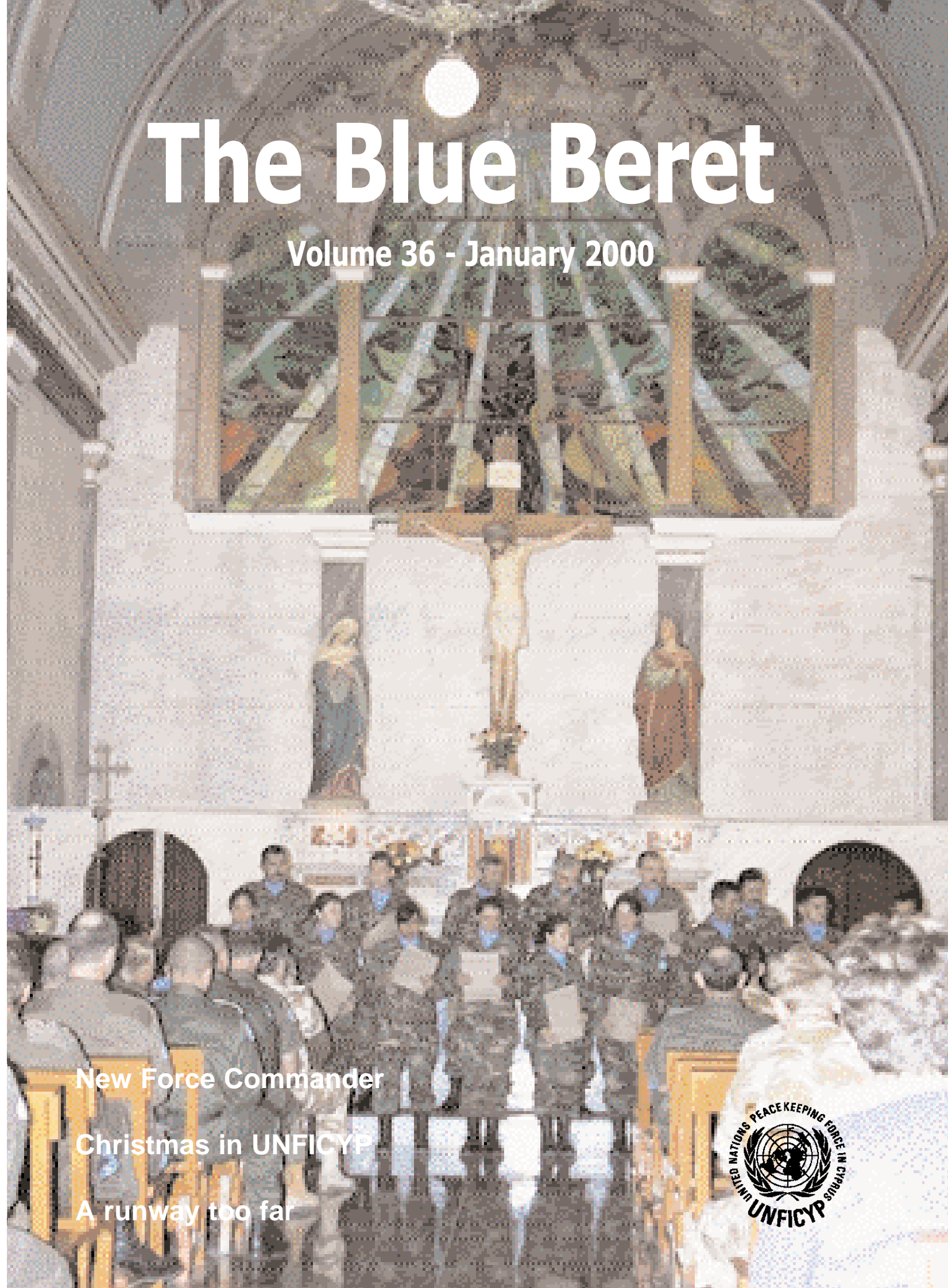


The Blue Beret

Volume 36 - January 2000



New Force Commander

Christmas in UNFICYP

A runway too far



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editorial

At the beginning of this new millennium, UN personnel, and soldiers and police officers serving under the flag of other organisations, are still deployed in many troubled areas worldwide. They serve the peace as best they can, by observing opposing forces, patrolling areas of operations and reporting violations. They serve the peace by giving people hope, simply by being there and showing that somebody cares. And they serve the peace by performing their duties impartially.

Many have spent the festive season away from their families, up in their sentry box or manning a radio in a faraway operations centre. Although we would all prefer to be at home with our kin, it is good to realise that we are the lucky ones, giving help as opposed to receiving it.

It is also good to focus on the results of our work. Often the process towards a just and viable solution to a problem is a slow one. It requires a lot of patience and many minor successes to create one total success.

Each of the 1,500 members of UNFICYP contributes in his or her own way towards the creation of these minor successes, thus helping to achieve the final aim. We wish everybody all the best for this new year, and hope that in UNFICYP, only a few more minor successes are needed.

The editorial team

Following instructions from New York that UNFICYP personnel would be required to use different software packages in the year 2000, training courses were arranged to ensure that as many office personnel as possible would easily transfer from the present use of Corel Office Suite to MS Office 2000, now the standard UN word-processing, spreadsheet and database program-mes. Computer software training courses offered are MS Office 2000 (Word, Excel, Access and Powerpoint) and AutoCad.



....of mice and (wo)men...

The company awarded the contract for the provision of software training is Emphasys Interactive Solutions Ltd. Training was carried out in one of the conference rooms at the International Cafeteria in HQ UNFICYP. A total of 75 participants, civilian (both international and local), military and police personnel, will have completed the training courses, which began on 15 November 1999 and will

end towards the end of February 2000.

Because of limited resources, training was not possible for all UNFICYP personnel, so participants were selected by taking into account the type of work they were concerned with as well as their expected length of service with the mission.

All participants were

invited to fill out a questionnaire at the end of the course, and their comments have so far been very positive. Christopher Gelsthorpe, Claims Assistant, says: "It was a pretty intensive course, especially for those who had never worked before with databases. I found the course I was on (Access) com-

prehensive and easy to follow. My instructor, Mr Andreas Ayre, was very professional and remarkably patient, an admirable quality because some people absorb information much quicker than others. I have already started applying Access to catalogue all traffic accidents involving UNFICYP. I also use it for the Property Survey Board."

Julia Girma (Inventory Control Assistant in the General Services Section) will use the same package for inventory control, and her department will also use it as a database for routine inspections and quality control of contractors and contract management. At the end of the year, statistics will indicate how contractors fare and how they are graded.

The facilities and options of the MS 2000 software programmes will greatly enhance document preparation and presentations, as well as improve general efficiency in office administration.



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My new year's resolution

2

Craig Taylor, Pte, Liri troop: "I intend to write to my girlfriend more often."

Attila Szöke, Capt, HQ JOC: "There's not enough space to describe all the tasks I would like to fulfil."

Paul Mair, MSgt, HQ Ops: "To visit my sister in the USA for the first time."

2

Natalia Epuleff, Pte, Sector 1: "I'll prepare to join the Army Academy in 2001 to become an engineer officer."

John Harmans, Cpl, Ypenburg: "To go home in good health after my tour of duty."

