INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS

By Lieutenant Gastón Grasso

On 9 July, Argentina celebrated 183 years of independence from Spain. The area of land that became Argentina, along with a number of other South American territories, had been arbitrarily allocated to Spain by the Pope, in the 16th century. The rest had been given to Portugal. The Spanish King particularly prized his Latin American lands for the gold and silver they produced.

In May 1810, feeling that they had had to fight their own battles without enough support from Spain, the people of Argentina set up their own government. They began to challenge the authority of the Spanish empire by starting revolutionary movements in all its American colonies.

Spain reacted by sending military forces to reestablish law and order. Argentina countered this by establishing its own army. The move was initiated by General San Martín, who had fought in Spain in the battle of Baylen. San Martín realised that the only way to withstand the strength of the Spanish Empire was to establish a regular army. Not surprisingly, San Martín found himself in charge of the army.

By 1816, he felt confident that Argentina could stand on its own feet. He urged congressmen at a meeting in the northern village of Tucumán to declare Argentina’s independence. He said that it was nonsensical to set up an army, mint coins, and organise a new government in the name of a distant king. Finally, on 9 July 1816, Argentina proclaimed its independence.

This year in Cyprus, to mark this event, diplomats from Cuba, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Russia, UK, and the USA, along with colleagues from UNFICYP, came to San Martin Camp at Skouriotissa on 16 July. As Colonel Rodolfo Mujica, Commanding Officer of Sector 1, stated in his welcoming speech, “As a new nation with only 183 years of history we are still growing. Maybe we are still teenagers with plenty of contradictions and doubts, but we do have a strong feeling that the future is ours. Happy birthday, Argentina.”

The music during the whole ceremony was performed by the Sector 1 band. Before the official part of the celebration ended, a choir sang in memory of those who lost their lives in war. But the musicians aren’t the only talented members of the Argentinean contingent – as was proved later on.

The swimming pool looked spectacularly festive, with hundreds of balloons in the national colours white and blue. Everyone seemed to enjoy the snacks and drinks (Argentina’s empanadas are always popular) and then settled down to applaud the dancers and singers.

Maria Eugenia Rodriguez performed two beautiful songs, accompanied by WO3 Roque Retamar on guitar. After these songs Roque played some solo guitar pieces.

Next, Mrs Beatriz Mujica danced the Escondido, followed by the typical Gaucho dance “Malambo”, demonstrating how the Argentinean gauchos expressed their bravery and manliness in the past.

The audience could hardly wait to dance themselves. As soon as the chance came, the floor was crowded with dancing couples who kept going till late in the evening.

Traditional entertainment for all
The Blue Beret

Argentinians have been committed to UNIFECY since 1993, when President Carlos Menem took a keen interest in the formation of this force. A battle was created, taking volunteers from across the army, navy, and airforce, and at the end of August, a task force of 375 personnel came to Cyprus to familiarize itself with the British and American equipment already on the island. On 8 October, Argentinian troops arrived and a full day’s training followed. That same day, Argentina took over responsibility for flight operations, and remains in charge of UN of Flight UNFICYP. In the past six years, hundreds of Argentinians have served in the missions and as part of UNIFECY of their very best. We currently have 410 men and women working in different fields and bases. This makes us UNIFECY’s largest contingent. I should note here that we are not all of us Argentinians. We are here together with personnel from Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, who work alongside us in a truly integrated manner.

When leaving home, we all have to give up on family and loved ones for at least six to twelve months. This is hard, but we know that by serving in Cyprus, we will be bringing peace to the region, because we are regarded as part of the Argentinian Military Force because of the time it gives us the opportunity to demonstrate our skills in training soldiers, to develop new techniques, and to be known worldwide for our diligence.

Life is not, however, all plain sailing. The previous contingent caused tragic loss of Lieut Ayr D’Agostino who died of a heart attack when chatting with colleagues. We have been fortunate that there have not been any operational accidents, but the fact that we have to, in the words of some, have been potentially serious, like the explosion of an anti-tank mine located under an armored vehicle. In 1999, a total of 96 people were using the machine, who died instantly, but everyone was aware that the damage could have been much worse.

The Blue Beret is the in-house journal of the United Nations Force in Cyprus. The views expressed are those of the authors concerned, and do not necessarily conform with official policy. Articles of general interest are invited from all members of the Force, photographs, together with captions, should accompany the articles. The copyright of all material in this journal is vested in United Nations Publications. Any article or illustration may be reproduced with the written permission of the Editor.

