

The Blue Beret

May 2003

Crossing
the Divide



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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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Giving Peace A Chance

May 29 has been designated the first International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers by the UN General Assembly in tribute "to all the men and women who have served and continue to serve in UN peacekeeping operations, as well as to honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace".

The date marks the day in 1948 when the first UN peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) began operations with a group of unarmed military observers in Palestine.

As the Secretary-General said in a special broadcast message to peacekeepers around the world, the mission of UN peacekeeping remains vital.

While "peacekeeping by itself cannot end a war ... it can prevent a recurrence of fighting. Above all, it gives time and space for conflict resolution. It gives peace a chance".

Today, and as the Day itself was being observed around the world, peacekeepers fulfil roles as military observers, trainers and disarmament experts, civilian police, civil administrators, judges and prosecutors, economists, human rights and humanitarian workers.

Others perform the more traditional peacekeeping functions of monitoring ceasefires and buffer zones in 14 missions on three continents. UNFICYP, the UN's third-oldest peacekeeping mission, is among these.

In the past 55 years, 1,819 United Nations peacekeepers – civilian and military – have died while on mission, 172 of them while serving with UNFICYP.

While most were the victims of accidents or illness, 583 were the casualties of hostile activities. All paid the supreme sacrifice in the service of peace.

On this special anniversary, we salute them.

Editorial

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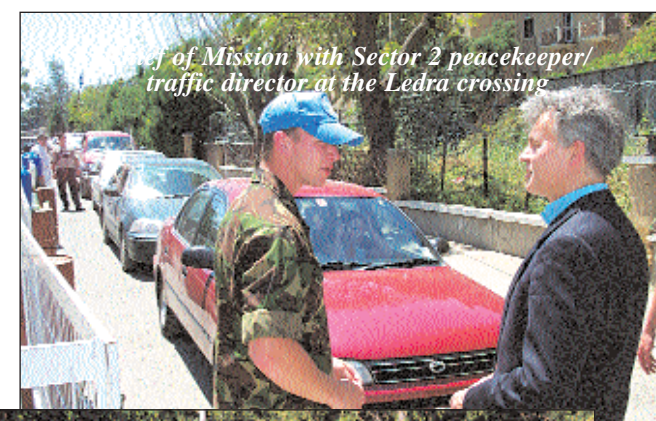
Back to the Future

Thousands of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, many visibly moved, began crossing from one side to the other of the divided island on 23 April, following the announced easing of restrictions by the Turkish side the day before. For many, it was a journey back to the homes they left in 1974. For all, it was a tentative step into the future.

Acting SRSG and UNFICYP Chief of Mission, Zbigniew Wlosowicz, welcomed the crossings while speaking with reporters in the buffer zone between the Ledra Checkpoints. "This is a very important day for Cyprus. For many years, Cypriots were not able to move freely throughout the island. We hope that it will be followed by more good things and that it will contribute to reconciliation", he said.

Press reports indicated that some 2,900 Turkish Cypriots and 1,750 Greek Cypriots made the crossing between 9:00 am and midnight on the first day, as Cypriots went cautiously back to the future.

The initial trickle quickly became a flow, spurred on by the coincidence of the Greek Orthodox Easter holiday weekend with some 18,000 people passing through the Ledra Palace crossing point in one day.



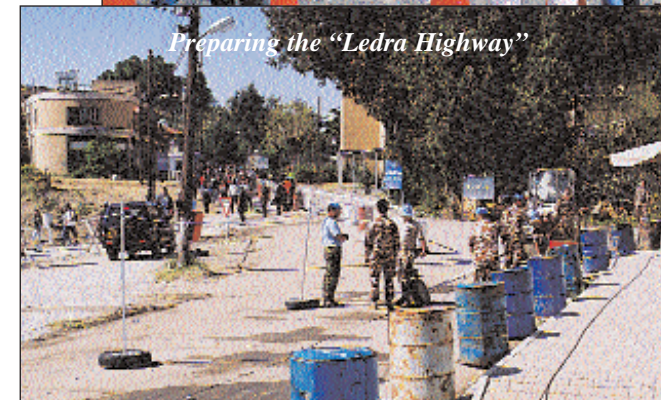
Chief of Mission with Sector 2 peacekeeper/traffic director at the Ledra crossing



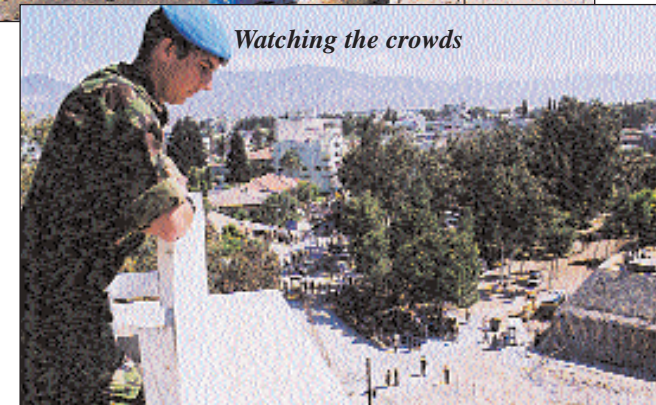
Eager to cross



Media inspect new crossing point at Ayios Dometios/Metehan



Preparing the "Ledra Highway"



Watching the crowds

As we go to press, some 242,000 Greek Cypriots have made the journey north while more than 158,000 Turkish Cypriots have travelled south.

To help ensure safe passage through the various crossing points in the buffer zone, UNFICYP was at full stretch from day one

working closely with the relevant Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot authorities. Sector 2, with only 24 hours' notice at the outset, was in the centre of things in devising the best strategy to get the people across as quickly and safely as possible.

