council welcomed the Cyprus Government's decision to remove the wall and National Guard post at Ledra Street as a step towards opening a new crossing point. They hoped both sides would be able to agree quickly on the practicalities for pedestrian access, and they welcomed SRSG Møller's and UNFICYP's support for the initiative. The SC members also welcomed the earlier dismantling by the Turkish Cypriots of the wall and pedestrian bridge on the north side of the buffer zone in the same area.

In a press statement issued in New York, members of the Council said they shared the Secretary-General's hope that confidence-building measures of this kind would be part of a broader move to resume full-fledged negotiations aimed at a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. They expressed their readiness to offer full support as necessary.

SC members urged both communities to work with the UN to open Ledra Street crossing and to implement the 8 July 2006 agreement, in particular through the immediate creation of bicommunal working groups and technical committees in order to prepare the ground for full-fledged negotiations leading to a comprehensive and durable settlement.

The wall, known as "Tourist Bunker", marked the southern rim of the buffer zone area dividing Ledra Street in old Nicosia's central commercial thoroughfare. It was taken down on the night of 8/9 March.

UNFICYP has since indicated it stands ready to conduct a sweep of the area for unexploded ordnance and to facilitate an EU-funded project to shore up adjacent buffer zone buildings as soon as the two sides agree to move forward with a crossing.



## Preparations for Return of Remains of Missing

Turkish Cypriot CMP member Gülden Plümer Küçük has been conducting a briefing session for relatives of the missing in order to update them about progress to date in the ongoing efforts to return the identified remains of missing persons to their families as soon as possible. She advised that it might take two months before the first remains will be handed over. The meeting was organised by the Turkish Cypriot Human Rights Foundation at the Near East University in north Nicosia.

The CMP has announced the launch of the genetic identification phase of its Project on the Exhumation, Identification and Return of Remains of missing individuals. A team of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot geneticists are involved in this work which is being carried out by the Laboratory of Forensic



Genetics of the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics (CING) in Nicosia. The DNA samples of relatives of missing Turkish Cypriots have been sent to the CING, which is already in possession of the DNA samples of the relatives of missing Greek Cypriots. The first submission of bone samples by the CMP Anthropological Laboratory has been made to the CING in order to proceed with the extraction of DNA, which, it is hoped, will lead to the identification of the individuals concerned.

The scientific complexity of the process is such that it is very difficult to predict exactly how much time will be required for the identification of remains. The CMP nonetheless hopes to be able to return the first identified remains of missing persons to their relatives by late spring.

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# Mine Awareness Day – 4 April

April 4th was International Mine Awareness Day. The Secretary-General noted that the Day serves to remind us all that millions of people in nearly 80 countries still live in fear of landmines and explosive remnants of war. These devices take an unacceptable toll on lives and limbs. They wreak havoc on people’s livelihoods. They block access to land, roads, and basic services.

In the ten years since the Ottawa Treaty banning anti-personnel mines, 153 countries have ratified or adhered to it, including Cyprus and Turkey. About 40 million stockpiled anti-personnel landmines have been destroyed. Production, sale and transfer of anti-personnel mines have almost stopped.

Landmines still kill 15,000 to 20,000 yearly – half the casualty rate at the time the Ottawa Convention came into effect. Nonetheless, DPKO USG Jean-Marie Guehenno says there is still much to be done to eliminate existing mines, to prevent their future use, to end stockpiling and to upgrade and improve help to the victims.

Successful de-mining programmes have helped millions of people in mine-affected countries to resume their normal lives by making land safe for farming and, by opening roads to transportation and commerce, enabling children to walk safely to school. Those familiar with UNMAC’s demining activities here in Cyprus (see below) can attest to new farming opportunities and to crossings that have opened because of successful de-mining operations.

Yet, for all the progress, it is well to remember that landmines can and do kill, years, even decades, after conflict ends. The vast majority of victims are civilians. In Afghanistan, most victims are below the age of 18. As UNHCR has pointed out, civilian populations are often the first, and always the last, casualties of war.

The shadowy presence of mines and minefields poses an ever-present threat, impeding a community’s prospects for a better life. Today, this is compounded by all the explosive remnants of war and conflict, including different types of ammunition, unexploded rockets and mortars, and especially the lethal legacy of cluster bombs. The latter scatter hundreds of smaller bombs, or sub-munitions, which, though intended to detonate on impact, often fail to until triggered by an unwary and unsuspecting civilian.

In Lebanon, the UN has helped to clean up 100,000 sub-munitions from cluster bombs, but a million still remain, and there have been casualties among both UN peacekeepers and the Lebanese.

The SG has called on the international community to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, the impact of cluster munitions on civilians. These indiscriminately kill and maim civilians, just as easily and frequently as landmines do. International outrage has driven a large group of countries to pursue a new international treaty to deal with these weapons, thus complementing and reinforcing other on-going efforts.

Currently, 14 UN agencies, programmes, departments and funds are active in mine action services – including finding and destroying landmines and explosive remnants of war; assisting victims; teaching people methods to remain safe in mine-affected areas; and destroying mine stockpiles; and encouraging universal participation in international agreements such as the Ottawa Convention – in dozens of countries.

Here in Cyprus, the EU-funded UN Mine Action Centre (MAC) has been operational since November 2004, working out of UNFICYP Headquarters in the United Nations Protected Area, Nicosia.

