

# The Blue Beret

## June 2003



Back in  
the Old City





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"Summertime and the living is easy", drawl the lyrics of the famous song in Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess", but here in Cyprus at this time of year, as the words of another song from the same work suggest, "It Ain't Necessarily So"! Temperatures may soar and energy levels may sap, but while tourists throng the island's beaches and splash in its clear blue waters, this is the time of year when UNFICYP peacekeepers have to be more alert than ever.

Now, those patrolling the buffer zone in service of maintaining the status quo, have to be especially vigilant about spontaneous combustion and the hazards of fire. Right now the vegetation is tinderbox dry and ready to blaze at the drop of a cigarette butt, a smouldering match, a sun-catching piece of broken glass.

June alone has seen three major outbreaks – all successfully contained and overcome thanks to the combined efforts of UNFICYP peacekeepers, the UNFICYP fire officer and, at different times, the help of firefighting units from the two communities.

This year, the mission benefits from the additional firefighting expertise represented by Sector 2's latest rotation, 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment Royal Artillery, fresh to Cyprus after more than six months of providing emergency fire fighting cover during Britain's fire service strikes.

Firefighting, however, is not simply a matter of equipment and expertise. The most important tool is fire prevention, an area in which we are all members of the firefighting team. Remember too, the best piece of equipment any of us can bring to that important task is a simple device called common sense.

On the opposite page, you can see a list of DON'TS. Read them, put them into practice and welcome to the UNFICYP firefighting crew!

## Editorial

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**Front Cover: Back in the Old City**

**Back Cover: Caught in the Frame**

(UNFICYP Force Photographer's record of photoartist Chan Chao's photo portrait of a Slovak peacekeeper)

# Fires Rage in Buffer Zone

Fires break out all over the island during the hot, dry, summer months. Gnr. Peter Nicholson from Bengal Troop, Sector 2, was on duty in OP 45 when he first spotted a fire on 27 June, believed to have started when rubbish was being burned in the buffer zone near Morphou Gate.

The fire rapidly spread eastwards, burning over two kilometres into the BZ over a frontage of between five and 500 metres. Morphou Gate was evacuated and several derelict buildings and a hangar were burnt in Jubilee Camp, including the old Support Regiment location, opposite the Nicosia Airport terminal building. The Nicosia Dog Shelter was also threatened by the fire and had to be evacuated.

Thankfully there were no casualties, apart from some water pipes and electrical cables. Men and women from Sector 2 West, plus reserves, MFR, UN Fire Officer and Greek and Turkish Cypriot Fire Brigades brought the fire under control after three hours. An Incident Control Point was established and remained in force overnight to monitor possible flare-ups.

The S2 personnel involved with fighting the fire were delighted to put the skills they recently learnt in the UK on Op FRESCO (fire fighting duties in relation to the firemen's strike) to good use. All did an excellent job and helped prevent the fire spreading deeper into the UNPA towards accommodation and offices.

*The biggest fire hazard UNFICYP faces at this time of the year is dry grass and vegetation. Remember – smoking is usually prohibited where we live and where we work if it's a UN facility. By taking precautions and paying attention, you can help prevent fires and save lives. Here are some simple rules to follow:*

## DON'T.....

- Throw away lit cigarettes and matches.
- Smoke in offices and accommodation buildings – use designated areas.
- Throw away glass materials such as empty bottles in open areas.
- Park your car near grass or vegetation – the hot engine of your vehicle can cause disaster.
- Leave your vehicle engine running – switch it off!
- Have a barbecue outside designated areas.
- Leave your barbecue unattended. When finished, use water or sand/soil to damp down the ashes.
- Fight buffer zone grasses/forest fires alone – always attack any fire in groups.
- Burn confidential materials (for all burning of sensitive material, contact UNFICYP Fire HQ Ext: 4453 or 4454).
- Fight buffer zone grass fires up or down wind – always from a cross wind direction.
- Use water if electricity poles are in the area of the fire, especially if near UNFICYP OPs – use fire beaters or green tree branches.
- Start your patrol without having at least four fire beaters in your patrol vehicle. Also, check your 500/700 grams dry powder fire extinguisher and medical kit.
- Risk your life to fight a fire – your life comes first! If it is safe, then take all the safety measures, otherwise wait for the fire crew.
- Forget when fighting fires that mines are present in the buffer zone.
- Spread buffer zone grass/forest fire with your boots – wash them as soon as you leave the area.

*Don't forget the Fire Emergency Telephone Number: 22-864777  
Call Signs: 9 India/9-X-ray/9-Zulu on Channel 14 UNPA  
Sector 1: 22-864764/5, Sector 2: 22-864760/1, Sector 4: 22-864757/8,  
South Cyprus: 22-112 and  
North Cyprus: 11-10*





# Peacekeeping: "Countering Might with Moderation"

The first ever international day of UN peacekeepers was celebrated by the UN and DPKO in New York and elsewhere on 29 May 2003. UNFICYP Chief of Mission Zbigniew Wlosowicz represented the Secretary-General at special ceremonies in the Slovak Republic.