Paul Nadeem, Chief Fire Officer: "I've got no new year's resolution."

Outgoing UNFICYP Commander, Major General Evergisto Arturo de Vergara, is leaving the island confident that a solution to the Cyprus problem will be found.

A veteran of two other UN peacekeeping missions, having served in UNTSO in 1984-85 as a military observer and senior operations officer, and in the former Yugoslavia in 1993-94 as a deputy sector commander, General de Vergara can look back on his own personal experience of conflicts, now seemingly on the way to resolution, to back up his argument.

"Who would have thought that in 1985, the war in Lebanon would have stopped, or who would think the problem in the Middle East would be on the way to a solution?" he said.

But he admitted that patience was a key to successful peacekeeping and peacemaking.

"How many people have come here with the best intentions, and were unable to see results?" he said. "But they have to be patient. Peace achieved through hard effort has a greater chance of surviving because any peace achieved easily can be easily destroyed. Whatever comes easily goes easily as well."

UNFICYP gave the General his first experience of commanding a UN peacekeeping mission.

Regarding Argentina's burgeoning role as a provider of UN peacekeepers - the country now has the largest Contingent within UNFICYP - General de Vergara said the fact that the country's population is made up of immigrants from all over the world gave Argentinians a natural advantage in peacekeeping.

"You can find all nationalities without exception in Argentina," he said. "Spanish, Italians, Austrians, Greeks, Turks, Arabs, Russians, Jews, Ukrainians, Welsh, English, Irish, French, all of them are in Argentina. You only have to walk through Sector One and read the names and you will be surprised. This could be the reason why Argentinians are so tolerant," he added. "If we were not so tolerant, how could we live together?"

In General de Vergara's own background, there are connections with other contingents in UNFICYP.

He explained that his great-great-grandmother was Dutch, while his wrestling instructor when he was a leading competitor in his youth was a Hungarian former Olympic champion.

However, being Argentinian, and having a large number of British troops serving under him less than 20 years after the two countries were at war with each other, did raise the inevitable question of whether there was any awkwardness in his dealings with the British Contingent.

He replied: "Do you know how many nationalities we have in the force? We have 12. Tell me with how many of these countries has Britain fought with in her history, and the reply is, all of them. We (Argentinian) soldiers had a war with the British some 17-18 years ago, but we are soldiers. We have a common link, which is the military profession. The unique feature of soldiers is that when they fight, they don't hate. So when the war is over, and you can read about this in history, former foes meet, and former foes even talk about the war. Because we know that in that war, we have relatives, mothers, fathers, wives. The lamenting of the loss of loved



Major General Evergisto Arturo de Vergara on the sacrifices of peacekeeping: "You go to a place, making several personal sacrifices, which is to leave your home country and your beloved ones. And then you want to see solutions at once. However, you know that this is not something that can be achieved straight away. It takes time. After a while, all peacekeepers realise how useful their efforts were, especially when they see that a situation was solved."

ones is on both sides. And people's wounds are on both sides, not just on the side that lost. So when you have such things in common, how can you remain enemies? You have much more to share than to disagree on."

He predicted that such a reconciliation between opposing forces will also be seen among Cypriots one day. "It will happen. Both may find that they have the same sufferings, and then the main task will be to build the future because you won't change history. History does not go backwards, history goes forwards." He said that Cyprus's "heavy history" of over 5,000 years and more meant that "some wounds take time to heal".

"The first thing I told myself when I knew I was coming to a place that was, in its own time, almost the centre of the world, was to have deep respect for the people. Because the people here have their own problems, their own feelings, their own history, so the least they

deserve from anyone coming here to help was respect.

This respect was reflected in the way I behaved with both sides, trying to promote tolerance, trying to promote understanding, trying to mediate, and not trying to impose anything."

Looking back on his time on the island, General de Vergara also acknowledged the debt he owed to the other members of the force, and particularly the soldiers.

"Whatever we have done here couldn't have been done without the help of everyone, police, military, and civilians. In particular, the soldiers, so, just for them, before leaving, I would like to express my full devotion to them."

"In life, nothing is eternal. So the fact that the Cyprus problem has lasted so long, means a solution is coming closer."

Interview by Noel Evdokiou

New UNFICYP Commander, Major General Victory Rana, has arrived on the island with a clear vision of what is expected of him. The 54 year-old Nepalese army officer cites the mandate given to UNFICYP by the Security Council as the guiding light for his role as Force Commander.

"That is the mandate we have. At my level, I will make sure that it is being followed to the letter," he says.

Rana - a veteran of two previous UN peacekeeping stints with UNIFIL in Lebanon - has already, in the month that he has been in Cyprus, had the opportunity to assess the quality of his colleagues at UNFICYP headquarters. He has been impressed by their calibre.

"I think I am very lucky to find a very good team here. The Chief of Mission is a thorough gentleman, an excellent person. A very experienced hand who knows the ins and outs of the problem that exists here. He places himself above trivialities and focuses his energy on the greater perspective. So I think I am very happy to have the present Chief of Mission.

The Senior Adviser, having been here for over three years, has a thorough knowledge of the situation. He really knows his job well and gives valuable advice, as and when required.

The CAO is a very competent and able person who is playing a very effective role in improving the overall efficiency of our mission here. He is trying to make it cost effective and is striving for the maximum utilization of limited resources."

Meanwhile, on the military side, the Chief of Staff is, according to Major General Rana, "a fine officer with a full grasp of the goings on in our mission area. I find him to be the ideal coordinator of the various branches that we have here. He seems to be a very dedicated and hard worker who expects results.

So you can see that I am very happy to have this team around me, and I shall endeavour to maintain the existing excellent teamwork between our civil and military personalities so that we can all focus our efforts towards achieving our common goal, which is the achievement of our mandate in a healthy working environment. The welfare of the troops under my command will be paramount," he stresses.

"As Force Commander, I must say that the safety of my troops comes first. But we must all expect the highest military and UN standards in terms of discipline, professionalism, dedication to duty, efficiency, and commitment. I also feel that in an international setting such as UNFICYP, it is important that we blend our individual national cultures together so that it blossoms into a cohesive multinational entity which once again is directed towards a common goal, which is the fulfilment of our mandate. I firmly believe it is up to those

of us in the highest echelons of this mission to set the example and motivate those under us towards the achievement of this very important goal that we have. The different cultures represented within UNFICYP should be used as a plus point. We must be open and must accept the cultures of the other nationalities that are involved here. We've got to be open-minded and learn to live together in the spirit of the UN reality."

While his appointment at UNFICYP is Rana's first as a UN force commander, it is not the first time he's been in Cyprus, nor even his first experience of the island's political problem.

"In fact, the first time I was here was in 1967," he says. "In those days, I was an officer cadet at the



Major General Victory Rana signs the hand-over/takeover document in UNFICYP Headquarters.

Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst in the UK. So we came here on a military exercise. In those days, at the end of each year, you had a final exercise abroad called 'Battle Camp'. So in 1967 I had the opportunity to come here with the rest of the cadets. This exercise took place in the south, in the British sovereign base area, mainly in Episkopi, although if I remember correctly, we went to Dhekelia as well. Unfortunately, a few days after we arrived and started the exercise, there was civil strife here in Cyprus and the exercise was called off. And we cadets from Sandhurst were detailed to man certain areas in the south."