The programme is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), executed by United Nations Operation Services (UNOPS) with technical assistance of United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and operations facilitated by the United Nations Forces in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

To date, it has removed 2,854 (1,496 Anti-personnel and 1,314 Anti-tank mines) mines from 25 minefields within the buffer zone. In doing so, it has released 2,245,317 square metres of buffer zone land, leaving a further 9 million square metres of land to be surveyed.

On 22 November 2006, Nicosia was declared mine-free, with the detonation of the last two remaining mines in the buffer zone area near the city.

Since de-mining was launched in November 2004, EU funding for this joint EU-UN effort has totalled 9 million Euros, enabling the project to run until December 2008. In 2004, the Governments of Canada and Slovenia made pre-launch contributions of US\$250,000 and US\$25,000 respectively to help set up the Mine Action Centre.

## SG’s New Appointments



Kiyotaka Akasaka of Japan has been appointed new chief of the UN’s Department of Public Information (DPI), succeeding Shashi Tharoor of India as the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information.

The new USG joins the UN from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in

Paris, where he served as Deputy Secretary-General since August 2003. Mr. Akasaka was Japan’s Ambassador to the UN between 2000 and 2001, and as Deputy Director-General in the Japanese Foreign Ministry’s Multilateral Cooperation Department from 1997 to 2000, was one of his country’s top negotiators in the Kyoto Conference on Climate Change. He has also held posts at the GATT and WHO. Mr. Akasaka served in the Japanese Foreign Ministry as Deputy Director of the Press Division and spokesman on climate change. He has also been deeply involved in OECD public information activities.



John Holmes, newly-appointed Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and UN Emergency Coordinator



Jan Egeland, former Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, has been appointed Special Adviser to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

# Wasting Water cannot be tolerated

The theme of World Water Day, celebrated on 22 March, was on “Coping with Water Scarcity”. Water scarcity can be physical, economic or institutional, and can fluctuate over time and space. The Secretary-General, in his message, pointed out that about 700 million in 43 countries currently suffer from water scarcity, a figure that could increase to more than three billion people by 2025.

“The state of the world’s waters remains fragile, and the need for an integrated and sustainable approach to water resource management is as pressing as ever. Available supplies are under great duress as a result of high population growth, unsustainable consumption patterns, poor management practices, pollution, inadequate investment in infrastructure, and low efficiency in water-use,” he said.

Even more water will be needed in the future in order to grow food, to provide clean drinking water and sanitation services, to operate industries and to support expanding cities. The water-supply-demand gap is likely to grow wider still, threatening economic and social development and environmental sustainability. The Secretary-General stressed that, “integrated water resources management will be of crucial importance in overcoming water scarcity. So will international cooperation, since many of the world’s rivers and aquifers are shared among countries. Such cooperation can also promote harmonious cross-border ties in general.”

The Millennium Development Goals have helped to highlight the importance of access to safe drinking water supplies and adequate sanitation, which undeniably separates people living healthy and productive lives from those living in poverty and most vulnerable to various life-threatening diseases. Making good on the global water and sanitation agenda is crucial to eradicating poverty and achieving the other development goals.

“The way forward is clear: strengthening institutional capacity and governance at all levels, promoting more technology transfer, mobilizing more financial resources, and scaling up good practices and lessons learned. On this World Water Day, I call on the UN system and all stakeholders to forge stronger partnerships and take more concerted action, not only this year, but throughout the entire International Decade for Action: ‘Water for Life’, 2005-2015.”

In Cyprus, the showers experienced in March were a welcome respite from a particularly dry winter, but did little to offset the low levels in the island’s reservoirs. Rainfall this winter was so low that the island’s dams reached only 26.3% of their capacity, with 72.075 million cubic metres of water, little more than half the 135.5 million cubic metres of water (49.5% of capacity) this time last year. Water inflow is currently 150,000 cubic metres, with the total inflow so far this year standing at 28.9 million cubic metres.

Significant amounts of water can be saved by following a number of water saving measures, which require little time and money to implement, not just during drought conditions but year-round:

- Check the plumbing installation for leaks.
- Check taps for drips and make repairs promptly.
- Install plastic water bags in the toilet flush tanks.
- Take a shower instead of a bath and avoid having to run the water until it’s hot. Turn off shower water while you apply soap to body.
- Encourage and advise children not to mess around with water in the bath, garden or anywhere else.
- Turn off water while you shave and/or brush teeth.
- Wash only full loads in the washing and dish washing machines.
- Water the garden with a watering can early in the morning or in the evening when evaporation is limited.
- Wash the car with a sponge and a bucket, instead of a hosepipe, which is prohibited by law.
- Use a broom, not a hose, to clean verandas and pavements.

**According to the United Nations World Water Development Report 2, “our society has not yet attained a level of sustainability whereby humanity honours and respects life upon this planet and uses fairly and equitably the resources it provides. The UN system has taken on a lead role in addressing this challenge through the setting of the Millennium Development Goals and water has a crucial role to play in this.**

- **Water is the primary life-giving resource. Its availability is an essential component in socio-economic development and poverty reduction. Factors impacting this resource and on managing water in an integrated, sustainable and equitable manner include widespread poverty, malnutrition, the dramatic impacts of demographic change, growing urbanization, the effects of globalization and the recent manifestations of climate change.**
- **Exacerbating the challenge of economic development is the issue of climate change, which strongly influences the hydrological cycle. Droughts and floods, intensified by climate change, can lead to famine, loss of resources and contamination of water supplies. Population pressure on forest resources can accelerate and degradation and compromise watershed functions, increasing the vulnerability of the poorest communities.**
- **Water is fundamental to our way of life, at whatever point in the socio-economic spectrum a community may be situated. It is likewise crucial to the preservation of the essential ecosystems upon which our lives depend.**

The seriousness of the water situation has promoted the Greek Cypriot authorities to announce that wasting water will no longer be tolerated, and that people found wasting supplies would be fined.