In Myjava, near Bratislava, the Slovak capital, the Chief of Mission conveyed the Secretary-General's message to assembled Slovak peacekeepers and a glittering array of dignitaries, including the President of the Slovak Republic, Rudolf Schuster, the Defence Minister, Ivan Šimko, his Czech counterpart, Jaroslav Tvrdík, and the Slovak Chief of General Staff, Milan Cеровský.

With more than 800 Slovak peacekeepers serving in UN missions around the world, the Slovak Minister of Defence said: "I want 29 May to become a new tradition for the Slovak Armed Forces – a day on which we commemorate the contribution of Slovak peacekeepers, male and female, who put their lives in service of the UN far from home."

In a special address, the SG recalled how 55 years ago, "soldiers were sent on to the battlefield under a new flag and with a new mission: a mission of peace."

In his special video-message marking that day,

the SG said: "That mission was without precedent in human history. It was an attempt to confront and defeat the worst in man with the best in man; to counter violence with tolerance, might with moderation, and war with peace."

**"... to counter violence with tolerance, might with moderation, and war with peace."**

*Slovak peacekeepers awaiting presentation of the special medal struck to commemorate the day*



He also noted how much more complex the duties and responsibilities of peacekeepers have become in the years since.

"Of course, we still undertake the critically important task of building confidence through monitoring cease-fires and demilitarised zones," he said. "But today's peacekeepers are also engaged in policing and training, serving as judges and prosecutors; administering health and education; ensuring that human rights and gender equality are observed. They have built administrations in Kosovo and East Timor. And in Afghanistan, they are helping the new authorities establish the rule of law."

Today there are nearly 40,000 UN peacekeepers deployed in 13 missions on three continents. They come from 89 countries. More than 1,800 peacekeepers have paid the ultimate sacrifice in this first half century of peacekeeping. "On this day, we pay tribute to each one of them", the SG said.

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

*Chief of Mission Zbigniew Wlosowicz represents the Secretary-General at the Slovak celebration of peacekeeping day*



Under-Secretary-General for DPKO, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, was in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, visiting the MONUC peacekeepers. There, as part of celebrating the special day, he opened a peacekeeping exhibit at MONUC headquarters in Kinshasa. A special video presentation paid tribute to the 18 UN personnel who died in the course of the mission. "The best way to contribute to the well-being of the Congolese people is to prioritise the political process", the USG declared. "The logic of power based on military conquest should be abandoned in favour of the political one based on national unity and nationalism", he said.

Three days after Peacekeepers Day, UN Headquarters hosted its first ever Conference for DPKO Force Commanders and Heads of Military Components. Thirteen of the UN's military heads attended. MONUC's FC was unable to attend because of the situation in the Congo. UNFICYP FC, Lt. Gen. Jin Ha Hwang, was present throughout, and indeed chaired one of four workshop sessions. In his case, the topic was "UN peacekeeping in the aftermath of the Iraq war". Other topics included security and safety, conditions of service and



*USG Guéhenno with displaced people in Bunia, the Congo*

**"... More than 1,800 peacekeepers have paid the ultimate sacrifice in this first half century of peacekeeping. On this day, we pay tribute to each one of them."**

command and control. There was also a townhall meeting with CAOs and a reception with the SG.

All in all, it proved to be an excellent opportunity to network with the military leaders of other missions, to compare notes and share examples of lessons learned. The FC also used the occasion to meet with headquarters officials on policy issues and to confer with them about UNFICYP's current status.

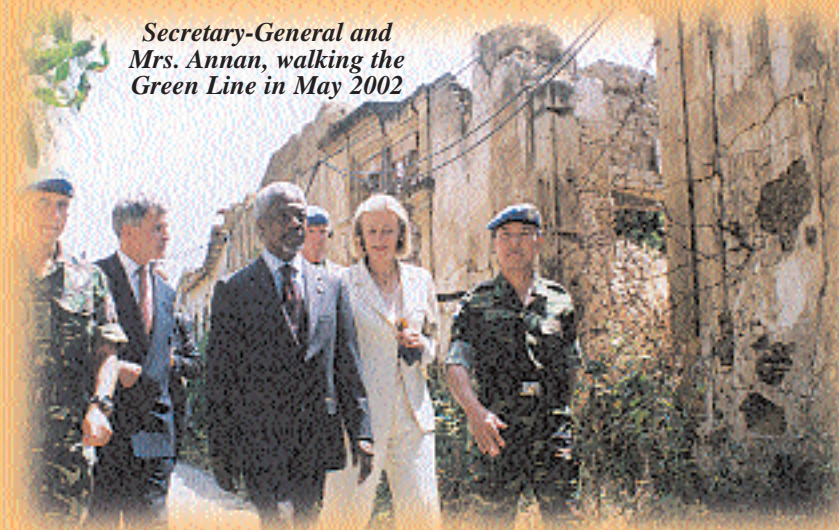
*UNFICYP FC Lt. Gen. Jin Ha Hwang with the SG at the FC Conference at UN headquarters*





