Editorial

The world watches Cyprus as February 28 fast approaches. As we go to press, the Secretary-General is here in the region, devoting the last week of the month to the final concerted push for a settlement.

Iraq, he says, may be on the horizon, but this is the week of Cyprus. It is the last best chance to bring an end to the divisions of 29 years. New thoughts, he says, will help us move forward, bridge the gaps and conclude an agreement. He comes with the hope that progress will be made. He comes ready to submit a new document, one that contains proposals both sides are familiar with from their lengthy discussions with Special Adviser de Soto.

Should the opportunity at hand be missed, it is not clear when it will reoccur and if it will be any time soon. Decision time has come. This is why the parties should stick to the goal of reaching an agreement on February 28, the SG says. “February 28 may slip a few days, but to go much beyond February 28 would doom the prospect of a united Cyprus signing the [EU] Treaty of Accession.”

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The Blue Beret
The magazine for UNFICYP’s civilian, military and police personnel

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Tel: 22-864550; 22-864416/22-864408
Fax: 22-864461
E-mail: unficyp-blue-beret@un.org
blueberetcyprus@hotmail.com
Web site: www.unficyp.org

Editorial Team
Brian Kelly
Maj. Ingrid Tomovká
Miriam Taylor

Photography
Sgt. George Csáfalvay
Contingent Photographers

Unit Press Officers
Sector 1 Capt. Marcelo Rojas
Sector 2 Capt. Ali Simmons
Sector 4 Lt. Lladislav Regenda

UNCIVPOL
Garda Alice Tierney
Supt. Marty Plim

HQ UNFICYP
Maj. John Hunt

MFR
Capt. Garrett O’Leary

FMU
Capt. Rory Sheerin

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Articles of general interest are invited from all members of the Force. Photographs, together with captions, should accompany the articles.

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Front Cover: Spring Snow
Back Cover: Forging The Winter Rains
White Powder Incident

The incident of a release of white powder in the offices of the SASS was fortunately nothing more than a harmless plant substance but it served to remind us that the threat of biological attack is not geographically restricted. There are a number of points that were raised by the incident which are important to learn.

The first thing to understand is that just because it is a white powder (in this case it was more grey than white) it is not necessarily Anthrax. Many people, particularly the press, called this incident a possible Anthrax attack. This can be dangerously misleading, since while Anthrax can be ruled out (n in) after one hour, it does not mean that the area is then safe.

It takes up to 24 hours to test for all biological agents, so an area cannot be declared safe until these tests are completed. This also means that following a release of powder, decontamination should always take place so that anyone potentially contaminated does not carry the substance or indeed the infection beyond the area of the incident to family, friends, colleagues or the wider community.

When faced with an incident, the immediate reaction of the person at the scene will determine how serious it is. The thing to remember at this stage is that the majority of biological agents take a significant amount of time to become lethal. Treatment is required within days, rather than hours or minutes, so there is plenty of time to treat anyone who is contaminated.

The key point to note by everyone is that containment of the incident to as few people as possible is important. This is achieved by leaving the package where it is (the more it is moved, the more likely that you and others are infected), closing windows and doors, turning off air conditioning and then alerting others to the danger without coming into physical contact with them. Tell them to move out of the area and alert the JOC while you stay outside but very close to the contaminated room or building. The fewer people that need to be decontaminated, the quicker the real potential casualties can be treated.

Once the JOC is alerted, they take over the running of the incident. Any incident runs the same way, which from this point (confirmation and containment having been achieved) is clearly set out in the contingency plan. In this case, as already said, there will be a requirement for decontamination as you leave the area, but this is for your own safety as well as that of others.

So, the things that everyone should keep in mind are:

- Remain calm,
- Contain the incident,
- Alert the JOC.

If this is done, you will have ensured the incident is quick and easy to resolve and you may save your life and those of others.