Troops from Sector 2 and MFR spent long, hot, dusty hours on duty, reassuring the waiting crowds, distributing water, and even erecting a shaded walkway on the stretch between the Ledra checkpoints to help the long queues cope with the unseasonably warm weather.

Since then, three new crossing points have been established at Ayios Dometios/Metehan, Pergamos and the 2.5 Mile Gate.

Like their Sector 2 colleagues, UNFICYP's engineers were quick off the mark to help ease the traffic congestion as new crossing arrangements

meant that vehicles crossing in Nicosia would switch to Ayios Dometios/Metehan while official vehicles continued to use Ledra, making use of the newly laid gravel road parallel to the "pedestrianised" old link road in the buffer zone there.



Two Sectors - One Aim

Douglas Campbell profiles Sectors 1 and 4

UNFICYP has welcomed the latest members of the Force from South America and Central Europe who arrived in March. The **Blue Beret** has been meeting some of the new faces and uncovering stories, including the young marine who discovered he had become a father while manning his observation post 17,000 km from home, and the blind dog who runs anti-snake patrols in Sector 1.

Capt. Pablo Halaburda, 35, from Asunción, Paraguay, a member of his country's Special Forces, arrived in Larnaca after a 16-hour military chartered flight, which he jokingly described as being better than a C130. A single man and keen skydiver and target shooter, he is one of seven Paraguayan officers, NCOs and other ranks. Capt. Halaburda says: We're just settling down right now with the new jobs. We are trained for war but now we are peacekeepers and it is a totally different kind of mission. We look forward to the challenge of working with both sides here in Cyprus.

Chilean Marines **Capt. Mauricio Diaz**, 37, is from Viña del Mar near Santiago, Chile, where he left behind his wife Paula Muller and daughters Catalina, eight, and Javiera, five. Capt Diaz, who enjoys sports including soccer, arrived in Cyprus with four officers and 28 other ranks. It is his first trip outside the Americas apart from a UN tour in Cambodia in 1991-92. He says: For Chile, the most important thing is integration with our new friends from the other South American countries here and most importantly, with the Argentinian Task Force. We are very keen to experience peacekeeping operations in different situations, such as in the line or at HQ.

April 7 started out like any other day for **Cpl. Patricio Perez** of the Chilean Marines, when he reported for duty with Alpha Company at OP 09. But at 22.00 hours, he received a very important message - he was a new father. More than 17,000 km away in Viña del Mar, his wife Maritza had given birth to a baby boy, Benjamin. Cpl. Perez, 25, says: Capt. Diaz told me the news when I was on duty and I have just seen for the first time a picture of my son. The Navy welfare department arranged an e-mail photo and when I saw it, it was such an emotional moment. It's hard to be away from my baby son and wife but at least I will see them in October. His mother Jaqueline is delighted to be a grandmother but insists she is not old enough at 39, jokes Cpl. Perez. Meanwhile, he is busy at work, keeping fit and playing soccer until the family is reunited in five months.

Capt. Claudio Alexandre De Almeida Freitas, 31, is a veteran of 16 years with the Brazilian Army. The other Brazilian member in UNFICYP, is Sgt. Felipe Branda da Costa. Capt. Claudio, of Resende in Rio de Janeiro State, is advancing his English and Spanish languages, and finds Spanish easier as it is related to his own Portuguese. Describing his job, he says: We analyse incidents which come to us



Men on the line

by fax, and if there is a threat to the *status quo*, we report it to HQ in Nicosia. Every soldier is able to solve problems and they are real professionals. I am very proud to serve my country in this international mission. It's a very important mission and I intend to continue the good relationships with Argentina, with the other South American countries and with Cyprus too. Capt. Claudio, a jungle specialist and instructor, is engaged to Viviane Melo and the couple are planning their wedding. Addressing his fellow South Americans, he laughs: Yes, you are all invited - if she's still waiting for me when I get home!

At Patrol Base 25 in Sector 1, high in the Troodos foothills, one mongrel dog lies sleeping in a makeshift gymnasium. He's blind, and the best snake-hunter in Sector 1. When we go out running, the dog goes out with us, but **25**, who got his name from our patrol base, gives us early warning of snakes. He runs over to where the snake is and points it out for us so we know to keep away. He's really useful to have around. **Lt. Hugo Daniel Yamanishi**, whose father's family emigrated from Japan to Paraguay, adds: This is our little home up here. We have the gym where we work out and we rotate every 10 days so it's quite relaxing, but we still have our job to do and go out on patrol. It does get quite busy sometimes.

Argentinian Marines **Capt. Gabriel Marin**, 31, is a Company Commander based in a former box factory closer to the British sector. A single man and native of Rosario, Argentina's second-largest city, he is well travelled, having visited many countries while training as a naval officer in a tall ship. His area of responsibility includes Mammari village, a community of 1,500 Greek Cypriots in the buffer zone. Says Capt. Marin, who enjoys social activities and quizzes: We are right next to the British sector, and sometimes we combine our patrols or start and finish in each other's areas. It's very good teamwork. I got to Cyprus two weeks ago, but I was here a few years back when I was second-in-command of an area. Now I'm the commander of two areas so I'm growing - or just getting older!

Lt. Yamanishi with "25"



Maj. Milan Kukuk of Slovakia is an air defence specialist with 23 years' army service. He is married to Emilia and they have two children Veronika, 18, and Martin, 17. He is no stranger to the United Nations, having been one of eight Slovakian observers based in Iraq in 2000-2001 with UNGCI under the Oil for Food programme. He is now senior logistics officer for Sector 4. Maj. Kukuk, 41, says: I am getting used to the different procedures and computer systems here but the main parts of my job are the same back home. The work is more demanding than it was when we were in Iraq. I come from the town of Trenčín in the western part of Slovakia, and I find living on an island very different to my homeland. In his spare time he enjoys studying Egyptian history. His other hobbies of motorcycling and hunting will have to wait until the end of his tour.

