

**Force Commander  
General Figoli  
Departs in Style**



**The Blue Beret  
January 2006**



**New SRSB Møller  
Meets the Leaders**

## THE BLUE BERET

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## Two arrivals and a departure

Two arrivals and the departure of a much beloved figure from the UNFICYP scene feature in this month's issue of the **Blue Beret**. New Chief of Mission, SRSG Michael Møller, shares views and insights and tells us about himself in an interview (pages 4 and 5). He sees his latest assignment as a challenge, one that he looks forward to. "A good job", he says, "is one in which firstly one can apply some of things learnt in the past, secondly learn something new, and thirdly have a feeling that you are doing something useful."

Møller favours a collegial management style, professing to an open door policy, provided it is not abused. "I like to consult and I like to listen", he says. This approach extends to personnel as well. "If people have problems that they want to have a chat about and if there is something I can help with, then I see that as my duty," he says.

Sad to report, a second and much less welcome arrival came with the confirmation that two suspect cases of avian influenza tested positive for H5N1. Authorities moved quickly to take appropriate measures. These range from culling flocks in the vicinity of the outbreak site to introducing decontamination procedures and random testing in suspect and vulnerable areas.

There is no immediate cause for alarm. The likelihood of contracting bird flu is remote. Common sense dictates that we should report any and all dead birds we encounter and that we should avoid handling them. For more, see details on what to do and what not to do and read about our bird flu contingency plan (pages 6 and 7).

Finally, the mission as a whole was sad to see our very popular and hugely respected Force Commander, Maj. Gen. Hebert Figoli, wrap up his tour of duty in early January to return home to Uruguay and retirement. The turn-out of uniformed and the civilian-clad for his farewell departure said it all. Here was a man who personified the ideal of the integrated mission concept (see pages 15 and 16).

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**Front Cover: SRSG Møller meets with the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos and Mr. Mehmet Ali Talat**

**Back Cover: FC Gen. Figoli departs in style**

## SRSG Michael Møller Reports for Duty

New SRSG Michael Møller arrived in Cyprus on 3 January to take up his assignment. He was met at Larnaca Airport by Force Commander Maj.Gen. Hebert Figoli. Because of flight schedules, Mr. Møller also had the opportunity to confer briefly with outgoing Chief of Mission Zbigniew Wlosowicz, who departed Cyprus for Poland the same afternoon.

Mr. Møller was greeted at UNFICYP headquarters next morning by a guard of honour before meeting with members of the senior staff group led by Senior Adviser Susan Allee, Chief of Staff Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell and Chief Administrative Officer Frank Clancy.

Having since called on the leaders of the two communities, Mr. Papadopoulos and Mr. Talat, SRSG Møller has

been busily familiarizing himself with the different mission components and sectors. He has also called on various members of the United Nations family here on the island, including UNDP/ACT, and UNDP/PFF, as well as UNMAC, where, after a briefing, he ventured off to a minefield area to meet the de-mining team.

Mr. Møller received his first VIP guest when Belgian Foreign Minister Karel de Gucht and his delegation visited the mission on 9 January.

In a widely appreciated gesture, our new Chief of Mission also took pains to meet all UNFICYP staff, national, international, civilian and uniformed alike, socially. The "meet and greet" he hosted at the Ledra Palace was the talk of the mission for days afterwards (photo coverage, next issue).



**FC Figoli greets the new SRSG on arrival at Larnaca Airport**



**SRSG Møller inspects Guard of Honour on arrival at UNFICYP HQ**



**SRSG Møller with Greek Cypriot CMP member Mr. Elias Georgiades (left) and Turkish Cypriot CMP member Ms. Gülden Plümer Küçük (right)**



**The Chief of Mission meets the de-mining team**



**Outgoing Chief of Mission Wlosowicz overlapped with incoming CM Møller at Larnaca Airport's VIP lounge**



**The SRSG receives the Belgian Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr. Karel de Gucht**



# Meet SRSG Michael Møller

## An Interview with the new Chief of Mission

Michael Møller gives the impression of a low-key, straight talking, matter-of-fact diplomat, who seeks to get to the point and not waste time. His vast experience in international politics spans a 27-year career in the United Nations. Before coming to Cyprus, he served on the 38th floor of the United Nations Secretariat in New York. There, he served as Director of Political, Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Affairs in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

Our new Chief of Mission combines the confidence of a diplomat in the know with an air of unquestionable authority that commands respect. Yet, he also possesses an easy-going style, as can be seen from his frank responses in the following interview with three members of the **Blue Beret** team to whom he spoke about his management style and plans for UNFICYP.