RECOGNITION OF SUSPICIOUS MAIL

The sender of a postal device will take care to make its appearance as innocuous as possible. The envelope may be professionally embarrassed suggesting that it comes from a bona fide source; the recipient’s address may also be printed or typed. As the first identification of a postal device is likely to depend totally on the recipient becoming suspicious when the mail is first examined, personnel should be alert to the following aspects which could indicate receipt of suspicious mail:

- If point of origin gives cause for doubt.
- If the manuscript of the sender is unusual i.e.:
  - Handwritten or poorly typed addresses.
  - Incorrect titles.
  - Mis-spelling of common words.
- If there is excessive postage.
- If the balance of the package is uneven.
- If the package seems heavy for its size.
- If there is any springiness in the top, bottom or sides of a package or letter (Do not bend excessively).
- If the package appears to contain powder.
- If water protrudes from it.
- If there is a hole (like a pin hole) in the package wrapping or envelope.
- If there are grease marks on the envelope or parcel wrapping.
- If the package is thought to contain a book, which is not expected.
- If the flap of an envelope is stuck down completely (usually there is an unguessed gap at each end of the gummed flap) a package appears excessively well sealed.

ANTHRAX FACTS

- Anthrax is NOT contagious and humans are NOT highly susceptible.
- It takes at least 24 hours to develop the disease after contact. Therefore, you have time to seek medical assistance.
- Quick treatment is effective – Ciprofloxin and Doxycycline are recommended.
- The symptoms of Anthrax are the same as any other bacteriological disease e.g. flu (an increase in temperature, weakness or feeling tired).
- Anyone with these symptoms should visit the doctor. Although the likelihood is that it is simply the common flu, it is wise to err on the side of caution.

G’Day

January 26 is Australia’s national day. It celebrates the outset of European settlement of Australia 26 January 1788. Since the 200th anniversary of Australia Day in 1988, Australians have taken far greater pride in celebrating their national day. January in Australia is in the midst of summer and Australia Day celebrations take many forms – a picnic in the park, a day at the beach, a backyard BBQ, a day at the pub, or simply relaxing with family and friends. The UNACIFY Australia Day celebration was all of these and more.

Under the stewardship of Commander Bob Heggie, the Aussies got together and came up with something uniquely Australian – Foster’s beer, meat pies and “two-up”. On the day, the Australians welcomed members of UNACIFY including the Chief of Mission and Chief of Staff. The Aussies special guest was the Australian High Commissioner to Cyprus, Frank Ingruber and his charming wife Marion.

Having decided that the meat pie was going to be the piece-de-resistance, the biggest problem was how to come up with 300 meat pies that tasted pretty much like your average Aussie meat pie. The prospect of having a shipment of previously frozen Australia meat pies sitting on the tarmac in Dubai for two days was an option that could not be entertained. However, the Aussies were rescued by a local pastry chef. Operating under a veil of secrecy, he made two test-batches of meat pies before the official dinner and was pronounced good enough to be graced with an Aussie flag.

After some fine beer and “those” meat pies, all attending settled in to play two-up. This is a betting game that is illegal to play in Australia, except in casinos and on Anzac Day, which is 25 April and the Australian equivalent of Remembrance Day. The game of two-up is played by throwing two or three coins into the air. Players bet against each as to how the coins will fall, heads or tails. As many of the AUSTRICPOL guests saw on the day, it is a quick way to win money and also a quick way to lose it.

Rumour has it that the last guests were seen to leave the CIVPOL Club, in the early hours of the morning. All in all, a great day was had by AUSTRICPOL and all their guests. The Aussies would like to thank CIVPOL who staffed the bar, MFR who assisted with assets and decorations, and BRITCON for assistance with catering equipment.

No doubt January 2004 will be another day to look forward to.

UN Radio Visits

By Judy Lessing, UN Radio, New York

Just as being part of a peacekeeping mission is a wonderful way to spend a holiday, so a Transmitter’s holiday is the way to see more than regular visitors do. For my 10 days in Cyprus, I packed a mini disc recorder and microphone so I could bring material back to New York for UN Radio.