# Talk in the International Cafeteria

Everyone in the UNPA knows the International Cafeteria. It is the gastronomic centre at HQ UNFICYP where soldiers, police and civilians can enjoy the high standard of catering available for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

The Cafeteria was first outsourced in 1999 to a company based in Britain. In July 2006, the contract for the cafeteria was awarded to Tözün Catering Ltd., and since then, the catering team has changed in a singularly special way.

Michael Charalambous has been the Facilities Manager since November 2000, and is responsible for managing the catering team of 19 staff – 13 Greek Cypriots and six Turkish Cypriots – on a daily basis. Michael says that “it is the first time we have worked under Turkish Cypriot management. We all wondered how we would get on, and I can honestly say we get on very well”.

The International Cafeteria caters for up to 200 on a daily basis – “not an easy task,” says Michael, “but we try our best”. One break from the routine menu, which includes meat, fish and vegetarian dishes, was a “national food day” on alternating Thursdays with Argentinian, British, Hungarian and Slovak traditional meals on offer. Michael also meets every second month at a Mess Meeting with the Force Supply Officer and representatives of each HQ unit (MFR, FMPU, UN Fit and BRITCON) to discuss suggestions, complaints, possible improvements, etc.

“It’s hard to please all the people, all the time, but even more difficult if cultural differences get in the way of the catering staff. It has, in the past, been acutely complicated when staff members work alongside each other yet don’t even speak each other’s language,” Michael added.



From the left: Neçip Tözün, Çimen Tözün and Michael Charalambous

To solve this problem, Mr. Neçip Tözün has provided every staff member with their own Greek/Turkish phrase book. In addition, Michael has identified common kitchen terminology. He had them printed and displayed in key areas in order to encourage personnel to communicate by using each other’s language.

Mr. Tözün has instigated regular staff meetings and training sessions to maximize teamwork and customer care. Staff development is seen as an important aspect which contributes to employee motivation. An example of this is the incentive trip to Dubai which Michael and his wife took with Mr. and Mrs. Tözün in September 2006 and included a food hygiene course.

Cafeteria staff in turn receive on-the-job training. This includes anything from general cuisine updates to first aid care.

Salome, one of the catering assistants, said “The beauty of the present system is that we all feel like one big family”. Betül, her co-worker, agrees. “I never expected to get on so well with Greek Cypriots, but now I am so very glad I got this job.” Betül worked for years in a Turkish Cypriot supermarket and never spoke a word of Greek in her life before joining the International Cafeteria. Now, even though it’s only a few phrases, she gets her meaning across. In one way or another, they manage to “speak each other’s language”.

Hasan Murat, one of the IC’s four chefs, comes from Louroujina. He loves his job and travels 45 minutes to and from work on a daily basis. Hasan speaks three languages – Turkish, Greek and English. He mentions how similar some of the Greek and Turkish words are in the respective dialects on the island – ancient words which have been used by both communities for hundreds of years. Nowhere other than in Cyprus would these words be understood!

Cypriots are great coffee drinkers, and as Hasan says,

*Smiles behind the counter!*

“It’s not so difficult for Greek and Turkish Cypriots to sit down and drink a coffee together. But many may consider it unthinkable to work all day long together, side by side. We have proven it can be done.” One of his Greek Cypriot counterparts, Fanos Andreou, is currently taking a Turkish language course at evening classes. “Very interesting”, he says. “And at least I get the chance to practise what I learn!”

When speaking to the staff, it is clear that they have bonded. Those arriving for the morning shift find breakfast waiting for them. Then at noon, when the afternoon shift arrives, all staff sit together for a coffee or a bite to eat. Mr. Tözün joins the group two to three times a week. Problems – if any – are discussed openly and immediately. Nobody feels intimidated.

Recently, Betül slipped whilst mopping a floor. She was immediately transported to hospital where X-rays were taken and she was cleared. The next day, Tözün arrived with new, non-slip shoes for every single member of staff – including those located in Sectors 1 and 4. Tözün Catering also has the catering contract in these sectors, in addition to the cleaning and laundry contracts.

On another occasion, Chryso Nicolaou, the catering assistants’ supervisor, suddenly lost her husband. A skeleton staff was organised and Mr. Tözün, together with the remaining catering staff, all attended the church ceremony and funeral proceedings. Respect and sensitivity for each other’s culture and religion is so clearly apparent.

Mr. Tözün is very aware that staff motivation is paramount to the accord within the unit. Everyone receives a 13th and 14th salary at Christmas and Easter. All social insurance contributions are paid. All staff members have joined the trade union, regardless of ethnicity. In addition, Mr. Tözün presents each staff member with a New Year’s present, and he never fails to arrive on each individual’s birthday – nobody has yet discovered how he found out the dates!

