THE BLUE BERET
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TOO MANY CROSS
MARITIME SECURITY LINE

The Austrian peacekeepers on duty at Observation Post 146 concentrate mainly on watching the Maritime Security Line (MSL) to the east. Through their binoculars, they make sure everything that happens at sea is observed. Not even a snorkeler can swim past unnoticed!

This MSL was established by the United Nations; it marks the mid-point between the two cease-fire lines of the Buffer Zone and extends seaward for 3,000 meters. Approximately 700 meters north of the MSL, there are four buoys in the sea, placed there by the north and marking the seaward extension of the Turkish Forces cease-fire line. The authorities in the south do not have an equivalent line, as they do not recognise any division of the sea.

By crossing these lines, captains of boats from the south run risks. These include having their vessels stopped, seized and confiscated and having their passengers detained.

OP 146 - where tension often arises

Patrol boats from the north have also fired warning shots when vessels pass the Turkish cease-fire line buoys. "It is clear that whenever a vessel from the south crosses the line, or whenever there is a response to that from the north, tension is raised," says OP Commander Staff Sergeant Klaus Hinke. "Of course, UNFICYP reports all violations when they happen."

Is this often?

"Oh, yes, especially in the summer. We report every crossing and other incidents through the chain of command to the Joint Operations Centre of UNFICYP at the UNPA in Nicosia. There they keep the records and follow the trends. Compared to the same period last year, there is a significant increase."

"That's right," confirms Chief Operations Officer Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Platezer. "We have compared the most recent six-week period in 1999 to the same period in 1998. This period last year, 141 fishing boats and 165 tourist boats crossed the MSL; many of them also crossed the opposing force's cease-fire lines past the orange buoys. The same period this year shows a large increase: 306 fishing boats and 714 tourist boats. Statistically, this means there is an increased risk. In late August last year, a fishing boat was fired upon by a Turkish Forces patrol boat, and in early June this year, the same happened to a pleasure boat. Both incidents, like all violations, were, of course, vigorously protested by UNFICYP, but the fact is that if boats from the south go over the line, they put themselves at risk."

"UNFICYP is naturally very concerned about this recent development," says Chief of Mission, Dame Ann Hercus. "That is why we thought it was important to inform the Minister of Tourism and the Minister of Justice about the significant increase in crossings of the MSL. Earlier this year, UNFICYP took the step of improving the markings of the MSL; there is now a danger marker on the coast line with "DANGER, KEEP CLEAR" and warning flags on the cliff top. However, regrettably, these signs are being ignored. Also, tourist boats cross the line when it is obvious that they can clearly see Famagusta and Varosha without doing so. So why take the risk?"

And what will happen next?

"In part, that is up to the Ministers," said Dame Ann. "I know that both understand the seriousness of the statistics and appreciate the practical nature of my calling on them. I also hope that this recent publicity will ensure that fishermen and tourist boat owners know about the risks taken when these lines are crossed. UNFICYP is doing everything it can within its own capabilities to warn as well as continue to protest violations when they happen."

INSIDE: BB TIPS - PEOPLE - REAL LIFE - CLASSIFIED - SPORT
The 20th century started in the Balkans, and it is ending in the Balkans. The Balkans has been a notable area for centuries. When the Roman Empire was divided, the division went through the Balkans. The Great War started in the Balkans. Throughout the world's history, the region has become a hinge between different cultures.

This is why problems in the Balkans are referred to as ethnic problems. The word "ethnic" does not refer to races. Although belonging to the same race, human groups can be deeply divided by culture, a very particular way of identity, a characteristic spirit of attitude of every community. In the Balkans, people belong to the same race, but they are divided by culture. Culture in the end means values.

The only way to fight is to consider culture as a collective and ancestral instinct for survival. History has taught us that people who lose their culture, lose their values. We can see examples in America, where the Indians lost their own values. Conquerors imposed their own culture on them, and the great Maya and Inca cultures vanished in the centuries.

The real mystery about the human race is why human beings fight. Physically the weakest being in creation, a human is nevertheless the only being who kills for pure hatred. In any conflict, the world is shocked by the human suffering that surrounds a war. In ethnic confrontation, the only respected rule is to survive in whatever way you can. Let us praise those who are dedicating their lives to ease human suffering in the Balkans.