Thus equipped, I hunted for pigeons at the old airport, helped by WO1 Caleb Cooper: not enough birds to make a loud enough noise but we tried. Goat bells in the buffer zone near Athienou were more successful. Without UNICYP’s help, how else could I have stood on the observation post or explored the ruins of the village and discovered the goats? Or walked the length of the Green Line in Nicosia (no microphones and no cameras allowed) to experience the desolation 28 years of neglect has brought?

The story about the restoration work at Hala Sultan Tekke and Apostolos Andreas monastery, an interview with Special Advisor Alvaro de Soto, and an overall look at the work of the mission have also found their place on UN Radio’s English daily programme, which we produce in New York.

UN Radio has almost no funds for field reports, so thank you, Brian Kelly and your staff for being so helpful and letting our listeners hear the sounds of Cyprus.
Nothing Left To Salvage

Sgt. Rachelle Heath arrived in Cyprus on 11 November as part of the 73rd Australian Contingent of UNIFICYP. Stationed in Limou (Sector 1), Rachelle and her Irish colleague Garda Pat Gallagher are responsible for a number of tasks including track patrols, assisting Sector 1 with anti-hunting operations, coffee shop meetings (where Cypriots meet with UNIFICYP personnel to obtain/update passes into the buffer zone for farming/workings), and responding to Sector 1 requests for assistance when there are intrusions into the BZ.

Rachelle comes from Canberra and has been with the Australian Federal Police (AFP) since 1990. In 1998, she married Darren Rath, also a member of the AFP. On 11 December, Darren (who has taken long service leave) joined Rachelle in Cyprus with their two children, Callam (4) and Ella (2), and the family set up home not far from Rachelle’s station in the village of Kakopetria.

At midday on 18 January, Rachelle was told about the bush fires which were raging in New South Wales, Victoria, and the Australian Capital Territory. Three hours later, she discovered that her house in Canberra had been completely destroyed by fire. The family had only been in the house for 18 months before leaving for Cyprus and had been very busy “making the house into their home”. Rachelle’s father is a builder and had helped a lot.

The AFP immediately arranged for Michelle to fly back to Australia to see if there was anything at all to salvage. She also had to deal with the building/insurance assessors and organise the demolition of what remained. Since 530 homes had been completely destroyed and hundreds of others damaged, the Australian Government had given grants of $10,000 for uninsured and $5,000 for insured properties.

It was a very busy week and Rachelle’s mother flew up from Melbourne to help. Three AFP members had lost everything, so the AFP Association organised for stores to provide items at cost and helped them find homes to rent. They also set up a fund for other AFP members who wished to donate money to their colleagues.

Back in Cyprus, Rachelle says: “We’re amazed and very grateful at all the support we’ve received from colleagues and friends, both in Cyprus and back in Australia. Although we were pretty miserable for the first week or so, we are now over our initial shock and are planning our new home.

We have lost so much but on the other hand, we’re one of the lucky families. Being posted to Cyprus meant that we had brought some things of sentimental value with us. Our children are small and weren’t physically affected by being dragged from flames, so they won’t remember.

“Things I shall miss? All our books, my piano, heirlooms, paintings, photographs – I could go on and on. They were irreplaceable items. But I am really sorry about losing my Christening dress which I had passed onto Ella.

“We jokingly said to our house-sitters just before we left that if they ever had to leave in a hurry, to please take Information Office. When he was with the UN in Mozambique in 1994), and a signed autobiography by Nelson Mandela. Although the power had gone off as the roof was caving in, incredibly enough, the house-sitters managed to grab the right books and escape. Trees had fallen over from the force of the wind and they had to drive through people’s front yards and around fallen trees to escape from danger, but they managed. We were just glad they weren’t injured, since four people were killed in Canberra and hundreds injured.

