The Blue Beret
October 2003

Music to celebrate UN Day
Dear friends all over the world,
These are difficult times, for the world and for the United Nations.

In Iraq and in many other regions, violence and terror continue to bring death and suffering to innocent people. In August, the United Nations itself suffered a brutal assault on its Baghdad headquarters. We lost some of our dearest friends and colleagues. You, the peoples of the world, lost some of your best and most dedicated servants.

But on this United Nations Day, let us not mourn or bedacast. Let us rather remember what our colleagues were in Iraq in order to: help the Iraqi people rebuild their country; after years of war, oppression and isolation – just as other United Nations workers are in other war-torn countries, helping to relieve suffering, restore peace and build new institutions.

We must continue that work of serving humanity wherever its needs are greatest. We must continue helping you, the peoples of the world, to find common solutions to common problems. And we will.

We will continue our efforts to tackle poverty, disease, climate change, and the spread of small arms. And we will also work together to fight terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. We do not have to choose. The United Nations must confront all these threats at once.

To do so successfully, it may be necessary to make changes in our international system, including the United Nations itself. By and large, I believe our Organisation has served humanity well for 58 years. But it has never been perfect, and the time may well have come to improve it. I have urged all governments to think about that, and I am appointing a panel of wise men and women, to make suggestions.

In the end, governments will decide. But they will have the effort to reach agreement only if you, the peoples, tell them clearly what you expect – what kind of world you want to live in. I rely on you to do that. And I believe that if you do make your voices heard, loudly and firmly enough, we can indeed win through this crisis and build a better world, based on the rule of law.

Let us all persevere, in the knowledge that we are profoundly part of the natural heritage of world you want to live in. I rely on you to do that.

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Cyprus celebrated UN Day with UNFICYP and the UN family of agencies at Ledra Palace in Nicosia on 19 October with a five-hour concert featuring musicians from all over the island and a special guest appearance by the Ross Daly trio.

The island’s celebration of the UN’s 58th anniversary was opened by UNFICYP Force Commander Lt. Gen. Jin Ha Hwang, who welcomed the turnout of some 3,000 guests at this year’s leading bicommunal get-together.

The UNFICYP Force Commander noted that this year Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots have been meeting throughout Cyprus, a welcome development worthy of celebration in itself.

“We believe that this contact contributes to understanding and friendship among the people of this island”, he said. “The political problems have not been solved yet – but through your interaction, you can help progress on the way to peace.”

This year’s UN Day tribute highlighted performances by such artists as the singer Pavlina Costantopoulos, Umut Albayrak (vocals) with the Abrahim Gersek group, a trans-island jazz quartet, the Bicommunal Choir, Hajimike and Zeki Ali with Poetz 4 Peace, and a special appearance by the lyre virtuoso Ross Daly and his ensemble.

UN Day is celebrated in Cyprus on the nearest Sunday to 24 October, the actual date on which the UN marks its official anniversary.
Celebrating the UN’s 58th Anniversary in Cyprus

The overall theme focused on the island’s traditions, in addition to the usual displays from home by UNFICYP’s peacekeeping contingents and the UNHCR and UNV exhibits.

The UNDP/USAID-funded Bi-communal Development Programme (BDP) through UNOPS mounted a special display of local arts and crafts. BDP also helped underwrite the concert.
The Cultural Heritage of Cyprus: Part XVII

Our Lady of Ayia Napa

What You’ll Find Today

The Monastery Entrances: At the southern (main) entrance to the monastery (if we accept that the heads on the fountain are those of her parents and herself) is housed in an open, arcaded, domed building with interior parapets providing seats.

The entrance to the monastery here consists of three rooms that form arcaded patios leading to the courtyard. The roof of the church is semi-circular, oriented in an east-west direction. The western room of the entrance connects through a door to a neighbouring oblong room. The monastery now stands, discovered his animal in a grotto. When he entered the clearing, he saw a floodlight that surrounded an icon of the Virgin Mary. It’s from this legend that the church and the town gain their names: Ayia means “Saint”, while Napa means “wooded glen”

Parallel to the upper part of the church is the Catholic chapel that is entered through arched openings on the eastern wall of the nave. The chapel walls bear signs of fresco paintings in which some crowned heads can be seen. The roof is barrel-shaped, and reinforced by columns attached to the walls. An oblong window is found on the southern wall.

The Courtyard: is the centre of the courtyard, inside the cloistered monastery walls and surrounded by gardens, an octagonal fountain basin decorated with large garlands takes pride of place. Reliefs above each garland depict different items, which (although a different source says that the name comes from the character and natural beauty”, which was run by his experiences at this “place noted for its sacred icons were more or less spared. The icon of the Virgin Mary found in the grotto could perhaps have been hidden there by those who wanted to protect it from the Iconoclasts.

