Leaders Meet
September 5th marked the first time the leaders have met in 14 months. Welcome as the UNPA official residence get-together may have been, the message issued afterwards signified that there is still a way to go.

Perhaps all concerned, both participants and those sceptical onlookers, should heed the example of two other gatherings held during the month. On 21 September, the International Day of Peace, the Cyprus Veterans of World War II, a body of men (and women) from the two communities, reminded us yet again that the United Nations remains the shining symbol of their generation’s aspiration to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

Similarly, the World Peace Prayer representatives from Japan attending that Peace Day ceremony alongside Ledra Palace modestly reminded us that the inspiration for the peace pole they presented UNFICYP stemmed from the determination never to forget, never to repeat the awful devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Here in the UNPA, in late September, UNFICYP’s Argentinian and British contingents, led by our Force Commander Maj. Gen. Barni and Chief of Staff Col. Fraser-Hopewell, attended a memorial service for all who fell when their two nations faced each other in the Falklands/Malvinas conflict some 25 years ago.

Surely, there is a lesson here for us all. Surely, Cypriots would agree that it is time to move on towards a settlement. Just look around. There are examples everywhere. Ireland and now Korea are a case in point.

Contents

Editorial .......................................................... 2
Leaders Meet in UNPA / Unique Tribute Serves as a Fitting Example .................................................. 3
Peace Day Ceremony in buffer zone .................................................. 4
People-to-People Peace Building / UNLB .................................................. 5
Force Commanders’ Conference / CIT’s Conference .................................................. 6
OpEd: Leadership and Climate Change – Ban Ki-moon .................................................. 7
Coming Together in Brindisi .................................................. 8/9
Pilgrimage / Sector 1 Medal Parade .................................................. 10
Aga Khan Prize / Young Filmmakers Cinematique Adventure / Chile celebrates National Day .................................................. 11
UNFICYP’s very own jockey .................................................. 12
Slovaks Dominate Strongman Competition .................................................. 13
Visitors / New Arrivals .................................................. 14
Farewell / Seven Year Hitch .................................................. 15

Front Cover: Leaders Meet
Back Cover: International Peace Day Vigil

Leaders Meet in UNPA

Greek Cypriot leader, H.E. Tassos Papadopoulos, and Turkish Cypriot leader, H.E. Mehmet Ali Talat, met for three hours at the UNFICYP Chief of Mission’s official residence in the UNPA on 5 September, their first meeting since they convened in the presence of then Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambari on 8 July 2006.

On conclusion of the latest meeting, SRSG Michael Møller read out the leaders’ joint statement as follows:

“Mr. Papadopoulos and Mr. Talat held a discussion in a constructive atmosphere and agreed on the need for the earliest start of the process and discussed other issues leading to a comprehensive settlement.

“They agreed to continue their contacts through the United Nations and to meet again when appropriate.”

Unique Tribute Serves as a Fitting Example

Led by Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael Jose Barni and Chief of Staff Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell, members of the Argentinian and British contingents joined together for a special memorial service in St. Columbia’s Church in the UNPA on 26 September to commemorate those who died in the Falkland Islands/Malvinas conflict 25 years ago.

Force Commander Maj. Gen. Barni spoke movingly and eloquently at the unique ceremony.

“We are here to pay tribute to the servicemen and women from the navies, the land forces and the air forces of both sides who gave their lives in the conflict for the Islands in 1982. It is particularly poignant that this service is conducted in Cyprus; an island with a turbulent history whose troubles we are all more than familiar with; and an island that remains divided today.

“Those that fought in 1982 did so with conviction for their cause. While both sides fought ferociously and with valour in pursuit of what they believed to be right, they fought with honour and with respect for the forces opposing them and the people of the other nation.

“That the conflict sought political objectives is the reason that both the Argentinians and the British are now able to serve successfully together as part of UNFICYP as both comrades and friends.

“It is a fitting tribute to those who lost their lives 25 years ago, that the soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen of both former adversaries work so closely together today in the common service of peace. That we are all able to put the past behind us and are able to look to the future, should serve as an inspiration to the people of Cyprus.”

On 23 September, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met briefly with H.E. Mr. Papadopoulos at UN Headquarters. Topics covered included climate change, the current status of dialogue between the two sides, ongoing support to UNFICYP, and the issue of missing persons. The SG emphasized the importance of implementing the 8 July 2006 agreement. Mr. Papadopoulos was in New York for the opening session of the General Assembly.

H.E. Mr. Talat is expected to meet with the SG, also in New York, in mid-October.
**Peace Day**

**Celebration in Buffer Zone**

International Day of Peace was observed by UNFICYP with a peace candle ceremony alongside Ledra Palace Hotel, Nicosia on 21 September. Attending the event hosted by UNFICYP Chief of Mission Michael Møller were members of the Cyprus World War II Veterans’ Association, members of the diplomatic and international community and representatives of both communities on the island.