I’m not offended by all the dumb blonde jokes because I know I’m not dumb... and I also know that I’m not blonde.

Dolly Parton

I base most of my fashion taste on what doesn’t itch.

Gilda Radner

You see a lot of smart guys with dumb women, but you hardly ever see a smart woman with a dumb guy.

Erica Jong

The Blue Beret

The newspaper for UNIFCYP’s civilian, military and police personnel

Published fortnightly by the Public Information Office of the United Nations Force in Cyprus, I.Q. UNIFECY PO Box 2162, Nicosia, Cyprus

Tel: (02) 864550/864541/864808
Fax: (02) 864550
E-mail: blueberet@cyrus.com

Editorial Team
Sarah Russell (Editor)
Maj Paul Kitchin
Miran Taylor

Photography
Force Photographer: Cpl Damian Faulkner and Contingent Photographers
Unif Press Officers
Sector One
Lt Carlos Grasso
Capt Victoriki Walker
Capt Capriotti Hristova
Lt Anita Rabil
Capt Ignacio Avila

Sector Two
Capt Andreas Vas
Capt Gregory Fvajla
Capt Antonis Baziak

UNIFECY

Gt Richi Hanisch
Capt Liam Hogan
Lt Mario Corbalan
Capt Horacio Failla
Lt Stephanie Grav-Fisq
Lt David Collins
Capt Keith Cole

Civilian Admin

The Republic of Argentina offers a unique dedication to the Missions in the United Nations. Since 1957, a number of men and women from the military, air force, and the navy have been serving in various United Nations Peacekeeping Missions around the world. The La República Argentina ofrece una dedicatoria excepcional a las misiones de la ONU. Desde 1957, hombres y mujeres de las fuerzas armadas, la aviación y el mar han estado sirviendo en diferentes misiones de mantenimiento de la paz de la ONU en todo el mundo.

The Blue Beret

EDITORIAL

Argentinians serve still since 1993. Troops from the UNIFECY and also with a significant number of technicians and military personnel, due to the formation of a new Permanent Sector.

An Argentine battle group was deployed and met the challenges of the Cold War era, including the Peacekeeping Missions in the Middle East and Ephraim. The Argentine forces were involved in various missions, including the UNIFECY and the UNMEE, among others.

In the past six years, hundreds of Argentinians have served in the missions and as part of UNIFECY of their very best. We currently have 410 men and women working in different fields and bases. This makes us UNIFECY’s largest contingent. I should note here that we are not all of us Argentinians. We are here together with personnel from Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, who work alongside us in a truly integrated manner.

When leaving home, we all have to give up on family and loved ones for at least six to twelve months. This is hard, but we know that by serving in Cyprus, we will be bringing peace to the region, because we are regarded as part of the Argentinian Military Force because of the time it gives us the opportunity to demonstrate our skills in training soldiers, to develop new techniques, and to be known worldwide for our diligence.

Life is not, however, all plain sailing. The previous contingent caused tragic loss of Lieut Ayr D’Agostino who died of a heart attack when chatting with colleagues. We have been fortunate that there have not been any operational accidents, but the fact that we have to, in the words of some, have been potentially serious, like the explosion of an anti-tank mine located under an armored vehicle. In 1999, a total of 96 people were using the machine, who died instantly, but everyone was aware that the damage could have been much worse.

The Blue Beret is the in-house journal of the United Nations Force in Cyprus. The views expressed are those of the authors concerned, and do not necessarily conform with official policy. Articles of general interest are invited from all members of the Force, photographs, together with captions, should accompany the articles. The copyright of all material in this journal is vested in United Nations Publications. Any article or illustration may be reproduced with the written permission of the Editor.

I’m not offended by all the dumb blonde jokes because I know I’m not dumb... and I also know that I’m not blonde.

Dolly Parton

I base most of my fashion taste on what doesn’t itch.

Gilda Radner

You see a lot of smart guys with dumb women, but you hardly ever see a smart woman with a dumb guy.

Erica Jong
Trouble at Kohima Gate - MFR Exercise

A group of 60 "rioters" gave UN soldiers a hard time on 2 July, when they tried to enter the Buffer Zone to commemorate the famous turning car incident of 1994. It was clear that UNFICYP was determined to keep things as quiet as possible, and protect the "rioters" from themselves. Initially the peacekeepers deployed in a non-provocative manner, although there were armoured personnel carriers parked nearby.