Capt. Andrea Iarikov comes from the industrial town of Presov in eastern Slovakia. She is single and a personnel officer in Sector 4, having completed 13 years' army service. In the hot summer months in Cyprus she likes swimming and diving on the coast and at other times she climbs the Troodos mountains and takes part in social and cultural events. I think it's very interesting being part of an international team, Capt. Iarikov, 30, says. I enjoy the different accents and learning about other cultures. I recently met some Argentinians and I liked their folk music very much. Cyprus is a beautiful country with very nice people and I would like to do another tour after this one finishes.

Capt. Andras Palatinus from Szabadszallas, Hungary, is married to Gyongyi and they have two sons aged eight and four. He is second-in-command of the 1st Hungarian Company based in Athienou. He lists sports, soccer and table tennis as his interests and is very keen to research the history of Cyprus as this is his first trip abroad. Capt. Palatinus, 34, says: I have only been here a short time but I think this is a very nice country and the local people are very friendly. I would like to tour a lot here when I am off duty. My wife and children will be coming for 10 days in August and I would like to take them to some interesting and historic places.

MCpl. Zsuzsanna Kubic, 24, is single and from Szolnok, Hungary. She is a radio operator in the 1st Company communications centre and took the job after completing a one-year army course in English. She is a keen swimmer and jogger, and would like to spend more time learning languages. MCpl. Kubic says: I am in a team of six radio operators and three are on duty at one time. I enjoy talking to people so I like my job. This is my second time here in Cyprus and I really like the island and the people, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

SSgt. Roland Dravucz has completed 10 years' service in the Hungarian Army. The 26-year-old, a native of Szolnok like MCpl. Kubic, is a patrol base radio non-commissioned officer. He has served in the Ukraine and Bosnia and in common with his colleague, he wants to improve his written and spoken English. SSgt. Dravucz says: It's really great to be here and I would say it is even better than Hungary. I was out and I went to a shop where I accidentally left my mobile phone. I went back two days later and the shopkeeper returned it to me. The Cypriot people are very honest.

Baghdad to Larnaca (and back...)

Sonia Dumont of the United Nations Office of The Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq (UNOHC) was evacuated to Larnaca, Cyprus, along with more than 100 UN colleagues on 18 March, during the transition to war in Iraq.

Preparations were being made as the **Blue Beret** went to press to assess security on the ground before staff could return to Iraq and help the people who are so desperately in need of food, water, medicines and other essentials under a coordinated distribution system.

Ms. Dumont, 34, an information officer, is a Canadian national from Montreal. Her husband, Michel, is chief of operations for the UNOPS Mine Action Programme. Since leaving Iraq, they had been renting accommodation in Larnaca until it was deemed safe to return. The Adonis and Flamingo hotels in Larnaca are being used as a temporary base for UN staff.

Ms. Dumont gave the **Blue Beret** this personal perspective on the situation. I've been in Iraq for two years with the office and I was stationed in Erbil in the



Sonia Dumont

north of the country, where the Kurdish majority live. Staff working on the Oil-for-Food programme had an observational mandate in the centre and south, while in the north the nine UN agencies were implementing the programme.

I arrived here in Larnaca with the first group of inspectors to be evacuated. We were just five from the humanitarian agencies and the rest were inspectors. The bulk of our humanitarian workers left on the third flight with the Coordinator, Mr Lopes da Silva. He was the last one to leave. We had 3,400 national staff left behind and our thoughts were with them as the situation evolved.

We watched the pictures on the TV like everyone else and we got more and more concerned as we saw events in the field and the chaos. The whole population of Iraq were a part of us a part of our lives. Talk to anyone here and they will tell you the same thing they are eager to go back. We are starting now to get more contact with our national staff, but the information is scattered. In the north, the situation is less intense.

Security staff have been assessing the overall situation in the north and have agreed to the return of the first UN inter-agency team, depending on a safe passage. There is an ongoing dialogue but at the same time, things are still happening on the ground. We have 200 people working here in the coordination office in the Adonis and Flamingo hotels. We had to take out furniture and organise computers, but the procurement system kicked in. We have four or five people working in one office but it is a little more organised now. We are coordinating with groups in Jordan, Turkey, Syria and other regional centres.

We know what we are doing, the preparation has taken place and we are ready. We want to be impartial and fair in the distribution of aid. You cannot deliver when there is chaos and lawlessness, looting and hospitals being ransacked. The Geneva Convention is clear on this.

[Editor's Note: Since giving this interview, Ms. Dumont has returned to Iraq.] CD

Playing at the Palace (Ledra)

Sector 2 recently hosted its bi-annual Combined Services Entertainment Show at the Ledra Palace Hotel. Over the two nights, nearly 400 UN personnel joined in the fun. The star attraction was Miss Claire Sweeny, the well-known British TV actress who stars in the West End smash hit, Chicago. There was also an extremely funny ventriloquist, not to mention a comedian (he didn't!) and some very energetic dancers who were clearly a hit with the young men.

All attending agreed it had been two nights of fantastic entertainment. Each night saw many of the audience dancing on stage and in the aisles. There was lots of laughter when, to the amusement of all, a strange man from Sector 2 ran onto the stage dressed in stockings, high heels and suspenders. We'll just never know the whole story!!



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UNFICYP Wedding

Sgt. Lee Crawford tied the knot on Friday 11 April when he married Sarah Hunt in Paphos. Lee, who is on a 2% year posting with Ops Branch at HQ UNFICYP, arrived from Abingdon last October. Sarah, who comes from Bedford, was working for Lloyds TSB before arriving in Cyprus early in April.

