Medals at Salamis
September 8th marked the first Literacy Day of the United Nations Literacy Decade – the international action campaign launched last February to promote improved literacy rates around the world so that they might grow by 50 per cent by 2015.

Of the 860 million-plus illiterate adults in the world today, two-thirds are women, hence the special initial emphasis on raising women’s literacy as a stepping stone to the ultimate goal of literacy for all.

In his special message to mark the first Literacy Day, the Secretary-General points out: “Literacy unlocks the door to learning throughout life, is essential to development and health, and opens the way for democratic participation and active citizenship.”

No society can be complacent. No society can claim illiteracy has been fully eradicated. True, the challenge is greatest in developing countries, however many developed countries are experiencing modest but worrying levels of illiteracy. Wherever it exists, “illiteracy is connected to patterns of poverty, social exclusion and inequalities”, the SG said.

It cannot be addressed in isolation. Rather, it demands teamwork involving every level of government, civil society, the private sector, community groups, professional educators and, last but not least, family, friends and colleagues of those seeking to develop their literacy skills.

Again, in the Secretary-General’s words: “Acquiring literacy is an empowering process, enabling millions to enjoy access to knowledge and information, which broadens horizons, increases opportunities and creates alternatives for building a better life. It is essential to the education of girls and the empowerment of women, the most effective tools we know for development across all society.”

Towards Literacy For All

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The Blue Beret
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Towards Literacy For All

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Contents

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When we learned the names of those we had lost on 19 August 2003, the very nature of loss became suddenly and personal. So many of us knew closely one or more of those who died. Even if we ourselves did not, we knew someone else who did. We felt as if we knew them all.

That is why, a month on, we feel that a deeper meaning has been given to the expression “United Nations family”. If and people need an example of our United Nations family at its best and its brightest, at its most committed and most they have only to look at the men and women who perished in the Canal Hotel.

Many of them were at the height of their careers. Others were just beginning, and had yet to make their full mark when they volunteered for their assignment in Iraq. All of them were in the prime of life. All of them leave a huge void.

They form a roll call of heroes that would be the envy of any nation.

By no means of the human imagination can I speak for those who shared their lives. That unwritten history can be informed and heard; friendship, family, friends and close comrades. It forms the most eloquent history of all.

I can speak simply as one who shares in the groundswell of grief, affection and respect that follows their passing. In that spirit, let me try to speak to every one of them today:

First, to our national staff – Raid, Leen, Ishsan, Emaad and Basim – I say: you were not only invaluable to our work in Iraq, and dear members of our UN team there. You formed a precious connection between us and the Iraqi people. Many of you had worked for the UN for many years, under different circumstances, including at times when we were unable to keep an open, single-minded presence in Iraq. We can never repay you for your courage.

To our international colleagues, I will speak one by one: you are among the best of your profession. We all should be especially proud of you.

In Baghdad, the deep divisions among states – have raised hatred, the bomb attack on the United Nations itself in August 2003, and the arrival of the all-powerful, unforgiving, clinically insane Saddam Hussein, who was matched by an equal measure of warmth and compassion. When you were taken from us, your young shoulders had already borne a great deal of the weight of this tragedy. You did so with strength, balance and poise.

Right and wrong, and irreverence and laughter kept their spirits high. There was never anything affected about you; honesty was your defining characteristic. You set the standard in rising above the fray through confidence and humour. In more than 30 years with the UN, you inspired several generations of young women – and men – by showing that there are no limits to what women can achieve, and courage goes hand in hand with irreverence. You inspired all of us, regardless of age, by showing us that one can be principled without being pompous. Nadia, whenever we get needlessly overwhelmed, we will remember your voice telling us to “get a grip”; and whenever we are tempted to take ourselves too seriously, we will remember the sound of your laughter.