But the tension grew and projectiles began to fly towards the multinational peacekeepers. Instantly, protective gear was taken out of the cupboards and the unprotected soldiers were quickly replaced by colleagues equipped with blue helmets, body armour and shields. Patiently the replacements waited until the "crowd", kindly provided by the soldiers, cooled down, helped by a stream of refreshing water generously distributed by the fire brigade.

One soldier received medical treatment after injuring an ankle, and a civilian woman sustained minor head injuries. Soon after midday the crowd dispersed. UNFICYP remained on the spot however, and continued monitoring the situation throughout the day.

The Inspector's Call

"Private Ismail, there's still a spot on the floor. Clean it right now - with your toothbrush, if necessary."

In the background, swiftly and professionally, someone is raking the gravel.

Bengal troop commander Lieutenant Ralph Kostense has been testing his men on a daily basis. The soldiers have to prove they know all about their job and details on the cease-fire lines in their area of responsibility. Not only must they be able to do this in Dutch, they also have to be able to reproduce the knowledge in English, orally as well as in writing.

Why is all this going on? Because the Force Commander is coming to inspect us. The chain of command passes by to pre-inspect the opportunity to dot more i's and cross more t's is well taken.

A finally it's D-Day. A last glance at the ops-room. Drinks have already been poured, an orderly standing by, ready to serve them. Then the tower announcement sounds: "Target in sight! Estimated time of arrival: Figures one, out."

Quickly all personnel in civilian clothes, ready to depart for hard-earned days of TAS (Training, Administration, and Stand down) are sent inside their rooms.

OP 45 ready for inspection, sir."

We're off. The first few minutes are crucial. Beads of sweat are running down spines. All the visiting officers seem to be very friendly, but is this genuine? Better keep everything and everybody on a tight rein, it could be fake. First guide them to the ops-room for the briefing.

"Where are those damned drinks?" hisses the Lieutenant at one of the saluting soldiers when he walks by.

"Good afternoon sir, welcome to the ops room of Bengal Troop. My name is Sergeant Doozer. Would you like an ops room brief sir?"

To everybody's surprise, the inspecting officer, Colonel Coats, answers: "No, thank you."

Did he really say no? What does he mean? After preparing everything, going through all those headache-inducing rehearsals and with all this adrenaline that's rushing through us? Instead, the Colonel asks: "How are you enjoying yourself?" But what has that got to do with the test? Something similar happens on the tower. Corporal Rutger Berendsoen had just started off on his speech when he is told to stop. "I know the area," says the visitor. "Please tell me something about yourself."

That was all the folks, the dreaded test. Three weeks of sweating, learning missions, memorising briefings, scrubbing and raking. First of all there is a sense of disappointment. But then everybody realises that the aim of the whole exercise has been achieved. All the trots and outs are known off the tips of our heads. Bengal Troop is ready to face the rest of the tour. And we have a collective sigh of relief.

Argentina Empañadas

Ingredients:

Dough:
- 1 kg floor
- ½ kg melted lard
- 2 cups hot milk

Meat filling:
- ½ kg rump steak, chopped into small cubes
- 2 large onions, finely chopped
- 1 green pepper, finely chopped
- 2 boiled eggs, sliced
- A few raisins, stones removed
- Salt
- Paprika

The meat filling should be prepared the previous evening and left in the refrigerator.

Fry chopped meat in hot oil. Add the onions and green peppers and then salt and paprika. When cooked, thicken meat juices with a tablespoon of flour.

The next day, sieve flour onto a flat surface. Make a hole in the centre, add the melted lard and also the hot milk and a pinch of salt. Knead dough until smooth, then divide into portions the size of a medium potato.

Roll out dough to a circle of approximately 15 x 15 cm. Place three tablespoon spoons of meat filling on half of the dough, with two olives, four raisins and one slice of egg. Then fold the other half over filling and press with fingers all around, turning the edges upwards to give the shape of a half moon. Repeat.

Bake in the centre of a hot oven (250°C) for about 20 minutes.

A Taste of Wales

A week or so ago, the chefs of the 2nd Regiment Royal Artillery brought the taste of Wales to the Friday morning sector commanders' briefing at UNFICYP HQ. They turned up with a traditional delicacy known as Welsh cakes. These small griddle cakes are popular throughout the principality. Indeed, most houses always have a tin-full handy.