For the occasion, Lee wore his blues (No. 1 dress) and Sarah looked lovely in a long ivory wedding gown. The couple were wed in St. George's Chapel located in the grounds of the St. George's Hotel in Paphos. They chose Paphos because their first proper home will be in Cyprus, and it seemed the nicest place to wed. Lee says: We chose Cyprus because we come from different parts of the UK and it was one way for all our family and friends to get together for the wedding and enjoy a little holiday as well. For the ceremony, about 15 members from both sides of the family flew out from the UK, and the reception at the hotel catered for approximately 40 guests from the UK and from UNFICYP. The honeymoon was spent in Rome and Paphos.

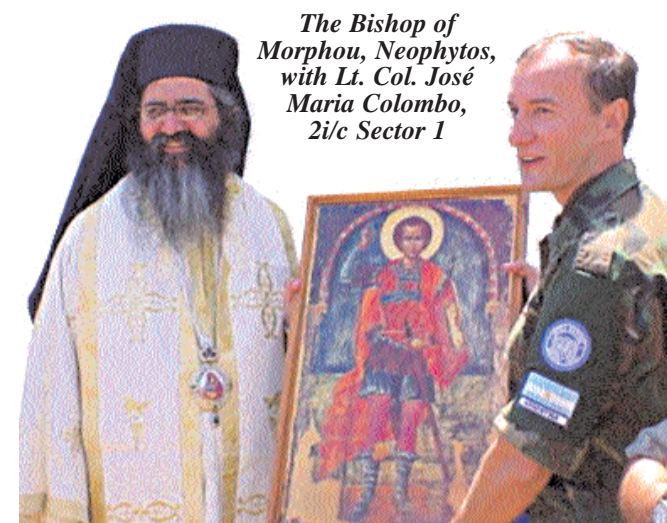
The couple have known each other for two and a half years, and Lee has been away for over half that time on operational tours in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Cyprus. Sarah's father was in the forces too, so she knows what life will be like married to a soldier. Sarah says: It was a wonderful day. We are very lucky to be starting our married life in Cyprus.



A Special Day in Varisha

As 28 April dawned, the focus of attention was the day's event in the village of Varisha, some 800 metres southeast of OP 11. Soldiers from ATF 21 had been appointed to mount the escort several days earlier and now everything was ready. All that was required was for the officer in charge to give marching orders to the convoy of five vehicles waiting to leave San Mart n Camp.

After an hour-and-a-half on a hard, zigzagging road, the Agios Giorgios church tower bell loomed 800 metres above the beautiful old mountain village in the buffer



The Bishop of Morphou, Neophytos, with Lt. Col. José Maria Colombo, 2i/c Sector 1

zone. Greek Cypriots have been coming here on pilgrimage from Limassol since 1999.

At about 08:00 hours, the first buses started to arrive, escorted by UN vehicles from the temporary checkpoint 1,000 metres away from the church. It was a poignant moment when the pilgrims caught their first glimpse of their former homes.

For those of us privileged to be there, it was gratifying and rewarding to be present at that moment in the service of the people, in the service of UNFICYP.

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The Cultural Heritage of Cyprus: Part XII

The Mountaintop Refuge of Kantara Castle

Although the limestone cliffs of the Kyrenia mountain range date back to prehistory, their rugged peaks belong very much to the mediaeval world. Kantara, St. Hilarion, Buffavento... the names of the three castles that cling to the mountaintops evoke a time when observation posts surveyed the northern coastline of Cyprus to guard against invasion.

The Lusignans rebuilt and improved the castles between 1192 and 1489, and the stony ramparts that still remain on the peaks owe much to this period of time. In this instalment of The Blue Beret's series on the Cultural Heritage of Cyprus, we look at the easternmost castle: Kantara.

Kantara Castle is located on one of the last peaks at the eastern end of the Kyrenia Mountains, at a height of 630 metres. Its name probably comes from an Arabic word, qantara, meaning "bridge" or "arch", which may have originated with Arab invaders or perhaps the Maronites from Lebanon who are said to have had settlements in this part of the island.

Indeed, the castle's setting resembles an arch, and it commands a breathtaking view of the Mediterranean Sea, the eastern reaches of the Mesaoria Plain, and the Karpaz Peninsula extending like a finger, pointing to the northeast.

It's widely believed that the castle was built in Byzantine times, 200 years before Richard the Lionheart took possession of Cyprus in 1191. In the 10th century, Kantara would have served as an observation post, keeping watch over the movements of the Seljuk Turks from the opposite coast.

Some historians dispute this, however, dating the castle's origins to the first years of the Lusignan (Frankish) rule, around 1192, when Kantara begins to appear in the written records of that time. What is certain is that the Lusignan kings improved Kantara, recognising that the steep cliffs around it offered a natural protection from attack, and that its lofty position afforded views of any enemy approaching from either sea or land.

One story from this period comes from a witness of the third crusade, saying that after the Battle of Tremithousa, Duke Isaac Comnenos, chased by Richard the Lionheart, found refuge at the castle. After Kyrenia Castle, on the northern coast, surrendered to Guy de Lusignan (Richard's representative), Isaac left Kantara, and surrendered himself to de Lusignan. In this chronicle, the castle is mentioned as Candasia or Candaira.

During the Lusignan period, at the beginning of the Lombardic War, supporters of the German Emperor Frederick II managed to capture Kantara. After Frederick's troops were defeated by Regent John d'Ibelin's army at the Battle of Nicosia on 14 July 1229, one of the leaders – Gauvain de Chenichy – took refuge at Kantara. D'Ibelin's army besieged the castle under the leadership of Anseau de Brie, but the thick walls and strategic position proved a difficult challenge. Only after de Chenichy's death did the castle surrender, in the summer of 1230 – although it changed hands back to Frederick's supporters, and back again to d'Ibelin, several years later.