# Breathing Life Back Into The Old City

Secretary-General and Mrs. Annan, walking the Green Line in May 2002



particular trades, like the shoemakers or copper traders, who later gave their names to streets where these trades were practised.

This central strip of the walled city accommodated its vital functions, thus concentrating much of the city's rich architectural heritage.

Since 1963, this particular area of the walled city of Nicosia has suffered many conflicts. From 1974

The buildings stand on approximately 10% of the total area of the walled city. Their state of deterioration is having a devastating impact on the old city's historic urban fabric and the architectural heritage contained within it.

It is because of the great significance of these places that UNOPS, funded by UNDP and USAID, sponsored a project to survey 238 buildings within the walls and an additional 27 outside that were considered to have historical, architectural or even monumental value. They were classified according to their architectural value as

report has just been published. This was announced at Ledra Palace on 26 June after two of the divided city's principal officials – Michael Zambellas and Kutlay Erk – toured the Green Line with US Ambassador Klosson and the team of town planners, architects, engineers, sociologists and economists. For Zambellas and Erk, it was their first ever visit to the Green Line, yet both remembered visits to the busy district before the creation of the buffer zone.

Zambellas and Erk expressed great enthusiasm at the prospect of seeing the old part of the city revived in the near future with functioning offices, shops and restaurants shared by Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

"For this to happen, the buildings and infrastructure need to be repaired and restored, but what is also essential is to create a vision that preserves the old character and traditional architecture of the area," said Zambellas.

Miran Rechter, Programme Manager of the Bicomunal Development Programme, said: "this area has always been the focus of so much attention by Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots alike, as it used to be the focal point of social activity and trade in Nicosia. By conducting this detailed survey of buildings and infrastructure, a first step has hopefully been taken towards preserving its architectural heritage and historic urban fabric. A new vision is now required for the city and that will include the buffer zone".

The project's report is viewed as an important move towards the restoration and preservation of the Green Line. Many of the buildings are structurally unsound, even falling down from years without maintenance. The project provided emergency support for eight buildings in danger of collapse, but many others that were surveyed require attention as well. Two buildings along the Green Line – the Olympus Hotel from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and a traditional house from the Ottoman period – were given special attention by the team. There are hopes that sometime in the not so distant future the streets can be returned to their former glory, making them an integral part of life in a unified city.



it has formed part of the buffer zone (also known as the Green Line), and has been completely inaccessible. Within the walled city, the buffer zone runs approximately 1.5 km in length and passes through several neighbourhoods. These are: Paphos Gate (Porta Domenico), Karamanzade, Ayios Andreas, Nebet Khane, Phaneromeni, Selimiye (Ayia Sophia), Omeriye, Chrysaliniotissa, and Ayios Kassianos.

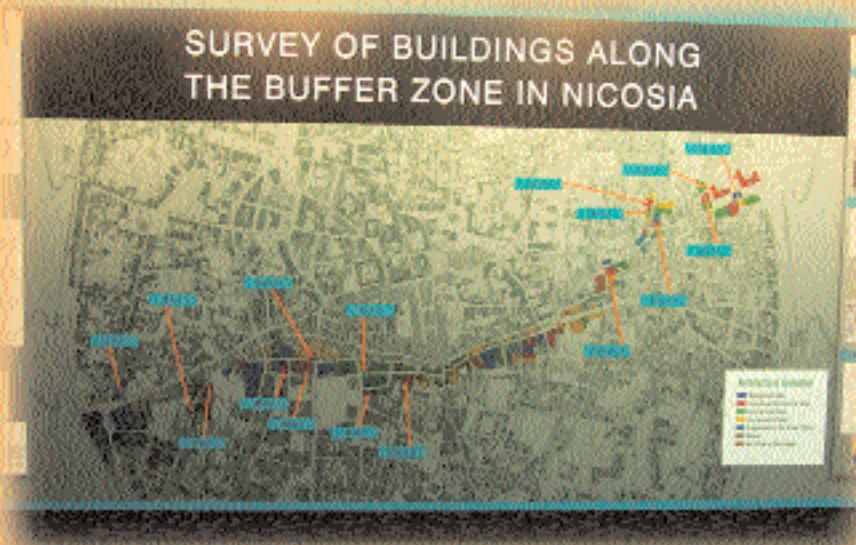
well as their structural condition. The existing infrastructure in the area was also recorded (roads electricity, water drainage and sewerage). Technical and architectural drawings as well as photographs and digital maps form part of the survey conducted by eight young Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot architects and engineers, who worked as a team for two and half years on the project. Their final

Throughout history, the centre of what is now the walled city of Nicosia has been a focal point of activity, social life, and trade.