“The insurance will cover us to build the same single-storey house in the same location. And seeing as we will start again from scratch, we intend to build a second floor.”

Here on the other side of the world, keeping the peace in Cyprus, Rachelle considers herself lucky.

MP

UN Flight Medal Parade

The UN Flight Medal Parade took place on 24 January. 15 UN medals and 10 numerals were presented to UN Flight personnel by the UNIFICYP Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Jin Ha Hwang. At a time of year when the weather is unpredictable, the organisers decided to hold the event under cover, so a hangar was set up to accommodate two helicopters, flags of UNIFICYP contributing nations, the medal/numeral recipients and guests.

Following the presentation, everyone was invited to the UN Flight Club “Los Bandos” for refreshments – typical Argentinian hospitality at its best.

New CO UN Flight, Lt. Col. Walter Fercher

Lt. Col. Walter Fercher, took over command of XIX UN Fli on 14 February.

In 1981, Lt. Col. Fercher graduated from the Argentinean Air Force Academy and was commissioned into the VII Air Brigade. Having qualified as a helicopter pilot, he completed two tours in Antarctica, as well as several tours in a forest fire fighting role and has also assisted communities in flooded areas all over Argentina. He has also served as an instructor at the Air Force Academy.

On promotion to the rank of major, he was appointed CO of the 2nd Air Squadron. As a staff officer, Lt. Col. Fercher worked in the Air Force General Staff in civilian personnel administration.

He is married to Elena Maria and they have two children, Juan and Carolina. His interests include shooting training, tennis and history.

Medal Awards

Warrant Officer Class 1 Caleb Cooper, currently serving as the UNIFICYP Visits Coordinator in the Public Information Office, was presented with his UN medal by the Force Commander on 31 January 2003.

Elaine with Caleb (left)

Juraj (right) with Lt. Col. Babjak

On 4 February, SSgt. Juraj Cífalay, the UNIFICYP Force Photographer, was decorated with the Slovak medal (second grade) for service with peacekeeping missions. It was awarded by Lt. Col. Pavol Babjak, on behalf of the Slovak Ministry of Defence.

This is Juraj’s second tour with UNIFICYP. The first was as Civil Affairs Team NCO in Sector 4 where he served from May 2001 to May 2002.

Back in Slovakia, Juraj is a squad commander for aircraft maintenance in the Slovak Air Force.

Caleb has been a member of the Irish Naval Service for the past 37 years. He has previously served with UNIFIL (Naqoura, Lebanon) where he held the post of Camp Sergeant Major.

Caleb is accompanied by his wife Elaine (pictured left).
The Cultural Heritage of Cyprus: Part X
Soli - City Kingdom

As The Blue Beret continues exploring the cultural heritage of Cyprus, we highlight the ancient city-kingdom of Soli.

Soli’s origins have rather legendary—and possibly doubtful—stories. One, recorded by the Greek writer Strabo, attributes the city’s establishment to the Athenians Philerus and Akamas (for whom Cape Akamas was named), and describes it as having a harbour, a river and a temple of Aphrodite and Isis. Another story, this time recorded by Plutarch, claims that Soli was named after the Athenian lawmaker and philosopher Solon. As the story goes, Solon visited King Philokyprios of Aegina (an unidentified city near Soli) around 580 BC, and advised him to move his city to another site. The Cypriot king was persuaded, and evidently named the new city after his guest.

Despite the legends, it’s certain that Soli was inhabited from the time of the Achaean-Greek settlers in the 12th and 11th centuries BC (the Late Bronze Age) until the late middle ages. Architectural evidence dates to all the intervening periods, and shows that Soli was a prosperous city despite occasional conflict. In fact, early mentions of Soli include a list of enemy towns in the time of the Egyptian Rameses III, and an Assyrian tribute list in 700 BC.