The castle's key place in history continues in later centuries. During the Genoese occupation of Famagusta, which lasted almost a century (1374 to 1464), the castle of Kantara appears to have served as a strategic position for the Lusignans to defend against the Genoese attacks inland, remaining in the hands of the supporters of King Peter II. This era saw Kantara once again providing safe refuge, this time for the Regent John of Antioch, when he was smuggled out of the Famagusta prison to which the Genoese had sent him, and brought to Kantara. In 1391, James I (Peter II's uncle and successor) reinforced Kantara by adding its outer wall.

During the early Venetian period (1489 to 1571), the castle was guarded by a company of Italian soldiers detached from the garrison of Famagusta. After 1525, however, hampered by a lack of manpower to guard the castle, Italian engineers judged Kantara to be of no further use, and it was partially dismantled and abandoned to the elements.

Description

Kantara Castle sits within a forest that takes its name from the castle – an area that, owing to its cool summer breezes, was long a favoured summer refuge from the heat of the Mesaoria Plain. Fire destroyed the previous Kantara forest of pine and cypress trees in 1912, so the trees and small brush on the slopes today are much younger than the old stone of the castle walls.

The castle is in reasonably good shape, especially compared with Buffavento Castle. Many chambers survive, including guard rooms, store rooms, the Queen's room, and even a small Christian chapel.

With particularly steep cliffs to the north, west, and south, Kantara's entrance was placed on the (relatively) approach-able eastern side. Here, an imposing barbican entrance sits in the centre of an outer wall, protected by two rectangular towers whose upper floors are now largely in ruins. The wall itself stretches protectively in front of the castle, ending in two horseshoe-shaped towers with loopholes (narrow windows through which arrows could be shot).

The barbican leads to a steep hillside, up which a series of steps climbs to the wall around the inner ward, similarly flanked by two towers. To the left, the southeast tower features a large, rectangular room with a cross – vaulted ceiling. In the tower's lowest level, which was once used as a prison, a cistern gathers rainwater. Beyond the tower, three vaulted rooms with loopholes were used as barracks for the soldiers – conveniently near the castle's entrance – along with a mediaeval latrine.

The chambers that line the rest of the south and the west castle walls are less well preserved than these first three, but still offer a sense of the castle as it once was, with cisterns, and a ruined tower that would have protected a small entrance in the western walls (impractical for everyday use, but vital in emergencies).

Circling around toward the castle's northern wall, a ruined tower stands on the mountain's highest peak, one window still framing the view to the west. From this vantage point, guards at Kantara could communicate with their counterparts at Buffavento Castle, exchanging messages and warning of potential threats.

The two-storey northeast tower – located on the northern edge of the castle's entrance wall – remains in fair condition. Here, its ground floor passage leads to a square chamber covered with a cross vault. A doorway leads to a horseshoe-shaped vaulted tower, with loopholes on three sides. The tower's top floor features a long, narrow passage and a rectangular chamber that leads to the tower's parapet.

Nearby

The site of an ancient monastery dedicated to the Kantariotissa Virgin lies a short distance from the castle. In the 13th century, the monastery was the Orthodox Church's centre of resistance to the Latin clergy.





The Hard Rock Cafe

On top of a hill, in the middle of the buffer zone, south east of Camp Saint Istv  n in Athienou, there is a small isolated patrol base called the Hard Rock Cafe. Where that nickname derives from no one knows! Maybe it's because it is situated on a hard rock? Or maybe it's because its habitants have made it into a nice, cosy cafe, always ready to offer a visitor a cup of coffee and engaging small talk.

Six men live there side by side, day in, day out. They patrol, they observe, they are standby in the 2nd Platoon 1st Coy area of responsibility, and when that is done, they hang out together, as a close family, working, resting, eating, and often making jokes with each other. As SSgt. Tam  s Csendes, PB leader, says: There is a very strong bond between us!

When the soldiers are not out patrolling, they are busy with their hobby collecting old motor vehicles in the buffer zone. They have jokingly named their base as the heaviest base in 1st Coy. It's also one of the more pleasant ones, with a year-round breeze, even during the hottest months, giving PB 114 another nickname: Base of the Everlasting Wind.

There is one member of the team not yet mentioned. Burkus, the watch dog, is responsible for guarding and securing the area. She is the oldest member of the PB, and is always there to greet and bid farewell during rotations.

Yes, life in PB 114 is not all that bad!

UNCIVPOL Medal Presentation

By Supt. Marty Plim

During April and early May 2003, the new crossing points opened along the BZ led to a significantly increased workload for UNFICYP. Ledra- and Pyla-based UNCIVPOL members were especially hard-pressed. So it was with regret and after much deliberation that Ch. Supt. Basil Walsh, Commander UNCIVPOL,

decided that the UNCIVPOL Medal Parade had to be cancelled. Nevertheless, it was also decided that if operational priorities permitted, a less formal Medal Presentation would take place.

On 8 May, available UNCIVPOL members and their families, assembled outside UNFICYP HQ, where the Chief of Mission presented UN medals and numerals to 15 AUSTCIVPOL and 11 IRCIVPOL members. All were disappointed that the Medal Parade had to be cancelled, but felt, under the circumstances, that the Medal Presentation was an appropriate substitution.

Others welcomed the large turnout of spouses, partners and young children, saying that the historic circumstances on the island made the presentation perhaps even more memorable.



Artists Of The World Unite!



United Artists!

When in Italy last year, I purchased a painting from a little gallery in Florence. When I got it home I took it to a gallery downtown and asked the owner what she thought of it. She said: The good news is it's a genuine Pandino, from his Venice period. I was ecstatic. The bad news is that Pandino was a plumber. But as the old clich   goes, beauty is in the eye of the beholder and beauty, style, class and a whole lot more were in abundant display on 14 May at St. Michael's school UNPA when the students of the UN art workshop exhibited their creations for all to see.

Many were showing their work for the first time and all must be congratulated for the quality and diversity of painting on display. Works ranged from horses in oils, to lilies in pastels, charcoal drawings of churches, old men looking pasty in pastels, frogs climbing trees, apples, flowers and abstract shapes and colours. Picasso would have been proud of them.

