Lett me extend to each and every one of you my very best wishes for this holiday season and for a peaceful and fulfilling year ahead. As we prepare to celebrate this traditional festive period with family, friends and contingent colleagues, let us also give pause and reflect on the 12 months now drawing to a close.

Looking back, 2003 has been a year perhaps more marked by pain and sorrow than crowned with accomplishment and achievement. True, we saw the island’s landscape transformed with the easing of freedom of movement restrictions on 23 April. However, less than two weeks before Christmas, a pall was cast over this mission when the Argentinian Contingent lost two soldiers and UNFICYP lost two peacekeepers in a buffer zone accident.

We mourn the tragic deaths of Sergeant Oscar Alfredo Chocobar and Private Juan Manuel Escalante. They paid the ultimate price, giving their lives in the service of peace. Let us remember them in our prayers and let us extend to their families and loved ones and to the contingent our condolences and deepest sympathy. In addition, we wish Corporal Nestor Fabian Ledesma a speedy recovery from his injuries.

In the wider UN family, let us remember too, 19 August. How can we forget that fateful day when the UN lost some of its finest, taken away in the devastation wrought by one calculated act of misguided mayhem in Baghdad?

Even as we recollected, stunned by the horror of that vicious attack, we could sense that, along with our fallen colleagues, the perpetrators struck a murderous and deliberate blow at the very heart of peace itself. Certainly, peacekeeping and peace-making as the UN has known and practised it since the time of the Charter have been changed forever as a result. Terrorism’s latest term “soft target” now casts an ominous shadow over all of us and our work.

Here in Cyprus, we began the year in high hopes only to see the effort to bring settlement to the island’s division through the Secretary-General’s plan falter to a halt in the small hours at The Hague last March. Then came the 23 April easement of freedom of movement restrictions that so far has led to more than 2.5 million crossings north and south.

And just days ago, on 14 December, the people in the north made their views known in an electoral process that, hopefully, will bring us closer to the long-overdue political settlement in Cyprus. Freedoms expressed are of the authors concerned, and do not necessarily conform with official policy. Articles of general interest (plus photos with captions) are invited from all members of the Force.

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December 2003 - The Blue Beret
December is, as we all know, a time of holidays. Throughout the world, people have traditionally celebrated this month of long nights and cold days (at least in the northern hemisphere) in a wide variety of ways. Perhaps the best known is Christmas.

When the weather outside is frightful, people like to stay inside and stay cheerful. When the world is dark, people try to make it a little lighter. Whether it’s Hanukkah, Christmas, the Solstice, the relatively recent holiday of Kwanzaa or the old nature-worshipping rites and sacrifices designed to bring on the return of the sun, the underlying theme of the festive spirit remains one of hope restored.

Many of these traditions can be found in Cyprus, which is after all the meeting point of three continents. Within the island, the UN encapsulates a global village of nationalities, most a long way from home. Mediterranean December may have as many gentle, sunny days as cold and rainy ones, but nobody is going to let “unseasonable” weather interfere with seasonable festivities!

It is no accident that the western world decreed that the new year begins shortly after midwinter. Winter, the time when the sun dies, followed by the new year with its promise of springtime, of the sun’s return, when life renew itself in the soil and the crops start growing again. Winter was a time to stay indoors, to shelter from the weather. Many of the traditions of the northern hemisphere are a time of enforced idleness, when the land lies fallow.

By midwinter, early in December, those who sub-sisted from the land generally knew whether food supplies would sustain them until the bloom of spring’s promise. Hence time for the feasts, whether in thanks or in celebration of another year with enough to eat. Back then, what was eaten at the feasts depended on what was available. In this modern world, various religions have invested the meal with ritual significance, subject to the vagaries of regional supply. In much of the western world, including Argentina, Australia, Britain, Canada and Ireland, the roasted, usually stuffed, has become the favoured meal, although older alternatives such as pork, duck and goose remain an enduring popularity.

The trimmings tend totake on a local flavour – bruta-
ly boiled vegetables in England and salmon in parts of British Columbia, for example. In Australia, famously, there’s always a good few people ready to celebrate with a “barbie” on the beach. In Holland, they opt for goose and hare, in Finland, codfish and pork.

In Cyprus, many have adopted the turkey as the centrepiece of the Christmas feast, replacing the more traditional pork. Otherwise, many Greek traditions are retained. For the Orthodox Church, the festival traditionally lasts from St Nicholas’ Day to the Feast of the Epiphany (6 December-6 January). More emphasis is placed on the religious solemnity of the occasion. Traditionally, some even observed a 40-day fast in preparation for the feast. Similarly, the Muslim celebration of Eid Al Fitr takes place on the first day of Shawaal to mark the end of the Ramadan fasting period.