During the ceremony, three Japanese volunteers, members of the World Peace Prayer Society, presented the UNFICYP Chief with a two-metre long peace pole. In his remarks, SRSG Møller noted that those attending the event “in this special crossing space” were linking up with millions of people around the world to proclaim their belief that the day was best celebrated through observation of a global ceasefire.

“Whether veterans of the Second World War or veterans of this island’s conflict and division, many of you here today are familiar with the respite and relief associated with a ceasefire. Your first hand experience offers a potent message to the younger generations standing alongside you here today. Who better than you, the veterans, to point out how worthwhile a worldwide stay-of-conflict for the sake of peace can be – even if it is only for this one precious day each year.”

Møller pointed out that a ceasefire should be a springboard for peace building, and not just an end in itself.

“Thirty-four years ago, this buffer zone we stand within became a fact of island life. It was intended to offer a breathing space in which to try and nurture new beginnings. The reassurance it offered the distraught and displaced victims of conflict was not intended to become a multi-generational comfort zone. Nor was it intended to be a barrier to progress, inuring people against the responsibility, the need and the duty to work for peace – is a fact that we should be reminding the younger generation.”

Møller stressed that here in Cyprus, the people are an untapped resource for solving the island’s problems yet their willingness to engage and move forward, if allowed, cannot be questioned. He referred to a meeting the previous day held at Ledra Palace by the United Nations Logistics Base Training Centre (UNLB) in Brindisi, Italy, this month.

The UNLB provides logistic support, telecommunications and training facilities for all peacekeeping operations around the world. The Training Unit acts as a hub for DPKO and other UN departments and agencies, and provides logistic and administrative support for courses, seminars and workshops. The UNLB acts as an effective training academy for peacekeepers from all over the world.

In his International Day of Peace message, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described peace as one of humanity’s most precious needs and also as the UN’s highest calling. He said it defines our mission, drives our discourse and serves as a source of worldwide work, from peacekeeping and preventive diplomacy to promoting human rights and development.

The SG described the day as an occasion to take stock of our efforts to promote peace and well being for all people everywhere. It is an opportunity to appreciate what we have already accomplished, and to dedicate ourselves to all that remains to be done.

**People-to-People Peace Building**

Living in a region of the world where violence and wars are not unknown and our duty to work for peace is therefore greater,” he said.

In his remarks, SRSG Møller noted that those attending the event “in this special crossing space” were linking up with millions of people around the world to proclaim their belief that the day was best celebrated through observation of a global ceasefire.

“Whether veterans of the Second World War or veterans of this island’s conflict and division, many of you here today are familiar with the respite and relief associated with a ceasefire. Your first hand experience offers a potent message to the younger generations standing alongside you here today. Who better than you, the veterans, to point out how worthwhile a worldwide stay-of-conflict for the sake of peace can be – even if it is only for this one precious day each year.”

Møller pointed out that a ceasefire should be a springboard for peace building, and not just an end in itself.

“Thirty-four years ago, this buffer zone we stand within became a fact of island life. It was intended to offer a breathing space in which to try and nurture new beginnings. The reassurance it offered the distraught and displaced victims of conflict was not intended to become a multi-generational comfort zone. Nor was it intended to be a barrier to progress, inuring people against the responsibility, the need and the duty to work for peace – is a fact that we should be reminding the younger generation.”

Møller stressed that here in Cyprus, the people are an untapped resource for solving the island’s problems yet their willingness to engage and move forward, if allowed, cannot be questioned. He referred to a meeting the previous day held at Ledra Palace by the United Nations Logistics Base Training Centre (UNLB) in Brindisi, Italy, this month.

The UNLB provides logistic support, telecommunications and training facilities for all peacekeeping operations around the world. The Training Unit acts as a hub for DPKO and other UN departments and agencies, and provides logistic and administrative support for courses, seminars and workshops. The UNLB acts as an effective training academy for peacekeepers from all over the world.

In his International Day of Peace message, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described peace as one of humanity’s most precious needs and also as the UN’s highest calling. He said it defines our mission, drives our discourse and serves as a source of worldwide work, from peacekeeping and preventive diplomacy to promoting human rights and development.

The SG described the day as an occasion to take stock of our efforts to promote peace and well being for all people everywhere. It is an opportunity to appreciate what we have already accomplished, and to dedicate ourselves to all that remains to be done.

**People-to-People Peace Building**

Living in a region of the world where violence and wars are not unknown and our duty to work for peace is therefore greater,” he said.

In his remarks, SRSG Møller noted that those attending the event “in this special crossing space” were linking up with millions of people around the world to proclaim their belief that the day was best celebrated through observation of a global ceasefire.

“Whether veterans of the Second World War or veterans of this island’s conflict and division, many of you here today are familiar with the respite and relief associated with a ceasefire. Your first hand experience offers a potent message to the younger generations standing alongside you here today. Who better than you, the veterans, to point out how worthwhile a worldwide stay-of-conflict for the sake of peace can be – even if it is only for this one precious day each year.”

Møller pointed out that a ceasefire should be a springboard for peace building, and not just an end in itself.