"It wasn't easy" says WO2 Nigel Fox, the catering WO for Sector 2. "To begin with, I couldn't find the recipe. But with the help of Staff Sergeant Wayne Thomas, a true Welshman, I succeeded. He contacted his mother back home in Wales and got hold of the recipe. The next problem was to find a Welshman to make them. Unfortunately, we don't have any Welsh chefs, so we had to ask a Yorkshireman, Corporal Mark Ellis."

Ellis followed the recipe to the letter, and now Welsh cakes have become standard fare for all visits to the British element of Sector 2 - the Dutch, of course, have their own speciality: spicy cookies known as speculaas (but they cheat: they don't bake them, they buy them in).
REAL LIFE

UNMP AROUND THE CLOCK

By Lieutenant Stephanie Grus-Ficq

The UNMP (United Nations Police) works a 24-hour shift. It is based at two police stations, one at the UNPA and the other in Dherinia. We have a headquarters unit of six people, five station commanders (of whom one works at Dherinia) and three special investigators. The patrolmen are on duty 12 hours a day, for six days at a time. Then they get two days off.

The UNMP includes people from seven different countries: Argentina, Austria, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and the UK.

Our days begin like everybody else’s. We get up, get washed, shaved (if male) and dressed. Then, we transform ourselves from normal human beings into military police officers.

WO II Lechner, MSGT Zubor, and SGt Monzon give something of an idea of what happens in a military police officer’s day. Shifts start at the station at 08.00 and 20.00. Normally the station commander is the first to arrive. After he has taken over he’ll brief his oncoming personnel about the jobs to be done that day or night, and send them away on a special or routine mission. Tasks are likely to include running speedtraps, carrying out vehicle and document checks, doing disciplinary patrols or vehicle or foot patrols, out of bounds checks, security checks, escorting VIPs and traffic duties.

The patrolmen work within their area of responsibility; the Dherinia station covers the area from the northeastern tip of the Karpas Peninsula to Athienou and Larnaca, while the UNPA station looks after the rest of the island.

Meanwhile, back at the station, the station commander watches the telephones, the Motorola radio and a computer on which he records everything that happens for the daily occurrence book.

Every incoming telephone call has to be answered. It might just be a routine matter. But it could be an urgent request for help.

If something has happened, the station commander immediately sends a patrol to the scene and the military police action begins. We take photographs, make sketches, take statements, and generally try to find out what exactly happened. It is then up to the UNPA to follow up.

Most of the incidents we deal with are traffic accidents. These range from the minor to the very serious. Any incident that involves criminal activity is initially dealt with by the regular military police, but may then get handed over to the headquarters unit and the special investigators.

A lot of the work we do is very routine and not very popular. No one likes us patrolling the area and checking to see people are sticking to the speed limit and carrying the right documents. But by doing this, we do help make sure there is a better flow of traffic.

It can be quite interesting in the morning watching people who, as soon as they see one of our patrol cars, suddenly remember the rules, and slow down and put on their seat belts.

You’ve probably worked out for yourselves that we don’t normally hang about at one location for more than 10 minutes, because by then, everyone coming along will have been warned that we are there.

Anyway, next time we stop you, please don’t try to kid us that driving 15 kilometres above the speed limit is not too much, or to tell us that you have never broken the rules of the road before in your life. It really doesn’t help you or us.

THE LIRI BIRD

By Captain Vicki Walker

It’s quite common for British soldiers on tour to acquire a pet of some sort. Many of those who have been in Northern Ireland will have got used to picking up a stray dog or two. But when the Welsh Gunners took over Liri Troop, they found something a little more bizarre.

Blackstone, an orphaned jackdaw, was found in the old print factory below UNOP.84. The chick had fallen out of one of the hundreds of birds’ nests in the factory, and had been brought back into camp. Fed on a diet of bugs and meat, Blackstone has grown in size and has begun his first foraging attempts at flying. Very tame, he is unafraid of anyone in the troop, and will often join numbers for a sunbathing session, or at the outside bar for crisps and a coke. Meanwhile, a close encounter with a white paintbrush left him looking like a magpie for days.

His efforts to make friends are not always appreciated though. Cries for food at sunrise can be particularly grating on the nerves.