During the mediaeval period (12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century), the Pedios River ran through the ancient walled city in an east-west axis, via an old course that's now used as the city's underground rainwater drainage. Bridges connected the two parts of the city. The famous mediaeval market extended along the river and was the vibrant hub of commercial transactions between Europe and the Near East. Luxury textiles such as silk, linen, and the "drap d'or de Chypre", as well as other precious items such as silver and gold, were among the items produced, crafted and exported.

During the Venetian period (15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century), the old mediaeval fortified walls were replaced with newer, stronger walls and the course of the river was diverted to a new bed outside the walled city. These walls and their 11 heart-shaped bastions have survived to this day.

The busy market area traversing the centre of the walled city also survived. Throughout the Ottoman period and the subsequent British colonial period (16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century), the bazaar remained along this east-west axis and flourished to become the centre of social, as well as commercial life. The bazaar still hosted





# The Cultural Heritage of Cyprus: Part XIII

## The Shrine of Hala Sultan Tekke

*Near Larnaca Airport, surrounded by an oasis of palms, olives and cypresses, a minaret and a small domed building appear. In the rainy months, the mosque and the trees create a double image, as the Larnaca Salt Lake reflects the scene. When the lakewater evaporates, the minaret shimmers in the heat haze rising from the flat expanse of white salt crystals left behind.*

*This is the Hala Sultan Tekke, otherwise known as the Tomb of Umm Haram, and the latest subject for the Blue Beret's series on the Cultural Heritage of Cyprus. Not just the holiest Muslim shrine in Cyprus, Hala Sultan Tekke is one of the holiest shrines in the Islamic world, after Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem.*

Tradition has it that Umm Haram was an aunt of the Prophet Mohammed, and that she was buried on this spot, where she died after a fall from her mule during the first Arab invasion of Cyprus in 649. While the latter part of the story isn't in question, the former – that she was Mohammed's aunt – has come under some scholarly scrutiny. Many now believe that Umm Haram, who was also known as the "Holy Woman" and as a miracle worker, was in fact a follower, rather than a relative, of Mohammed.

Her names, however, reflect tradition. Hala Sultan means the Ruler's paternal aunt, while Umm Haram means sacred mother. (A tekke, meanwhile, is a monastery or convent, often associated with a mosque and a tomb.) Regardless of her relationship to Mohammed, the shrine that built up after her death was considered so important that during the Ottoman period in Cyprus (1570/1 to 1878), all Ottoman ships passing Larnaca had to pay tribute by lowering their flags and firing their guns.

Scholars of Islamic history report that Umm Haram (whose full name was Umm Haram bint Milhan, Khalid, Zaid, Haram, Genoub) was a very close follower whom the Prophet esteemed. (She had helped him, with others, to travel from Mecca to Medina.) The belief that she was the Prophet's aunt likely came about because her nephew, Anas ibn Malik, was the Prophet's private secretary and faithful servant. According to the 9<sup>th</sup>-century scholar Baladhuri, Umm Haram travelled with her second husband (her first had died in battle) to Cyprus with the Arab invasion forces of Moawiya, the Governor of Syria. Moawiya believed that the newly formed Islamic world needed a strong navy to compete for supremacy with the Byzantine empire. He sought the permission of Omar, the Khalifa of Mecca, to make a naval expedition against nearby Byzantine Cyprus. The Khalifa turned him down. Moawiya tried again with the next Khalifa, Othman, who also refused him. Othman finally granted permission, however, under several conditions, including that the wives of the expedition's officers would accompany them.

So, Umm Haram followed her husband when the Arabs set sail for Cyprus with 1,700 ships in 649, or the year 28 of the Hegira (which marks the Muslim chronology, based on the lunar year). The expedition's result was that Cyprus became a "condominium" of the Byzantines and the Arabs. By a treaty between the two empires that lasted for three centuries, the island had to pay taxes to both and to remain neutral in their conflict.

Little is known of Hala Sultan Tekke's earliest days, other than that Umm Haram was buried here by the Arabs in 649. Danish traveller Cornelius van Bruyn, who visited the area in 1683, mentioned the tomb's existence. Other sources speak of a wooden barrier enclosing the burial site that was built in 1760 by Meghed Agha, the Muhassil (Commissioner, representative in Cyprus of the Grand Vizier or the Sublime Porte), who in the 18<sup>th</sup> century held supreme political and military power on the island.