The real mystery of the Balkan conflict is whether the conflict is a result of ethnic hatred, history, or the legacy of previous wars. The parallels between the Balkan conflict and the conflicts in the Middle East, Africa, and the former Yugoslavia are striking. The Balkans have been a testing ground for several global powers, including the United States, Russia, and the European Union. The conflict has been fueled by ethnic, political, and religious tensions, and the international community has struggled to find a peaceful solution.

The EU has played a significant role in the stabilization and development of the region. The EU's political and economic integration efforts have aimed to promote stability, peace, and prosperity in the Balkans. The EU has provided financial aid, technical assistance, and political support to the region, helping to build institutions, promote human rights, and support democratic reforms.

In conclusion, the Balkan conflict is complex, and finding a peaceful solution requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the underlying causes of the conflict. The international community must continue to work towards a lasting peace in the Balkans, promoting stability, economic development, and inclusive governance, ensuring that the voices of all people in the region are heard and respected.
OP 135 COMES TO LIFE

Just south of the Corridor Road, between Dhekelia and Ayios Nikolaos, the 3rd Squad of the Slovenian Contingent operates UN Observation Post 135. Until 21 April, this was a temporary OP, although due to lack of space on OP 139, the six Slovenian squad members slept there every night. Now, however, it’s a fully operational patrol base. With two Observation Posts instead of one permanently operated, the Slovenian Contingent can now fulfill its tasks much better.

Says OP commander Senior Sergeant Matej Kapelj: “It’s taken a lot of work. When we moved in to transfer this location into a permanently operated Observation Post and Patrol Base, the grass was over 60 centimeters high and cacti were growing everywhere.”

Indeed, the place is impressively neat, inside and out, with a row of army boots lined up in a cupboard on the terrace. Corporal Matej Cizelj for a patrol along the UN observation posts in the Corridor Road area.

Ales seen his work with UNIFCYP as a welcome change from his previous job with the civilian police in his home country. “I worked for the traffic police for two and a half years, before I decided to join the army. In this job there is much more variety. And there’s a lot of responsibility on the shoulders of each individual. That is why I already know I’d like to stay longer than my six-month tour, although I only arrived in Cyprus two months ago. If I can’t stay, I’d like to come back to UNIFCYP some other time.”

What’s life like at OP 135?

“Well, of course it’s not all fun. I don’t like radio-duty much. I’d rather be outside. I prefer doing things like this patrol we’re going out on. And off duty, I like to do sports. Most days I start early with a run of about one hour. And whenever there is time in between my shifts, I like to go swimming or to ‘pump some iron’ in the little gym we’ve made.”

Matej Kapelj adds: “As an OP commander, I see it as a responsibility to make sure that everybody performs their duties with a high level of discipline. But it is also important to keep motivation high and to have fun or to relax. That’s why I try to encourage people to be active. The Slovenian Contingent rest a billiards set and a table tennis kit. We play basketball against the other squads in Sector 4, and organise football matches against teams from the NG or the TF.”

So are there any problems?

“Oh sure. At OP 135 we’ve only got one generator. Every day it has to be shut off for two hours. If we’re to keep things going, we need a second one. But this will be taken care of. Apart from that, I am happy and proud to be commanding our very own Slovenian OP.”

OP 135 is fully operational since 21 April

Preparing for patrol

HNUGARIAN
1. Hogy vagy?  
2. Jól vagyok.  
3. Hogy hívnak?  
4. A nevem .....  
5. Megnénzhetem az étlapot?  
6. Kaphatok egy kis vizet?  
7. Egy taxit kérek.  
8. Meleg van ma.  
9. Mennyi az idő?  
10. Mennyibe kerül?

SLOVENIAN
1. Kako si?  
2. V redu sem, hvaída.  
3. Kako ti je ime?  
4. Ime mi je ....  
5. Lahko dobim jedilni list, prosim?  
6. Ali lahko dobim malo vode, prosim?  
7. Taksí, prosim!  
8. Danes je pa vroče.  
9. Koliko je ura?  
10. Koliko pa tole stane?