Responsible for looking after Blackstone, 19th, main duty of the shoulders of Gunners Sharon Harris and Rick Curran, who can often be seen chasing flies and carrying dubious-looking foodstuffs,” says Bdr Steve Crisp. “It could be that they are looking after him too well: plans to release him into the wild have so far been thwarted by his reluctance to find his own food. The troop will keep him as an honorary member until he decides to leave.

In the meantime, though, as Blackstone has the jackdaw’s traditional penchant for collecting glittering objects, everyone keeps a close eye on anything shiny they have, in case it gets ‘Blackstoned’

OPERATION SUNFLOWER

By Captain Andreas Vas

A 1 July, Sector 4 conducted a fictional exercise in a small village in the Buffer Zone. The scenario featured increasing tension between two communities because of several unsolved problems and there was a risk that this tension might lead to riots.

As one of UNFICYP’s key jobs is to keep tension as low as possible, a special company, called Sunflower, made up of four platoons of medical and fire-fighting teams, was deployed to the area.

Two platoons looked after the six checkpoints that had been set up, while the other two acted as a local reserve. The exercise was run by Lt Col Pallis, DCO UNASHF. Soldiers from Sectors 1 and 2, as well as the Mobile Force Reserve (MFR), came along to pretend to be members of the two communities. During the exercise, the deployed forces had to handle nine different situations. In each of these, between two and four check points were involved. Sunflower had to deal with peaceful individuals as well as crowds of aggressive demonstrators. Meanwhile, the medical and fire-fighting teams were also given specific problems to handle – and all in soaring summer temperatures.

Hungarian soldiers keeping “cool” in high temperatures

Slow down, speed kills

Ready, set, blow!

Two acted as a local reserve.
PEOPLE
CHEERING ON -
AND CHEERING UP

By Lieutenant Gastón Grassa

Eduardo Castellanos, padre del argentino Econstituent (UNFICYP’s largest contingent) is a busy man. At weekends he leads church services both at San Martin Camp, but also at Rocca Camp, Base, and Saint Barnabas’ church at the UNPA. During the week he travels along the hilly tracks in the Buffer Zone to visit the soldiers who work at the observation posts and patrol bases.

“I spend time with them and listen to anything they’d be interested with anybody else,” says the priest. “Although most men and women are content and working quite happily, every once in a while they might want to talk about their feelings, about their families and friends back in Argentina. Being there and listening is my main job, but of course - if I am asked to - I also try to help and give the best advice I can.”

Father Castellanos is a loyal supporter of the sportmen of his contingent, cheering on soccer teams or encouraging runners on the last stretch of a road race.

“I very much like being in Cyprus, supporting the Argentinian peacekeepers during their tour. I try to help them, but they also help me a lot. One thing I am particularly proud of is all the support I have received in assembling the new chapel in San Martin Camp. There is still more work to do, so volunteers are always welcome.”

APLAUDIR Y ANIMAR

El Padre Eduardo Castellanos, quien es el sacerdote del Contingente Argentino, el contingente más grande de UNFICYP, es un hombre ocupado. Los fines de semana oficia misas no solamente en el campo de San Martín, sino también en el campo de Rocca, en la base Brown y en la iglesia de Barnabas en la UNPA. Durante la semana va a las colinas de la zona de amortiguación, viajando por caminos de tierra, para visitar a los soldados que trabajan en los pasivos de observación y en las bases de parapeto.

“Paso un tiempo con ellos, escuchando todo aquello que quieran discutir así como sus confidencias”, dice el sacerdote. “Aunque la mayoría de los hombres y de las mujeres parecen estar contentos y felices trabajando, de vez en cuando les gusta hablar de sus sentimientos o de su familia o de amistades que se encuentran en Argentina, o inclusive, de religión. Mi labor principal es estar ahí con ellos y escucharlos, pero sí me llegan a pedir algún consejo, por supuesto que trato de darle el mejor.”

El Padre Castellanos es un local seguidor de los deportistas de su contingente, animándolos en los partidos de fútbol, así como también animando a los atletas en su última etapa de la carrera.

“Me gusta mucho estar en Chipre, apoyando a los Cascos Azules de Argentina durante su estancia. Trato de ayudarlos siempre, al igual que ellos también me ayudan a mí. En particular, estoy muy orgulloso de la ayuda que se me ha brindado para poder construir la nueva capilla en el Campo San Martín. Todavía hay mucho trabajo por hacer y por lo tanto, cualquier voluntario que se aparezca, es siempre bienvenido.”