The evening started with a reception hosted by Marian Ingruber, tutor and mentor, who guided the students through months of hard work from furrowed brow frustration to raptures of delight on being told when shyly showing their work to a loved one: It's fantastic, get it framed and hang it on the wall! Oh the joy when it all comes together.

The very large attendance included the Chief of Mission, Mr. Zbigniew Wlosowicz, and the Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Jin Ha Hwang. The Irish Ambassador, Mr. John Swift, was also present to support his wife, Jean, who was one of the exhibitors.

The very appreciative students presented Marian with a bouquet of flowers. In return, she thanked all for attending and, in particular, John and Shelia Hunt for their support in helping to keep the art classes thriving within the UNPA.

Anyone interested in participating in the Art workshop can contact Marian at 99-584104.

CCC

Marian Ingruber and Alice Tierney discuss the merits of Marian's painting "An Open Window"



Wall-to-wall paintings and not an inch of space!



Big Spender Dermot Higgins inspects the exhibits, hand firmly on his wallet



If I framed this shirt, I could hang it with all the others!



Look, with hands like these, I could have painted the Sistine Chapel!

Air Crash Exercise

Following UNFICYP's air crash exercise which took place in the UNPA on 7 March this year, Sector 4 decided to hold a similar exercise in the AOR of 1st Coy close to PB 101. The event was planned and coordinated by the Ops Asst. and Air Liaison Officer, Maj. SÆndor Hegedus, to test the ability of Sector 4 personnel in an air crash situation.

The scenario was as follows: a helicopter crash occurred in the vicinity of PB 101. This was immediately reported to the JOC, and the local medical and fire teams were called to the scene. Simultaneously, members of PB 101 began fighting the fire.

Meanwhile an Incident Control Point (ICP) had been set up and the area secured by two checkpoints.



The trapped crew were gradually eased out of the helicopter and first aid was provided.

The fire team brought the area under control, and the Sector 4 Medical Officer and his team attended the injured. The casualties were evacuated from the crash scene by a Bell 212 UN Flight helicopter and by ambulance.

Although this exercise may sound easy and straightforward, it definitely isn't! It is vital that such training takes place, ideally on a regular basis.

It was an excellent opportunity for all personnel involved to experience an emergency situation and learn how to deal with it accordingly.

Green Line – Virtual Reality

By Capt. Ali Simmons

I told the British High Commission I would be happy to give the kids a talk about the Green line and the history of Cyprus. So here I was on 7 March, welcoming a group of 15 eight-year-olds from Highgate Primary School at the gates of Sector 2 HQ at Wolseley Barracks, and wondering what I had let myself in for!

After they had settled down in the briefing room I launched headlong into my tried and trusted presentation on the history of Cyprus and a short chronology of the war in 1974, though slightly simplified, (mainly for my benefit!!). I sensed that the attention span of a group of pre-teens might not last as long as my usual presentation demanded and quickly switched to my electronic version of the Green Line Virtual Reality Tour.

The photographs of the old streets and lanes of the Green Line, seemed to raise their interest level to a point where there was a great deal of audience participation, especially when it came to the minefields within the old city.

After the presentation, we all marched smartly over to Ledra Palace Hotel (LPH) in military fashion,



climbed the four long flights of stairs and eventually came out into the sunshine on the roof of LPH. This was the closest they would come to actually seeing the situation at first hand, and the questions came thick and fast. All the kids seemed to enjoy the unusual school trip departing Sector 2 with waves and very smart salutes!

A Tribute to Štefánik

The camp in Sector 4 Headquarters is named after one of the most significant generals in Slovakian history. To explain his importance, The Blue Beret highlights the biography of this distinguished personality.

Nestling at the foot of Mount Bradlo in Slovakia lies the small village of BrezovÆ, hidden among the surrounding wooded hills. Nearby is the village of KoariskÆ, where Milan Rastislav tefÆnik was born on 21 July 1880. His father was a Lutheran clergyman, who ministered to the spiritual needs of the villagers. His vocation afforded him more consolation of conscience than pecuniary reward, for the people were poor and the emoluments meagre.

In this peaceful atmosphere, in circumstances bordering on outright want, tefÆnik spent his boyhood under the guidance and tutelage of his parents. It was here that the foundation was laid for the education of the boy who was destined to become a noted mathematician, astronomer, diplomat and soldier, and ultimately achieved the army's highest rank, that of French General (August, 1918).

Small of stature, frail and lightly built, having been born with heart problems, tefÆnik was a dynamo of energy in spite of this handicap. It seems that the very knowledge of this defect, and the uncertainty as to when he would be called back to his Creator, imbued young tefÆnik with exceptional zeal and determination in whatever he undertook. Certainly his frail condition did not deter him from succeeding in the tasks and challenges he set for himself. If anything, it probably just spurred him on.

In 1910, tefÆnik, whose attainments had drawn the attention of the scientific world, was commissioned by



the French Government to go to the island of Tahiti in the Pacific to observe the course of Haley's comet. It was on this trip that tefÆnik came in contact with his compatriots in the US and learned that nearly three quarters of a million Slovaks had emigrated there in search of better opportunities than those available in their own homeland, which remained strangled in the grip of feudal government.

While travelling from New York to San Francisco, tefÆnik stopped off to visit the Slovak colonies in New York, Chicago and on the west coast. Everywhere his magnetic personality won him friends. By 1913, his renown had spread far and wide, and his astronomic calculations, discoveries and observations were widely known and respected.

On 9 September 1913, the New York daily paper *Slovak v. Amerike*, under the headline *Dr. tefÆnik in America*, informed its readers of his visit, his achievements and plans. Recalling an earlier visit by the distinguished traveller, the paper noted how he had survived many perilous adventures but perhaps none so dangerous as when he had almost lost his heart to a charming young Slovak lady, the belle of Chicago's Slovak community.

