BLUE BERET

UNFICYP troops take on
Limassol Marathon

In the early hours of 10 April, a number of UNFICYP soldiers joined thousands of runners participating in the International Competition OPAP Limassol Marathon GSO. This is the official marathon of Cyprus and is the biggest sporting event on the island, with more than 13,000 competitors from around the world running distances from five to 42 kilometers.

Most of the approximately 30 peacekeepers from the Sectors and Mission HQ competed in the half marathon, with four braving the daunting challenge of running the full marathon.

Some soldiers took part for fun, but others brought a more competitive spirit to the event. One of those was a team from the Argentinian contingent composed of eight soldiers, including an officer of the Argentinian Army; one from the Argentinian Navy; one from the Paraguayan Army and five non-commissioned officers of the Argentine Army. They participated in the 21 km run, achieving excellent results: Argentinian Army Corporal Fernando Ramon Avellaneda, with a time 1:21:43, took home the bronze medal, with Argentinian Marine Corps Midshipman Cristian Gabriel Flor Mantulak – with a time 1:24:43 – finishing right behind him in fourth place. Maj. Neil Foot-Tapping from the UK achieved a personal best with a time of 1:33:13, finishing in 23rd place.

Those who took on the full 42 km faced the toughest challenge: one of these was SFC Emil Penciak from Slovakia, who has running his first marathon and finished in an excellent 39th place with a time 3:28:12; he was followed by his Hungarian colleague, 2nd Lt. Zoltan Virag, who finished 54th with a time of 3:40:34.
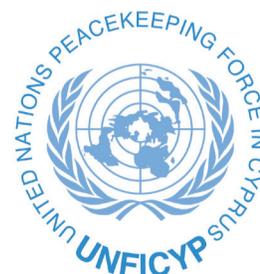
We congratulate all who took part, doing UNFICYP and their home countries proud!