The following year, the wooden barrier was replaced by a stone wall with two bronze gates, and a few years later the Mosque was built, along with living quarters and an ablution fountain.

As it stands today, Hala Sultan Tekke was completed in 1816 by Seyyid Emin Efendi, the Ottoman Governor of Cyprus. In recent years, it has been restored under the auspices of the Department of Antiquities and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) with funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

For centuries, Umm Haram's shrine has been visited by pilgrims, who pray for her help in times of need. The major pilgrimages occur during the periods of Bairam (holiday). There are two Bairams: the lesser, or Seker (sweet); and the Kurban (sacrificial). The first one is celebrated with an exchange of goodwill wishes and candies on the first day of the Arabic solar month of Seval following the month of Ramadan (the ninth month of the Mohammedan year, in which fasting is observed during all daylight hours). The second takes place 70 days after Ramadan.

There are many legends about Umm Haram's miracles, one of which relates to the three monoliths, or stones, that mark her tomb. On her journey from Jerusalem to Ramla, Umm Haram was hosted by a Christian monk. She asked him to sell her three monoliths that were located nearby, and the monk, believing that it would be impossible for the stones to be carried, offered them to her without charge. She left the stones with him, saying that she would send for them in due time. The legend says that at the time of her burial, the stones rolled over the sea and came to hang on her tomb.

In fact, when Cornelius van Bruyn described the tomb, he said that above it hung three huge stones (the monoliths) measuring 4.5 metres long; one standing by the head, one standing by the feet, and the third suspended over the body above the other two.

### Description

From September to April, Hala Sultan Tekke is reflected in the blue waters of the Salt Lake, where seagulls and migrating flamingoes and swans feed. In the summer, the Tekke's location resembles an oasis, surrounded by scrubland and bordered by the dried-up salt lake.

The main entrance to the Tekke is in the west, where an outer gate leads through a set of steps and an open-air corridor to two patios, from where one enters the monument's inner court. To the right of the second patio is the women's guesthouse, while on the left is the men's guesthouse, both of which feature covered verandas. The women's veranda is enclosed by a lattice screen.

Within the courtyard, a west-to-east open-air corridor leads to the Mosque, fronted by a covered veranda with four limestone arches. Inside the oblong Mosque and just above the doorway of the entrance, a wooden gallery supported on two marble columns runs along the north side of the building. A small door on the ground below the gallery opens to the minaret's staircase. On its western side, the Mosque has a wooden latticed enclosure that is reserved for women.

The Mosque's simple decoration includes a prayer niche (Mirhap) facing Mecca, a stepped dais, carpets, and two small bookcases containing old books and documents. Arab calligraphic inscriptions from history and the Koran are found in many places around the building.

The Tomb of Umm Haram lies south of the Mosque, protected by a railing and shielded by green cloth curtains (green is the colour of Paradise and is sacred to the Muslim world).

In the adjoining arcade, the easternmost part of the monument, lie a number of other tombs, including that of Hadidje, who died in Cyprus in 1929. She was the Turkish wife of King Hussein of the kingdom of Hedjaz, and the grandmother of the late King Hussein of Jordan.

A covered octagonal fountain with eight taps and a wooden latticed roof sits to the north side of the Mosque, and is used by the devout for their ablutions. In the courtyard, enclosed by the living quarters, is a cistern for watering the citrus trees and flower beds.



Hala Sultan Tekke





# There's More to Sector 1 than Argentini- ans: Brazilians and Chileans have their say

## Bi-lingual difficulties? Try tri-lingual with the Brazilians!



*Capt. Claudio and WOII Felipe*

ARGCON, as we insiders know, doesn't consist solely of Argentinian nationals. There is a small, but very active team of other South American soldiers from Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. Two from this group of peacekeepers are especially different, because they are not from a Spanish-speaking country. They are the Brazilians.

Capt. Claudio Alexandre de Almeida Freitas and WOII Felipe França da Costa are the only ones in UNFICYP who think in Portuguese, speak in Spanish all day long and, when they have to answer a phone call, instantly shift to English.

Capt. Claudio is an infantry officer and when he's home, resides in Resende, near Rio de Janeiro. He is assigned to the Brazilian Army Military Academy where he teaches infantry tactics to cadets.

WOII Felipe is an artillery soldier. He is assigned to a Jungle Company in Manaus, in the middle of the Amazonian Forest. In the jungle, the company operates in extreme conditions of hot, wet weather. It is a hostile environment that presents many adverse conditions to survival.

UNFICYP's Brazilians work in the Operations Branch of the Argentinian Task Force as the Operations Officer and auxiliary. It is a very important tasking in ARGCON, because the team has the responsibility of controlling all the events in the sector. The Brazilian military is proud of the cooperation between two armies.