The Cypriot Christmas has come under many influences over the years. For instance, as one Cypriot recently observed, at a time when Christmas trees would be on sale in supermarket parking lots surrounded by the pleasant whirl of the season, the only difference being that the trees for sale were artificial. Artificial, that is, in Cyprus as elsewhere, the old tradition of the German tree-gods seems to have made itself a niche.

Another popular tradition associated with Christmas and this time of year that perhaps dates back to pagan times is the holiday custom of gift-giving. In Northern Europe, this also began as a consequence of the long winters. During the rest of the year, there is work to be done all day, but in the winter, confined indoors, there is time to make and play with toys. The custom of giving of toys to children has expanded to the exchange of gifts between people of all ages and, in much of the world, this has become linked to the Christmas tree. The Victorians were quick to draw comparisons with the biblical tale of the Adoration of the Magi, the three kings who brought gifts to the infant Jesus. However, the giving of gifts in winter is a recurrent theme regardless of religion or culture. In many areas, these presents are placed around the Christmas tree, and the distribution and opening of the packages is a major ritual, usually taking place on Christmas Day.

In Greek tradition, gifts are seldom given to individuals; instead, small gifts are given to hospitals and orphanages. Within the family, presents are exchanged on new year’s day. Hanukkah, similarly, is a time for both gift-giving within families, and for making charitable donations. In addition to gifts, children receive money, and the traditional dreidel (a four-sided top with the words “Nun”, “Gimel”, “Hay” and “Shin”) to remind them of the reason for celebrating the Festival of Lights. Charitable giving is also an important aspect of the Muslim Eid, when all Muslims are expected to look after the less fortunate. Earlier, this took the form of gifts in kind but now cash is given. British giving is supposed to be followed by the opening of the (hopefully well-filled) poor boxes on Boxing Day, though this tradition has rather died out. The Day of the Wren is an Irish tradition celebrated 26 December (St. Stephen’s Day to some) and involves the “Wren Boys” who dress up and visit house-to-house, singing.

Another widespread tradition, often with regional variations, is that of the mystical gift-giver. Santa Claus, first promoted by the Americans in Victorian times as the red-robed image of Christmas, is now widely seen as the personification of the Yuletide spirit – a jolly, white-bearded old man who distributes gifts on 24 December. Also called Father Christmas, this character is based on St Nicholas, and is popularly depicted riding in a sleigh drawn by reindeer. In Australia, he prefers to dress in shorts, T-shirt and beach sandals, and his sleigh is pulled by half-a-dozen large kangaroos – unless that is, he’s catching “the perfect tube” on his surfboard! Whatever his transport, he arrives the night of 24 December to place presents beneath the tree or in specially hung bags or stockings. In Finland, he is known to make personal daylight visits! In Greece, Agios Vasilis visits New Year’s Eve. In Holland, Sinterklaas arrives early – 5 December – while Mikulas visits Hungarian children the following day, and they also have presents left for them on Christmas Eve by the “Baby Jesus”.

Finally, winter is a time for conviviality. The New Year is traditionally the biggest party of the season, both ending and beginning each year with good cheer and good company. The Scots, especially, make a particular tradition of this, all but ignoring Christmas in favour of “Hogmanay”. Meanwhile, the holiday season has become a time for family gatherings, and also for office parties. In many parts of the world, the word “family” is expanded to include anyone who, for whatever reason, can’t be with their own family. Most people would agree that a large family gathering is hardly a recipe for peace, joy and harmony; despite this, it remains popular.

At root, the winter – even the gentle, Cypriot winter – is a time for people to relax a little and enjoy themselves. Beneath the tradition, the religion and the cultural complexities, really it’s just an excuse to have a big meal in the company of people you like to be joyful and give thanks.
Psychologically Speaking...

Slovakia has more than 800 peacekeepers and observers serving with UN missions around the world. It is Slovakian Armed Forces policy to send military psychologists to three of these missions – UNFICYP, UNMEE and KFOR.

The reasons for doing this are many. Most units are posted overseas as a whole. However, in Cyprus, as with UNMEE and KFOR, soldiers are specifically chosen for their professions and/or skills and are selected from units all over Slovakia. They do not know each other, yet they have to learn quickly to work together as a team. Missions without psychologists have personnel who have already been posted in Slovakia as a unit, and so are familiar with each other and trained to work together as a team.