He remembers it as an initial "small taste" of peacekeeping.

Asked what comparisons could be made with the Cyprus of 1967 and the present, the Force Commander explains that his 15-day stay on the island back then was too short to leave indelible memories. But a visit to the then bustling port city of Famagusta, and the contrast with the city's current situation, had made an impres-

sion. "Back in 1967, the country wasn't divided," he recalls. "So there were the Turkish Cypriots as well as the Greek Cypriots who lived side by side in Famagusta. It was a very busy city, I thought, and a very nice one. I went there the other day on my visit to Sector 4, and as we flew over, I saw the southern portion of the city which was unoccupied, and I definitely saw a big difference from my first visit."

The Force Commander concludes: "I feel pleased to have been given this opportunity to come here as Force Commander and will do my utmost to fulfil the responsibilities placed upon me. I sincerely hope that the Cyprus problem will be solved soon and that there will be peace on this beautiful island."

"I believe in leading by example. I expect to spend a lot of time visiting the various sectors we have here, getting to know the commanders and getting to know the problems they face."

Interview by Noel Evdokiou

The Staffordshire Regiment, now stationed in Ternhill, has its origins from four Regiments of Foot: the 38th, 80th, 64th and 98th. The senior of these regiments, the 38th, was formed in 1705. In 1881, the regiments became linked to the county of Staffordshire. The 38th and 80th became the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the South Staffordshire Regiment and the 64th and 98th the 1st and 2nd Battalions of The Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment). This title was reversed to The North Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's) in 1920. In 1959, the present-day Staffordshire Regiment was formed.

Throughout its history, soldiers of the regiments, in their various guises, have served in every corner of the globe. During the First World War, Staffordshire raised 25 battalions which fought in all the major battles. In the Second World War, South Staffords formed part of the Chindit forces and were selected as air landing troops seeing action in both Sicily and Arnhem. The North Staffords served in India, Burma, were at Dunkirk and took part in the Anzio landings. In the post war years, the regiments served in Germany, Egypt, Palestine, Korea, Northern Ireland and the Gulf. Most recently the regiment was the penultimate to garrison Hong Kong before the handover in 1997, and completed a six-month tour of West Belfast in 1998.

In keeping with the British Army tradition of animal mascots, The Staffordshire Regiment has a Staffordshire Bull Terrier. The first, 'Boxer', was with the South Staffords as they arrived in Egypt to relieve General Gordon at Khartoum in 1882. He unfortunately jumped from the train taking the troops south from Cairo but,



British-Dutch teamwork in S2W

showing true Stafford grit, he rejoined the Battalion a few days later having followed them almost 200 miles along the railway line. The present-day mascot is Watchman IV.

The Alfa Squadron of the 103 Armoured Reconnaissance Battalion form the Dutch contribution to Sector 2. The 100-man strong unit will be observing and reporting in the western part of the Sector 2 area of responsibility. Fulfilling UNFICYP's mission for a period of six months is completely different from anything the unit has done in its rich history.

"The regiment whose traditions we carry, the 4th Regiment Huzaren van Boreel, most recently served in Bosnia (1997)," says Squadron Commander, Major Robbert Verbrugh. "But our history goes back to 1813, when the regiment was founded. Our hussars received battle honours during various actions. We fought

Napoleon at Quatre-Bras and Waterloo, joined the 10-Day Battle (10-Daagse Veldtocht) during the Belgian uprising, defended the Netherlands against the German invasion and went on missions to Java and Sumatra.

"When our battalion was formed, during the Berlin crisis in 1961, we also received our battalion crest. It is a landmark which was used in Prussia at the famous German 'Trakehnen' stud farm. Therefore, our battalion is also known as the Trakehner Battalion.

"Although we will surely miss Soesterberg, where my unit is located, we feel warmly welcomed under the wings of the 1st Bn The Staffordshire Regiment," assures Major Verbrugh.

Introducing: Lieutenant Colonel Chris Hughes

Lieutenant Colonel CGS Hughes, Commanding Officer 1st Battalion, The Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's), was commissioned into the regiment in 1984 whilst the battalion was garrisoned in Colchester. After completing two years as a rifle Platoon Commander, he took command of the Reconnaissance Platoon serving in Germany.

In 1988, he took over as Adjutant of the 1st Battalion, deploying to the Gulf on Op Granby 1990 in this appointment. On returning from the conflict, he attended Division II of the Army Command and Staff Course before returning to regimental duty with 1 Staffords, com-

manding his company in England and Northern Ireland.

In January 1995, he was posted as Chief of Staff HQ 19 Mechanised Brigade serving a tour with UNPROFOR in Bosnia. In August 1996, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and took over the post of Military Assistant to the General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland.

In December 1997, he took command of 1 Staffords. He has commanded the Battalion in Ternhill, Shropshire, on operations in West Belfast and in Kenya on Exercise Grand Prix.

Lieutenant Colonel Hughes is married with two children.



The Stafford Regiment has the Queen's Colour and the Regimental Colour. Originally carried into battle to rally troops, they are still a symbol of pride. Emblazoned on the colours are 75 of the 157 battle honours won since 1705, the latest being the Gulf War.

Four Regimental days, Ypres Day, 31 July, Ferozashah Day, 21 December, Anzio Day, 22 January, and Arnhem Day, 17 September, commemorate the actions of predecessors.



After the Ferozashah dinner, the Colours are returned to the Officers' Mess

Among the four regimental days the Staffordshire Regiment celebrates, Ferozashah day is the most important. It commemorates the actions of Her Majesty's 80th Regiment of Foot (Staffordshire Volunteers) during the Second Sikh War in 1845 and in particular, those of Colour Sergeant Matthew Kirkland.

In 1843, the British Government followed a campaign in the Scinde region of India and annexed it. This caused consternation amongst the Sikh leaders, and for the next two years, there was much unrest. On 11 December 1845, the Sikh Army moved into the Sutlej region, and two days

later, Britain declared war.

Ferozashah was the second of three major battles fought by the British during the Sutlej campaign. The first, Moodkee on 18 December 1845, had seen the British victorious and with the Sikh army now split in two, the high command were keen to advance and attack the Sikh forces, estimated at some 35,000, hastily fortifying the town of Ferozashah.

At 1600 hrs on 21 December, the British commanders were in a position to attack the Sikh entrenchments, with the 80th of Foot formed up on the right of the British line. The left of the line advanced first and the Sikh Army's accurate artillery fire took a heavy

toll. With the line disrupted and troops entirely exhausted, the order to retire was given. The right flank was ordered to advance and through shot and shell and smoke so thick the soldiers could hardly see the man standing next to him, they eventually reached the Sikh entrenchments. Quickly they were amongst the guns and furious hand-to-hand combat ensued.

Beyond the artillery the Sikh infantry lined up. Under a fierce volley and charge from the British troops, their lines broke. Suddenly, a group led by a soldier carrying a large black flag counter-attacked.

With Captain Best and Captain Scheberras killed during this attack, it fell to Colour Sergeant Kirkland and Corporal Brown, aided by other comrades, to defeat the enemy. Amidst gunfire, slashing swords and stabbing bayonets, Colour Sergeant Matthew Kirkland seized the Black Standard. Colour Sergeant Kirkland, who was severely wounded later that day, was rewarded with promotion to the commissioned rank of Ensign.