SPANISH
1. Como estás usted?  
2. Yo estoy muy bien  
3. Cuál es su nombre?  
4. Mi nombre es .....  
5. Me podría traer el menú?  
6. Me podría traer un poco de agua, por favor?  
7. Un taxi, por favor.  
9. Que hora es?  
10. Cuánto cuesta?

TURKISH
1. Nasilsiniz?  
2. Çok iyi.  
3. Adınız ne?  
4. Adım ....  
5. Meni lütfen.  
7. Bir taksi lütfen.  
8. Bugün hava çok s.ck.  
9. Saat kaç?  
10. Fiyat ne?
REAL LIFE

DUTCH TAKE OVER SECTOR 2 WEST

For the first time, the Dutch have their own little sector, Sector 2 West. Last year, the Dutch troop in Sector 2 West served under a British major. Now another Dutch troop, which used to be part of Sector 2 East, joined them, and they all came under Major Wils Hein, who uses a former school as his headquarters, locally known as Kingston. A third Dutch troop is still a part of the MFR.

2ic, Captain John Sliepen, seems to feel at home already. But he was part of the advance party and has already been in Cyprus for three weeks. Looking back, he notes: “It’s important to absorb as much knowledge as possible from the departing unit. Everybody has to know exactly where the ceasefire lines run, this is essential. I can safely say we have had a very good handover. The departing soldiers organised that very well. After our training period, which included two weeks of exercises in England and one week in the Netherlands, everyone had a good ‘feel’ for this mission. Following our arrival, we also had ‘vision’, and it’s good to know that our senses gel.”

Corporal Karin van der Linden is a radio operator at Kingston. “This is what I joined the army for. I really wanted to go on a mission. After a preparatory year, during which we were introduced to military procedures, I had no hesitation about enlisting for UNFICYP.”

In the first week, the temperature reached a level of 34 degrees Centigrade. That was quite a shock to the system. Karin sighs: “At 3:00 pm, I had to withdraw. I was then sent to bed. I probably didn’t drink enough. I do have a small bottle of water on my desk, but I think it will have to be a larger one from now on.”

Suddenly we hear a pump start, and a penetrating smell of sewage crawls through the open windows. Looking outside, we can see a sewage disposal truck, a “honey sucker”, collecting the faecal leftovers from the buildings.

On one of the posts along the 180 km-long Buffer Zone, Pte Ruben Kraaijkamp is on duty. He also suffers from the weather - although in an operational sense, rather than in a physical one. Pointing upwards, he says: “Normally, I’d be on the roof of that building, seeing that both parties stick to the rules. Because of the danger of lightning at the moment, I have to be at ground level, looking towards trees and seeing nothing! I do hope the threat of thunder will disappear soon.”

Ruben thinks the mission is an essential part of the job in the army. “And what’s more important, it has helped me to make up my mind to join the NCO’s school when I return. My experience with UNFICYP will be a definite advantage when I apply.”

Radio operator Corporal Karin van der Linden assists Ops Officer Captain Philip Curtis (UK) at Battery HQ

Kingston, Headquarters of Sector 2 West, commanded by Dutch Major Wils Hein, who replaced his British predecessor

Two weeks ago, the Air Liaison Officer of Sector 1 began training members of the Argentinian crew, who have been assigned as assistants in helicopter operations in San Martin Camp, Roca Camp and Brown Base.

The basic training includes flight safety rules, ICAO (International Civilian Aviation Organisation) procedures and air communications to facilitate flight operations in the OP heliports.

Advanced training includes instructions and procedures relating to medical evacuations. Sector 1 will join with UN Flight to improve this part of the training.

Night flight operations to San Martin Camp were also included in the training plan.

FLIGHT SAFETY IN SECTOR ONE

Desde hace dos semanas, el oficial de enlace del sector 1, comenzó a entrenar a los miembros de la tripulación argentina designados como asistentes en las operaciones con helicópteros en los campos San Martín, Roca y Brown.

El entrenamiento básico incluye: reglas de seguridad para el vuelo, así como los procedimientos y las comunicaciones según las normas de la Organización Internacional de Aviación Civil (OLAC) para facilitar las operaciones en los helipuertos de los OPs.