In 499/8 BC, the kings of Cyprus (with the exception of Amathus) rose up against their Persian overlords at the instigation of King Onesilus of Salamis and King Aristokyprios of Soli. Both kings perished, and the revolution failed.

The Athenian general Kimon made another unsuccessful attempt to free Cyprus 50 years later. It wasn’t until 333 BC that Alexander the Great liberated Soli and, indeed, the rest of the island.

During the last years of the 4th century BC, Soli ceased to be a kingdom and adopted more democratic institutions, including a boule (a council) and a demos (a popular assembly). It remained an important centre, particularly thanks to the flourishing copper trade. During the Roman period, in 5657 BC, Saint Mark the Evangelist ordained the first Bishop of Soli, Saint Auxibius, who later built a magnificent basilica.

Its central position made Soli vulnerable to the Arab raids that took place in the part of the world in the 9th to 11th centuries, however, and the city gradually declined. By the late middle ages, it was abandoned by its citizens, who dispersed into the neighbouring area—which to this day is known as the Solia region or valley.

Soli has revealed that, along with the predominantly Greek orientations of the city, influences from both the Persian overlords who dominated the island from time to time, and from foreign commercial activities. A number of statues, including those of Aphrodite, Socrates and Alexander the Great were uncovered, while tomb finds included ceramics, gold, silver, ivory, seals, coins and jewellery.

### What You’ll See Today

Most of the remains of Soli date to the Roman period, including a theatre, a nymphaeum (fountain) and market place. Other remains include burial sites, and two superimposed Byzantine basilicas.

#### Theatre

The theatre overlooking the coastal plain was built at the end of the 2nd century AD, destroyed by earthquake in the mid 4th century, and restored to its current form in 961–64. With a diameter of 52 metres and seating for approximately 3,500, it is smaller than the theatres of Salamis and Kourion (Cyprus). The seats were cut into the rock of the hillside, and faced with hewn limestone. The semi-circular orchestra had a diameter of 17 metres, which you will have a panoramic view of from either side. Only the structure of the scena (stage) remains; the rest of the stage has been restored.

#### The Agora and Porticoed Street

The lower part of Soli has revealed the remains of the Roman agora (market-place) and a porticoed street (along which a series of pillars supported a roof) with shops. The sheer size of the street and the fact it is remarkable: it measures 4.75 metres wide, with pavements of about 4.5 metres in the north and 3.6 metres in the south. Archaeologists consider it one of the largest streets of the Roman Orient.

#### The Nymphaeum

This building, dedicated to the nymphs (semi-divinities of the sea or woods), dates to the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century AD. Although only one third of it has been excavated, the richly decorated remains scattered around it, have enabled archaeologists to form an idea of the whole monument, on the basis of symmetrical design. It was supported by a wall in the south of the agora, and was U-shaped. A central cistern was placed inside the U, and smaller lateral cisterns on either side (only one of which has been identified so far). The cisterns were sided with columns bearing capitals with floral motives, while iron’s bezels served as fountains.

#### Basilica A

Excavations have shown that two basilicas, or churches, were built on a terrace 20 metres above sea level on a site used earlier during the Hellenistic and Roman era. Basilica A was built in the 4th and 5th centuries AD in the style prevalent at the time of Constantine the Great, and is the oldest basilica in Cyprus. Measuring 45.5 metres by 22.5 metres, it demonstrated the importance of the Soli bishopric at this time.

The design included one central nave, with two inner and outer aisles on either side. The floor was covered with panel mosaics, a study of which shows that they were executed in three stages. Their designs are mostly geometrical with some animal decorations, including dolphins and a beautiful white swan. This basilica was unfortunately destroyed by the earthquake of 526; however, its ruins include portions of the apse’s semi-circle of seats for the clergy during services.