In your dedication to work, you gave us back your own family. You destroyed your own family in the cause of your work. You were so young, yet had already achieved so much. There would have been no limits to what you could have done with your life. You chose to work for the United Nations because you wanted to do something for others. You went to Iraq to make a contribution to the lives of your Arab brothers and sisters. It is their loss as much as ours that you were denied the chance to do that.

Ramilo, you were quiet, diligent, considerate and ready to work all the hours God gave you. You showed generosity to everyone around you. And you were such a devoted son and sibling to your family home back. Never let the distance to your homelands, or the years spent away, stand between you and your loved ones.

Rick, as a passionate Arabist, you were driven by an equally passionate commitment to peace, justice and human rights. You dazzled people with your brilliance and scholarship; but you also made friends for life through kindness and wisdom beyond your years. You devoted most of your career and most of the waking hours in many of your days – to searching for ways to help people in the Middle East and the Arab world. And now you have lost your life while on a mission that left you in a position that could have saved you. You were a singularly gifted champion; we have lost a deeply beloved friend.

Reza, in your dedicated work to ease the plight of refugees, you never shied away from challenges or difficult assignments. Nor did you ever fail to win people’s affection through your warmth, your good humour and your gift for cooking good food. Your heart was as big as your smile. And that was bigger than most.

Jean-Selim, wherever you went, you waged your war against injustice and inequity. A human being first and foremost, you were a human being who was exceptionally caring; with an exceptionally strong sense of principle and commitment in the name of our irreplaceable, inimitable, unforgettable, indelible memory.

Arthur, who devoted his life to championing the rights of the forcibly displaced; and Alya, who used to serve as one of our most dedicated and experienced transactors in Baghdad.

We all knew that the United Nations called you were not only invaluable to our work in Baghdad, the deep divisions that you faced between Iraqis and the rest of the world had already borne a great deal of the weight of this tragedy. You did so with strength, balance and poise.

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Dear friends,

We are especially close to the United Nations colleagues in Iraq who were driven solely by a desire to help the Iraqi people build a better future.

When we lost them, our Organization also suffered another loss, of a different kind: a loss of innocence for the United Nations.

We, who had assumed that our mission to help others served as its own and ultimate form of protection, now find that we repeatedly suffer.

We, who have tried from the beginning to serve those targeted by violence and destruction, have become a target ourselves.

That means we will need to adapt the way we work to our new environment. We will have to learn to balance our mission on behalf of other people with the need to protect our own.

But our commitment – our pledge in the name of “the peoples” – must never change. Today, let us renew that commitment with a renewed sense of purpose.

Let us work to heal these unforgettable wounds, by working every day to live up to the standard they set us.

I now ask you to rise and join me in a minute of silence.

Thank you very much.

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There is special poignancy and purpose in this year’s International Day of Peace. As the UN and its volunteers face the continuing and far-reaching consequences of the violence in Iraq, and as the world has just begun to turn the page on the events of 9/11, we have the opportunity to mark a significant historical milestone: the 60th anniversary of the United Nations.

In the years since its establishment, the UN has seized from the history of the 20th century its most hopeful and challenging mandate – to help establish and maintain international peace and security.

The International Day of Peace is being celebrated by the United Nations as a “day of global ceasefire and non-violence, an invitation to all nations and peoples to honour a cessation of hostilities for the duration of the holiday.”

It is important to acknowledge that such a declaration is based on a fundamental question about the efforts of the international community to prevent, mediate and resolve conflicts, and to promote and maintain global peace.

The United Nations is committed to the idea of a world free from violence, and to the establishment of international peace and security. The UN is committed to the goal of ending violence in all its forms, and to the promotion of non-violent solutions to conflicts.

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Sector 4’s return to Salamis for the first time since the Austrians departed in 2001 saw the combined Slovak and Hungarian Contingents put on a sparkling display. Every move was carefully choreographed against the stunning backdrop of soaring amphitheatre, all paced to a medley of beautiful music.