“Estoy orgulloso de todo el apoyo que me gente me brinda.”

IRISH INVADE LEDRA

By Sergeant Ricki Hanisch

No – that’s wrong. The correct word is integrate.

In early May, as part of the integration of the former AUSTCIVPOL and IRCIVPOL into a single UNCI POL unit, the Ledra civilian police team welcomed Police Officer Mary Bermingham. The Ledra team, which had previously been solely made up of Australian Police, was one of two civilian police stations who began working with police from another country that day. The other was Pyla, formerly an IRCIVPOL post, which for the first time welcomed Australians into their midst.

The Ledra Aussies had already met Mary on 9 March. She had helped out with the police contribution to the International Women’s Day celebrations at the Ledra Palace Hotel a few days earlier. As well as providing civilian police support, UNCI POL ran a highly successful tombola.

“It was a very enjoyable day,” Mary says, “and it was terrific to meet the people I knew I would soon be working with.”

Once at Ledra, where UNCI POL officers live alongside military from Sector 2, Mary had to get accustomed to living in a military environment.

“It wasn’t difficult,” she says, “but it did take a bit of getting used to.”

And the Aussies?

“They’re great. They were very hospitable and helpful, which made settling in here a lot easier. The Australians are wonderful people. If only they were Irish, they’d be perfect.”

SOUNDS OF THE VALLEYS

By Captain Gareth Rhys-Evans

Everyone knows that the Welsh pride themselves on their national rugby team. It is also well known that we are extremely proud of our singing.

For the soldiers of the Welsh Gunners, however, singing had long been an underground activity. I use the word underground partly because we rarely sang publicly. But also because our favourite location had always been our rugby clubhouse, a former RAF command bunker. This all changed dramatically in April with the arrival of our new Commanding Officer. Lieutenant Colonel Huw Lawford handed us out of our cozy niche, thrusting us into the harsh glare of the public and sobriety.

Over the past three months or so, we have drawn in the music of those icons of Welsh popular culture, Tom Jones and Max Boyce, as well as hymns and arias remembered from long Sundays spent in local chapels. So we now have a repertoire that extends beyond the rugby songs that had previously been our specialty.

The warmth of Ledra Palace turned out to be the ideal arena in which to coax untrained and sober voices into a choir. From the high harmonies of “The Sisters of Sin” to the gravelly sound of “The Basement”, we turned ourselves into a respectable regimental choir.

We met, and overcame, the musical challenges posed by “Men of Harlech”, “Sloop John B”, and of course “Deliha”, with the result that we can now perform quite a variety of music.

Choir practice attendance has been excellent and so has the effort - given all our other duties. Our first public performance at the UNPA swimming competition on 13 July went swimmingly by all accounts. With other invites coming in, we hope to expand our repertoire over the next few weeks. So if you’d like to add a certain something vocal to your next event, give us a call (through the JOC at Sector 2) and we’ll be glad to help if we can.
NEWS

A SHEEPISH EXCHANGE

By Sergeant Ricki Hanish

If you'd been around the Ledra Palace Hotel on 8 July, you could well have been excited for thinking you'd taken a wrong turn somewhere and ended up at a sheep market. With five livestock lorries, and a motley crowd of people (UNCIVPOL, police from both north and south, military personnel, and civilians) along with 180 sheep and goats bleating and baaing, it was tempting to sit down in the dust and wait for the bidding to start.

What was, in fact, occurring, was the transfer of stolen livestock from the south back to the north. The animals had been stolen on the night of 20 June, from a farmer in Louroujina. The thief, a Greek Cypriot, took them to the south. On 7 July a judge ordered the immediate return of the livestock to the north, and Inspector John Galvin, UNFICYP's civil affairs police liaison officer, began work arranging the transfer, which took place the next day.

On the same day, another livestock transfer took place at Pergamos. This time 89 animals travelled from north to south, having been stolen by a Turkish Cypriot who had taken them north.

The two transfers occurred with both sides waiving all feeding charges and with no transport costs claims made against the owners of the animals.

GETTING TO THE CHURCH ON TIME

Traditionally, 17 July is St Marina's Day. This year, to mark the occasion, 860 people visited the church of Ayia Marina in the Buffer Zone. Sector 4 personnel escorted the worshipers to and from the church. Firm believers in the motto 'Be prepared', the Austrians had a medical team on stand-by. They were concerned that hot weather might cause heat stress and dehydration.