“Thirty-four years ago, this buffer zone we stand within became a fact of island life. It was intended to offer a breathing space in which to try and nurture new beginnings. The reassurance it offered the distraught and displaced victims of conflict was not intended to become a multi-generational comfort zone. Nor was it intended to be a barrier to progress, inuring people against the responsibility, the need and the duty to work for peace – is a fact that we should be reminding the younger generation.”

Møller stressed that here in Cyprus, the people are an untapped resource for solving the island’s problems yet their willingness to engage and move forward, if allowed, cannot be questioned. He referred to a meeting the previous day held at Ledra Palace by the United Nations Logistics Base Training Centre (UNLB) in Brindisi, Italy, this month.

The UNLB provides logistic support, telecommunications and training facilities for all peacekeeping operations around the world. The Training Unit acts as a hub for DPKO and other UN departments and agencies, and provides logistic and administrative support for courses, seminars and workshops. The UNLB acts as an effective training academy for peacekeepers from all over the world.

In his International Day of Peace message, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described peace as one of humanity’s most precious needs and also as the UN’s highest calling. He said it defines our mission, drives our discourse and serves as a source of worldwide work, from peacekeeping and preventive diplomacy to promoting human rights and development.

The SG described the day as an occasion to take stock of our efforts to promote peace and well being for all people everywhere. It is an opportunity to appreciate what we have already accomplished, and to dedicate ourselves to all that remains to be done.

**People-to-People Peace Building**

Living in a region of the world where violence and wars are not unknown and our duty to work for peace is therefore greater,” he said.

In his remarks, SRSG Møller noted that those attending the event “in this special crossing space” were linking up with millions of people around the world to proclaim their belief that the day was best celebrated through observation of a global ceasefire.

“Whether veterans of the Second World War or veterans of this island’s conflict and division, many of you here today are familiar with the respite and relief associated with a ceasefire. Your first hand experience offers a potent message to the younger generations standing alongside you here today. Who better than you, the veterans, to point out how worthwhile a worldwide stay-of-conflict for the sake of peace can be – even if it is only for this one precious day each year.”

Møller pointed out that a ceasefire should be a springboard for peace building, and not just an end in itself.

“Thirty-four years ago, this buffer zone we stand within became a fact of island life. It was intended to offer a breathing space in which to try and nurture new beginnings. The reassurance it offered the distraught and displaced victims of conflict was not intended to become a multi-generational comfort zone. Nor was it intended to be a barrier to progress, inuring people against the responsibility, the need and the duty to work for peace – is a fact that we should be reminding the younger generation.”

Møller stressed that here in Cyprus, the people are an untapped resource for solving the island’s problems yet their willingness to engage and move forward, if allowed, cannot be questioned. He referred to a meeting the previous day held at Ledra Palace by the United Nations Logistics Base Training Centre (UNLB) in Brindisi, Italy, this month.

The UNLB provides logistic support, telecommunications and training facilities for all peacekeeping operations around the world. The Training Unit acts as a hub for DPKO and other UN departments and agencies, and provides logistic and administrative support for courses, seminars and workshops. The UNLB acts as an effective training academy for peacekeepers from all over the world.

In his International Day of Peace message, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described peace as one of humanity’s most precious needs and also as the UN’s highest calling. He said it defines our mission, drives our discourse and serves as a source of worldwide work, from peacekeeping and preventive diplomacy to promoting human rights and development.

The SG described the day as an occasion to take stock of our efforts to promote peace and well being for all people everywhere. It is an opportunity to appreciate what we have already accomplished, and to dedicate ourselves to all that remains to be done.
September 2007 - The Blue Beret

**Force Commanders’ Conference**

**OpEd: Leadership and Climate Change** by Ban Ki-moon

*Every day brings new evidence. Climate change has become a personal reality, for each and every one of us on this planet.*

Just recently, to cite the latest example, scientists in the United States reported that the Arctic ice cap is melting at a rate of about one percent per year. By their calculations, 40% of the summer ice covering the Arctic sea will be gone by 2050. Earlier studies had predicted that this wouldn’t happen for another century.

It’s small wonder, then, that climate change has shot to the top of the world’s political agenda. That is why I have invited world leaders to the United Nations for a high-level meeting tomorrow. I am deeply concerned that our current response falls far short of what is required.

The meeting is a political call to action, a time for all countries, big and small, to grasp the moral imperative of taking urgent action with new urgency, and to begin to understand our mutual self-interest in doing so. Climate change is a defining issue of our time.

The science is clear. Earlier this year, the world’s top scientists, under the auspices of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, laid it out with unprecedented clarity. Global warming is real. Its impact, if unchecked, could be devastating if not catastrophic over the coming decades. We know what we have to do. We have affordable measures and technologies to do it. We must begin to attack the problem, right now.

But we do not have time. Traveling in Chad recently, I saw firsthand the humanitarian toll of climate change. An estimated 20 million people depend on the Great Lakes region that has shrunk to a tenth of its original size over the past 30 years. In Africa right now, the worst rains in memory are washing hundreds of thousands of homes. These are the signs of what is to come. The problems our generation faces will be worse for our children, particularly if we do not act now.