Maj. Gen. Jozef Blizman, Deputy Chief of the Slovak General Staff, joined the Chief of Mission, the Force Commander, H.E. Mr. János Kisfalvi, the Hungarian Ambassador, and H.E. Dr. Ján Varsó, the Slovak Ambassador, in presenting medals to the peacekeepers of Sector 4.

In his speech, the Chief of Mission commended the return to the amphitheatre, or the ancient city kingdom of Salamis.

“Our commendations to those honoured here today are heartfelt and sincere, but they surely understand that – as one diplomat said – “today our smiles are a bit forced”.

“While earlier UNFICYP peacekeepers found themselves in harm’s way, those of us here today know ourselves to be more fortunate. Still, we would do well to consider the special significance and poignancy of the UN medal we award here today as we contemplate the sacrifice of those who died or were injured in Baghdad, and of those peacekeepers who over the years have given their lives in the service of peace here on this island.

“This UN medal represents an honorable tradition of high standards and sacrifice. It bears testimony to each recipient giving of his or her very best, to the demanding complexities of service as a peacekeeper.

“I salute each of you for the fairness, impartiality and dedication that you have brought to your exacting work. In rising to the hallmark standards of peacekeeping, you have laid the basis for our success here.”

Everybody knows that Sector 1 always brings a special flair to its celebrations. So it was on 12 September when the Sector’s peacekeepers from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay paraded to receive their UN medal at Camp Saint Martin.

Family and friends, UNFICYP colleagues and members of other contingents all turned out in strength to witness the presentation of the medals by the Chief of Mission, the Force Commander and the Chief of Staff among others.

The parade was under the command of the CO Sector 1, Lt. Col. Giro Martín. Musical honours were rendered by the Argentinian military band, under the baton of WO1 Rual Cardoso.

Later that evening, an ensemble of musical tradition, both vocal and instrumental, from the participating nations was presented to the delight of the visiting guests, and included such numbers as El Condor Pasa (Peru), Way Ay Ay (Bolivia) and Zamba De Mi Esperanza (Argentina).

In the ensuing revelry, everyone watched a sultry Argentinian duo hover in a sensuous tango, and wished they too could tango, while all marvelled at the replica of Cyprus floating in the pool that had been constructed by the staff in Charlie Coy. The reception held by the poolside included traditional South American delicacies mixed with traditional Cyprus kebab.
Buffavento Castle gained its name from the Italian buffare, meaning to blow, and vento, meaning wind. Over its long history, it has also been known as Buffevelt, Castello de Regino, Castle of Leonde, Castle of the Lion, The Hundred Chambers of the Queen, and The Hundred and One Chambers.

Indeed, traditional stories tell of the castle having 101 rooms, the 101st of which housed the treasures of the Regina, or the Queen (this mythical queen seems to have replaced the legends of Aphrodite in mediaeval times).

Only a few rooms remain in the castle today, but it still lives up to its name, defying the winds of the Kyrenia mountains. It’s also the destination for this issue of the Blue Beret’s continuing series on the cultural heritage of Cyprus.

Buffavento Castle today

Buffavento Castle stands at 954 metres above sea level, on the second-highest peak in the Kyrenia mountains, and records show that the castle has existed since at least Byzantine times. In its original form, in the 10th century, it was likely a Byzantine watchtower. From its summit, sentries could monitor the coastline, watching for approaching ships. When any danger was perceived, beacon signals could be sent to Nicosia or to the castles of Kyrenia, Kantara and St. Hilarion by the lighting of fires at Buffavento.

Both chroniclers and travellers have pointed out that a lot of effort must have been made to build a fortress at such a height and on such dangerous terrain. Detailed descriptions of the castle underline the fact that nature has done everything needed for defence, and the aim seems to have been to build an inaccessible stronghold, rather than a proper fortress.

Another chapter in the castle’s history opened when King Richard the Lionheart captured the castle in 1191. It is said that the King of England, hearing that the daughter of Emperor Isaac Comnenos was in a very strong castle, took his army here. On his arrival, she came to meet him, and put herself and the castle at his mercy, whereupon he captured it; and all nearby towns and fortresses of the Byzantine Empire were surrounded.