Mrs. Çimen Tözün’s influence is noticeable in the IC. The restaurant environment has been enhanced by several changes, including replacing the curtains with light-coloured fabrics and introducing blue table cloths. These improvements, in addition to the salt and pepper pots and air fresheners placed in the centre of the tables, have contributed to a warmer atmosphere. Smart new uniforms were also given to employees to complete the new look in the Cafeteria.

Today, the smooth running of the Cafeteria can mainly be attributed to the excellent relationship and open communication between Michael and Mr. and Mrs. Tözün. From the outset, the management team sat down and discussed the difficulties experienced by the bi-communal staff and the inherent potential problems, so much so that whenever a problem arises, it is immediately solved without delay. Since the arrival of the Tözüns, nobody has resigned – and nobody has been fired!

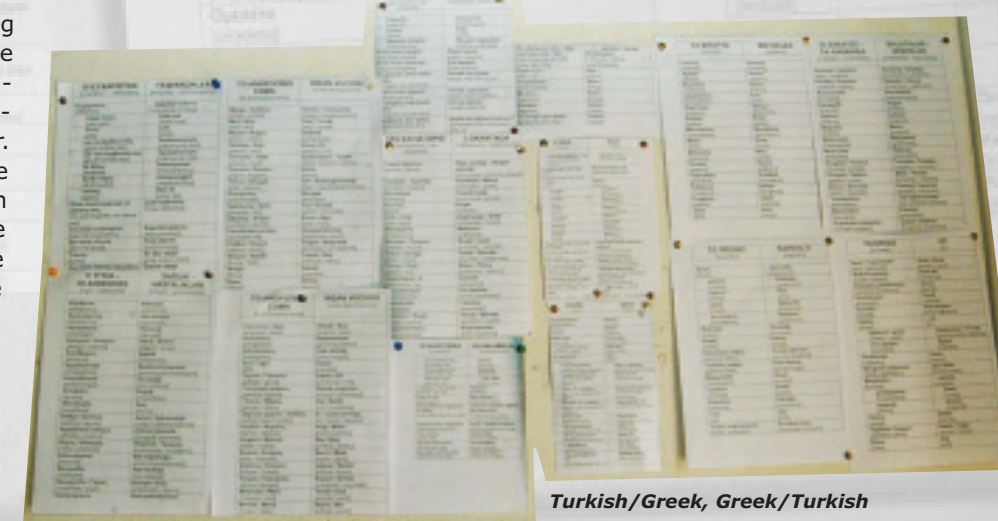


From the left: Çimen Tözün, Michael Charalambous, Neçip Tözün, Betül Binici, Eleni Vai Markidou, Maroulla Michael, Savoulla Yianni, Salomi Andreou, Fanos Andreou, İliada Adamou and (kneeling) Hasan Murat

Currently, Michael and Mr. Tözün are planning a bi-communal lunch-time function at the International Cafeteria with traditional Cypriot food. They are even considering inviting a bi-communal singing/dancing group to entertain their guests! According to Michael, “this is a truly unique set-up, the perfect place for researchers from both sides to see how the two communities can and do work together. Psychologists would have a field day!”

He hopes that there will be many more such employment situations everywhere in Cyprus in order to promote positive relations between the two communities.

*Miriam Taylor*



Turkish/Greek, Greek/Turkish





# International Women's Day at LPH

He noted that, as underscored in Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's message for the day, violence against women and girls continues unabated in every continent, country and culture, taking a devastating toll on women's lives, on their families and on society as a whole.

SRSB Møller said acts of violence take many forms: physical, sexual, psychological and economic, and the consequences are far-reaching and long lasting. "We all pay the price. None of us escape scot-free because the very acts represent a pervasive violation of human rights, and are a major impediment to achieving gender equality."

He described Women's Day as an opportunity for everybody, "women and men, to unite in a cause that embraces all humankind. International Women's Day spells out our responsibility to work for enduring change in values and attitudes. It calls on us to work in partnership – governments, international organisations, civil society and the private sector. It urges us to work for a transformation in relations between women and men, at all levels of society. It demands that we

**I**nternational Women's Day was celebrated by UNFICYP at a bicomunal event at Ledra Palace on 8 March 2007. This year's theme was "Ending Impunity for Violence against Women and Girls." The phenomenon of violence against women and girls that affects both communities was highlighted through a short play performed by UNFICYP staff and then discussed by a panel of Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot women's rights activists.



Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni arriving, received by Androulla Michael (centre) and Betul Binici in national dress

The audience included Nicosia's two mayors and representatives of the diplomatic communities, as well as UNFICYP staff, led by Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni.

In his address, SRSB Møller told the bicomunal gathering that there were no circumstances that can excuse violence that targets women and girls. "It is always a violation of their human rights, it is always a crime and it is always unacceptable. Violence against women is widespread, its prevalence reflecting the bullying self-regard of perpetrators who believe that they will not be held accountable for their actions."



The panelists, chaired by Sally-Anne Corcoran



Nicosia mayors Eleni Mavrou and Cemal Bulutoğlu with SRSB Møller

support and sustain a political and social environment in which violence against women and girls is not tolerated – an environment in which friends, family members and neighbours, men and women together, will intervene to ensure that no perpetrators go unpunished."

SRSB Møller went on to praise the long-standing and ground-breaking cooperation between Cypriot women's groups on the island.

UNFICYP Gender Focal Point, Sally-Anne Corcoran said: "States have an obligation to protect women and girls from violence, to hold perpetrators accountable and to provide justice and remedies to victims. The failure to meet these obligations is unacceptable and serves to reinforce gender inequality. Real security entails freedom from fear. It means women's empowerment, which is the only thing that can fundamentally change gender equality. Violence against women is not a women's issue, but one of basic justice that concerns each of us and one which we all have a responsibility to end."