El entrenamiento avanzado incluye las técnicas y los procedimientos para la evacuación médica helitransportada. El Sector 1 trabajará estrechamente con UN Flight durante esta parte del entrenamiento.

También se ha incluido, como parte del entrenamiento, la ejecución de vuelos nocturnos al campo San Martín.
COMMUNITY POLICING IN LINOU

At a few kilometres south of San Martin Camp, on the lower slopes of the Troodos, lies the village of Linou. Linou has one of the seven UN civilian police stations currently being established. It is home to UNICVPOL officers: Station Sergeant and team leader Gary Farly, Sergeant Mark Scott from Australia and Police Officer Con Lynch from Ireland.

Mark Scott says life has been quite recently, “just from some controlled explosions Con monitored a Namad the other day. They were part of a movie.” But it’s not always this tranquil. “During the hunting season, we’re pretty busy trying to keep hunters out of the Buffer Zone,” says Mark Scott. Hunters are not aloud into the Buffer Zone because, due to the unsullaged clothing they wear and the guns they carry, they are easily confused with the military and their presence can raise tension.

“If hunters come into the BZ, we have to escort them out. The area we three have to cover, along with two colleagues from the UNPA, is extensive. It stretches from the UNPA to Linou and then onwards to the Kokkina pocket. It takes us two and a half hours just to drive to the patrol track to Kokkina. We visit all the OPs and ask if there are any problems and if we can assist in any way.”

Do they carry out the sort of speedgun controls that happen at the UNPA?

“No, that’s a job for the Military Police,” replies Con.

“Anyway,” adds Mark. “It’s a waste of time their coming. The Argentinians are the slowest and most sensible drivers I’ve seen over here. They always drive way below the maximum speed.”

Before moving to Linou, Con was based in Famagusta. “That was a different type of policing,” he says. “There was more contact with people up there, especially when I escorted the Civil Affairs team on the money run to the Karpas. Civil Affairs take government allowances up to the Greek Cypriots who still live there. I also had quite a lot to do with the Turkish Cypriot community in the north.”

Prior to Con moving to Linou, Sgt Peter Kuhnke was the third Australian member of the Linou crew. Following the integration of UNICVPOL, Peter is now attached to Sector Four on the other side of the island.

The Linou crew recently started to intensify contacts with people living in nearby villages like Kakopetria and Akaki.

“We talk with the people in the coffee shops and try build a rapport with the Muhktars. People need to know that we’re here, and to understand that we’re here to help as far as we can,” stresses Con.

ON THE MOVE AGAIN

Armenian Maida Megerditchian started work with UNFICYP 24 years ago in the orderly room with the Canadian Contingent. She stayed there for 2½ years, and then transferred to the Welfare Office where she worked until the end of 1993.

The next move was to Camp Command where she helped out in any way she could with all kinds of tasks, including interpreting. Whenever confusion developed, Maida was always at hand to straighten things out.

After more than six years with Camp Command, Maida is again on the move - this time to the Force Engineer’s office. Camp Command’s loss is the Force Engineer’s gain.

Gor raith mle maith agat.
Friday 23 October 1998 was a key date in the history of the UNFICYP Headquarters; it was the day that the Chief of Mission summoned the Humanitarian Branch staff to her office to announce that it was about to be transformed into the Civil Affairs Branch. This was something that had been worked on for some time.

The careful transformation of the branch began in earnest right there and then and it goes much further than a mere cosmetic name change. For many years, UNFICYP had been the only UN Mission to still retain a military Humanitarian Branch. This branch had been formed way back in 1974 when the task facing UNFICYP was very different from that of today. Many of the tasks carried out then, such as the housing, feeding and tracing of thousands of refugees and their families, simply do not exist any longer.

The key changes, however, were the re-staffing of the branch with integration of some civilian personnel and the shifting of the branch from the military chain below the Force Commander and Chief of Staff to UNFICYP’s civilian hierarchical chain, directly below the Chief of Mission and the Senior Adviser. Essentially, the former Chief Humanitarian Officer (military) has been replaced by a civilian Chief Civil Affairs Officer (CCAO) and the former military Staff Officer (Economics), was replaced by a civilian Political Officer post. These key changes were supplemented by the creation of an Office Manager’s post and a Liaison Officers’ Assistant post.