Because of its inaccessible location, Buffavento was used as a political prison, in times of peace and a sure refuge for the Lusignan kings in wartime. The first definite information about Buffavento in Lusignan times states that in 1232, Escrive Montbeliard, the wife of Baldwin d’Ibelin, took refuge in the fortress. In 1312, King Henry II, on his return from exile, imprisoned his brother there. In 1348, still under Lusignan rule, Peter I transferred the unfortunate John Visconti, who had informed the King about the adultery of his wife, Queen Eleanor, to Buffavento, where Visconti was accused of slander and left to starve to death.

As with the other Kyrenia mountain castles, Buffavento was largely abandoned when the Venetians (who controlled the island from 1489 to 1571 and used it mainly as a military outpost) concentrated their forces in Nicosia and the seaport towns. The Venetians destroyed the staircase that linked the two halves of the castle. Today, only one or two partly ruined rooms are preserved in their entirety.

Buffavento Castle Today

Buffavento is the least accessible of the three castles that sit on peaks in the Kyrenia range, and it is also the least well-preserved. It is, however, very well camouflaged, as it blends almost indistinguishably into the cliffs from which it rises, offering outstanding views. It’s approached from just west of Pendadactylos Peak, along a six-kilometre road that winds along the cliffs. A path cut into the mountainside forms a 25-minute walk up to the castle.

The castle is divided into two distinct groups of buildings, all of which have been designed to fit the terrain in which they are built. An arched gatehouse, which is part of the fortification wall that protects the lower part of the castle, is built almost into the hillside. Through the gatehouse, a path leads to the lower section buildings that appear to have been dormitory style barracks and storerooms.

A staircase cut into the rock leads to the upper section, in the so-called Queen’s Chamber. Some of the castle’s gates and rooms, particularly in the upper level, still show the red brickwork that dates to Byzantine times, and which is similar in style to some that can be found at St. Hilarion Castle, to the west.

At the castle’s highest point, a terrace is likely the spot where the signal fires that linked Buffavento with the other castles and with Nicosia would have been lit.

The remains of two churches also stand in the Buffavento area, one dedicated to St. Chrysostomos, an Archbishop of Constantinople, and an older church, said to have been built for St. Helena after her visit to the Holy Land. The former church is believed to have been built as part of a monastery: shortly after Richard the Lionheart took control of the island, he sold it to the Knights Templar, who held it for approximately two years. The story goes that during this time, a Byzantine princess discovered that a spring near the castle held water that was healing her dog’s skin, and that she also subsequently healed her. To give thanks, she founded the monastery.

Memorial

A stone memorial has been built on the path leading up to Buffavento Castle, inscribed in three languages, to commemorate the victims of an airplane that crashed nearby in 1988. The spot is also the site of an old olive tree, carefully ringed by an airplane that crashed nearby in 1988.
FMPU Investigate

This is why it is of the utmost importance that immediately following the discovery of an incident or reporting of a crime, the area is secured and the matter reported to the FMPU. This prevents loss or alteration of evidence, whilst ensuring additional material is not added to the scene, which would cause unnecessary contamination.

Each crime scene examiner deploys with a standard set of tools and equipment. The kit includes a 35 mm Nikon camera and ancillaries ranging from a forensic box containing various packaging materials and tools such as screwdrivers, a hacksaw and power drill, to a fingerprint box containing several different fingerprint powders and brushes required for the enhancement of latent fingerprint marks on a variety of surfaces.

On arrival at any scene, the crime scene examiner first conducts a visual examination and makes written notes and a sketch plan detailing those items considered to be of potential evidential value in relation to the enquiry. Each room or area is broken down into segments and searched in a methodical manner to ensure that evidence is not lost or overlooked. This often includes making a video recording of the scene for later use to brief the Senior Investigating Officer and members of the enquiry team.