Returning to Czechoslovakia from Siberia where his visit had helped boost the morale of the Czech army, tefÆnik next turned to Italy where some legionnaires still awaited transfer home to their newly liberated country. tefÆnik made the necessary arrangements and then set about organising his own trip back.

Such was his love of country that he opted to fly home on the wings of love, on a Caproni plane. So, accompanied by two Italian aviators, he took off in the early hours of the morning. He and his companions crossed over the crests of the Carnolian Alps and shortly before noon approached the outskirts of Bratislava, the new capital of Slovakia. It was a windy day and a suitable landing place could not be found. As the aircraft circled above the town of Vajnory at a height of 1,500 feet, it dropped suddenly, crashing to the ground. tefÆnik and the two aviators were killed instantly.

tefÆnik's earthly remains were buried on Mount Bradlo, the mountain of his early childhood. To this day, his spirit lives on among the people, the hero who had worked untiringly, day and night, in the crucial liberating days of the revolution.





John (left), taking over from Jussi

The Finnish Contingent is one of the oldest in UNFICYP. Over 10,000 Finns have served with the Force since the mission was set up in 1964. Currently there are three Finns based in the UNPA.

Maj. Jussi Hokkanen, the outgoing LO TF, who has been with UNFICYP for the last year, is now saying goodbye and handing over to Lt. Col. John Laukka. John comes from his posting as CO of the Hame Cavalry Battalion in the Hame Regiment in Lahti in south Finland (a town famous for skiing and winter competitions). John has been with the Finnish Army since 1974. He joined as a conscript, attended the officers' cadet school and became a lieutenant in 1978. John has previous service with the UN, serving as a Military Observer with UNTSO in OGD (Damascus) from 1995-96. John's wife Ritva joined him in Cyprus on 16 April and will stay for the whole year. Tony and Jani, their twin sons (21), are currently conscripts and will come for holidays. John says: I'm looking forward to working with all the people in UNFICYP. I think I am the luckiest Finn to have been selected to replace Jussi. There are many people who would have liked this post, but, as they say in Finland, I won the lottery.

Jussi says: I've had a great time with UNFICYP, and I hope John gets the same support and encouragement I received during my tour. I wish all the best to UNFICYP and my colleagues.

Pekka Riekkola, the Camp Commandant, is the second Finn in UNFICYP and is well-known to everyone. Pekka enlisted in 1977 as a conscript and has been in the army since then. He arrives from the Personnel Office of Western Command Headquarters in Hmeenlinna in the south of Finland. Pekka is responsible for 1,220 officers (nominations, promotions, salaries, task demands, retirement, etc). On his return to Finland, Pekka will take up the post of Personnel Administration Planning Officer.

He arrived in UNFICYP in September 2002 for a one-year tour as Camp Commandant. This entails basically running the Camp Command office, which includes following up on the contractors who take care of the UNPA and the facilities located therein. CC also allocates accommodation in Blue Beret Camp, as well as taking care of the renovation and refurbishment plans.

The Camp Command team includes Pekka, WO2 Noel O'Neill and Camp Assistant Mr. Panicos Loizou. Pekka

however wears two hats in UNFICYP. He is also responsible for Finnish Contingent personnel and logistics matters including financial affairs, contingent paperwork and Finnish Contingent property, especially the sauna.

Pekka was with the UN in 1995-96 with UNPROFOR and UNPREDEP in Macedonia as Chief of the Personnel Office in the Nordic Battalion. His hobbies include studying administrative science, jogging, karate, ju-jitsu and kick-boxing.

Pekka's wife Anne and son Tommi were unable to join him on this tour since Tommi attends school, but they catch up with him for holidays. Pekka says: I am always looking for new things to do and here in Cyprus, I can find the opportunity to practise my English and of course meet people from other nations. Some days I don't say even one word in Finnish. It has been quite a difficult year since Camp Command has had to deal with all the flooding and concurrent problems in the UNPA. I'm now waiting for the summer season to arrive so that I can have a taste of nice, hot weather!

The third member of the Finnish Contingent is Capt. Marko Lhteenmki, the UNFICYP Force Signals Officer.

Marko comes to UNFICYP from Kainu Brigade in northern Finland where he served as Staff Officer of the Signal Battalion.

Marko works with the Sector Signals Officers who channel signal requests through him. He is directly responsible to the Chief Operations Officer and the Chief of the Electronic Services.

Marko enlisted as a conscript in 1987. He joined the military academy in 1989 and graduated in 1992 in communications. Here in UNFICYP, Marko's duties involve the operational communications systems for the whole Force. He began his one-year tour in January 2003.

Marko attended a UN staff officers course (UNSOC II) in Sweden last year. He enjoyed the course and found it very instructive. But this is Marko's first UN mission and he has already found out that every mission works in its own way.

The UN system took some getting used to, but now I feel quite comfortable.

Marko was an athlete in the military pentathlon at international level. He has been all over Europe (particularly the Nordic countries) and has even travelled as far as China. He keeps up the training but not so seriously as before. His hobbies include water sports, boating and hunting with dogs.



Marko

Three Finns and a Sauna

Like all true Finns, the Finnish Contingent takes great pride in its sauna in the UNPA.

Those lucky guests who have received an invitation to a sauna evening hosted by the Finns will know that it is not simply a body cleansing ritual. It's a social event that could last a whole evening or even a whole day. Fifteen-minute sessions in the sauna room are followed by cold beer, sandwiches and traditional sausages and then another stint in the sauna and so it goes.

A guest who attended one such event said, most Scandinavians enjoy taking a sauna but it is the Finns who have taken it to higher levels, making it almost an art form. It should then come as no surprise to learn that there are 1... million saunas in Finland for a population of 5.2 million, meaning there is one sauna to every four people.