A second legend relates how the monastery was refurbished in the 16th century by a noble Venetian lady from Famagusta, who took refuge here from her family’s pressure on her to marry a nobleman. She likely built the two-storey house by the northern entrance and the domed fountain in the centre of the courtyard.

Pietro della Valle, who stayed at the monastery for four days in September 1625, provides some interesting reading on Ayia Napa. He wrote about his experiences at this “place noted for its sacred character and natural beauty”, which was run by women. He says that “the rooms were full of people, men and women, Greek Christians with a few Turks among them, all playing, dancing, drinking, amusing themselves, and we amused ourselves likewise”.

During its long history, Ayia Napa served the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, both as a monastery and a nunnery. It was abandoned early in the 19th century for unknown reasons, and its vast land properties were hired out to farmers, who came to settle in the area and enlarged the fishing village of the same name, now turned into a thriving summer resort.

The monastery was reconstructed in the 1960s, and is now used by the delegates to conferences of the World Council of Churches. Its gardens and fountains remain a peaceful haven.

October 2003 - The Blue Beret
A Day in the Life of the MFR
From Civvy Street to UNFICYP

By Gnr. A. Myles

Once completed, all hot and sweaty, we moved to the urban area ready for our next exercise. Upon the arrival of Col. Bayless, we began. It was hard going, especially with our clerk, LCpl. Boresenko, and the Sector Two lads pushing us to our limits. Cheers guys, we will get our revenge. Afterwards, Col. Bayless gathered us all together for a few words of wisdom, which lifted spirits within the battery, due to our forthcoming disbandment upon return to the UK. Then it was time to clean up and hand in stores, while Col. Bayless attended a top table lunch with the officers and seniors of the battery. All in all, we carried out the day in the true Louisbush fashion. Well done, lads! Now it’s onwards, taking each day as it comes till the end of tour.

Friday came and members of 1 Platoon MFR carried out the honour guards. The first was at 09:30 hrs, followed by the arrival of Col. Bayless at 10:30 hrs, who met nine members of the honour guard. Escorted by Maj. Morgan, he proceeded into HQ UNFICYP for a JOC brief. Meanwhile, the honour guard had one more visitor at 11:00 hrs. They completed and the honours done, we had to ditch our weapons and get up to UN Pt and join 3 Platoon and the rest of 1 Platoon for the rural demo. We got the call over the radio that Col. Bayless was in position ready.

So, off we went in our TACTICAs and carried out rural crowd control. A big thanks to Paul, our fire chief, for the fires, and to MAPA “Boris” (Slovak) for letting me burn…. (Cheers mate!)

A Day in the Life of the MFR

By Bdr. Ian Inglis

A fter 10 years in the Territorial Army (TA) serving with 218 Battery, 105 Regt RA (V), I thought it was time to broaden my military experience. But how and in what way? Just at that time, a memo and poster was circulating round the Battery, that 22 Regt RA were looking for TA volunteers to join them on their UN tour to Cyprus. They needed people to start training in April.

I never gave it a second thought. Running my own cleaning contracts business is very demanding and time-consuming, along with my TA commitment. There was no way. Weeks passed and when the poster was out-of-date but still on the notice board. I read it more closely, and thought, “Could I manage to go?”

Sixteen years being self-employed – time for a change I thought! What about Donna and the kids? Every time I passed the poster, I thought I like the sound of this. But I am too old. We have to leave in June. Will I? Won’t I?

So I called 22 Regt Direct, missing the boss on his command, and asked if they were still looking for TA personnel. They said “yes” – great! Would they accept a 53-year-old gardener who had never got on a bit? They said “yes” again! Great! Col. Bayless was up in the wheels in motion. Then I thought I better mention it to my wife! After many discussions, like “can we afford it?”, “what will you do when you return back”, “Can we afford it?” I soon got to know all the guys and find out who was the chaff in the crop. I have to know the old TA guy who just hates a drink.

I was losing weight (no bad thing), and after the first few weeks of 12-hour shifts on security, PT in the mornings, crowd control training and, most of all, refreshments. It didn’t take me long to become a bit of a regular, but I know that the Army have two-can rule though. I soon got to know all the guys and find out who was the chaff in the crop. I have to know the old TA guy who just hates a drink.