Before anything is recovered or moved, the area is then photographed. Any object, mark or stain overlooked. This often includes a chain of evidence, which could be broken down into segments and photographed. Any object, mark or stain overlooked. This often includes a chain of evidence, which could be broken down into segments and photographed. Any object, mark or stain overlooked. This often includes a chain of evidence, which could be broken down into segments and photographed. Any object, mark or stain overlooked. This often includes a chain of evidence, which could be broken down into segments and photographed. Any object, mark or stain overlooked. This often includes a chain of evidence, which could be broken down into segments and photographed. Any object, mark or stain overlooked. This often includes a chain of evidence, which could be broken down into segments and photographed. Any object, mark or stain overlooked. 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To sum up, as Hercule Poirot might put it in an Agatha Christie who-done-it, the crime scene examiner does not conduct the investigation or solve the crime, but merely ensures that the necessary evidence left at a crime scene is correctly recovered, allowing it to be presented as best evidence to link a suspect to a scene and an alleged offence. From the moment of discovery of a crime, everything hinges on the actions taken by those on the scene.

So remember to best help the crime scene examiner secure the scene, thereby preventing loss, alteration or contamination of vital evidence.
Limassol Liaison Office

UNFICYP has reopened its Liaison Office in Limassol after four years to handle a resurgence of demand among Turkish Cypriots for assistance in the area since the opening of the crossing points last April.

Today, Limassol houses an estimated 700 Turkish Cypriots, of whom some 70 are original residents who opted to remain in the town after the events of 1974. Limassol appears to be a favourite destination for Turkish Cypriot newcomers arriving from the north. Since many claim they have difficulties in obtaining Cyprus identity cards, a prerequisite for welfare, accommodation and health care benefits, the Limassol office is now in the process of working to assist Turkish Cypriots in their dealings with the responsible authorities in the south.

During its first two months of operation, the UN office was open only once a week. Demand for its services has been so great that the need is clear for more resources to enable it to open more frequently. Currently, it has a caseload of five to ten client requests per office day, which are dealt with by Joanna Alexandru, Civil Affairs Liaison Assistant, and Ersin Oztuyucan, our Turkish Cypriot colleague who has recently joined the Civil Affairs team to staff the office.

Most of the families approaching the office for help are facing serious humanitarian difficulties. A case in point is that of a woman from the north, six months pregnant, married to a Turkish Cypriot with a Cyprus ID card. Because her parents come from Turkey, she has been unable to obtain her own Cyprus ID. Lack of ID means the authorities do not recognize her entitlement to medical care.

Another case concerns a Turkish Cypriot family of six living for the last seven months in one room in a house ruled unfit for habitation, while continuing to seek official assisted housing in the Limassol area. The Limassol district office has been unable to help because of lack of available housing.

Another recurring concern is the issue of education for Turkish Cypriot children in the south. Some children of Turkish Cypriot families have experienced difficulties in schooling because of their inability to speak Greek, and some parents have declined to send their children to school in the absence of the availability of Turkish-language medium schooling. UNFICYP is pursuing the issue with the Limassol District Officer. The UNFICYP liaison office in Limassol has evoked high expectations amongst the Turkish Cypriots living in the south. However, much will depend on the readiness and ability of the authorities in the south to cooperate with UNFICYP in solving these problems.

Three Senators on the Green Line

A high-level US delegation, led by US senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham, visited the Green Line on 25 August. The delegation stopped off in Cyprus after a fact-finding visit to Iraq.

Before setting off on their walkabout, the Senators, plus Congressmen James Kolby and Dan Twaing, US Assistant Secretary of Defence for Legislative Affairs Powell Moore, and the US Ambassador to Cyprus, Michael Klosvon, were briefed by the Chief of Mission.

Senior UNOPS officials responsible for the Nicosia Master Plan, including Miran Rechter, Programme Manager of the Bicomunal Development Programme, were also present.