Prior to his UNFICYP assignment, Mr. Møller served as Acting Deputy Chef de Cabinet to the Secretary-General in addition to Director for Political, Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Affairs in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, a position he took up in June 2001. Holding both positions concurrently for a period of a year left Møller "more than busy", as the UN had been going through difficult waters.

"I had approximately 50 subjects to deal with a day on average," Møller says, smiling at our reaction to the overwhelming number of issues on a single person's plate.

This is in stark contrast to what his duties require in Cyprus, where he will be focused on a single political issue along with the overall running of the mission. A change he very much looks forward to.

Møller does admit to some prior involvement in UN efforts on the Cyprus problem. "Before I joined the SG's Executive Office, I was Chief of Staff in the Department of Political Affairs, and Cyprus is a recurrent theme that goes through practically everybody's career. Therefore, I have been following it and was part of meetings that the SG had with Mr. Clerides and Mr. Denktash over the years. So it was one of the subjects I followed sporadically, if not in depth."

Møller explains that he sought out the position in Cyprus as he felt the time had come for him to move

on. "I personally like to be no longer than four-to-five years in one job, and I have managed to structure my career in that way. I learnt that my predecessor was going to be moving on at some point in 2005 and thought, given that, it would be a very nice place to go to from New York so I worked on it. I was pleasantly surprised that the SG let me go because, after all, it is the last year of his tenure and it is always difficult to change in the last year. There were a lot of staff changes and I was one of the few left with institutional memory at senior level. As usual, the SG was very nice, understanding that this was an opportunity and that if they didn't offer it to me now, it wouldn't come up for a while. So he said 'yes' and here I am, a happy man."

Cyprus was an attractive option as he says, especially since it means that for the first time in maybe 15 years, he gets the chance to deal with one subject in depth, rather than 50 on the surface. It also represents a good change, letting him go to the field after all those years in New York. "I have been in New York for over eight-and-a-half years, which is longer than I have lived anywhere since I was born." Cyprus, he points out, ranks as one of the most pleasant missions to work in, be it in terms of living conditions, job gratification, climate, etc. It is not a war zone. Moreover, it is an interesting problem substance-wise – intractable until now at least, but interesting, he says.

"Of course it is a challenge. It may sound cliché, but a good job for me is one in which firstly one can apply some of things learnt in the past, secondly learn something new, and thirdly have a feeling that you are doing something useful. I have been lucky enough to apply that test to almost everything I have done and it is definitely the case with the post here. I have been in the field before, headed a mission before, set up a mission that I then co-headed, so this was a kind of natural evolution, if you want, in my career. It is one of the rare occasions where you can marry the professional and the personal into something that is very nice," Møller said.

He says there is an added personal element to being in Cyprus in that the neighbourhood is an interesting one. "There is a whole half moon of countries

that I don't know very well. I have never been to Syria, I have never been to Jordan. I have only been to Lebanon for two days. I have never been to Israel nor to Egypt. So from a personal point of view, I look forward to travelling and visiting these places when I get a chance."

His first impression of UNFICYP is that he has been handed "a well-run mission full of nice, competent people." As for the Cypriots, Møller says they have been very welcoming and he has been very well received by officials on both sides.

Responding to a question on what UNFICYP personnel can expect from him, Møller says he has an open door policy and his management style is collegial. "I like to consult and I like to listen. It doesn't mean that the decision-making process is a consensus one, but certainly I am very open to advice and suggestions. There are many people here with a lot of experience. Some people have been here a long time and with that experience comes ideas, suggestions that are not necessarily within their own sphere of work, but that is very welcome."

"Open door means exactly that – the door is open to anybody to come in, not that I expect it to be abused," he says, noting that he need not be involved in issues that can be dealt with between individuals and their immediate superior. Møller stresses that his door is open to staff not only for work-related issues but also on a personal level. "If people have problems that they want to have a chat about, and if there is something I can help with, then I see that as my duty," he says.