Slovakia remains a relatively new participant in UN peacekeeping operations. Soldiers therefore receive four weeks of extra training prior to their departure for UNFICYP. They are also required to take tests on their physical and psychological health, and on their qualifications for specific jobs. The psychological testing takes four hours, and must be passed by all personnel before they can be posted to the mission.

Test criteria include the soldier’s adaptability to new environments (on the basis of written tests and an interview), general mental stability, and the psychological capacity for reacting and coping in stressful situations. This applies not only to stress arising from being posted to a danger zone, but also to stress between unit members (i.e. between leaders and soldiers and vice-versa). Commanders and soldiers appear to be well qualified for their jobs, but it is important to keep in mind that they have never met each other before moving on to “more important” matters. After only weeks of extra training prior to their departure for UNFICYP, they are all over Slovakia. They do not know each other, yet they have to learn quickly to work together as a team.

In the first room he has three beds for these treatments, while in the second room there are simply chairs set out in a circle (never with a table – this would be an obstacle) where he can spend time analyzing problems with patients. He discusses problem situations with both commanders and personnel.

Whether the problem is emotional or work-related, he tries to see if the situation can be resolved as quickly as possible. He proposes the resolutions and talks through problems in one or more sessions until the problems are resolved. Each person speaks his or her piece on the subject and between them, they all try to improve the situation.

In Cyprus, soldiers work in limited areas and conditions and in different surroundings to those back in Slovakia. Even if a soldier has a simple traffic accident, he also has to learn quickly to work together as a team. Dr. Delincák will follow up on psychological recuperation in Cyrus in September this year to serve as military psychologist for the Slovak and Hungarian soldiers of Sector 4. He operates from Camp General Stefánik in Famagusta, visiting all locations within Sector 4 – OPs, patrol bases, camps, etc. During these visits he observes the lifestyle of the soldiers, talks with them and, on appropriate occasions, interviews them, asking questions about any problems they may face. From this he can discover what troubles they have, whether problems are related to home or to military life. He is able to work with them on their lifestyle in UNFICYP. The doctors try to guide, counsel and motivate the afflicted soldiers or might be experienced outside the camp. They do not wish to influence the soldiers’ time of stress. This can include an interview with the commander of the OP or troop to ensure that the method of command does not impose stress on the soldiers. In such cases, the psychologist diagnoses and recommends methods of command.

He also has two rooms in which he can work within Camp General Stefánik in Famagusta where soldiers can undergo such treatments as music therapy, relaxation therapy, concentration methods, regulation of emotion and hypnosis. In this room he finds that some soldiers have received some good news, and they are happy about another on HIV and AIDS. Some of us have probably ignored it completely or only given it a cursory glance before moving on to “more important” matters. After all, HIV and AIDS can seem to be some distant problem, unrelated to UNFICYP and Cyprus. If there is still a relative low reported incidence of AIDS (377 HIV cases have been reported 220 Cypriots and 157 non-Cypriot – since 1986), this should not allow us to be complacent. As members of the UN and as part of international community, we should not only be aware of the ravages that this terrible disease has caused both to individuals and at the global level, but we should also be aware and make a point of being fully informed of the facts surrounding it. We should not be complacent.

We are fortunate to have at our disposal an excellent booklet prepared by UNAIDS: “AIDS and HIV Infection, an overview for military personnel and their families”. With chapters on the facts and myths of HIV/AIDS, prevention, testing, living with, global overview, UN response, glossary and additional information, it is truly a comprehensive document on the subject.

The booklet is available on the K drive/Force Medical Officer/HIV/aids.pdf. A limited supply of hard copies is also available from the Civilian Personnel Office.
These are some of the most painful symptoms of HIV and AIDS.
Help us fight fear, shame, ignorance and injustice worldwide.

Live and let live.
The Cultural Heritage of Cyprus — Part X: Splendour and Sanctuary: The Kykkos Monastery and Museum

As the Blue Beret continues its series on the island’s cultural heritage, we look at the Monastery of the Virgin Mary at Kykkos. Located high in the Troodos mountains at an elevation of 1,200 metres, Kykkos Monastery was founded in the early years of the 12th century by the Byzantine emperor Alexios I Comnenos (1085-1180) to house an icon of the Mother of God that is attributed to Saint Luke. Although not the oldest, Kykkos is one of the richest and most renowned monastic establishments in Cyprus, despite having experienced periods of destitution and several devastating fires. Its workshops have produced exquisite icons, religious ornaments and illuminated manuscripts over the centuries, and its modern museum houses objects of significant historic and religious value.