UNFICYP staff then performed a short play titled "Better the Devil You Know", written specifically for the occasion by Information Assistant Derya Bicer and directed by UNPOL Garda James O'Keeffe, about domestic violence.

The scenario of the play follows the path of a desperate woman Sarah (performed by Derya Bicer) in an attempt to change her fate and live a quiet, free and peaceful life with her child far away from her abusive husband.

Finding the courage that was always lacking, Sarah finally decides to leave her husband in the hope of a new better life for her and her child, Terri (performed by Eleonora Kourea). However she finds that the police (policeman performed by Sgt. Jason McArthur) are not particularly sympathetic to her situation and cannot offer her safe refuge until she is able to support herself. She then turns to her mother (performed by Netha Kreouzou) for help, who, also a victim of abuse, shows no compassion for her daughter's situation, insisting that she is somehow to blame for her husband's wrath and as a wife and mother should obey her husband. Her mother urges her to go home and do as she is told, as her parents no longer have responsibility for her.

Sarah, after being let down by her own mother, then turns to her friend (performed by Ersin Oztocan) for help. Although willing to help, she proves unable to do so when her husband (performed by Jonathan Vatikiotis) insists they should not become involved and come between the couple, especially since the abusive husband is his close friend. He insists she go home and sort it out with her husband.

Having nowhere to turn, Sarah takes sanctuary in a park where she meets a young girl (performed by Michelle Kourea) who shares her story with Sarah. Once married to an abusive husband, she left to seek a better life. However, being young and vulnerable, she falls prey to another abusive man who sexually exploits her and keeps her trapped in this abusive relationship. The young girl urges Sarah to return to her husband because, as she says, "better the devil you know, than the devil you don't". It's too late for her, but not for Sarah. Having no other choice, Sarah returns to her husband and a life of abuse.

A panel discussion ensued on the issue of domestic violence in Cyprus. Women's rights activists, academics and legal experts, all expanded on the issue. Panelists included Androulla Vassiliou, Shefika Durduran, Julia Kalimeri, Professor Mehmet Cakici, Professor Fatma Guven-Lisanlier and Professor Maria Hadjipavlou.

The evening ended with a reception. Many thanks go particularly to Tözün Catering, who supported the event with tea and coffee as well as two staff members dressed in traditional Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot costumes, adding a local flavour to the event.

Netha Kreouzou



Last year, the findings of an in-depth study by the UN Secretary-General on violence against women were released.

- Demographically speaking, it is estimated that women are short between 112 to 200 million women. They have been the victims of infanticide (boys are preferred to girls) or have not received the same amount of food and medical attention as their brothers and fathers.
- Between one and four million women are forced or sold into prostitution every year. Profits from sex slavery are estimated at \$7 to \$12 billion annually.
- At least one out of every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Usually, the abuser is a member of her own family or someone known to her. Domestic violence is the largest form of abuse of women worldwide, irrespective of region, culture, ethnicity, education, class and religion.
- It is estimated that more than two million girls are genitally mutilated every year, a rate of one girl every 15 seconds.
- Systematic rape is used as a weapon of terror in many of the world's conflicts. It is estimated that between 250,000 and 500,000 women in Rwanda were raped during the 1994 genocide.



## The White Ribbon Campaign



In what has become the largest effort in the world by men to end gender-based violence against women and girls, the white ribbon symbolizes a man's pledge to never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women and girls.

Originally consisting of one week of awareness-raising a year, the White Ribbon Campaign, which originated in Canada in 1991, has evolved into a year-round effort on every continent, in over 55 countries. It focuses on identifying policy questions, educating men and boys and raising public awareness, and it challenges men directly on their actions, ideas and beliefs.

For more information, please visit [www.whiteribbon.com](http://www.whiteribbon.com).





## St. Patrick's Day

On a wonderfully warm and sun-filled day in Cyprus, the multitudes flocked from all corners of the globe to join the Irish Contingent in celebrating possibly the greatest day in the Irish festive calendar, St. Patrick's Day.

With preparations beginning as far back as January, things really heated up as the Irish prepared to party with over 300 guests from all sections and contingents at the UNPA on 17 March.

An Feile Mor (the Big Event) kicked off with mass being celebrated by the charismatic Fr. Joe Kennedy (Chaplain to An Garda Siochana – the Irish Police) who didn't let the occasion pass without mention of his beloved "DUBS". He was accompanied by Assistant Commissioner Gerry Kelly, who had also travelled from Ireland especially for the occasion.

The wonderful service was only added to by a traditional Irish band and a choir formed by members of the Irish Contingent who sang some traditional Irish hymns associated with St. Patrick's Day under the careful tuition of organist Dr. Irene Cotter.

During the mass, the traditional sprig of shamrock was presented to each member of the Irish Contingent by Supt. Martin Lee and Ms. Aideen Flannery.

Among the crowd of wellwishers at a reception held at the International Café in UNPA was the Irish Ambassador to Cyprus, His Excellency Mr. Tom Brady,



accompanied by his wife, Kathy. Mr. Brady conveyed the good wishes of the Irish President to all those gathered to celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

Also present was the Force Commander, Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni, Chief of Staff, Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell. UNPOL Police Commander Carla van Maris, and her Deputy Commander, Col Speedie, joined in the celebrations.