After the first few weeks of 12-hour shifts on security, PT in the mornings, crowd control training and, most of all, refreshments, I was beginning to enjoy myself. It was great meeting new people and doing something important and worthwhile, as well as learning new things. Good experience to take back to my own unit. I decided not to make the best of it and to get as much out of it as possible. I was getting fitter “a bit”, thanks to the beatings from L/Bdr. McGettigan, the platoon PTI, even though I hated every minute of the PT. I was losing weight (no bad thing), learning new skills, and attending the fire fighting course. This was all new to me, but with the other battery members, having been part of OP Fresco, were old hands. It didn’t take long for that to show, we were called out to help out on the first fire. The professionalism of the regiment soon had the fire under control.

As well as the military skills I was learning, I was able to go to UNRRAF and do some adventure training, and something we don’t get to do much in the TA. I have recently completed my level 2 powerboat handlers course and my BCU 2 kayak course. I have now been bitten by the kayak bug. I can’t get enough, thanks to the UNRRAF team. But doing all the adventure training has also helped me decide what I want to do when I return back to Civvy Street and the TA. I’ve started to look at training to become an instructor. There are a number of courses I am going to try and complete and get the relevant qualifications, including kayak, instructor and mountain leader, to name a few. I have also thought about starting an adventure training course for UNPA as part of the Mobile Force Reserve. Having had no pre-training, prior to joining the Battery, I was a bit wary to say the least. But after meeting the guys and the girls who I would be serving with for the next six months, I thought, “this will be OK, I think.” This was despite the fact that the majority of my new comrades are between 18 and 25, and here’s me, 39 in a few months. I am old enough to be a dad to some of them. But I’m here now, it’s too late, I just have to get on with it.

My first port of call on my first time off was..... Well, being a 38-year-old married man, and having kids? Every time I passed the poster, I offered a contract there and then and managed to get as much out of it as possibly.

The memories, descriptions and portrayals of Nicosia’s journey in time provided a good insight to the audience of the city’s distinctive beauty, past and present.

Nicosia: Monuments and Memories

Round 500 people attended a bimonthal event at the Ledra palace Hotel on 10 October which focused on Nicosia: Monuments and Memories. The event was sponsored by the US Embassy, the United Nations, the Hellenic Bank and the two municipalities of Nicosia. The history of Nicosia from the Middle Ages to recent times was related by a group of young Greek and Turkish Cypriots through a tri-screen slide show with narration in English, accompanied by slides in Greek and Turkish. The journey through the city’s history was based on personal experiences that have been recorded by historians.

The memories, descriptions and portrayals of Nicosia’s journey in time provided a great insight to the audience of the city’s distinctive beauty, past and present.
The CM addressing the parade

Everyone loves and hates the medal parade. The rehearsals always pay off on the day, but that’s not always on your mind when you are doing the drills. September’s Sector 2 medal parade, however, was like no other parade before, since this was the last tour for the 22nd Regiment as we are disbanding in March next year. However, was like no other parade before, since this was the last tour for the 22nd Regiment as we are disbanding in March next year. While the RSM caught LBdr. Hancock napping long and somewhat boring, there were a few funny moments to look past time – rifle drill and parade format training. Although these were for the 22nd Regiment as we are disbanding in March next year, however, was like no other parade before, since this was the last tour for the 22nd Regiment as we are disbanding in March next year. September’s Sector 2 medal parade, however, was like no other parade before, since this was the last tour for the 22nd Regiment as we are disbanding in March next year. With this parade being done, we moved on to the 23rd Regiment’s Sector 2 medal parade.

The parade was conducted at LPH on 26 September. We were led on by the band from 2 Light Infantry Battalion. Once we were all into open order, the officers marched on to join us and the parade was passed to the CO, Lt. Col. Caldwell. Then the long wait for the staff cars.

On arrival of the staff car containing the Chief of Mission, Zbigiew Wlosowicz, and the Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Jin Ha Wang, we all were brought up to attention, and the CM gave a speech of welcome to all the guests. Having been given the order to advance in review order and then having given a general salute, we were ready to receive our medals.

All medals pinned, the FC stepped up to say a few words and to congratulate us all on a job well done. We then marched past in quick time and gave an eyes right as we passed the guests.

After the parade, everyone gathered in front of LPH for a reception, enabling us all to talk with our guests over a few drinks and to thank them for attending our historic final UN medal parade.

Beware Ideas And The Scent of the Day

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**Ambrosino’s Mandolin**

Once upon a time, an Italian prisoner of war named Carlo Ambrosino whiled away his time in a prison camp in Egypt by making a mandolin. He used everything and anything that came to hand—wood, brass, copper pinnies, bits of plastic combs, metal hinges, whatever he could find.