The branch also now includes an Interpreter and Translator Pool which supports the entire UNFICYP, though much of their work stems from the Civil Affairs Branch.

In May 1999 it was decided, after much discussion, that another new post should be created within the Civil Affairs Branch, but based at Pyla. This post would provide UNFICYP with the means to carry out its ethos of co-responsibility in the mixed village of Pyla, and to provide a direct line of communication from Pyla to HQ UNFICYP enabling issues of a Civil Affairs nature to be dealt with quickly and effectively. The post was designated as the Pyla Civil Affairs Liaison Officer, PYCALO.

All this has come about, in UNFICYP as elsewhere, due to the realisation that the conduct of humanitarian, economic and intercommunal coordination tasks required a new focus. Not so much efficient military staff carrying out contact and delivery tasks on the ground (important though that is) but more a mix of people with expertise (political, legal, police-based and military-based) who can liaise at the correct level and together tackle problems.

For example, the former military Humanitarian Branch faced all sorts of difficulties because, in the Cyprus arena, everything, especially anything to do with contact with minority groups, may have important political or legal aspects. The branch now has the necessary expertise to deal with issues, often before they arise, without having to wait for assistance from outside staff.

Following the Chief of Mission’s announcement, there was much work to be done. If the new branch was expected to work efficiently, then its offices and equipment had to be up-to-date and suitable. This might sound obvious, but it was new time to give certain priorities and support to Civil Affairs functions which, quite frankly, the old Humanitarian branch sometimes lacked. So the entire Branch was re-equipped and re-energised. The CAMLO (Civil Affairs Military Liaison Officer) was able to draft his change and slide into the favour of the latest Pentium, whilst the branch carrier pigeons were retired to give way to e-mail. By the grace of God, the branch even acquired the 4WD patrol vehicle it had been requesting since 1975.

New posts were allocated and completely new procedures and routines were drawn up to define the branch’s new approach and new way of conducting business, particularly with regard to contact and liaison with the authorities, individuals and groups across a wide spectrum. Old ways and perceived wisdoms were all questioned and, if necessary, changed.

The new Civil Affairs mantle is not only confined to Headquarters but is spread far and wide into the sectors, whose Humanitarian Teams were restituted Sector Civil Affairs Teams (SCATs), led by Sector Civil Affairs Officers (SCAOs). These teams now have a direct tasking and reporting chain to the CCAO, through the CAMLO. Previously, they operated under the military chain, through their Sector COs (though they still remain now under their military commanders for administration purposes). This is a totally new scenario for everyone concerned and, with the goodwill of all, it is easy to implement.

The benefits of this new system are widespread. Issues are not necessarily dealt with more quickly nowadays, but they are certainly tackled in a more uniform and integrated manner. This is important when dealing with contentious issues between the two communities;

UNFICYP must always be seen to be impartial and the same consistent line must always be taken. In its role in the Buffer Zone, the Force must always be beyond reproach and may be seen to be ‘whiter than white’ in all its dealings.

Such changes to any organisation invariably involve farewells to some people and here was no exception. Amidst all the departures, it was particularly sad to lose the personality and expertise of the branch PA, Dolly Olsson, who had retired. Dolly’s vast experience, his impressive catalogue of contacts on her general efficiency is fondly remembered. In the middle of May, the Branch also lost its first (acting) CCAO, Lone Jessen, who has been called back to New York headquarters. Lone played a crucial role in getting the new CAB started and she definitely paved the way for this branch’s new permanent head Wlodek Cibor, from Poland, to take over as an up-and-running department.

Cibor arrived on the island only last week, but the considerable experience he has gained in his previous UN appointments stands him in good stead.

UNFICYP’s new Civil Affairs Branch was officially opened on Wednesday 23 June 1999. The branch personnel are listed below:

CCAO: Wlodek Cibor
CAPO: position currently being filled
CAPLO: Insp John Galvin
CAMLO: Cpl Maj Mark Kingman
Chief Clerk: SPO Danny Fins
R/Supply Clerk: WO2 Gary Parks
Office Manager: Klaus Hocevar
Assistant: Anita Thomas
Translator/Greek: Noel Erdovics
Interpreter/Greek: Yanna Tsangara
Translator/English: Beroot Mustafa
MILITARY ADVISERS VISIT UNFICYP

Eight Military Advisers from United Nations missions in New York visited UNFICYP on 15-16 June. They included representatives from Australia, Austria, China, Chile, Jordan, Norway, the Russian Federation and Slovenia.