In calling this high-level meeting, I have challenged the world’s presidents and prime ministers to show leadership. We need a new and comprehensive multilateral accord on climate change that all nations can embrace.

**CITS Conference**

There has always been a requirement for logistical cooperation between the Middle East missions of UNTSO, UNDOF and UNIFIL not least because the operational area of responsibility (AOR) of UNTSO overlaps with the AOR of its neighbours. An important aspect of this cooperation is in the area of Communications and Information Technology (CIT). Regular inter-mission meetings are held to discuss common problems, share good practices, and so on. The FC explained that DPKO will take the lead and coordinate both divisions so there is clarity for the FCs on the ground. Other issues that were discussed were the need for increased liaison with the host governments and the UN security management of the missions.

The FC noted that the four days were a time to exchange ideas and best practices, not only during the formal sessions but also over lunches and coffee breaks when discussions invariably continued.

The main themes of the conference included a brief overview of UNFICYP’s regional cooperation with other missions in the area like UNTSO and UNDOF was also raised in discussion.

**Global leaders show will for climate change “breakthrough”**

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon welcomed the political will shown by world leaders at the 24 September meeting in New York, for a climate change breakthrough at the Bali Conference on Climate Change scheduled for December.

"This has been a ground-breaking, historical event," he said, praising the world leaders for showing the political leadership necessary for change. It had been the largest-ever meeting of Heads of State and Government on climate change, he said, noting that more than 80 Heads of State and Government had attended.

The leaders had sent a clear signal to the world’s citizens that climate change is "getting the attention it deserves". He said the high-level event had clearly sharpened the responsibility of the world to act, emphasizing that "national policies are not enough. The invisibility of borders when it comes to climate-affecting gases, and the broad range of political and economic interests involved, requires international cooperation. We have an ideal framework. It’s called the United Nations — uniquely equipped to serve as a forum for hammering out a meaningful, equitable and sustainable long-term solution to global climate change."

For all of us, this is a defining moment. We all have a historical responsibility to future generations. Our grandchildren will be our judges.
Coming Together in Brindisi

HIV/AIDS Focal Point Netha Kreouzos attends her first international conference on HIV/AIDS

DPKO invited HIV/AIDS advisers and focal points from 15 missions to participate in the fourth annual HIV/AIDS workshop – this year hosted at the United Nations Logistic Base in Brindisi, Italy.

Newly inducted into the HIV/AIDS team, me, the workshop was an intensive five days of absorbing as much information as possible without being overwhelmed at the task before me in the year ahead.

Arriving at the brand new Brindisi Airport with its luminous yellow chairs I found my excitement intensifying – I can see my colleagues chuckling at that, saying it is not possible for that ruddy smile to get any bigger.

The luminous yellow chairs made for my first introduction to a member of the HIV/AIDS team. Musulman Shindano was seated beside me waiting for the convoy belt to cough up his luggage. Once the belt was turned off, I glimpsed at us that our luggage had not made its way to Brindisi. I soon came to associate Musulman, who is the Database Manager/Trainer of the HIV/AIDS Unit in UNMIL, Sierra Leone, with a deep rumbling laugh and seriously organised spreadsheets with facts and figures about the induction training, peer education and voluntary counselling and testing conducted in his mission.

That evening, a gathering was arranged at one of the waterfront cafeterias where all the course participants could meet old friends or acquaint themselves with newer team members. I gradually put faces to the emails and, as one of the newest members of the team, was immediately welcomed into the fold by a group of people drawn from the four corners of the globe and astonishingly diverse backgrounds. However, in this truly international environment, and as a South African born Cypriot, I think we Africans outnumbered the rest of the world in representatives, which gave a warm feeling of home for me.

Next morning I got up early – too early, nervous I would be late for the shuttle bus that would take us to the UNLB. I was the first up for breakfast and found myself in an empty dining room, which only served to increase my anxiety. Needless to say, the more experienced met up for breakfast at a more reasonable hour, then, to my great relief, they directed us to the rendezvous point, Piazza Cairoli. Seeing all the participants arriving in their suits and ties, I felt somewhat out of place in my grubby jeans that I had been wearing for the previous two days. Dr. Megh Gurung, HIV/AIDS Policy Adviser, reassured me, however, that part of the training experience is losing your luggage. At the last workshop, his luggage had been missing for four days – yet every day the participants would say to him you look different today. So for three days I learnt to appreciate the bare essentials until my luggage finally arrived.

The first day of introductions and brief presentations of the work in each mission over the last year left me feeling a little overwhelmed – both at the amount of work carried out, not only by the advisers, but also by the other focal points in often extreme working conditions. It is all in a day’s work for them to carry out induction briefings or training for peacekeepers in sectors in remote areas that could only be reached by UN helicopter or plane. That is why Dr. Ingrid Schrills, HIV/AIDS Adviser for MINUSTAH, says her backpack not only carries her materials, but often serves as a pillow for the long journey home, either by plane or helicopter – whatever is available.