Assistant Commissioner Kelly made a presentation to Commissioner van Maris on behalf of the Irish Police. Senior Police Adviser van Maris complimented the Irish Contingent for their contribution to UNFICYP.

Entertainment was provided by the musicians of "The Flight of Earls" and a traditional Irish dancer, making it another memorable occasion at the UNPA. As the music tempo increased, many guests could not resist the urge to take to the boards and display their own versions of "river dance".

The day's festivities were brought to a hectic finale with an "Irish Night" at the CIVPOL club. Veteran attendees at this annual event said that this year's function was the best in a long time.

The Irish Contingent Commander praised the hard work of the entire Contingent, all of whom had laboured tirelessly to ensure that everything was ready for the big day.



The Flight of Earls playing traditional Irish music



Assistant Commissioner Gerry Kelly with Supt. Martin Lee



Attendees at the start of the Conference, held in the International Conference Centre in Nicosia

With many years of combined experience working on individual learning difficulties, four learning difficulty advocacy organisations (the Cyprus Dyslexia Association, the North Cyprus Dyslexia Association, ADD-ADHD Support and KAYAD Community Centre) came together in 2006 under a project titled "Promoting Special Education for Children with Learning Disabilities", funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Within the framework of the project, a "Learning Difficulties Network of Cyprus" was established, based on the principle that all children with learning difficulties deserve the right to an education that meets their needs and helps them develop to their full potential. Knowing that there is strength and influence in numbers, these organisations hope to be able to more effectively shape and encourage the implementation of a special education policy for learning difficulties.

With this in mind, the Network organised a series of activities to provide training and awareness on the issues, including its first bi-communal conference and teacher-training

## Bicommunal Conference on Dyslexia

courses. The conference, entitled "Strategies for Coping with Learning Difficulties", was held on 10 March 2007. It was followed by a weeklong teacher-training course held at the bi-communal rooms at Ledra Palace and the Fulbright Centre on 12-16 March. Other courses included "Train the Advocate Trainers" and "Train the Teacher Trainers".

During the conference, experts from Greece, Turkey, the U.S.A. and Australia



UNFICYP staff member Ersin Öztöykan (centre in yellow) attended the conference in her capacity as NCDA president



Parent-training and teacher-training courses which took place at the Fulbright Commission offices in the Ledra Palace

addressed an audience of over 200 Turkish Cypriots and 300 Greek Cypriots. Buses were organised to ferry people crossing over the buffer zone to attend the conference, held at Nicosia's International Conference Centre.

In her opening address, Chairperson of the Network, Olga Messon, drew attention to the political sensitivities on the island and stressed that "all four partners of the Network are non-governmental, non-political and non-profit-making organisations. Our only purpose is to advocate for the rights of the child," she said.

Speaking on behalf of the NCDA, President Ersin Öztöykan, a member of UNFICYP's staff union and one of UNFICYP's Information Assistants, noted that the great turnout was proof of how a common cause can bring together the two communities on the island.





**74 Battery (The Battle Axe Company)** was raised at Kilkenny on 1 April 1801 from men of the disbanded Royal Irish Artillery. During the Napoleonic Wars, the Company helped capture the Caribbean island of Martinique on 24 February 1809. Having distinguished itself, the then Force Commander wished to give a captured French gun to the Company. The Battery Commander petitioned that the gun be replaced by something more easily carried and two French trophies captured at Martinique were given in its place. These trophies were a brass drum and a Battle Axe. The Company has been known as the Battle Axe Company, Royal Artillery since that day.

This year, Lt. Jim Luck RA was awarded the honour of carrying the Battle Axe and of wearing a moustache on parade. This is the full set of whiskers to represent the status of the veterans of battle, as was the custom at the time. He is the first officer to carry the Axe this century. After the parade, Lt. Luck was interviewed by BFBS and remarked "I had a two-week beard audition for the position. If I couldn't grow one after two weeks, I would have been 'canned' – luckily I pulled through."

On 24 February, the Battle Axe was trooped through the ranks of the 70-strong Company for the 198<sup>th</sup> time. The battle commemoration took place in the blazing sun at Ledra Palace Hotel, a tribute to the valour and sacrifices of the Company's forebears.

Force Commander Lt. Gen. Rafael Jose Barni inspected the parade. He said, "It is interesting to note the professionalism and discipline displayed on one parade. The formality shows what is behind the soldier which is

## Sector 2 News

### 74 Battery Parade Battle Honour

esprit de corps, discipline, courage and enduring loyalty – everything is perfect."

The Force Commander presented the Battery Commander, Maj. Sean Grant RA, with a framed print of an Argentinian Officer during the 1817 Wars of Independence (see photo below). These wars were conducted when Argentinian and Chilean Armies fought and defeated the Colonial forces at Chacabuco and Santiago; an extremely apt gift, considering the Battle Axe Company went from the Battle of Martinique to the fight the Wars of Independence in America. Such was the reason for choosing the more practical Battle trophy.

The Battle Axe celebrations were completed in true fashion with a traditional curry lunch enjoyed by all, followed in the evening by a traditional Cypriot dinner and dance in the north of the island.

*Sgt. Dave Liversedge*



## Welsh Gunners celebrate St. David's Day

**39th Regiment Royal Artillery** formally celebrated their first St. David's Day since becoming "The Welsh Gunners" with a parade held at the Ledra Palace Hotel.