They were given a full briefing at UNFICYP HQ as well as in all three sectors. MASs from UN missions make periodic visits of this kind to different regions where there are United Nations peacekeeping forces, and this visit was part of a tour of missions in this area. Before coming to UNFICYP, the advisers had been to UNDOF, UNTSO and UNIFIL.

The group left the following morning for UNLB, the United Nations Logistics Base in Brindisi.

BLUE BERET SPORTS SECTION

GOLF, GET INTO THE SWING OF IT

The heat stress indication notice board outside the Joint Operations Centre of UNFICYP shows a clear red square: refrain from heavy exercise or sports. Runners and soccer players obey this advice. But it seems it is wasted on players of the noble sport of golf.

Close to the terminal of the old Nicosia International Airport, Peter Ives ignores the heat and plays his sport for several hours, thoroughly enjoying himself.

Carefully he places a ball on a tee, judges the direction and the speed of the wind, chooses a club of the right weight and size, and swings. The ball gets airborne. Peter keeps the ball in sight, sees it land and suddenly change direction. Some unquotable words pass his lips.

"That's the one disadvantage of this golf course," he explains. "This isn't a nicely mown lawn. It just happens that your ball changes direction when it hits a pebble. But every player faces the same circumstances, so it's not really a problem."

Peter plays about four times a week. Doesn't that use up a lot of time?

"Yes, it does," he answers. "But since I'm retired, that's no problem for me. It takes me about four hours to play all 18 holes. And then I go to the club house for some time to evaluate my game," he smiles. And adds: "With a drink, of course."

Interested in playing golf yourself?
Come and visit the clubhouse opposite the traffic control tower at the UNPA for more information. There is some second hand kit available for your first try. Saturdays and Sundays are especially good days to come along and get into the swing.

THE BBC OFFICERS' CLUB INVITES ALL MEMBERS, FAMILIES & GUESTS TO TAKE PART IN THE UNPA ORIENTEERING COMPETITION ON FRIDAY 2 JULY
REGISTRATION & BAR OPENS: 1800 HRS
FIRST RUNNERS AWAY: 1830 HRS
LAST RUNNERS AWAY: 1930 HRS
PRIZE GIVING: 2030 HRS
TWO COURSES: 4.5 KM APPROX AND 2.5 KM APPROX, IDEAL FOR CHILDREN, PRAM PUSHERS, DOG WALKERS AND STROLLERS.
FOUR CHAMPAGNE PRIZES TO BE WON.
FIRST RUNNER ON EACH COURSE AND FIRST MALE/FEMALE COUPLE RUNNING TOGETHER ON EACH COURSE. ROSETTES FOR ALL UNDER 18S WHO COMPLETE EITHER COURSE.
MAPS PROVIDED, JUST TURN UP WITH YOUR RUNNING SHOES ON!
MORE INFO: 02-864756

MEDAL COLLECTOR

I will take UNICPOL's Con Lynch six months to get his medal for peacekeeping in Cyprus. That's a lot longer than he spent acquiring the 1,500-metre world police championship medal. That only took 3 minutes and 47 seconds. He's also pretty speedy over 5,000 metres (14'05") and 10,000 metres (20'15").
Now Con thinks he's ready for the ultimate challenge: the full marathon.

"On 11 July I'm doing the Brugge marathon in Flanders, Belgium," he says. "To be ready, I cover about 140 kilometres per week. I try to vary between training high in the Troodos mountains, training on the flat in the Dherinia area, and training on a track in Nicosia. It's heavy. My colleagues are being incredibly supportive. When I come back from training, they have dinner ready. I try to make up for it by doing the washing up."

And how long does he aim to spend collecting this particular medal? "Well, let's put it this way, I'll be disappointed if I can't finish under 2 hours and 30 minutes."

Watch this space to see if he makes it. And if there's anyone out there who can do a marathon in better time than this, let us know.