Brazilians first linked up with ARGCON in 1995 with ATF 05 and still continues now with ATF 21. The Brazilians send all *Blue Beret* readers their best wishes, and say that they hope everybody goes to Brazil sometime and that they get in touch with them.

## Empanadas – A Taste of Chile?

Chile, one of the most southern countries in the world, famous for its wines and the tastiest empanadas, is represented by a contingent of 32 men as part of Sector 1.

The first Chilean army officer arrived in UNFICYP two years ago as a staff member of Sector 1. Thereafter an agreement was struck between the two countries, and 32 Chileans now find themselves serving in UNFICYP.

The group is composed of army and marine personnel, four of whom are officers. Two of these officers work in Sector 1 HQ in San Martín Camp, while the rest of the contingent are part of Alfa Coy and are stationed in OP 08 and OP 09 in the 20<sup>th</sup> area. Their work includes daily patrolling and escorting civilians, mostly farmers from Kato Pyrgos village, through the buffer zone.

There are no differences in the tasks carried out by the Chilean and Argentinian soldiers, yet you can spot the difference between the two countries when on patrol – the Chileans don't use a field cap, but a "blue hat", as seen in the photo.



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## Chilean Minister of Defence checks up on Sector 1



The Defence Minister of Chile, Mrs. Michelle Bachelet Jeria, arrived at Camp San Martín's heliport on 2 June for a short visit to Sector 1. Earlier in the day she had met with the Chief of Mission.

During her brief visit, the Defence Minister was accompanied by the Defence Joint Chief of Staff of Chile, General Juan Salgado Brocal, the Chilean Army's

Operations Director, General Oscar Izurieta Ferrer, the Chilean Navy's Personnel General Director, Vice Admiral Eduardo Garcia, and the Sub-Secretary of the Navy, Dr. Carlos MacKenney Urzua. The Commanding Officer of ARGCON, Lt Col Giro Martín, welcomed the group.

After the parade in her honour, she went to OP 08 and OP 09 in order to see first-hand the Chilean soldiers at work.

Later, when she met the Chilean contingent in the Officers' Mess, Mrs. Bachelet Jeria thanked the CO ARGCON for the "opportunity" Argentina afforded the Chilean troops to deploy with them in the mission.

The importance of this shared peacekeeping arrangement and her delegation's visit would remain in the "memories of the two countries", she said, since it "undoubtedly constitutes for both nations a state policy".

She assured her Sector 1 hosts that she and her colleagues "leave pleased and fundamentally reassured about the work that you all are accomplishing".

In addressing the Chilean soldiers, the Defence Minister said she would tell of her experiences when she returned to Chile.



*The Vice President of the Italian Council of Ministers, Gianfranco Fini, and a delegation of 10 officers, accompanied by the Italian Ambassador, Mr. Gherardo La Francesca, were escorted along the buffer zone on a Sector 2 Green Line tour on 25 June.*

*Mr. Fini was welcomed at the Ledra Palace by the Senior Adviser, Mr. Wlodek Cibor, and CO Sector 2, Lt. Col. R.B. Caldwell, RA.*



*Mr. Zhang Limin, the Chinese Ambassador to Cyprus, visited UNFICYP HQ on 11 June. He paid an office call on the CM and FC.*



*Swiss Chargée d'Affaires, Mme. Marianne Engler, visited UNFICYP on 3 June. Mme. Engler paid a courtesy call on the CM.*



*The Japanese Ambassador, Mr. Toshio Mochizuki (second right), on his visit to UNFICYP on 21 May. He is pictured above with the Chief of Mission (right) and the Force Commander (left).*

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# Sector 2 Rotates 35 Bty – Swapping Rapiers for Blue Berets!

By Maj. John Kingdom

35 Battery Royal Artillery took over Sector 2 East (S2E) as part of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment Royal Artillery UN Roulement Regiment (URR) at the start of June this year. Deployment on an overseas operation has come as a welcome break for a battery that had been caught up in the Fire Service strikes in Britain. As part of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Regt Group that deployed to Derbyshire, the Battery helped to provide emergency fire fighting cover to the whole county from autumn 2002 to the spring of 2003.

35 Battery is a Rapier Field Standard B2 battery. We are part of a Welsh Regiment and almost half of the soldiers in the battery are Welsh. We dominate the regimental football team and, with the help of our four Fijian soldiers, are well represented in Regimental, Royal Artillery and Army rugby.

The Battery has been joined for this tour by soldiers from the 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment Workshop and a Troop from 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment Royal Artillery. The 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment group includes soldiers from 4/73 Special OP Battery, Q Sanna's Post Battery and the Regimental Workshop.