The Black Standard now hangs in the Regimental Chapel at Lichfield Cathedral. Each year the Regiment celebrates Ferozashah Day, with the Colours being ceremoniously handed into the care of the Warrant Officers', Colour Sergeants' and Sergeants' Mess. They are returned to the Officers' Mess after the Ferozashah dinner in the evening.



Officers discussing the battle of Ferozashah

by
Capt Andreas Vas

In early December, 16 members of the Austrian Spittal/Drau garrison visited Sector 4 to entertain the peacekeepers with evenings of traditional military and Carinthian songs. Five times in total and at different locations, the choir laid down a performance. This way each member of Sector 4 was able to visit, listen, and be in touch with home.

Peacekeeping comrades from other nations were invited to attend a performance in the all ranks canteen at the UNPA. The prospect of a promising choir, led by choirmaster WO2 Horst Zach, the availability of glühwein and apfelstrudel and a comforting fire attracted many colleagues who got value for money. Especially since this event was free!



.....carols, prayers and blessings

Father Umberto Barato's beautiful Church of the Holy Cross, just inside Paphos Gate, accommodated delegations of the Force contributing countries on the occasion of the annual UNFICYP Christmas Carol Service on 11 December.

Each nationality performed in its mother tongue. Some even arranged musicians to support the singers. A guitarist and a tambourine player from Argentina and two Austrian trumpeters gave the service some extra flavour.

Representatives from all strands of UNFICYP read lessons, while chaplains from four different nations offered prayers for armed forces, peace, our leaders and our families. Those lucky enough to be present appreciated this moment away from the green line, a moment to think about peace and family.



Go in peace

.....lunch at Ypenburg

Christmas is an occasion you should celebrate at home with your family. But when this is not possible, you go for second best. Your comrades will be your family, the padre will host a service and the chefs will prepare a Christmas meal almost as good as mother would do. Christmas crackers and regimental place-mats, to be kept as a memento, help to deliver the finishing touch.

That's exactly what happened at Ypenburg. To allow each soldier of Sector 2 West to attend one Christmas lunch, there was one on Christmas Day and another one on Boxing Day. The Dutch soldiers, together with their British colleagues from Irish Bridge, enjoyed the three-course lunch, which could be washed down with a glass of wine. But only one, because duty still calls.



A meal served in the Christmas spirit

by
Sgt Michelle
Lomas-Travers

.....in bed

Whether sick in bed or out working on the line, the members of ARGCON were not forgotten by Santa Claus when he came to town.

On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, members of UNCIVPOL/Sector 1 donned the fluffy white beards and pointy red hats to deliver a little extra cheer to all the UN OPs from the Kokkina enclave to Mammari.



.....atmosphere

by
Capt Luis Cormick

Sector 1 staff officers practised the true Christmas spirit on 24 December. Each one of them visited two or three patrol bases and observation posts to wish season's greetings to the soldiers spending Christmas along the green line.

The staff officers were not the only ones who were very busy that day. For all priests, Christmas is a busy period - and it was no exception for our priest. He celebrated mass in Brown Base, Roca Camp and finally in San Martín Camp. The choir also participated in each mass, singing traditional Argentinian Christmas songs.

As in many other countries, it is customary in Argentina to celebrate Christmas with the family. Several delicacies are cooked and served. Then at midnight, we bring in 25 December with a toast - wine or champagne - wishing each

other Merry Christmas.

In Sector 1, the chefs proved their skills by cooking many delicious dishes which crowned the dinner table. Several soldiers had their families on the island, and those who were absent were in our hearts. But we consider ourselves part of one big family, the ARGCON family.

Of course, for the little boys - and not so little - midnight brought the arrival of Papá Noel (Santa Claus) with his bag full of gifts. It was really very moving to see the children around him asking for their presents. This made us feel quite at home.

UNCIVPOL members from Dhenia and Linou Stations were our guests. It was our pleasure to have them with us to share this important festivity.

All Sector 1 members wish a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all the



civilians, police and military in UNFICYP and hope that this new millennium will bring you and your families prosperity and happiness.

by
Capt Tony Seager

Christmas, the most festive of seasons, a time of family and friends and a time to give and receive. Now, for only the second time in my life, I would not be spending Christmas at home with my family; would it still be the same?

Along with the other 20 members of Ortona Platoon, I would be spending Christmas Day not in the regimental home of Staffordshire, but between the ceasefire lines as a member of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. If the day were to bear any resemblance to a traditional Christmas, it would be up to us to make the effort. Following some minor reorganisation of the kitchen and dining room, we arranged one long table with room for the whole platoon to sit down together at the same time.

The Battalion had provided some decorations and the boys made some more. The table began to look more in tune with the occasion. The very un-Christmas-like dining room was fitted out with streamers, balloons and some home-made banners. We just about had enough cutlery, although a few lads were forced to rumage through their bergens to find the full compliment of spoons.

With the table laid, it only remained

for the chef to provide the most important ingredients. Pte Longhurst had spent four hours in the kitchen and I think we were all glad of his efforts. Without roast turkey and brussel sprouts, the decorations would have failed to impress anyone.

The OC, CSM and CQMS were on hand to act as waiters but, more importantly, to distribute the free beers provided by company funds.

Pte Stalker, the newest member of the platoon, said a few words, crackers were pulled, presents opened and we were ready to begin. I for one enjoyed my lunch, although I'm not so sure WO2 Baker did, as I ended up wearing most of it. Obviously it would not be the same without Christmas pud and brandy sauce, although I was a bit disappointed not to find some money in mine.

Once we had cleaned up the extraordinary amount of mess we had managed to make, we retired to the bar for the

.....between ceasefire lines



remaining can of our daily ration and the pool championship began. I tried hard but couldn't win.

Before long, the day darkened and it was almost over. A very different occasion from the norm. It may not have been a traditional white Christmas, but it was still a good one. I was grateful for my present and, despite some sceptical comments, I definitely witnessed most of the boys playing with theirs.

It may be strange to be away from home at such an important time of the year, but it just goes to show it's not where you are but who you're with that makes the difference.

by
Capt Zsolt Hatos

.....near UN 92

Built in the Byzantine era, the small chapel of St Stephen sits in the Buffer Zone. In 1996, Hungarian soldiers began renovations, and the work was finally completed by Sgt Balázs Szemerszky and MCpl Bertold Gazsi of Sector 4 in off-duty hours.

Asked why they had devoted so much of their spare time, they said: "It was very sad for us to see this lovely chapel in such a poor condition. Since

it has the name of Stephen, the first Hungarian king who founded the Hungarian State exactly 1,000 years ago, we thought it would be good to repair the chapel and celebrate Christmas together in this very special place."

And so it happened. On 25 December, mass was conducted by padres Diebl and Trauner - with the help of the Hungarian choir.



By Cpl Maj Mark Kingston

Nowadays, Nicosia International Airport is a quiet place. No planes landing or taking off anymore. No tourists or businessmen strolling through the terminal building.

Only the occasional off-duty soldier running along the straight and even runways disturbs the silence. And in the distance, you might observe a golfer searching for his lost ball.