There are a number of stories relating to the foundation of the Holy Royal Monastery of Panagia (which means the “all-holy one” or the Mother of God) at Kykkos. It is generally said that in the early years of the 12th century, the Duke-Governor of Cyprus, Manuel Butumutes, while on a hunting trip near Kykkos met — and mistreated — a hermit named Isaiah. The duke then fell into a coma and dreamt that he was asked to return to Kykkos and redeem himself to Isaiah. In the meantime, Isaiah had received a visitation by the Virgin Mary and was asked to return to Constantinople with her famous icon, painted by Saint Luke, to be sent from Constantinople to the island. Butumutes unfortunately considered that this request would be impossible to satisfy.

However, on Butumutes’ return to Constantinople, he learned that the Emperor’s daughter was stricken with the same illness from which he had suffered. He informed the Emperor of his experience, whereupon the Emperor sent for Isaiah, who cured the duke by laying his hand on her. Isaiah was then able to return to Cyprus (with the icon), and to start building the monastery with funds from the Emperor and with the help of architects and artists from Constantinople. The monastery, originally built of wood, was accidentally burned down in 1365 by a farmer, and was reconstructed, again with timber, on the orders of the Lusignan king Peter I. His wife, Queen Eleonora, provided the funds, as the Kykkos Virgin was also worshipped by the Latin Church. The monastery burned down again in 1541 during the Venetian period (1489 to 1570/1). The third building was constructed of local stone, so two subsequent fires (in 1751 and 1813) were not as disastrous.

Under the Ottomans, the monastery attracted many foreign visitors who, in their references to Kykkos, mentioned the existence of up to 400 monks. A property list compiled in 1789 by the British administration in Cyprus shows that the monastery owned 13 dependencies, 10 churches, 11 water systems, 24 land and orchards. Within the monastery resided 74 monks, 198 workers and seven orphaned children.

During the Ottoman and British periods in Cyprus, Kykkos played an important educational role by operating a school within its walls. Following Cyprus’s independence in 1960, the monastery founded two secondary schools in Nicosia and Larnaca, and thousands of hectares of land and orchards. The entire echelon of the clergy. A third showcase holds items that are the work of a famous Cretan painter, Ioannis Cornaros, who lived in the monastery as the 18th century turned into the 19th century.

The Museum offers showcases containing parchments and other manuscripts, books and documents of religious interest.

The Church

The Church is a domed basilica with three aisles. The nave was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, with the right aisle dedicated to All Souls and the left to the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. The screen that separates the sanctuary from the aisles dates back to the 18th century, and bears icons from the 17th and 18th centuries and, of course, Saint Luke’s icon of the Virgin. The entire church has recently been decorated with mosaics and frescoes.

The Museum

The Museum is a state-of-the-art building constructed and decorated with luxury materials such as granite and walnut. These were chosen because Kykkos’s abbot, Nikiforos, and the fathers wished to offer pilgrims and other visitors a small example of the style of辉煌 of Byzantium (when the monastery was founded).

The granitel floor of the entrance hall has an octagonal decoration in the centre featuring a bee — the emblem of the Kykkos abbots from the 18th century — which symbolizes toil and order. Around the bee are the consorts in the Abbot’s name in Greek, and the date of the museum’s construction in 1995.

The Museum has four exhibition rooms containing archaeological, historical and religious items from the Bronze Age to the mid-20th century, along with a small shop.

Room 1 contains antiquities mainly from the Cypriot Bronze Age to the end of the Roman period (2300 BC to 330 AD), as well as pottery from Greece and Italy (Magna Graecia). The Attic Black Figure vase, for example, depicts the slaying of the Minotaur by Theseus in the presence of the goddess Athena and Ariadne.

Room 2 displays various Byzantine and later works of art from the 4th century to the mid-20th century. The early Christian collection consists primarily of bronze items such as lamps, crosses, censers, chandeliers and lamp stands. It also includes a series of silver religious items; hanging lamps from the Middle East showing the influence of Greek Orthodox, western Baroque and Islamic traditions; and silver and wooden reliquaries, mostly in the form of books whose covers hold interior cases that contain bones of saints and a cross.