#### Basilica B

This church was built over the ruins of Basilica A, and was dated to the 6th century on the basis of its architectural plan, the style of flagstones, and its decoration. It measures 47.7 metres by 31.4 metres, and probably features the widest nave in Cyprus. Two lateral aisles end in the east in three protruding apses. In the west is a quadrangular atrium. The aisles were each separated by two arcaded colonnades of 94 irregularly-spaced columns. It’s thought that the basilica was abandoned in the 7th or 8th century. An additional, smaller church appears to have been built in the eastern section of the basilica in the 12th century.

#### Temples

The five temple dated from 250 BC to the beginning of the 4th century AD, and were dedicated to Aphrodite, Cybele, Isis (twice) and Serapis. Despite the fact that excavations have not been completed, it has been possible for archaeologists to gain insight into the great wealth and culture of Soli. Some of the limestone and bronze statues found at the site compare well with the best of Greekian and Roman masterpieces. This includes the statue of Aphrodite, dating to the 1st century BC and currently in the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia. In the “Cyprine” style, Aphrodite looks slightly to the left, her hair in braids that drape over her shoulders. Note that the temple was probably built by Solians, but little of it is visible today.
The Green Line Tour

By Capt. Ali Simmons

The area of the buffer zone that runs through the Old City area is commonly known as the Green Line. The reason it picked up this title dates back to December 1963, when a British Commander, General Young of the Strategic Reserve, deployed onto the island to try and keep the two rioting sides apart.

During lengthy negotiations, General Young drew a line across a map of Nicosia with a green chinagraph pencil; hence the well-known name the “Green Line”. Therefore, we can see that this term only relates to the Old City of Nicosia as it was in 1963, and not the buffer zone across the whole island.

Today, the Green Line is a quiet area of land between the two opposing forces cease fire lines. Each side has many observation posts throughout the whole area, although not all of them are manned; indeed, the eastern side of the City area, from Ayios Kassianos, (Beaver Lodge) is completely unmanned agreement that remains to this day. The western edge of the unmanned area is the end of Konstantinou Drive (Spear Alley), which is the narrowest point, at 3.3 metres, of the buffer zone across the whole island.

Areas within the Old City are becoming extremely dilapidated, with many of the old buildings crumbling down. In fact, in the two months that I have been here conducting the Green Line tour, we have had numerous buildings collapse, the last near Betty’s Bridge, and usually after a prolonged period of heavy rain. The situation has got to a point where City Troop engineers have identified the worst buildings for immediate attention, which is currently ongoing.

As I walk through the Old City, what strikes me most is the feeling of sadness, the feeling of time standing still. In the tranquility, I can hear normal life carrying on, on either side of the buffer zone, cars driving past, mechanical tools working in workshops, people greeting each other in the morning, much like it would have been prior to 1964. Now the only things that you can hear in that hidden nature reserve are cats, chickens and UN patrols.

I have learnt a lot about the history of Cyprus, the stories behind the Green Line Tour and the views of both sides, but what will stay with me longest after I leave is the sadness of the quiet lanes in the Old City area.

Officers’ Club Dinner Night

The Officers’ Club held a Dinner Night on 13 February.

The Force Commander, Lt Gen Jin Ha Hwang, Sector Commanding Officers, Contingents Commanders and the military members of the Officers’ Club spent a delightful evening in a very friendly atmosphere. The Force Commander took this opportunity to praise everyone for their hard work and good efforts within UNFICYP and encouraged everyone to continue in the professional manner they have shown so far.

The Officers’ Club would like to thank Sector 2 for their support and contributions towards this event.

Officers’ Club Winter Ball

The Officers’ Club winter ball was once again an opportunity for UNFICYP personnel to let down their hair.

Held at the Navarino Restaurant on 24 January, the event was a sellout with the entire restaurant booked solid for a theme evening devoted to “The Bold and The Beautiful”, and bold and beautiful were the outfits on display.

New WHO Director

UN health agency’s Stop TB Programme. Dr. Lee holds an M.D. from Seoul National University and a Master of Public Health Degree from the University of Hawaii.