Saunas are an integral part of life in Finland and deeply rooted in their culture with many social events historically centred around the sauna, including birth and death as well as almost everything in between.



Outside the sauna on the UNPA

seems almost masochistic to somebody who hasn't tried it, but those who have insist it has a wonderful therapeutic effect. Your skin feels great after a sauna and for days afterwards it feels as soft as a baby's, one Scandinavian woman said.

Then there is the social side of it - it's great once you get over the fact that everyone sitting around you is naked, you can relax and enjoy yourself. Women tend to use it as a therapeutic time for themselves to socialize with their girlfriends and catch up on the latest news.

On the other hand, men in Scandinavian countries, and especially in Finland, use it as an informal business meeting area where deals can be clinched.

Newly arrived Lt. Col. John Laukka says he would like to bring a flavour of Finland to UNFICYP. The last thing I did before leaving Finland and the first thing I did when I arrived in Cyprus was to have a sauna. It's the perfect place to relax and discuss business!

Only a few decades ago, when midwives and hospitals were rare in Finland, babies were born in saunas as there was plenty of hot water available and the bench was a good place to lie down on and give birth.

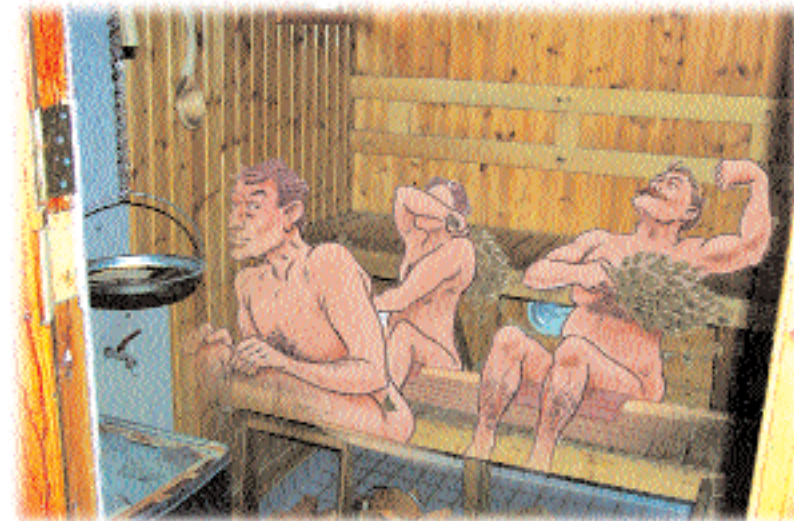
During wartime, the Finns built saunas for their soldiers in the front line of battle to keep their morale high. And when the army retreated, it not only carried its dead back with it but its saunas as well.

In even earlier times, when Finnish settlers moved into new territory, the first thing they built was not a cabin for themselves and their families but a sauna, and they lived in it until a real home was erected. Saunas were also used for brewing beer, curing and smoking meat, washing clothes and laying out the dead.

Today, however, it is the therapeutic effects of saunas that are capitalized on in spas the world over. Stepping into a steam room with a temperature of 100 degrees Celsius (the boiling point of water) to perspire for 15 minutes

In the sauna's reception room

Enjoying the sauna



ANZAC Day - The Dawn Service

Each year on 25 April, Australians and New Zealanders pause to remember their countrymen and women who have fought in all wars and conflicts. They honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice and gave their lives in battle, and they honour the memory of those who served. Although Australia and New Zealand also recognize 11 November, Remembrance Day, for many Australians and New Zealanders ANZAC Day is one of our days of greatest respect.

In 1914, the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps was formed, quickly becoming more familiarly known as the ANZACs. Their first taste of battle was the landing at Gallipoli in Turkey in the dawn hours of 25 April 1915. The difficult terrain and strong defensive positions of the enemy saw the ANZACs suffer terrible losses. In eight months of fighting, the ANZACs were able to advance little more than one kilometre.

The ANZACs continued to serve with distinction in the 1914-1918 war and during those years, almost one in five young ANZAC men and women died in the service of their country. Over 78,000 ANZACs died in battle during World War I.

The ANZAC tradition has continued and Australian and New Zealand defence forces have served in World War II, Korea, Malaya/Indonesia, Vietnam, and the 1991 and 2003 conflicts in the Gulf region.

The meaning of ANZAC to many Australians and New Zealanders was probably best described in December 1997, when the then Governor-General of Australia, Sir William Deane, gave the eulogy at the State funeral of Ted Mathews, whose death marked the passing of the last Australian ANZAC to have landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. Sir William said of ANZAC:

"It is about the spirit, the depth, the meaning, the very essence of our nation. And it is about sadness and grief for young lives cut short and dreams left unfulfilled. And the horror and carnage of war..."

...ANZAC is also about courage, and endurance, and duty, and mateship, and good humour, and the survival of a sense of self-worth: the sum of those human and national values which our pioneers found in the raw bush of a new world and tested in the old world for the first time at Gallipoli."

In Cyprus this year, AUSTCIVPOL, their families and invited guests, came together in darkness at 5:00 am at Wayne's Keep Cemetery in Sector 2 West. The light drizzling rain, although uncomfortable, was a reminder of the harsh conditions that the ANZACs struggled with 88 years before.

In the gathering light of dawn, BRITCON Padre, Rev. Lee Gandiya, conducted a moving service. There is no doubt that this service was watched from nearby posts by TF members. They may not have been aware of the words of Kemal Ataturk, etched in stone on the ANZAC Memorial at Gallipoli:

*To mothers who have sent their sons to war from distant lands:
Shed no tears. Your sons are now in our hearts.
Calm and serene, they will sleep in repose and tranquility.
In losing their lives on our soil,
They have become our sons as well.*