One interesting object is a 1576 silver gilt repousse cover of the Holy Icon of the Virgin Mary with the Baby Jesus. Another is an 1807 church-shaped hexagonal gilt ciborium (a vessel that holds bread for the Eucharist), richly decorated with corals and pearls. On its sides are Christ at the table of the Last Supper, the Virgin Mary and the Apostles. The crosses is an intricately carved wooden cross with scenes from the Old and New Testaments.

Two showcases display a large collection of post-Byzantine embroidered church textiles, such as altar cloths, icon covers and habits of the collegiate clergy. A third showcase holds items that demonstrate the special esteem held by sailors for the Virgin Mary.

In the apse of this large room is an early Christian marble Holy Table. On the wall hangs a 13th-century icon of the Virgin Mary, along with eight 17th-century icons of the Apostles on either side. Below these are eight marble reliefs.

Room 3 is an octagonal room that features a dome bearing a fresco of Christ Pantocrator (Almighty). The granite floor is laid with a peacock, the symbol of paradise.

Frescoes rescued from a church at Kellia Village in the Larnaca district are housed in this room, along with a number of icons and pieces of church furniture. Some of the icons are the work of a famous Cretan painter, Ioannis Cornaros, who lived in the monastery as the 18th century turned into the 19th century.

Room 4 offers showcases containing parchments and other manuscripts, books and documents of religious interest.
Hello, I am Ingrid Steuer, Inspector of the National Dutch Police Force, from the region of Flevoland. I arrived as part of the Dutch element of UNCIvfPOL with Gert Jan Hooijwerf on 7 November. Two other police officers, Gert Zondervan and Jan Krouwel, arrived on 1 December.

I am on a six-month tour with an option to stay for another six months. Let’s see if the UN wants us to stay that long, and if my husband and two sons in Holland will survive without me!

After a month with UNFICYP, I have already started to feel “at home”. This is due to the fact that I had a very warm welcome by Geoff Hazel, John McGloughlin, and all the other members of UNCIvfPOL, and I really thank them for that.

As a police officer in The Netherlands, I have worked in Surveillance, Special Forces, Community Policing, Investigations, and Project Management prior to arriving in Cyprus. I last worked in the Flevoland region, where I started my policing career over 23 years ago. My most recent project targeted unemployed young offenders. They were encouraged to take part in training courses and employment throughout the community with discipline. This became a successful project and is still ongoing.

I will spend Christmas with my family in Holland. We will have the traditional tree with presents for the children underneath. My extended family will visit us on the 25th and we will have a festive dinner together. This year it will be goose and hare. We Dutch always look forward to a white Christmas, but I think the last one was 12 years ago. So let’s see what happens this year. For all of you who are staying on Cyprus, have a nice, safe and happy holiday!

Three Cheers for the Tripod Trio

By Capt. Fiona Smith

On 28 November, the scene for a party with a difference in the International Police Club Bar at UNPA, Nicosia. The occasion: a joint birthday party for three of the Hungarian Non-Commissioned Officers based at FMPU.

Not content to organise their own party, the trio decided to go back to their cultural roots and cook an al fresco Hungarian style. All Hungarian hands were on deck early on that Saturday morning to ensure that preparations would go smoothly. All their investigative talents were required to locate the tripod, wood and shovels to start the laborious outdoor cooking process of the special Hungarian stew.

Zoltan the strongest member of the Hungarian team was called on for his spectacular digging style. Once he finished, the fire was immediately started and the cooking process began. All credit must go to Lazlo, who, together with some secret ingredients, cooked the meat to perfection in the traditional fogolics and kept a watchful eye on the proceedings, all five hours of it.

Not to be outdone, the other two birthday boys, Norbert and Jannis, were relegated to the kitchen where their potato peeling skills came to the fore. The result was a splendid Hungarian stew and just enough time to prepare for the arrival of their guests. Festive hats, courtesy of Maj. Kovacs and family, ensured that the birthday boys were the centre of attention for the duration of the party. All in all, a really enjoyable night. All their friends from Camp Berger, Camp Istvan, San Stefanik and, of course, the UNPA enjoyed the efforts of the tripod trio.

Arigato Michael-san

By Lesley Barlette

Quite frankly, when I took my 3½-year-old daughter Claudia to her first judo class, I thought it would probably be her last! But something, or should I say “someone”, rather special happened. His name is Michael Clarkson.

Michael, a radio technician in the Communications Unit of Electronic Support Services, joined UNFICYP in January 1996. Twice a week at St. Michael’s School, this gentle giant of a New Zealander with a black belt and 13 years of UN field service, dedicates his spare time to teaching children (and a few adults) judo with influences of budo (karate, aikido and aetem). The rapport he has with his pupils is a joy to see. They not only learn valuable techniques for defending themselves in real life situations they learn self-confidence, self-discipline and, most importantly, self-respect.