About the same time, a farmer named Pelopidas Polycarpou turned up in the land of the Pyramids. He was one of a group of Cypriots who had answered the call to serve with the British forces in the Second World War.

Polycarpou admired Ambrosino’s craftsmanship and bought the mandolin. After he was demobbed at the end of the war, he brought the mandolin back with him to Cyprus.

Once safely home, he was one of the pioneers who helped set up the renowned collective farm at Onisha. There the years quickly passed. Many a mellow evening, Polycarpou, the veritable virtuoso, entertained friends and family with melodious murmurings on his mandolin. He used everything and anything that came to hand—wood, brass, copper pinnies, bits of plastic combs, metal hinges, whatever he could find.

So it was that at the town hall in Nicosia’s Agios Dhometios suburb, in the presence of the President of the Republic, Mr. Demetris Christofias, that the 40-year-old saga played out.

About the same time, a farmer named Tom Johnson, his wife, and two other Canadian peacekeepers deployed to the farm in the chillier climes of New Brunswick, Canada. In April 1964, Johnson and seven others were the first group of UN peacekeepers to arrive in Cyprus. Polycarpou, the 25-year-old UN peacekeeper, was one of the pioneers who helped set up the renowned collective farm at Onisha. There the years quickly passed. Many a mellow evening, Polycarpou, the veritable virtuoso, entertained friends and family with melodious murmurings on his mandolin. He used everything and anything that came to hand—wood, brass, copper pinnies, bits of plastic combs, metal hinges, whatever he could find.

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**Lars Skold bids farewell**

Mr. Lars Skold from Sweden, the outgoing Chief Support Services, decided to take early retirement on 30 September 2003 after almost three decades of service with the United Nations.

Lars was recruited as a civilian staff member of the United Nations on 2 February 1976, after spending two years in the Swedish military in UNEF II and UNIFCYP.

Here in Cyprus, his military, international and local staff colleagues in UNIFCYP hosted a number of farewell functions prior to his departure.

Lars says: “I hold many fond memories of my service with the Organisation, far too many to commit to paper. But I consider myself fortunate and privileged to have served with the United Nations”.

Lars plans to share his retirement between Sweden and Cyprus.

**New CO Sector 1**

L t. Col. Gustavo Jorge Luis Motta graduated from the Military Academy as a 2nd Lieutenant of the Engineer’s Corps in December 1979.

As a junior officer, he served in the 101st Combat Engineers Regt, 2nd Armoured Engineer’s Coy and the 7th Engineer’s Coy. In December 1987, he graduated as a Military Intelligence Officer.

After graduating as a Staff Officer in 1992, he was assigned to the Operations Branch at the Army General Staff HQ. Between January and March 1995, he was appointed Instructor in the “O1 (Staff) Course” for Latin American Officers at Fort Benning in Georgia, USA.

In April, 1995 he was reassigned as the Engineering Officer in the Field Administration and Logistics Division (FALD) in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), UNHQ, New York. In 1998, he was assigned to the Planning Department of the Operations Branch, Army General Staff HQ.

From September 1998 to March 1999, he was Commanding Officer of 12th Engineer’s Coy in UNIKOM working mainly in explosives ordnance disposal and road maintenance tasks. At the end of 1999, he took up the post of Assistant to the General Staff Director in the Army HQ and, since December 1999, he has been in the position of Chief Support Services.

During his career, Lt. Col. Motta has been awarded the UN medal for services at UN HQ and in UNIKOM.

Lt. Col. Motta is married to Maria Elisa Buzaglo and they have three children, Nicolas (17), Maria Guillermina (12) and Luis Ignacio (9).

**Slán Caleb**

WPO Caleb Cooper wrapped up his year-long tour with the UNFICYP Spokesperson’s office a few days before all hands were called on deck for the latest UN Day at Ledra.

For Caleb and his wife Elaine, Ledra was where it all started. Caleb and Elaine were the first made landfall on the island the previous year. It was a confusing but appropriate place to begin, since Caleb was to serve as WPO during his secondment and where and when better to start than the day and place where thousands of islanders come together to mingle in the biggest biconnental event of the year?

In his capacity as Visits Coordinator, Caleb organized and coordinated visits to UNFICYP HQ, to the UNPA and, in close consultation with the hardworking crew at Sector 2, tours of the Green Line, whether a group visit for school children or the VIP of VIPs, as was the case this month when the visitor was the Dutch Prime Minister. Caleb’s visits all met with the same courtesy, and the same unflappable care and attention to detail went into planning their programmes.

For Caleb and Elaine every good fortune on their return home to their own green island.
Dutch Prime Minister Visits UNFICYP