From large countries like the Sudan and Congo, to smaller missions like Georgia, the common theme was ensuring UN peacekeepers and members of the host communities have the essential facts about HIV/AIDS, knowledge of how to protect themselves and their families from HIV infection and to live positively with HIV as well as contribute towards a tolerant, equitable and compassionate UN-system work place.

The first day set the tone for the rest of the course.

It was turned to work highly dedicated individuals in challenging circumstances and the frustration of feeling that more needs to be done on awareness, prevention, peer education training, voluntary confiden-tial counselling and testing as well as care for UN staff living with HIV/AIDS.

This frustration however was turned into creative solutions for problems via sharing of best prac-tice. Dr. Megh Gurung, HIV/AIDS Policy Adviser, summed it up by saying, “Together we can make a difference!”

Stephen Talugende, Chief of the UNFIL HIV/AIDS Unit said, “It was a great opportunity for sharing experiences, lessons learnt and best practices.”

Dr. Ingrid Schrills, HIV/AIDS Policy Adviser in MINUSTAH said, “It was the opportunity to identify common challenges and constraints and contribute to DPKO’s policy and framework, based on field experience.”

Michael D.M. Munywoki, HIV/AIDS Policy Adviser, UNMIS, said, “It was a great platform for discussing Minimum Standards and sharing experiences.”

Gagan Banjara, HIV/AIDS focal point for UNAMA said of the workshop, “Coming together is always a beginning, keeping together is a progress and working together is a great success.”

Elisabeth Lothe, Associate HIV/AIDS Expert, PBPS UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, said: “The workshop gave me a real boost to the community of practice who agreed to work towards shared standards across missions and to develop an evidence base for HIV interventions in peacekeeping missions through improved reporting, data collection in the field and information sharing.”

Patricia Keayes, facilitator of the conference, commented that the camaraderie and mutual support in the group is part of what makes the meetings so enjoyable, as well as intense. “One specific thing I learned that I value a lot was Andy Seales’ insight into what undermines partnership – Ego and Logo – because it can help the HIV/AIDS Community of Practice avoid the things that work against true partnership.

Cyprus is considered a low prevalence country where there is reduced risk of contracting the disease. However, there is no room for complacency, and awareness and prevention strategies are fundamental to protec-ting ourselves and our families.

The most important outcome of the workshop was that participants were presented with DPKO’s draft policy directive outlining the HIV/AIDS functions in mission peacekeeping operations. This comprehensive document, which is in its final stages of development, will provide clarity on the purposes of the HIV/AIDS functions in missions outlining the framework in which they operate and guides the scale for integrating HIV/AIDS in peacekeeping operations. It also defines the parameters of work of the HIV/AIDS units and the specific areas of overlap with medical, training and supply components, defining areas of authority and responsibility as well as parameters for integrating HIV/AIDS concerns in the activities of other sections.

It sets out the two roles of HIV/AIDS units – to provide awareness, prevention and care programmes for peacekeeping personnel and to integrate HIV/AIDS into mission mandates, highlighting specific areas of concern.

The policy provides the framework for action to reduce HIV risk and vulnerability and manage its impact on peacekeeping operations.

The policy was presented to the HIV/AIDS team by Roxaneh Bazergan, who is the Database Manager/Trainer of the HIV/AIDS Unit in UNMIL, Sierre Leone, with a deep rumbling laugh and seriously.
Pilgrimage

A round 120 pilgrims attended the annual service on 27 September at the Ayios Neophytos Monastery. The monastery is situated just outside the village of Troulli, in the UN buffer zone. The vast majority of pilgrims were elderly or very young children.

The three pillars, UNPOL, SCAT and the military in Sector 4, facilitated the congregation’s clean-up efforts in preparation for the ceremony, both the day before and on the day of the pilgrimage. Preparation of the monastery’s courtyard involved escorting workers and machinery to and from Troulli village. On the day of the event, the track was watered so as to keep the dust at a minimum for the ease and comfort of the pilgrims. Electricity generators, lighting stands, tables, chairs, food and light refreshments were ferried into the pilgrimage site. This work commenced at 1.00 p.m.

From about 5.00 p.m., the pilgrims began to gather in Troulli Village Square. There was an air of sadness about the occasion, as the Mukhtar had buried his mother earlier that day.

Arrangements had been made for the the pilgrims to be ferried to the monastery in two coaches. Unfortunately, only one bus turned up. The fact that only one coach arrived at the appointed time caused problems for the three pillars. As delicate negotiations were taking place between the UN personnel on the ground, the Mukhtar of Troulli and other local representatives, the second coach arrived. Most of the pilgrims were accommodated on the second coach. However, 15 vehicles were permitted under UN escort to follow the coaches to the monastery.

The religious ceremony took place without incident and all present were invited to partake of some light refreshments. The Mukhtar, in his address to the assembled pilgrims, paid tribute to all involved in the restoration of the monastery. He highlighted the fact that cooperation led to the successful restoration of the monastery, and that this type of cooperation should be used as an example for future projects. He saw it as a way forward and a model for solving other problems.