Michael told me in his own words: “There is an ancient Chinese saying that a journey of 1,000 miles begins with the first step and the aim is to give my pupils the confidence and belief in themselves so that they can move on to bigger and better things. Children especially have to learn about themselves and identify what they are physically capable of and what they need to develop. My main goal is to ensure that when my pupils move on from Cyprus, they have acquired sufficient skills to be able to join another association and continue their learning and development”.

Michael also indicated that he would very much like to be able to take his pupils on field trips to other judo clubs on the island, but recognises that time restraints and family commitments make this somewhat difficult. However, he would like to warmly invite anyone interested to come along to St. Michael’s School, UNPA, on Wednesdays and Sundays at 5.00 pm (beginners) or 6.00 pm (intermediate).

Even the parents have been known to learn a thing or two thanks to Michael. For someone who didn’t even know the difference between a teriyaki and a tatami, I am proud to say my Japanese is coming along nicely! On behalf of the pupils and the parents, I’d like to say a big “arigato” to Michael for his time, his patience and for teaching us all so many valuable things.

“Dona” Mara

He tells us what it was like and what it is like to be a peacekeeper through the eyes of a father:

“Unlike my previous missions, when communication was something not quite so important, this time the need to keep in touch with my wife Neli and Mara is constantly with me. I can’t wait to find out the latest thing my daughter has learned to do. When my wife tells her that she’s going to talk to me, she starts moving in front of the screen and this makes me the happiest man on earth!”

Unable to keep his emotions to himself, Carlos says: “We had been waiting for a child for 10 years. Now we know it’s the first thing that ever happened to us. But although being apart is a great sacrifice for my family and myself, I can’t help feeling very proud of being part of this group of men and women who work every day to keep world peace.”
Independence Day is Finland's most celebrated national holiday. Finland gained its independence from Russia on 6 December 1917, and during the early decades, this day was a very solemn occasion marked by patriotic speeches and special church services.

All over the country, festivities take place including parades, parties, and of course family get-togethers. Today, even rock stars and entertainers have been accepted as worthy interpreters of Finnish patriotism.

No less so in UNFICYP when the three officers of the Finnish Contingent started the day off with a short wreath-laying ceremony at the Kykko Camp in honour of UNFICYP veterans. Later on, the Finns in the mission gathered together to toast the occasion at the sauna. A reception was held in the evening to celebrate the day in style. 120 guests arrived and were welcomed by the Commander FINCON, Lt. Col. John Laukka and his wife Ritva. During the event, Capt. Raimo Pünkäläinen was decorated by UNFICYP Force Commander Lt. Gen. Jin Ha Hwang with the UN peacekeeping medal.

Rumour has it that following the official function, a reception was held in the evening to celebrate the day in style. 120 guests arrived and were welcomed by the Commander FINCON, Lt. Col. John Laukka and his wife Ritva. During the event, Capt. Raimo Pünkäläinen was decorated by UNFICYP Force Commander Lt. Gen. Jin Ha Hwang with the UN peacekeeping medal.

Joanne Retires

Joanne Kelly from Personnel Branch HQ UNFICYP is about to leave to make a new life for herself and her three children in the UK.

Joanne has been with UNFICYP for the past seven years. She is about to settle in Chichester and will be taking up a post with the British Ministry of Defence in early January.

During her time with UNFICYP, Joanne has met with all locally engaged civilian personnel who pass through the mission. She says: “I’ve had a great time working with UNFICYP and meeting people from so many different nationalities and backgrounds. It’s been a great experience, and I’d like to thank everyone from the bottom of my heart for the help and support I’ve had during my time with the mission”.

We wish Joanne all the best in the future.

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We wish Joanne all the best in the future.
Sobering Conversations

“I enjoy wine with my meal, but if I don’t feel completely fine, I’ll have a strong black coffee before going anywhere near the car.”

“I’ve got better than a breathalyser - I’ve got her! If she’s ever not sure, she takes the keys and she drives, and that’s that.”

“I can hold my drink probably better than most, but I never overdo it - after all, you never know how many other people have had, do you?”

“Look, I drive for a living, I’m not a big drinker - I know my limit and I never go over it.”

Would you take a lift from any of these drivers?

In all seasons, the best greeting is:

If you drink, don’t drive.
If you drive, don’t drink.

It’s that simple.