Visitors to UNFICYP HQ

UNFICYP soldiers were at their smartest for the visits of two Major Generals to the UNPA. Maj. Gen. Josef Bitzman, Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Slovak Armed Forces, visited on 27 August, and Commander British Forces, British Forces Cyprus, Maj. Gen. P.T. Pearson, CBE, on 2 September.

Both inspected an honour guard, met with the Chief of Mission, Force Commander and Chief of Staff. Both Generals visited their respective contingents and met with their troops.

Travelling Down Memory Lane

Former Finnish peacekeeper Esko Heikkinen, who served in Cyprus over three decades ago, paid a visit to the Public Information Office of the UNFICYP Headquarters on 3 September. Esko had a particular reason for visiting this office - he was the Military Public Information Officer from December 1967 for a 17-month tour.

Esko graduated in journalism from Tampere University in Helsinki in 1967 and immediately joined UNFICYP. "It was a hard task to take on the MPIO job as I was young and inexperienced, but it was a wonderful opportunity for me to travel so soon after graduating. We Scandina-vians are well known sun worshippers!"

Being back in the UNPA was a very nostalgic experience. I searched for my old accommodation block, and was sorry to discover it had been burned down in the recent summer fires. But I was pleased to see the dancing area in the Officers' Club is still intact, which brought back many happy memories of my tour here."

Following Esko's tour with UNFICYP, he returned to Finland and worked as a journalist with several well-known local magazines and newspapers. Nowadays he is retired but still works from home as a freelance journalist. His fact-finding trip to UNFICYP was because he is currently working on a number of articles for the Finnish Blue Beret magazine. This is a monthly publication for the UN soldiers' Association which keeps past peacekeepers up-to-date with the UN and current events in missions they once served in. Esko’s UNFICYP visit was to do just that for some of the more than 10,000 Finnish soldiers who have served as peacekeepers here in Cyprus since 1964.

In 2004, it will be the 40-year celebration of FINCON’s arrival in Cyprus, and there are plans ahead for more than 100 retired Finnish soldiers, headed by General Ahl Varttiaiinen, the UNFICYP Force Commander from 1996 to 1999, to visit the island next spring.

Back on the Beat

Two retired Australian police officers who served with UNCIVPOL over 35 years ago revisited the island with their wives earlier this month.

On 4 September, Mr. Peter Vaughan, with his wife Patricia, and Mr. Bob van der Wolf, with his wife Lynn, paid a visit to UNFICYP UNCIVPOL. Both Peter and Bob are retired members of Australian Police Services who were part of the 4th AUSTCIVPOL Contingent who served in Cyprus between May 1967 and May 1968. After a short meeting with the Force Commander, they were taken on a driven Green Line tour before spending a social evening with currently serving CIVPOL members.

The exchange of stories between the two eras was very interesting. While the UN Buffer Zone did not exist during their time, both veterans clearly remember the Green Line in Nicosia and smaller “Green Lines” in Pafos. They also told of the requirement to escort convoys from both communities through areas that were under the control of the other.

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Esko Heikkinen with the Blue Beret's own Miriam Taylor for the Finnish Blue Beret magazine. This is a monthly publication for the UN Soldiers' Association which keeps past peacekeepers up-to-date with the UN and current events in missions they once served in. Esko's UNFICYP visit was to do just that for some of the more than 10,000 Finnish soldiers who have served as peacekeepers here in Cyprus since 1964.

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ARGCON’s 10 Years in Cyprus

This year marks ten years since the first Argentinean troops were deployed in Cyprus as part of UNFICYP. The Argentinean Contingent, ARGCON, took over Sector 1 from the Danish Contingent on 25 September 1993. When the order to prepare troops for a peacekeeping mission in Cyprus was first received in September of that year all the officers and soldiers felt slightly awestruck since this was a new kind of mission for them. “We will keep the peace so far away from here, from our land”, was the thought that crossed their minds.