The day started with the customary "waking of the soldiers and officers". Having been forewarned that it was traditional to be woken by "gunfire", I was disappointed to be presented with a cup of tea and a "Good Morning Sir, happy St. David's Day" from the RSM, WO1 Chris Kerr. Only on tasting the tea did the penny drop – "gunfire" has nothing to do with the ceremonial 25-pounders situated outside the Ledra Palace. Rather, it refers to tea heavily laced with brandy.

The soldiers were presented with leeks (the national emblem of Wales) on parade by their Battery Commanders, whilst the Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Tim Wordsworth, read out the history of St. David. The Regimental goat of six months was also present on parade, proudly sporting a Regimental coat emblazoned with the 39 crest and Welsh dragon.

A potted sports competition and then lunch followed with an abundance of leek-related delicacies on offer. After leek and potato soup and authentic Welsh cakes, the three youngest members of the Regiment were "invited" to participate in a traditional Welsh "eat-off": a raw leek and a soup terrine of ale in rapid succession.

Unsurprisingly, two of the three participants, Gnr. Patterson and Gnr. Coleman, looked a little worse-for-wear afterwards, with only 2Lt. Tom Jamieson managing to complete the task with absolute composure and to rapturous applause.

*2Lt CW Bitlups*



*Gnr. Ross Patterson takes the leek ready for the "eat-off"*

## Sector 1 News

### Sector 1 Medal Parade

On 23 February, after more than four months of service with UNFICYP, the current Argentinian Contingent celebrated the presentation of its United Nations Medal at San Martín Camp.

During the ceremony, 141 men and women received the decoration in recognition of their peacekeeping duties on the island. Besides Argentinian peacekeepers, Sector 1 members from Chile, Paraguay and Peru were also awarded medals.

The medal recipients were over and above the 75 Sector 1 peace-



keepers who had been decorated earlier at the Integrated Medal Parade, held in the UN Flight hangar on 15 February last.

Chief of Mission Michael Møller and Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni headed the parade. Mr. Møller acknowledged that the work of the Argentinian Contingent has contributed greatly to the stability of the buffer zone in an area which is potentially prone to conflict. SRSG Møller also thanked Sector 1 personnel for the professional manner in which they have carried out their tasks.

This is the 28th Argentine Contingent to serve under the UN flag in Cyprus since September 1993 when our first Task Force arrived. Since then, more than 10,000 Argentinian military peacekeepers have served with UNFICYP.

Once the parade was over, refreshments were served to medal recipients and guests who came from all over the island to honour the Argentinians on this very significant day.



No Argentinian celebration is complete without a demonstration of the tango and folkloric dancing, so Sector 1 chose its best performers who added spirit and cheer to the occasion.



## Fallen Peacekeepers Honoured

Serving under the United Nations flag is a very exciting professional challenge for any soldier, from any country, but it's also true to say that this challenge involves a deep commitment to worldwide peace.

Duty far away from home is not a simple task, particularly when soldiers are more than 12,000 km away from their loved ones, coming face-to-face with a different culture and, of course, a different conflict.

Three Argentinian peacekeepers have lost their lives during their tours with UNFICYP. During the daily morning parade on 6 March, members of the Argentinian Contingent paid homage to SSgt. Luis Alberto d'Agata who died of a heart attack on 12 December 1999, and Sgt. Oscar Alfredo Chocobar and Pte. Juan Manuel Escalante, both of whom died on 1 March 2003 in a car accident near OPT 09.

To honour these fallen Argentinian peacekeepers, all Sector 1 troops attended a parade in St. Martín Camp and observed a minute's silence, during which a bugle accord was played. CO Sector 1, Lt. Col. Justo Francisco Treviranus, then said some words to remember the work that these Army men did in Cyprus. Subsequently, Contingent priest Father Anival Sousa gave a blessing in honour of their memory and their souls.





## New Staff Members



**Lt. Col. Guillermo Sergio Garces** joined UNFICYP on 22 January as CO UN Flight.

Born in Rosario, Argentina, in 1962, he graduated from the Argentinian Air Force Academy in 1984.

During his service with VII Air Brigade, he participated in several tasks such as medical evacuation, community support in aid of natural disasters, fire-fighting operations and eight Antarctic summer campaigns.

In 1995, he joined the Argentinian navy for two years and in 2000, he graduated as a Staff Officer in the Air War School.

His experience in peacekeeping operations includes two tours in UNFICYP (1998 and 2002) and MINUSTAH, Haiti.

Lt. Col. Garces is married to Graciela and they have four children, Santiago (13), Maria Guillermina (9), Maria Catalina (5) and Francisco (15 months).



In December 2006, **Mark Hughes** arrived in Cyprus to stay with some friends for a short visit. He liked the look of the island, saw an advertisement in the newspaper for radio technician and applied. Mark took up the position on 12 March, replacing Charalambos Charalambous, who resigned from UNFICYP to take up a position in UNIFIL.

Mark, who hails from Bristol, graduated with a City & Guilds diploma and has been working in his home town with the British Ministry of Defence in their telecommunications department.

Mark is single and enjoys reading, swimming in the sea, boats, mountain biking and, in particular, veteran sports cars.



**Panos Antoniou** took up his position on 13 February as an HVAC Mechanic, taking over from Abdullah Houssein who retired last December.