Prior to his work on TB, Dr. Lee headed the WHO Global Programme for Vaccines and Immunisations. He has served 19 years with WHO.
Ypenburg Revisited

Ypenburg recently saw the visit of a former Dutch soldier posted there in 2000. Cpl. Jeroen Blom, who served from May to December 2000, recently visited Ypenburg in company of two Dutch journalists who were preparing a report on the Dutch Continental’s and its history. Blom was given a tour of the town by the Dutch Military, who explained the history of the town and its importance in the Second World War.

Pyla’s Corcoran

Flag and Anthem Competition

Some 1,600 designs for a new Cyprus flag and 80 compositions for an anthem were registered by the UN at its Nicosia headquarters in Cyprus following the 17.00 hours, 17 February deadline for submission of entries in a worldwide competition.

UNIFCYP Spokesman Brian Kelly said the organizers were gratified and overwhelmed by the response. Most contests submitted multiple entries, many from schools, as might be expected, but also from individuals and, interestingly, from commercial graphic design firms. Standards were very high, very professional.

The team logging the entries worked until 3.30 am in the morning following the close of the competition. They returned the next day and worked until midnight and again the following day, cataloguing submissions from some 15 countries.

Anthem compositions were submitted as scores or sheet music. Some were accompanied by tape and CD recordings. Many of these were renditions by full orchestra. Although one entrant’s composition was played on the harmonica.

Among the flags was one design submitted by the proud Greek Cypriot father and Turkish Cypriot mother of a talented three-year-old. Perhaps this represented the furthest one could go in fulfilling the competition organizers’ announcement that special consideration would be given to collaborative creativity involving the two communities.

Entries in the competition were sent from Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, of course, and from as far afield as Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the US. Others came from the UK, Spain, Belgium and Norway. Those who want to hear soundbytes and see an exhibit of the design entries will have to remain patient. The UN facilitated the process based on the leaders’ agreement that there should be a contest. The leaders are to appoint representatives to two judging panels. These will review the entries and make recommendations to the leaders regarding the winning selections.

Blood Drive

UNIFCYP is continuing in its efforts to support blood donations on the island.

Every Thursday and Friday, a bus takes donors to the hospitals in north and south Nicosia, where the procedure is expected to last about two hours (travel time included).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Force Medical Assistant, Sgt. M. Dzurik (2386–4536) or the Force Medical Officer, Dr. P. Babjak (2286–4597).

CHARITY AUCTION

A charity auction will be held at the International Police Club, UNPA, on Sunday 5 April 2003. Proceeds will go to children’s charities, north and south. All donations – money/items/services – will be gratefully accepted. For more information, please contact S/Sgt. David Bates, FMPU, at 22–864629.
Visitors to UNFICYP

There were a number of visitors to UNFICYP this month from several countries.

Brig. B. Brealey, Commander Royal Artillery 3 (UK) Division arrived in Cyprus on 5 February and started his visit by calling on troop houses and OPs in Sector 2. At UNFICYP HQ on 6 February, he was greeted by Chief of Staff, Col. Hamish Fletcher and following an inspection of an Honour Guard, he met with Chief of Mission Zbigniew Wlosowicz. His visit was rounded off with an overflight of the BZ.

H.E. Mr. János Kissfalvi, the Hungarian Ambassador to Cyprus whose country provides a significant number of peacekeepers to UNFICYP, paid a courtesy call to the HQ on 18 February. Greeted by the Force Commander Lt. Gen. Jin Ha Hong on arrival, he was asked to inspect an Honour Guard before proceeding to meet with the CM.

Mr. Michael McDowell, the Irish Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, who was on an official visit to Cyprus, stopped at UNFICYP HQ on 21 February. He met with the FC, CM and CH. Supt. Basil Walsh, Commander UNICYPOL.