The Mukhtar made several presentations on the night including one to the UN. The presentation, a Plaque of Ayios Neophytos, was accepted by Sgt. Gerry Brennan, SCAT Pyla.

Insp. Jerry Coonan

Sector 1 Medal Parade

The Argentine Republic has been represented within UNFICYP since 25 September 1993, when ARGCON took over control of Sector 1 from the Danish Contingent, responsible for the western part of the buffer zone. Since then, over 10,000 Argentinean soldiers have served with UNFICYP.

Officers, NCOs and privates belonging to the Argentinian Armed Forces make up the majority of personnel in Sector 1, which is augmented by Officers and NCOs from the Republics of Chile and Paraguay.

On 31 August, close to the end of the fifth month of service with UNFICYP, ARGCON prepared its Medal Parade at San Martin Camp, when 132 peacekeepers were decorated.

At 7.00 p.m., the ceremony started with the presentation of formed troops to Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael José Barni, who inspected and saluted the soldiers.

Argentinian, Chilean and Paraguayan national anthems were played and subsequently Argentinian Contingent Commander Lt. Col. Justo Francisco Treviranus, followed by the Force Commander, addressed the parade.

Once the ceremony was over, all medal recipients and more than 150 guests enjoyed refreshments. The evening was highlighted by an entertainment and a popular music show, in this way celebrating the presence of our country in Cyprus.

Capt. Guillermo Larreyena

Chile celebrates its National Day in Sector 1

Chile joined UNFICYP in 2003, and since then has been an integral part of Sector 1, responsible for Alls Coy. It is traditional for all nationalities within Sector 1 to celebrate their national days, and this year was no different. On 18 September, an internal celebration was organised to commemorate the anniversary of Chilean independence.

The day started off at 8.00 a.m. in Roca Camp, with troops lining up to form a parade. Sector 1 CO Lt. Col. Justo Francisco Treviranus started the ceremony with a salute to honour both the raising of the Chilean flag and the Chilean national anthem. Then, 1/Lt. Alexander Vevereheren Párra addressed the parade, outlining the history of Chile’s independence.

After the parade, the troops marched off. All present then feasted on a traditional Chilean breakfast.

Aga Khan Prize

In early September 2007, the Aga Khan Foundation awarded its three-yearly prestigious Prize for Architecture to UNDP and the Nicosia Master Plan for the “Rehabilitation of the Walled City of Nicosia, an Outstanding Contribution to Architecture for Muslims”.

The “Rehabilitation of the Walled City of Nicosia” is one of the nine awarded projects which have been selected among almost 350 projects from around the world.

Under the auspices of the UNDP, the Nicosia Master Plan was initiated in 1979, thanks to the remarkable efforts of the representatives of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities of Nicosia.

The Nicosia Master Plan aimed at creating a common development plan for Nicosia and revitalising the architectural and urban heritage of the walled city of Nicosia.

A large number of projects identified as priority interventions by the Nicosia Master Plan have been implemented through UNDP programmes: the UNDP Bicommunal Development Programme/ACT funded by the USAID and the UNDP Partnership for the Future Programme funded by the European Union.

Young Filmmakers Cinematic Adventure

On 27 October, in celebration of UN Day, UNDP-Action for Cooperation and Trust will hold an outdoor film festival at Ledra Palace. The festival is the highlight of UNDP’s Young Filmmakers project and an expected audience of 300 guests will have a chance to see the premiere of 13 short films created by young Cypriots. Prizes will be awarded to the top three films, and a Participation Award will also be given to the finalist with the highest level of participation in the project during 2007.

The 13 films are the selected finalists from the Young Filmmakers competition “Shooting Reality”, which was launched by UNDP-AC in December 2006. The island-wide competition called upon young Cypriots between the ages of 18-30 to send in their ideas for a short film about anything that is important to young people including individual or social issues. The selection panel made up of film critics, youth representatives and educators had the challenging task of judging the entries.

A total of 28 young Cypriots completed a training programme covering the following topics: Story Development, Production Management, Lighting, Camera Operation, Sound, Storyboarding and Editing. Under the guidance of professionals, these successful finalists were provided with equipment and technical support to make their films.

“Entries for the competition were of a very high standard. It was impressive to see so many thought-provoking and intelligent ideas coming from the young people of Cyprus,” said Jaco Cilliers, UNDP-AC Programme Manager. “I’m sure the finalists will do an excellent job of initiating discussion on the issues which affect modern Cypriot youth and society at large. This project will really give Cypriot youth a voice and empower them to express themselves through film.”

For further information, please contact Pembe Mentesh on 22 874 778.

Young Filmmakers Cinematic Adventure

Entries for the competition were of a very high standard. It was impressive to see so many thought-provoking and intelligent ideas coming from the young people of Cyprus,” said Jaco Cilliers, UNDP-AC Programme Manager. “I’m sure the finalists will do an excellent job of initiating discussion on the issues which affect modern Cypriot youth and society at large. This project will really give Cypriot youth a voice and empower them to express themselves through film.”