Panos comes from Nicosia and is a certified electrician, specialising in refrigeration. Previously, he worked for a local domestic appliances company in Nicosia.

Married to Antonia, they have three children, Andri (16), Magda (13) and Christos (8).

Panos' hobbies include walking (he's walked all over Cyprus!), music and veteran cars.



**Silva Devledian** took over the post of Supply Clerk in ISS Supply on 26 March. She replaced Anastasia Neocleous who transferred to the Finance Section.

Silva is involved with the administration of contracts, budget, asset management and requisitions.

Of Armenian origin, Silva comes originally from the Lebanon. She attended the Melkonian boarding school in Nicosia, and during that time she met her Cypriot husband, Assadour. They married, moved to the States where they lived for 16 years. They have two children, Sevag (26) and Salpy (20).

A linguist, Silva worked mainly in the insurance industry. She used her language skills as a tour guide with visitors coming mainly from Europe.

The family returned to Cyprus in 1992 and now live in Nicosia. Silva's hobbies include reading, gardening and cooking.



**Andreas Laoutaris** joined UNFICYP as a Store Worker on 22 January, taking over from Andreas Dimitriou who retired at the end of 2006.

Andreas comes from Limnia, a village in the Famagusta area, and now lives with his wife, Irene, in Nicosia.

Andreas' position involves receiving and issuing food rations for the mission HQ and all sectors/units. Since arriving at UNFICYP, Andreas says he is "very happy" working here, dealing with military, civilian and police personnel and mixing with all nationalities.

Andreas' hobbies include football and swimming. He also enjoys the traditional Cypriot game of "tavli" (backgammon).



On 26 March, **Dima Abdoul Samad**, of Syrian/Cypriot descent, took over the post of Liaison Assistant in the Civil Affairs Branch at HQ UNFICYP. She replaced Anita Thomas.

Dima has a B.A. degree in Turkish Studies from the University of Cyprus and an M.A. in International Relations.

Her work experience involves mainly translation projects, since she is fluent in Arabic, Greek, Turkish and English, and has a good comprehension of Bulgarian.

Dima has a special interest in bi-communal affairs. She has interpreted in several bi-communal events on a voluntary basis, and she is also a member of the Bi-communal Choir.

Dima is committed to studying more foreign languages, and she loves dancing. She is hoping to start Latin American dancing lessons at HQ UNFICYP. Currently, she is searching for a teacher!

## Visitors to UNFICYP



On 6 March, Seton Hall University's Whitehead School of Diplomacy, making what is now an annual visit to the island, spent a morning at UNFICYP HQ. After briefings by SRSG Møller and the Chief of Staff, the students, led by Dean (former US Ambassador) John Menzies, toured the old Nicosia International Airport.



Admiral Juhani Kaskeala, Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish Defence Forces, visited UNFICYP on 3 March. He inspected an honour guard at the Finnish Memorial Site in the UNPA, after which he laid a wreath for fallen Finnish soldiers. The Admiral then visited the Chief of Mission and Force Commander, following which he went on a brief buffer zone and city tour.

## On the Sporting Scene ...



**Spectacular Splash!**  
The UNPA Dolphin Swimming Pool opened with a bigger splash than usual this year. At 9.15 a.m. on 16 March, a small group of loyal supporters watched as the COS, Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell, in his role of COMBRITCON, officially declared the pool open for the season.

Rather than cutting a ceremonial ribbon, the COS dived in and swam a length, quickly followed by the MA to the Force Commander, Maj. Matt Walker. They both agreed that the water was extremely fresh!

Among the onlookers, huddled in tracksuits, fleeces and even gloves, were some nervous BRITCON ladies. Angela Hall, Mandy Stanton, Clare Fraser-Hopewell, Lynnetta Cook-Hannah and Cpl. Amanda Kent had all volunteered to swim a length after the opening ceremony in order to raise money for the charity SSAFA Forces Help.

So at 11 a.m., the brave volunteers arrived in swimming costumes. Encouraged by an impressive number of supporters and photographers, they lined up on the poolside, held hands and jumped in at the deep end. The ladies completed not one but two lengths of the pool, emerging to cheers, applause and bacon sandwiches! They raised £300 through sponsorship from this event, and would like to thank all who contributed.

The pool is now well and truly open – and can only get warmer!

### UNFICYP Strongman Competition

took place on 9 March in the UNPA, organised by the MFR. Shown left is the winning team from Sector 4:

From the left, Sgt. Jan Valenčík, Sgt. Vladimír Pliška, Sgt. Štefan Hudec and Sgt. Slavomír Gajdoš. The individual winner (kneeling) was MFR's LCpl. Ludovít Vereš.



**HQ BRITCON team:** Standing, from the left: WO2 Tim Cook-Hannah, Maj. Fred Reid, Sgt. Rob Shubert, Maj. Matt Walker, WO1 Peter Hall, Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell, WO2 Simon Robinson. Kneeling: Sgt. Sarah Spencer and SSgt. Stan Houssain. SSgt. Kev Burn - photographer

Nearly 40 runners from the Headquarters, the MFR and HQ BRITCON took to the hills of Paphos on 11 March and, roared on by families and friends, jogged their way around a demanding course on the hottest day of the year so far.

Times were not important, but ranged from around the four-hour mark for the more serious marathon runners, to about two hours for the half marathon. What was important was seeing UNFICYP out in force and playing, as well as working, hard.







**A Winning Smile,  
A Winning Team!**