Last year, up until deployment on the fire strike, was a training year for 35 Battery. The year included deployments on a combined exercise with 31 US Air Defence Artillery Brigade in El Paso Texas, a tactical live firing exercise in the Hebrides and a brigade-level field training exercise with 101 Logistics Brigade in East Anglia (the largest exercise on the UK mainland in the last decade).

Looking further back, the Battery has extensive experience of both Cyprus and Northern Ireland having completed two tours of each in the last decade. The Battery has also deployed on Military Aid to Government Departments (MAGD), tasks including combating foot and mouth disease and fighting floods and fires (or the "3 Fs", as they are affectionately known!).



OC S2E

The Battery is commanded by Maj. John Kingdom RA, who was also Adjutant of 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment in 1995. The Operations Officer is Capt. Mark Elliott RA, who is on his first tour and the Battery Sergeant Major is WO2 (BSM) Robbie Draper, who has served with the Battery for the majority of his career.

The Battery is settling in well to its new role in Cyprus. The soldiers are learning the ground, developing a rapport with the OPFORs (Opposing Forces) and are working hard on improving the infrastructure of S2E. Life on the line is very busy at the moment, as the soldiers get used to the situation and the OPFORs become accustomed to seeing new faces on patrol. City Troop, commanded by Lt. Simon Holden RA and based within the Old Walled City of Nicosia, is particularly busy. This is the area where the OPFORs are closest to each other throughout the island. City Troop have also had to deal with three fires since their tenure began.

Ortona Troop, commanded by Lt. Beth Colley RA, and Ledra Troop, commanded by Capt. James Hubbard Royal Signals, are both also adjusting well to their new role. Ledra Troop have the Markou Drakou Road within their AOR. This is the pedestrian access route for transit between the north and the south. They also patrol the area around the Roccas Bastion.

Liri Troop, commanded by Lt. Thom Bruce, has not been lacking in excitement either – namely in the form of a huge fire that swept through the buffer zone on 7 June.

All in all, the handover period has progressed extremely smoothly, albeit busily, for the troops of S2E. The officers and soldiers are all well aware of their mission and tasks, and look forward to the rest of the tour.



Ops Offr S2E with Troop Commander Liri Troop

# IRCON on Parade at the Irish Embassy



Medal recipients BQMS (WO1) Noel O'Neill and Capt. Fiona Smith

The Irish Contingent held their medal presentation at the Irish Embassy in Nicosia on 23 May. The recipients were Capt. Fiona Smith, FMPU, and BQMS Noel O'Neill, Camp Warrant Officer. C/Sgt. Dermot Higgins, Ops, and Sgt. Jim Ryan, the FC's driver, also received their numerals (four and two respectively).

The party was greeted at the embassy by Ambassador John Swift. Commanding Officer IRCON Lt. Col. Niall Daly thanked the ambassador for hosting the ceremony and invited him to make the presentations. WO1 Caleb Cooper read the citations as the ambassador presented medals and numerals to the recipients. In his

remarks, Ambassador Swift spoke eloquently of the Irish Defence Forces' contribution to peacekeeping throughout the world, and in particular its contribution in Cyprus, where Irish contingents have been in continuous service since 1964. He hoped the tradition of Irish service on the island would continue for the foreseeable future.

Special guests at the ceremony were Brig. Gen. David Taylor (retired) and his wife Margaret, who were visiting from Ireland. Gen. Taylor had served in Cyprus in 1967 as a young officer and was happy to be back to visit some of his old stamping grounds.

Formal ceremony over, the group adjourned to a local hostel for lunch and refreshments.



Members of the Irish contingent with the Irish Ambassador to Cyprus, H.E. Mr John Swift

## Flying High on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>

Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> proved to be a very lucky day for the soldiers of UN Flight. Sixteen members of the 27-member contingent were honoured with medals and numerals at a medal parade held in the hangar at the Nicosia International Airport.

Both the Force Commander and the Commanding Officer UN Flight, Lt. Col. Hector Walter Fercher, addressed parade members and a distinguished array of guests, which included representatives from all UNFICYP contingents.

Afterwards, in keeping with Argentinian hospitality, everyone was feted to a superb buffet at UN Flight. UN Flight proudly displayed the two helicopters, a Hughes 500 and a Bell 212, used in carrying out observation and reconnaissance in the buffer zone and transport of cargo, personnel and VIPs.

UN Flight, also known as ARGAIR, has been staffed by members of the Argentinian Air Force since 1994, when they took over from the British command. Since that time, they have logged an impressive 9,600 successful flying hours and transported over 22,000 passengers safely. There is always one helicopter and crew on 45 minutes' notice to move at all times.

Congratulations to all the recipients and thanks for all the hard work.





## Finnish Defence Forces Flag Day

Finnish Defence Forces Flag Day was celebrated at a reception in the Hilton Park Hotel on 4 June, hosted by the Commander of the Finnish Contingent, Lt. Col. John Laukka.