For further information, please contact Pembe Mentesh on 22 874 778.

September 2007 - The Blue Burst

September 2007 - The Blue Burst
The valuable and excitable thoroughbreds are amazingly well behaved and relaxed, thanks to the perfect equine environment and the careful handling and schooling they receive from Pat and his experienced team. Pat is very much a “hands on” trainer and one of the most accomplished piece of weight-lifting that was fit to grace any strength competition.

The Eddery horses in training range from recently bought yearlings and as yet unraced two-year-olds being brought on to all seasoned two, three and four-year-old winners. Some are bred as sprinters and some are bred to stay and are thus raced accordingly. The best horse in the yard is bay colt Secret Tune, a “Black Type” three-year-old son of 1991 Derby winner Generous. This amazingly clever colt who has won over £200,000 this year “talks” to you as you ride him. He was originally entered for this year’s St. Leger to be run in September but was judged not ready. Other notable include two-year-old diva Gallani and flashy home-bred Ascotan – both by 2001 Derby winner Galileo; the bullet-like Replicator and small but gutsy Cavort, both successful two-year-olds; and the double winning three-year-olds Alfresco and Lawyer’s Choice, to name but a few. I was thrilled that Pat thought I was up to riding his best and most valuable horses. Riding upsides Pat on the gallops at “warp factor” speed was amazing and I learnt much from this equine maestro, his team and his horses. So, if you see me at my desk you will see a wistful look on my face, you know where I am ... back on Secret Tune, with six-inch stirrup leathers, dashing up those gallops – thankful that there are no UN MPs lurking nearby with radar guns!

The Blue Beret

September 2007 - The Blue Beret

Slovsaks Dominate Strongman Competition

Eleven contestants entered the UNFICYP Strongman Competition which was held in September. Organised to mirror TV’s “World’s Strongman Competition”, our own version was designed to allow competitors of varying size and weight to compete against one another. This is why certain events were based on lifting a percentage of total body weight.

First was the Vehicle Push where each competitor had to push a UN L200 vehicle over a distance of 30 metres. It was a surprisingly close-run event, with Mario Sucansky pipping his fellow Slovakian, Peter Polecak, by 0.7 second; Sergio Nuñez, Argentina, finished a respectable 3rd. One competitor, who shall remain nameless, did bring a smile to the faces in the crowd when for all his efforts, it appeared that the hand brake had been left on – Pte. Cooper, I can assure you, it was not!

Next up was the Tyre Flip, an event which required the competitors to lift a tractor wheel and flip it over as many times as possible in one minute. The selection of tyre had caused problems, as the original selection would have been suited ideally to the actual world’s Strongman Competition, weighing in at a break-breaking 150 kg. A slightly lighter option was chosen, but this prevented the problem of bouncing. Technique became the key and Cpl. Stephens “don’t let it settle method” won the event with an astonishing 25 flips.

The third event was the much dreaded Crucifix. Competitors had to hold 8 kg weights, at arm length, for as long as possible. Once the weight dropped below the shoulder level the clock was stopped. There were some truly arm-shaking performances, resulting in a Slovakian 39 seconds, 2, 3 for Krutka, Polecak and Cusanczyk.

The penultimate event, the dreaded Squats, came as the sun beat down relentlessly upon sunburnt necks. Mine was radiating a striking purple. Competitors had to squat their own body weight as many times as possible in the minute. Mario Sucansky achieved an unbeat- able looking score, all the more impressive considering he was the heaviest taking part at 101 kg. However, Krutka would show him up with a staggering 40 reps in an accomplished piece of weight-lifting that fit to grace any strength competition.

And so, with just 10 points separating the top five competitors, it was down to the final event – the notorious Atlas Stones. Five barrels were stood up with a 66 kg barbell in between. Each competitor had to lift each stone onto the barrels in succession in the fastest time possible. Somewhat disappointingly the event had to be cancelled after one of the Atlas stones split in two and another was greatly reduced in size providing an unfair advantage to those yet to tackle the challenge. It can be deduced that limestone is not the optimum choice for this event; LtCol. Glover (C of stone selection) took note.

The eventual winners were:

Strongest Overall
1st place Mario Sucansky, Slovakia, Sector 4
2nd place Victor Krutka, Slovakia, Sector 4
3rd place Peter Polecak, Slovakia, UNPA.

And once each event score had been modified to account for body weight, the Strongest Overall was won by Victor Krutka.

Slovaks Dominate Strongman Competition

The Blue Beret

July 2007 - The Blue Beret
UNFICYP extended the usual courtesies when the Chief of Mission and Force Commander received the following visitors during the month:

5 September: H.E. Mrs Anna Tureničova, incoming Slovak Ambassador

14 September: Vice Admiral Sunil K. Damle, Indian Commander in Chief, Southern Command Naval

New Faces

Legal Adviser

Lt. Col. Christian Pöckl joined UNFICYP on 11 September, taking up the newly created post of Legal Adviser. He is responsible for providing legal counsel for any issues which may arise in the mission.