Mr. John Swift, the Irish Ambassador (left) and Mr. Michael McDowell (centre) with the CM

Two Japanese police officials made a fact-finding visit to UNFICYP on 24 February where they had the opportunity to exchange views with the Force Commander and Commander UNICYPOL at HQ UNFICYP.

Mr. John Swift, the Irish Ambassador (left) and Mr. Michael McDowell (centre) with the CM

Star Jumps in the UNPA

The sound of pounding feet and loud music has been heard coming from the area of St. Michael’s School, UNPA, every Tuesday between 6:00-7:00 pm. It’s all due to an aerobics class, taken by the Company Sergeant Major WO2 Jaqi Collins of the Force Military Police Unit.

The classes cater for all UNFICYP personnel – male, female, soldiers, dependants, civilians, police, etc. There is no charge for the class, however Jaqi requests that a donation of £1 be handed in which will be given to cancer research on completion of her six-month tour in May 2003.

Jaqi qualified as an aerobics instructor in 1997 whilst serving in Northern Ireland, and since then, she has taken classes in Donnington, Holme and Boston.

Jaqi shows how it’s done

Trans-Buffer Zone Bikeway

Over two gruelling days (31 January and 1 February), members of UNICYPOL organised and took part in a bicycle ride across the buffer zone.

Anyone who has served on this mission will realise that this was a very difficult and arduous cycle, even for the fittest members. The terrain is rough with a lot of testing hills to climb. The buffer zone is 180 km long from coast to coast, that is from Kokkinia on the western coast to Pyla in the east. It varies from four metres in width in and around Nicosia to seven kilometres in width near Aheineou.

The cycle ride, which was unique because it has not been done before, was the brainchild of Sgt. Liam Hogan who is presently stationed at Pyla. All proceeds raised during this event went to the victims of the Bali terrorist attack.

Brush up on the long and arduous journey were (left to right): Tommy Bally, Jim Hennessy and Patrick Gallagher

Sector 2 Triathlon

By WO2 Les Leithes

Every soldier deployed on operational tours wants to go back to the UK a better person, be it either through study and self education or simply just to lose a few kilos and be a little fitter than before. To get fit, lose weight and raise money for charity is even better! However, because the first half of this tour has seen more rain than even Cypriots can recall, the idea of an indoor triathlon was spawned by WO2 (BSM) Leithes and LtBlr. Pinfield from 31/HQ Battery.

The intention was to cover 3,232 km, the distance between 47 RA’s present home in Wolseley Barracks, Sector 2, and their home in the UK, Baker Barracks, Thorney Island, just off the coast of Portsmouth. Three teams of eight volunteers rotated, with each team in one-hour shifts using static machines to run, cycle or row over a 24-hour period.

Endurance was severely tested, but a steady check on dehydration and boost of carbohydrates kept the volunteers energy and enthusiasm up.

The final amount raised is expected to reach £1,000, which will be donated to charities north and south.

The gauntlet is now laid. Can anyone beat 3,232 km in 15 hours, 42 seconds?

Sector 2 Orienteering Competition

On 24 January, Sector 2 held its Sector Orienteering Competition at the UNPA. Taking part were the seven troop houses within the buffer zone, the sub-sector headquarters, the three platoons of the Mobile Force Reserve and departments at the Sector Headquarters in Nicosia. Also invited were competitors from the Eastern and Western Sovereign Base Areas, making a total of 120 runners competing over three different courses of varying length and difficulty.

Prize giving took place at midday with the Commanding Officer Sector 2, Lt. Col. R. P. M. Weighill RA, presenting prizes to the winners.

Team Competition (C Course – 4.0 km)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Liri Troop</td>
<td>256.53 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Otrona Troop</td>
<td>272.21 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>LPH</td>
<td>285.25 mins</td>
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Individual Competition (B Course – 6.5 km)

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<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Gnr. Jones</td>
<td>51.43 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Cfn. Hunter</td>
<td>51.53 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Sgt. Gaskell</td>
<td>52.46 mins</td>
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