The runways didn't always look as even as they are now, seemingly ready to be used again. During the conflict of July 1974, both the main and subsidiary runways were severely damaged, caused mainly by air attack.

The responsibility for maintenance of the joint user area being that of the British Government under the 1960 Cyprus Treaty Agreement, an immediate survey was made of the whole airfield on 26 July 1974. This was to determine the extent of the damage and planning was started for its repair. Due to the high political sensitivity of the project, it was not known at this time who would carry out the work or supply the materials.

In May 1975, nearly 11 months after the conflict, the UN finally broke the political deadlock by agreeing to pay for the repairs to the runways in return for the use of the airfield under UN jurisdiction. This was in the hope that when the airfield was once again operational, an agreement would follow to bring the airport back to international use.

At the end of May 1975, the final go-ahead was given to carry out the repairs to both runways. The major restriction was that no Cypriot labour was to be employed on the airfield at any time in order to maintain political rest. This meant that all the work had to be carried out by the British military. A local

contractor was used to supply the materials and any additional plant required. This contractor also possessed an asphalt plant close to the airfield capable of producing marshal asphalt required for the patching and resurfacing of the runways.

The exact extent of the damage was really unknown, due to the amount of debris spread about the runways, but the preliminary survey showed several bomb craters up to 12m in diameter and 2m

the resurfacing was to use an automatic sensing device regulating the varying depth over the entire runway. Materials at the start of the job came from Kato Lakatamia some 10 km west of the airfield. The Royal Engineers would meet the trucks at the access road to the airport and then take over its delivery and eventual use. Later, the bulk supply of asphalt came from Akrotiri, a distance of some 120km with a journey time of some four

hours. Repairs to the surface scars created by bomb blasts and other small arms were a major problem. This was overcome by using a trial material called 'Eponite D4', an epoxy based pitch produced by Shell. It was mixed with sand to produce a strong and long lasting filling material. This proved to be a tedious task but it did reinstate the surface to a first-class finish. The reliability of these repairs is, however, still to be



This is what you call an engineer's challenge

put to the test as nothing larger than one of UN Flight's helicopters has landed on the airfield since its reconstruction.

In the last days of the project, the brief was changed from full international standards to a tactical airstrip. All the resurfacing had been completed, and some remarking using road marking paint was carried out on the main runway, but was stopped before completion.

The task of repair to the runway was a complex and difficult one under the conditions, but was met head on by the professionalism of the Royal Engineers. Thanks to their hard work and ingenuity, the airfield doesn't look like a scarred surface any more. Unfortunately, it's still only the UN soldier who uses the 'run' way. He'd be all too happy to make way for modern jets connecting Nicosia to other international airports.

The full recommendations were not accepted and the workforce was instructed to return the runways to an internationally accepted standard in the minimum time and at minimum cost.

After complete clearance of the site and cleaning of the craters in preparation for filling, it was found that the extent of the damage was greater than first anticipated. The technique used in perfecting

deep. There were numerous smaller craters produced by rocket and mortar fire and extensive surface damage from other weapons.

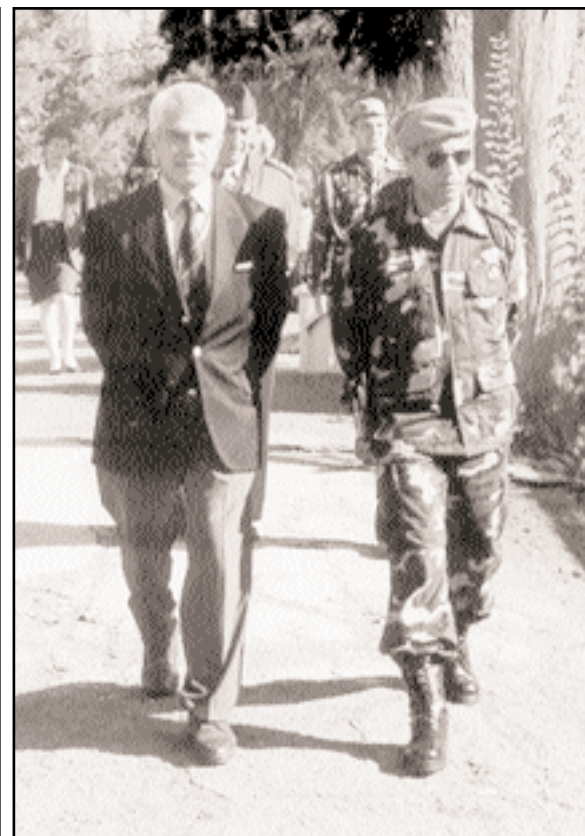
In order to return the airfield to its former glory, it was necessary to reinstate all the damaged surfaces. This, of course, would need to be done to a very high standard in the minimum available time and using the readily available materials and labour, namely the British military and its resources.

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Argentine ambassador visits UNFICYP

Mr Gil Espeche, the Argentinian Ambassador in Israel, visited San Martin Camp on 8 December, accompanied by his wife. This is the third time Mr Espeche has visited Sector One since taking up his position. Escorted by Maj Gen de Vergara, they attended a mass, followed by a lunch in the Camp. Mr Espeche expressed his appreciation at the welcome he was given and said how proud he was of his soldiers serving in UNFICYP.



El 8 de diciembre pasado el Embajador Argentino en Israel, Sr. Espeche Gil, visitó el Campo San Martín. Lo acompañaba su Señora esposa y el Comandante de UNFICYP, General De Vergara.

Una guardia de infantería le rindió los honores correspondientes a su entrada al Campo. Luego de los saludos protocolares al Jefe y Segundo Jefe del Sector 1, asistieron a un oficio religioso que fue celebrado para conmemorar el día de la Inmaculada Concepción de la Virgen María. Durante la misa, nuestro coro canto por primera vez en público entonando canciones y villancicos navideños.

Luego de la misma, el Embajador almorzó junto a los oficiales del Campo y los Jefes de Compañía.

Esta es la tercera vez que nos visita desde que asumió su actual cargo en Israel. Nos expresó estar orgulloso, como argentino, de nuestra presencia y buen trabajo en Chipre cumpliendo misiones de paz. Agregó además que en el Campo San Martín se siente como en su propia casa ya que todos le dispensan un trato agradable y afectuoso. Nuestra respuesta a tan amables palabras fueron que esta es la manera en que nosotros recibimos a todos nuestros invitados.

Sector One

Lt Col Héctor Ludueña, OC UN Flight

Lt Col Héctor Ludueña is the new LOC of UN Flight.

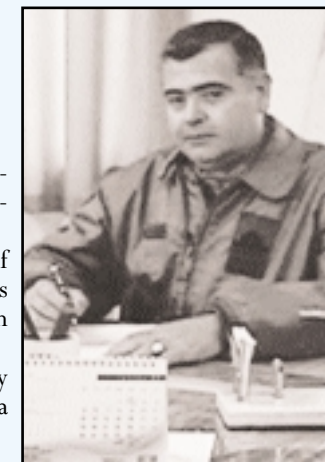
He was born in Córdoba City in 1957, and was educated in the Escuelas Pias institute in the same city, graduating in pedagogy.