Christian joined the Austrian Armed Forces in 1983 and attended the Military Academy, graduating as an Engineer Officer in 1987. He also gained a Master of Law degree from the University of Salzburg in 1998.

Christian has had several postings as platoon leader and commanding officer of engineer and staff companies. From 2000 to 2002, he served as deputy chief in the recruitment division at the MoD in Vienna. From 2002 to 2006, he served as a legal adviser with the former land forces command, and in 2006 was posted to the Austrian Joint Armed Forces Command. This is not Christian’s first tour with UNFICYP. He served as an Engineer Officer in Sector 4 from 1990-1991 (one year). He also served in Kosovo as a legal adviser during 2005.

Christian is married to Elisabeth and they have four sons, Alexander (22), Anton (19), Benjamin (16) and Michael (3). His hobbies include fishing, skiing and all kinds of sport.

Wayne Hayde

Chief of the Regional Conduct and Discipline Unit Wayne Hayde met with Chief of Mission Michael Møller during his recent visit to UNFICYP where he conducted induction briefings for new staff members.

Wayne also visited the sectors and reviewed policy issues as well as outstanding Board of Inquiry cases. Hayde, who is based at UNIFIL, will be visiting periodically — at least once a quarter — to meet UNFICYP Conduct and Discipline Focal Point Maria Wilkins and keep abreast of issues that arise, and to conduct training and awareness briefings for new staff.

Wayne is the overseas Conduct and Discipline Officer for UNTSO, UNLB, UNDOF and UNFICYP.

Farewell

8 Transport Regiment Officially Says Goodbye

The highlight of the evening was without doubt the Beating Retreat, as performed by the RLC Corps Band, all 32 of them kindly on loan from the UK for the occasion.

The Beating Retreat is a reproduction of the music used at the end of a day’s battle in times gone by, and thus it seemed a fitting moment for the Regiment to say farewell to UNFICYP and Cyprus as they begin preparations to handover to the next Sector 2 soldiers, the Queen’s Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment, on 1 October.

Seven Year Hitch

It’s been seven years since Jerry Ashcroft joined UNFICYP Transport Unit in October 2000 to take charge of repairs and maintenance of UN vehicles, trucks and plant equipment.

It just seems a lot longer.

Well, seven years proves too much for the man, so he’s leaving on that midnight plane to Haiti. It just seems a bit extreme when we would have been quite happy if he’d just retired quietly to his village, Spilia, to put his tractor back together again. (No, that’s true).

But for those of us who have come to know Jerry, we didn’t really expect anything else from our little man of action.

Jerry has seen his job evolve and develop over the years and he has maintained, repaired and inspected UN vehicles as well as trucks found haring precariously over the sides of mountains or upside down in ditches or even landing in minefields.

For a few years, he found himself in charge of the Mission’s generators, keeping the soldiers supplied with power in the various isolated OPs scattered around the island.

The Transport Unit has become famous for our consistent wicked sense of humour (nobody gets away with anything) but we are also a highly motivated team of people running a smooth operation. This is largely due to Jerry’s dedication, enthusiasm and the time he freely gives to pass on his technical knowledge and experience, streamlining our operation helping to instill a sense of pride in our Unit.

Certain people, however, may consider his greatest achievement the founding of the UNFICYP Biker Gang: a group of fearless adventurers who have followed Jerry in blind adoration on many memorable trips around the island and we didn’t get lost once. Well, we always ended up somewhere, and the Harley usually managed to keep up with the Honda (biker gang humour).

So, Jerry, you’ve decided to leave us — a bit older, a bit greyer and, possibly, a bit shorter — but nevertheless all your friends and colleagues wish you the very best in your new adventures in Tahiti, or should that be Haiti — they say it’s very nice over there! So have fun. Keep safe and keep in touch.

Bike ride on your next trip home?

Christine Iacovou

Transport Regiment RLC officially said goodbye to recently made friends and colleagues on 13 September when they held their farewell party in the grounds of the Ledra Palace Hotel.

Guests included the CM and UNFICYP COS, as well as various ambassadors and dignitaries from around the island. The evening afforded the Regiment the opportunity to say a thank you to all invited before returning to Catterick, in North Yorkshire, England, after their six-month tour.

Seven Year Hitch

Christian has had several postings as a group of fearless adventurers who have followed Jerry in blind adoration on many memorable trips around the island and we didn’t get lost once. Well, we always ended up somewhere, and the Harley usually managed to keep up with the Honda (biker gang humour).

So, Jerry, you’ve decided to leave us – a bit older, a bit greyer and, possibly, a bit shorter – but nevertheless all your friends and colleagues wish you the very best in your new adventures in Tahiti, or should that be Haiti – they say it’s very nice over there! So have fun. Keep safe and keep in touch.

Bike ride on your next trip home?

Christine Iacovou
International Peace Day Vigil