Camp Duke Leopold Revisited

Camp Duke Leopold recently played host to three Swedish veterans who came, with their wives, to visit the place where they had served in the '60s and early '70s. They toured the camp and then had a chance to sit down in the Officers' Club and talk about what had changed and what had remained the same.

They said, for example, that there used to be just one storehouse for all different items like weapons, clothes and equipment. Now all these things are kept separately. They noticed that most of the buildings had undergone a change of function. One visitor found that his old quarters had been turned into the Officers' Club TV room.

Nevertheless, they felt that a lot of the buildings looked much the same – despite the passing of more than a quarter of a century.

Swedes on a sentimental journey

Media interest explodes as the UN maintains peace and stability in the Buffer Zone
BLUE BERET SPORTS SECTION

SWIM FOR IT

The only sensible thing to do after duty hours during a Cyprus summer seems to be to go to the pool. And that’s exactly what UNFICYP personnel and their families did on Tuesday 13 July. Some went to compete; others to watch, enjoy each other’s company, and generally have a good time. The swimming competition was also an opportunity for families to get together again at the end of the school year.

Competitors from the UNPA and all sectors raced fast and furiously, with enthusiastic support from spectators. There were also fiercely fought children’s races, with 39 medals lying waiting for the quickest children. Military winners simply went home with eternal glory.

After the military had finished the “serious” part of the competition, they launched into the famous chain of command race. Team members were instructed to behave like dolphins, diving under and jumping over lines, come ashore, pick up a ball (or a cap or a closed can of beer) or put on an operation overall and do the return journey. Chief of Staff Colonel Chris Coats was doing really well but failed to go over a lane dividing line and lost time correcting this. People seemed to get disqualified for all kinds of reasons (Sergeant Jerry Behan is a famously strict referee), but no one appeared to complain.

For anyone with any energy left, two floating goals were launched and a water polo match started. But by now, most people were more interested in collecting food from the barbecue and salad bar – kindly laid on by UNCTVPOL.

After dinner, a team of persistent raffle-ticket sellers led by the Chief of Mission ambushed unsuspecting carriers of wallets. Lack of change pushed even the reluctantly charitable to buy either five or even ten tickets at a time, enabling the Welfare Committee to raise more than £1,000 for charities in both north and south. The lucky winners, meanwhile, went home with prizes ranging from tickets for a flight to a beautiful Mediterranean island to a couple of tickets to go go-karting on the UNPA. There were quite a few envious-looking kids as Wlodek Cibor walked away with an inflatable bouncy castle.

Then it was entertainment time. Before the disco got going, Bracton children danced to the accordion music of Mr Eireen Cotter. Sector 1 (renowned for having the best dancers in UNFICYP) contributed a Malambo performance. Sector 2 (more talented vocally than on the dance floor) turned up with a Welsh Choir, while the MFR (whose taste has often been described as dubious) elected to impersonate The Village People performing “YMCA”.

HOW LONG IS A MILE?

On 10 July, four members of Sector 2 went down to Dhekelia to take part in the Dhekelia One Mile Swim – a race sponsored by the UK’s 2nd Royal Anglian Regiment.

All four finished in the top 20, with Captain Phil Curtis coming in seventh, Ssgt Pete Barney 11th, Ssgt Ted Comber 16th, and Sgt Linda De Jager 18th.

One mile in a swimming pool seems far enough, but out at sea with waves, wind, salt, and currents, it must seem that much further.

Ted Comber certainly thought so: “Swimming in the sea is much harder than swimming in still water.” He went on to confess: “Not only did it seem further – it was further. I got lost.”

The sea swimming team will be in action again soon at the Episkopi Bay-to-Bay Swim on 23 July, giving the Sector 2 Ops team just a few days to finish waterproofing Ssgt Comber’s map.

VETERAN’S RUGBY

Do you think you are over the hill, but would still like to play rugby? Then we have news for you.

Phil Davies from the finance office in the UNPA would like to put together an over-35 rugby team to play out of Nicosia. Don’t hesitate, pick up the phone now and dial (02) 864443 or (02) 357903. Do you play in a veterans team already? Then please get in touch too. Perhaps the new UNFICYP veterans can play against your team.