He joined the Air Force in 1975 and obtained his wings in 1979. In 1980, he became a helicopter pilot and in 1982, he participated in the South Atlantic

Conflict, carrying out a number of successful missions. In 1993, he was promoted to the rank of major.

Lt Col Ludueña now has a total of 4,875 flying hours to his name. He is currently doing a course on human resources at Buenos Aires university.

He is married to Mónica and they have 22-year-old twin daughters, Laura and Paula.



Message from the Secretary-General

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

I usually write to all of you at this time of year, looking back upon the year grown old and wishing you the very best in the new. But this year I feel we must all look back not only on the year just past, but on the century we are about to leave.

It is a century that has seen bloodshed unparalleled in the history of humankind, but also the renewal of hope. It has seen humanity pull back from the brink of self-destruction and start building the defences of peace. It has brought unprecedented human suffering and untold devastation, but also a new era of human rights and humanitarian intervention. It has seen the birth of our United Nations, and of many new

nations. Its history will be written in blood and tears, but also in the ink of our United Nations Charter.

This year, the 54th in the life of our Organization, has put it to new tests. We have worked together to take on tasks that are unfamiliar to us. And we have come together to mourn losses that have become far too familiar to us, the deaths of beloved colleagues. We have seen in our work a reflection of the complexity and drama of the world at the end of the 20th century. And we have seen where we can do better in the 21st, where we might break new ground and, not least, some old habits worth breaking.

For me, as Secretary-General, the turn of the century also provides an occasion to

give thanks: to the founders of the United Nations who gave us a vision which still guides us today; to the pioneers and predecessors who turned that vision into an indispensable Organization; but most of all to you, my dear colleagues and friends. Because what has never failed us in the life of our United Nations is the commitment of men and women like you. We remain undefeated because you have continued trying.

That is something in which you can take great pride. As we start work afresh in the new century, I want you to remember that. To you and to those close to you, I wish a very Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely,
Kofi A. Annan



Alf on duty

One of the two Austrians in the Force Military Police Unit is Alfred (Alf) Bratranek. He's our 'man in disguise', because if you meet him out of uniform, you would never believe he's in the police force.

Born on 7 March 1971 in Vienna, Alf is not exactly a typical Austrian. He doesn't know how to waltz and he can't ski. So, if he is not a typical policeman and he is not a typical Austrian, what is he?

Alf is a militiaman. This means he's in the national army reserve and during his conscription, he attended a number of military courses and exercises.

At the age of 18, Alf became a conscript as an engineer. After he com-

pleted his national service, he studied history and political science at the university of Vienna and graduated in 1999.

Whilst in the national reserve, he went on several training courses, one of which was with the MPs two years ago. This resulted in him being sent to Cyprus in March 1999.

Alf is much more than just an MP. Not only does he go on patrol, but he's also the station commander, barman, entertainer, and always lends a friendly ear to his colleagues.

You'll no doubt have an enjoyable time with Alf if you meet him off-duty, but beware of him if you're caught speeding.

By addressing the audience in his mother tongue, Dr Franci Demšar, the Slovenian Minister of Defence, made clear he was in Cyprus mainly to meet with his own soldiers. The proud members of the Slovenian Contingent surely appreciated this gesture, as well as the reason for laying down a fine ceremony in the late afternoon of 20 December, as Dr Demšar used the occasion of his visit to present the unit with her colours. Less than half a year after giving their main camp a truly Slovenian name (Triglav), another step in the history of the Slovenian contribution to UNFICYP was made.

During the candlelit ceremony, Commander Sector 4, Lt Col Helmut Plieschnegger, complimented the visiting minister on the professionalism and the peacekeeping performance of the young army's soldiers.

Acting Force Commander Col Jeremy Brooks noted that by contributing forces to peacekeeping missions, the Slovenian government clearly shows its interest in world peace in the global perspective.

Official statements made, it was time to celebrate this happy occasion. A glass of champagne to hail the unit flag awaited every visitor. A cosy fire produced the right atmosphere and the Sector 4 chefs delivered the finishing touch by demonstrating they had mastered the art of preparing a high-class buffet.

Unit flag presented



Dr Franci Demšar is sure his visit to Cyprus will be noted in Slovenia.

A group of journalists from home accompanied him for the day when he visited the

Buffer Zone. They guaranteed that over the Christmas period, the home front would read and view their reports about UNFICYP's mission and the Slovenian contribution to it.



1,719 pilgrims to Apostolos Andreas

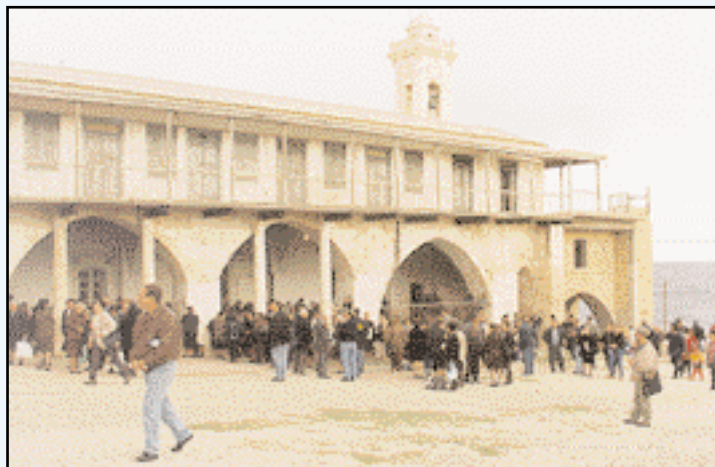
It took 43 buses to bring a total of 1,719 pilgrims to visit the holy site of the Apostolos Andreas monastery in the Karpas peninsula on 30 November. There were 200 pilgrims more than last year. This high number made it necessary to divide the total into six groups.

Each group had the opportunity to attend one of the services between 0600 hrs

and 1800 hrs. By executing the pilgrimage in this way, a crush in the small church, seen during previous pilgrimages, was avoided.

Traditionally, pilgrims bring candles to light at the shrine of the monastery, and collect sand and blessed water to bring home.

UNFICYP monitored the long return journey, which luckily didn't see any incidents.



Greek Cypriots at their beloved Apostolos Andreas

Mulled wine and chips

On every Sunday during Advent, soldiers of Sector 4 HQ Coy organised a mulled wine stand after mass at CDLV in Famagusta. A special mixture of red wine spiced with cloves, cinnamon bark, sugar, water, lemon and orange pieces was sold to their guests.

Not only mulled wine was on sale, but so were chips and macaroons. Guests even had the opportunity to buy a special Christmas 1999 mug for CYP2.

All money raised during the four Advent Sundays will be donated. A local charity is soon in for a nice surprise.



Back to Cyprus via East Timor

Like many of his military and police colleagues, for Superintendent Steve Polden, his mission with UNFICYP is not the first occasion he serves abroad. He was first in Cyprus during 1996-1997 when he carried out the duties of Police Liaison Officer.

When Steve saw the opportunity, he, along with 282 other police officers, went to East Timor for the elections in 1999. He was posted as Liaison Officer to the Indonesian Police on 12 June and was evacuated to Darwin, Australia on 7 September 1999.