So far, more than 7,500 soldiers have served with ARGCON. In October 1993, when the first contingent was established and the Argentinean Forces were still taking their first tentative steps in Cyprus, the then President of Argentina, Carlos Saul Menem, visited the newly arrived troops on the island. On that occasion, apart from the significance that a head of state’s visit has, it was a clear indication to the troops of his support for the tasks that the military personnel had undertaken. Dr Menem said: “I return to our country so deeply impressed, that I promise to military personnel had undertaken. Dr Menem said: “I return to our country so deeply impressed, that I promise to the troops of his support for the tasks that the military personnel had undertaken. Dr Menem said: “I return to our country so deeply impressed, that I promise to the troops of his support for the tasks that the military personnel had undertaken. Dr Menem said: “I return to our country so deeply impressed, that I promise to

During the course of its peacekeeping duties, ARGCON has had to deal with numerous incidents. The most significant occurred in August 1996, when two Greek Cypriot demonstrators were killed and several peacekeepers were wounded. The incidents – the most violent recorded on the island since 1974 – made headlines around the world including the front page of The Times.

ARGCON is a “Joint and Combined Contingent”. Active duty personnel come from the Argentinean Army, Marine Corps and Air Force. Since 1993, the contingent has also incorporated soldiers from other South American countries including a platoon from Chile (32), a platoon from Paraguay (30) and officers from Brazil, Bolivia, Peru and Uruguay.

Medal parades are always memorable. Typical Argentinean hospitality includes displays of military disciplines, and traditional dances with the tango always taking top billing. And no Argentinean celebration would be complete unless it features the traditional delicacies, empanadas and mate.

Jumping for Joy?

Some people say that parachuting is a dangerous and stupid sport and that they wouldn’t jump from a perfectly good plane (they would if they saw the one I jumped from), but that’s what attracted me to it, whilst on a previous tour of Northern Ireland with another regiment a few years ago.

So when my team commander on that tour asked if anybody wanted to do a static line jump, I couldn’t have jumped any higher. When I actually got in the door, I was very apprehensive about jumping. As any person with vertigo will tell you, they hate heights, but when I left the plane on the descent, it was calm and relaxing.

So now, out here on a Cyprus tour, I wanted to follow up this early step. When my Battery Commander and Battery Sergeant Major asked the lads in the troops if any of them wanted to jump out at 3,500 ft, they had no takers so I was told and volunteered to do it.

On 20 July, I was on the transport down to Dhekelia Garrison where the course was being run, ready for the Monday morning start.

The first day was the boring – but essential – ground training. Without it, none of us would have been permitted to jump.

The actual training consisted of learning about the actual parachute – types of malfunctions, exiting the plane, canopy control, etc. Most important of all were the “Reserve Drills”, which we practised day after day until we got it right.

By the end of the jump, only one of the original 12 was to start the course had fallen by the wayside. LCpl. Billingham looked as if he

Senior Staff on Green Line Tour

UNFICYP senior staff were given a custom-tailored Green Line tour, courtesy of the CO Sector 2, Lt. Col. Bob Caldwell and his line officers on 11 September.

Those participating included the Chief of Mission, Force Commander, Chief of Staff, Senior Adviser, UNCIVPOL Commander, Chief Administrative Officer, Chief of Civil Affairs, Spokesman and the FC’s MA.
UN Day 2003

This year, we celebrate UN Day in Cyprus on Sunday 19 October.

As always, it is a day for the family. So join us at the Ledra Palace to help celebrate this very special birthday.

This year, the festivities begin at 3:00 pm and feature a concert, celebrating the island’s diversity and its traditions.

Featured artists will include:

Hadjimike
Ioannis Savvides
Soner Ersen
Tanner Sah
and the
Ross Daly Ensemble.

There will be the usual games for children, backgammon for the grown-ups, and a full array of UNFICYP contingent and UN agency displays.

Refreshments will be on sale.

Mark the date in your calendar: 19 October 2003!