June 4 is celebrated to honour the birth of the great Marshal of Finland, Carl Gustav Emil Mannerheim (1867-1951), one of the most prominent figures in Finland's history. Respected both as a soldier and as a statesman, Mannerheim served at different times as Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces as well as President during the difficult years of the Second World War.

Over 100 people attended the Nicosia reception, among them Mr. Demosthenis Severis, Finland's Honorary Consul General, and the Honorary Consul, Mr. Costas Severis. UNFICYP Chief of Mission Zbigniew Wlosowicz spoke admiringly on the remarkable contribution the small Finnish Contingent makes to the overall mission. The Chief of Staff, Col. Hamish Fletcher, and military attachés from a number of



*Laying a wreath in memory of fallen Finnish peacekeepers*

embassies in Cyprus also attended.

Guests were offered typical Finnish delicacies including reindeer meat and other traditional dishes flown in specially for the occasion.

## Hungarian Annual Inspection



The Hungarian Defence Forces conducted its annual inspection of UNFICYP's Hungarian contingent in June this year. The delegation arrived on 6 June, led by Col. Géza Boros-Leskó, 2IC of HDF Joint Operations Centre.

The delegation included five other officers from the

Hungarian army. They were welcomed by a Guard of Honour at the UNFICYP HQ. The Chief of Mission and the Force Commander then received the group in their respective offices.

Chief of Staff, Col. Hamish Fletcher, gave the visitors an Ops Info presentation and the Chief Personnel and Logistics Officer, Lt. Col. Chris Kilmister, also spoke with them. The delegation then met with UNFICYP HQ members from the Hungarian Contingent.

On 12 June, the inspection party continued to Camp General Štefánik, where they were received by the CO of Sector 4, Lt. Col. Ivan Hirka. They also met with members of the Hungarian Contingent stationed in Fama-gusta. That afternoon the delegation arrived at Camp St. István.

On the evening of 12 June and the following day they inspected the 1<sup>st</sup> Coy Area of Responsibility. The final event of the visit was held that evening in a restaurant in Athienou, when the delegation was joined by the Ambassador of the Republic of Hungary, János Kisfalvi.



which they remembered well.

The Swedish veterans were happy to have had the chance to see their old place of work once again, and wished the present Sector 4 all the best.

## Bicommunal Go-Karting Event Raises Money for Charity

A new type of bicommunal event took place on 25 May with a Go-Karting competition held at the airstrip near the old Nicosia Airport. Organised by the Cyprus Institute for Neurology and Genetics (CING), it was a great success with approximately 70 Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot drivers participating.

"Go-Kart Together for Hope" raised money for two charities through ticket sales. The north charity benefiting was the Saracoglu Foundation, supporting children suffering from leukemia. In the south, the proceeds were donated to CING to help muscular dystrophy patients. UNFICYP generously supplied many of the necessary support items, including chairs, tables, tents and a generator, which was set up and supervised by the UNFICYP Workshop Unit.

About 1,800 Greek Cypriot and 700 Turkish Cypriot spectators attended the event. A major attraction for the children were the fun karts made available by the UNFICYP Go-Kart club. Under the supervision of the Master Driver, the club allowed children to use its smaller race track. The kids got to experience the feeling of being racing drivers themselves.



Thanks to the spectators who came and had a fun time while supporting two worthy charities. An extra thanks to everyone who helped plan and set up the day.

## Sector 1 Celebrates Argentina's Revolution Day



Chief of Staff Col. Hamish Fletcher and the Ambassadors of Germany, H.E. Dr. Jochen Trebesch, and H.E. Mr. Ignacio Garcia-Valdecasas Fernandez of Spain.

The ceremony began with an inspection of troops in formation. Following the national anthem, Sector 1's chaplain said a prayer. Then Lt. Col. José Luis Giró Martin, CO Sector 1 gave a speech to honour the day. He noted that today "193 years later, we keep the same ideals, trying to give the best to our country, in giving the best to the world." The CO pointed out that while May 1810 marked the end of Argentina's political dependence on Spain, "we kept and will always keep the tie to our Hispanic heritage."

To end the formal ceremony, the troops marched in a parade past the guests. Everyone was then invited to a special breakfast and treated to displays of traditional Argentinian dance including the chamame, tango, and samba.

Sector 1 would like to thank everyone who attended for helping them to celebrate this special day.

The significance of 25 May is that it marks the beginning of Argentina's struggle back in 1810 for independence from Spain.

This year, Sector 1 commemorated the day with a ceremony and special breakfast. The ceremony was presided over by UNFICYP Chief of Mission Mr. Zbigniew Wlosowicz. Distinguished guests included



# Caught in the Frame