"Serving in that mission was one of the toughest jobs I've ever been involved in," he says. "But the fact that the UN mandate was accomplished, in that the election went ahead and there was a clear result for independence, was rewarding and is a credit to all involved in the mission."



Steve Polden returned to Cyprus



"No, this skid mark is too short for the millennium record."

One split second of losing attention in Nicosia's rush hour can mean hours of work for members of the Force Military Police Unit, as when a force member reports a collision one dark December Friday night.

Upon accepting the incoming call, the duty police officer tries to get directions to the exact place of the accident and inquires if there are any injured persons. Luckily there aren't any. Then a team is tasked to visit the spot and gather as much relevant information as possible.

Upon arrival the team leader starts taking statements from both the drivers. "Are you on duty, have you been wearing your seat belt, was your car functioning well before the accident?"

In the meantime, his compatriots start measuring all kinds of things, like the width of the street and the length of the skid marks. They establish the condition of the road, write down what the visibility was like, and test the drivers on whether or not they consumed alco-

holic drinks.

Finally, arrangements are made with the Cyprus Police on how to go about a further investigation, if necessary.

In this particular case it was quite clear. The civilian driver entered a one-way street from the wrong direction. Time to write final reports and close the case. Next please (or rather not!).



"And were you wearing your seat belt?"

Tip for good company

Sgt Paul Whittaker arrived on the island a month ago to work in Sector 4 in Pyla. A keen gardener, he decided it was about time the house had a touch of greenery added to it.

Paul quickly found some flowerpots and, deciding he needed some soil, headed to the local rubbish dump. Whilst loading the soil into his flowerpots, he noticed some movement in a nearby pile of rubbish.

Using his police investigative skills, he discovered a small black and brown bundle of fur. With a bit of coaxing, the bundle of fur came out of its temporary home, a garbage bag, and waddled towards his new found friend with his tail wagging. More investigating revealed the pup's mother had passed away and it

was left to fend for itself, just waiting for a new "mum" to come along.

After giving the pup a hot bath and a good feed, the UNCIVPOL members had a major duty... to think of a name for the young German shepherd cross: what else could they call their new pal, but "TIP".

Unfortunately the accommodation in Pyla does not allow for a 4-week-old puppy, so the UNPA Dog Shelter was contacted. After veterinary checkups, it was found that Tip, although very young, is in excellent health.

No doubt Tip will be quick to find a good home, and yes, the Pyla police accommodation has some lovely flowerpots full of blooming geraniums!



Tip in the arms of Sgt Jonny Lancashire

La Compañía Charlie del Contingente Argentino ha desembarcado en Chipre con artillería pesada. No nos referimos a ninguna clase de munición o pieza de artillería. Nos referimos al Cabo Primero de Infantería de Marina Roberto Miguel Condori quien actualmente presta servicio en el OP 42. El practica fisiculturismo y el 8 de mayo pasado obtuvo en la ciudad de Buenos Aires el Subcampeonato Argentino en la categoría hasta 80 kilos.

El fisiculturismo, según manifiesta quien ostenta el título, es un deporte de exhibición de crecimiento muscular, en forma progresiva, del cuerpo humano. Para tener una imagen deseada y poder competir, se requiere de mucho sacrificio y esfuerzo. Otro secreto es la alimentación. Debe ser cuidadosamente preparada y debe ser balanceada y de máxima calidad.

El Cabo Condori ha practicado este deporte desde los 16 años de edad pero recién dos años atrás ha comenzado a participar en competencias.

Según sus palabras, es duro entrenar y a la vez cumplir su tarea como Infante de Marina ya que cada actividad requiere una adecuada atención. Sólo con sacrificio y real vocación puede asumir y llevar a cabo ambas responsabilidades con un desempeño adecuado. Pero nuestro "Hercules" también tiene una familia y estudia profesorado de inglés.

Sostiene que el fisiculturismo es sano y que, al igual que todos los deportes, mantiene alejado del alcohol, el tabaco y la droga a quienes lo practican.

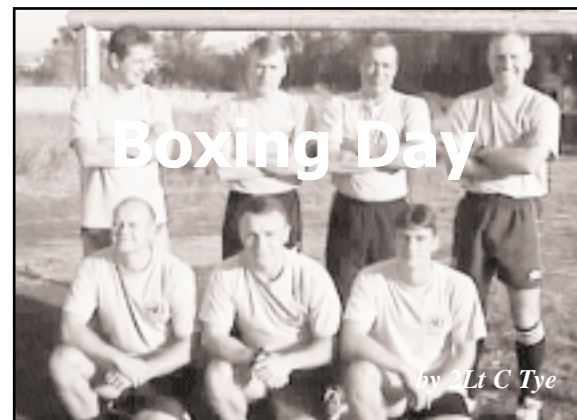
Hercules in UNFICYP



Charlie Coy in ARGCON has recently acquired some "heavy artillery". This does not refer to any kind of munition, but rather to an Argentinian navy marine who goes by the name of 1Cpl Roberto Miguel Condori, Sector One's "Hercules".

Roberto has been practising body building since the age of 16, but it was only two years ago that he finally decided to take part in competitions. Then last May, he achieved second place in the latest Argentinian Championships (up to 80 kilos) which took place in Buenos Aires.

Although this is an exhibitivie rather than an active sport, it is still necessary to train regularly and keep strictly to a special diet. This is hard to achieve when serving in the marines, however Roberto, who is a devoted family man, manages to do just this, plus studying for a degree in English, certainly advocating the proverb that a healthy body leads to a healthy mind.



Boxing Day

Taking full advantage of the weather, 1 Staffords held a 5-a-side football and volleyball competition on Boxing Day followed by an all ranks BBQ. With the sun shining and 22 teams participating, the competition got underway.

With football being the battalion's primary sport, there were naturally a lot of young stars keen to display their talents. The Quartermaster's team, odds-on favourites, managed to knock themselves out with an own goal in the first match, much to the relief of the battalion headquarters' side. With many a game being settled in a penalty shoot out, BHQ found themselves in the final facing Headquarters Company. With BHQ having played the last two games back to back to

reach the final, and the Adjutant and Cpl Russell sustaining early injuries in the final, the game quickly turned in HQ Company's favour. Their selector had done well, with three of the squad being regulars of the Battalion football team. Their ball skill quickly brought the tally to 2:0 through goals from Sgt Bennett and the RSM.

Relatively inexperienced at volleyball, 10 teams of varying abilities took to the court, with a good performance from Ledra platoon seeing them to the semi-finals before being eliminated.

HQ Company reached the finals again, this time playing a team from the MT. It was a close-run match, but the MT, having recently sampled the delights of the BBQ, were notably less enthusiastic to dive around the court, and were finally beaten by 3 points.

No revenge

The football grounds of the UNPA were the scene of the rematch for the Staffords against the Dutch Trakehners on 2 January. For the Staffords, this match should set the record straight, following a 9-0 defeat during the training period in Tern Hill.

During the first half, the Staffords managed to score a beautiful goal. Even well-trained keeper Nieck Verhart couldn't stop the ball. It took the Dutch half an hour before Cpl Jeffrey Damerie managed to score even.

In the second half, Hussar Edwin Kuitert and Cpl August Karperien managed to secure the game, putting the score at 3:1. Not the high numbers of the first match, but definitely not the outcome the Staffords will be satisfied with.

For sure we'll see more attempts to set the record straight. Trakehners: be warned.



Edwin Kuitert in action

Violations at Camp Brown!

by Lt Richard Hoy

Thursday 9 December saw what is probably a record number of incidents and violations against elements of the UN in Camp Brown, Sector 1. The incidents included over-manning, intrusion, moves forward, threats to the UN, photography, demonstrations, and UN casualties.

What is more shocking is that all these violations were committed by serving soldiers of the UN, against fellow UN members. Fortunately for the new Force Commander, it was all in the name of sport, and not an internal breakdown of discipline. For Sector 1 had staged an intercompany football, volleyball and tug-o'-war competition with teams

attending from all of their company locations, as well as representatives from the MFR.

The first incidents occurred during the football match with numerous intrusions onto the pitch by spectators eager to support their teams. This was firmly but fairly stamped out by the referees, who would not tolerate such action. However, the number of incidents increased as the first teams were knocked out of the league and the semi-finals kicked off. There were complaints of over-manning in the goalmouth, and a number of minor casualties as the teams strove for a place in the elusive final. A demonstration against a goal that had been awarded saw the



referees reversing the decision, proving that a vocal yet peaceful protest can be fruitful. The Camp Rocca team won the final, quite comfortably beating the MFR 7:4.

With the Marines winning the volleyball, all that was left to complete the day was the tug-o'-war competition. Despite allegations of over-manning on the rope on more than one occasion, a standing OP could not produce any firm evidence to support this. Even if there had been, it was not going to effect the inevitable clash of the MFR and Argentine Marines in the final, as both teams won all of their pulls.

The final was to be the best of three pulls with the first going to the MFR and the second to the Marines.

With it all resting on the third, and the teams tiring, no one was expecting the umpire to call a re-pull after the MFR strayed out of their lane. This time it was the turn of the Marines to stray out of their lane. Both sides petitioned as suggestions of a re-match or a call for a draw were discussed. In the spirit of the UN and sport, a draw was declared with a sigh of relief coming from both teams, who could now nurse the abrasions on their arms and aching muscles.

The whole day was approached with great enthusiasm and goodwill by everybody. The Marines from Camp Brown were perfect hosts, which only added to the success of the whole day.



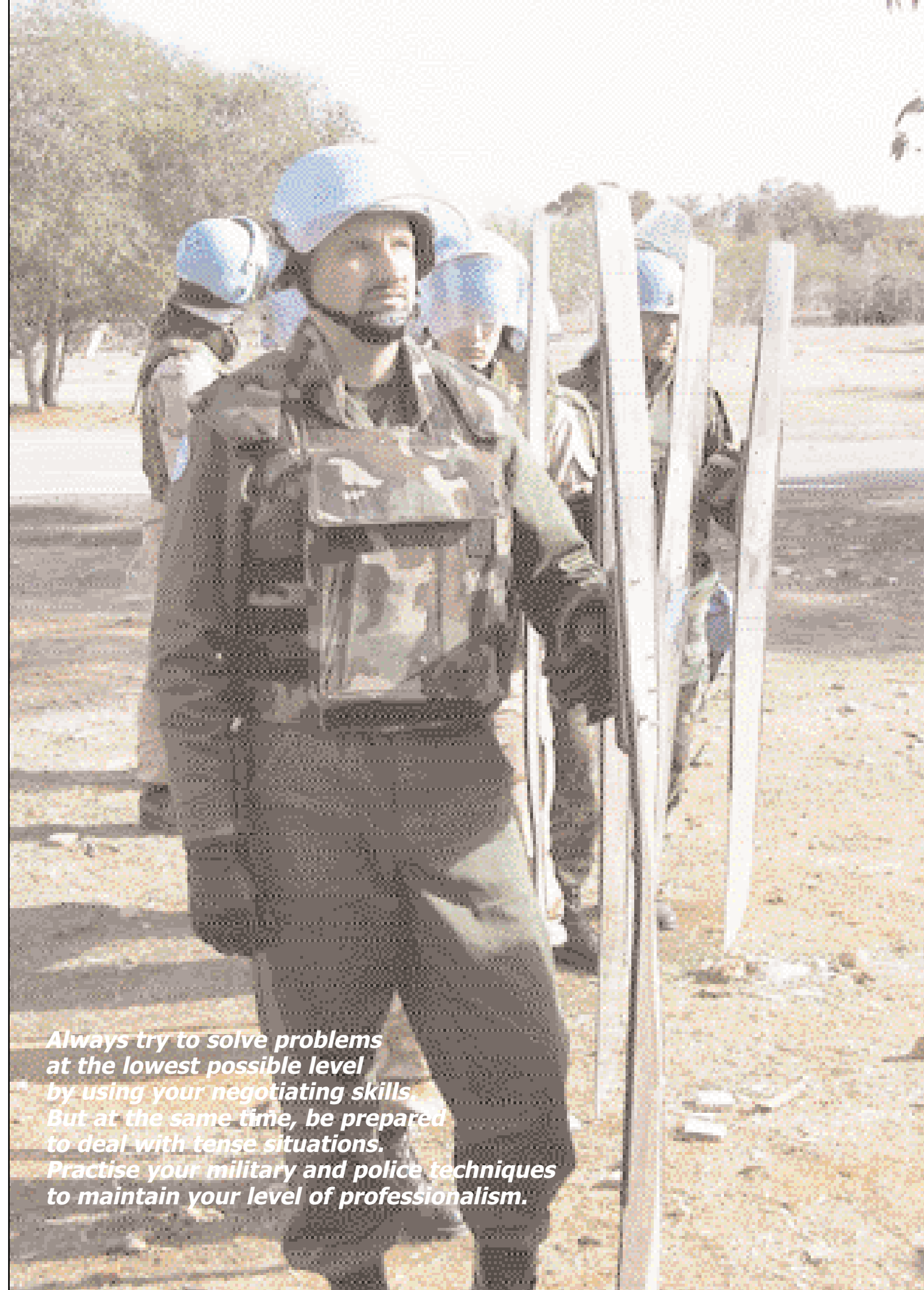
Single smash in double block

12 Signal Unit walk down competition

Three teams from UNFICYP took part in the 12 Signal Unit Walkdown, with participants free to choose whether they would run or walk the course.

This event, which took place on 4 December, started in Platres (in the Troodos mountain range) and finished in Episkopi, a distance of just over 32km. 60 teams of three started off, each with one novice, one female and one expert map reader. All carried a back pack containing a first-aid kit, a torch, water, some clothes and a whistle.

The first team home for UNFICYP finished in 4th position. Known as the 'Lynch Mob', Diana Bridger, Mary Dellar and PO Con Lynch would probably have made the medals, had it not been for Mary's heavy cold! The second UNFICYP team home was the 'Lion Boks' (Cpl Colin Gent, his wife Caroline and Cpl Heidi Boreham), and the third team was 'Forest Gump & Co' (Mrs Janet Forrest, Maj William Style and WOII Mark Kingston). Of the 56 teams to complete the course, the UNFICYP teams did very well.



Always try to solve problems at the lowest possible level by using your negotiating skills. But at the same time, be prepared to deal with tense situations. Practise your military and police techniques to maintain your level of professionalism.