He is also particularly interested in helping with career development of staff. "I apply the same principles to others that I apply to myself, or at least try to, which means that as a matter of principle, I think it is unhealthy for anybody to be longer than four or five years in one job. I want to ensure that my colleagues have opportunities to develop and hone skills in order to have an interesting work environment that is stimulating. This could mean moving laterally or into something else completely different, he says.

Møller encourages opportunities for promotion, for lateral moves, improvements and training for all staff. He takes care to point out that he makes no distinction between national and international staff. "People shouldn't allow themselves to be locked in either by themselves or the system," he says.

Møller however also expects creativity and initiative from staff. "There is one thing that drives me absolutely up the wall, and that is when I ask a question about why we are doing something and people tell me it's because we've always done it that way. That is not an answer I like to hear. It doesn't mean that I want to change everything, but it does mean I think that people should think, they should think outside the box sometimes and they should have imagination."

He noted that he will take a personal interest in staff management relations as he wants them to be as good as possible. "I will familiarise myself with the staff and the system and I am open to suggestions for change. It doesn't mean that everything is going to change, don't get the idea that the world will necessarily look differently after I have been through here."

Møller is determined to achieve greater coherence between the different aspects of the mission. "They cannot function as self-contained silos," he says, stressing the need for better integration between the UN departments and agencies under one umbrella. If they are to work towards a solution to the Cyprus problem, all the agencies and departments (UNDP, PFF, UNHCR and others) all need to know what each is doing.

Also, beyond the communication between UNFICYP's police, military and civilian sections, there is need for greater interaction with civil society. "They need to be energised into being much more a part of the overall solution. We all need to sing from the same sheet of music," he says.

The Chief of Mission points out that up until now, too much emphasis has been given to what outsiders can do for Cyprus. "It's time the Cypriots take ownership of their own problem. The solution must be rooted in the hearts and minds of the people for it to succeed."

The activities the UN supports and encourages must have that in mind, he said, noting that bicomunal projects must reinforce each other, rather than being one-off isolated events. There have been projects for many years, but the question is, where they are taking us, he says stressing the need for clearer direction and better dissemination of information concerning the UN's role and its end goal.

On a personal note, Møller says he entered the field of international politics as he didn't think he could make a successful career out of film, which is a passion of his. "When I was 18 and had to decide what I wanted to do, I had two choices – one was to enter the field of diplomacy and the other was to be a film director. In my youthful arrogance I, of course, wanted to be a world-renowned film director. As a Dane, at the time, I realized I didn't have much of chance on the international film scene, so I opted for diplomacy." He says he has no regrets in this choice.

He says he is a very sociable person and barely arrived on the island before his friends started to call to book time for their summer holidays here in Cyprus with him. A great art lover, he is particularly interested in exploring the art scene on the island and especially young and upcoming talent. Music is another passion of his where he enjoys jazz and other contemporary music, but concedes opera is not top of his list, although as he says, with age, it tends to grow on you.

Møller has an ear for languages. He speaks seven, including English, Danish, German, French, Italian, Spanish and Greek, and he intends to add Turkish to this impressive list.

Outside of the United Nations, he is involved in the Global Institute for New Energy Technologies (GIFNET) and says characteristically "there are other ways of saving the world than working for the UN." GIFNET aims at "addressing critical issues, provide credible information and innovative solutions for our planet's pressing biospheric needs through inexpensive, clean energy systems."

### GIFNET

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Ersin Oztoyocan, Netha Kreouzou and Anne Bursey from the Blue Beret talk with Michael Møller

# Avian Flu – Risk Assessment

**A deadly virus has spread through the bird flocks of Asia and Central Europe. The H5N1 strain of influenza has claimed close to 100 lives to date and threatens to mutate into a pathogen that could spread from human to human.**

## The History of Avian Influenza

Confirmed instances of Avian Influenza viruses infecting humans since 1997 include:

**1997:** In Hong Kong, Avian Influenza A(H5N1) infected both chickens and humans. This was the first time an avian influenza virus had ever been found to transmit directly from birds to humans. During this outbreak, 18 people were hospitalized and six died.

**1999:** In Hong Kong, cases of Avian Influenza A(H9N2) were confirmed in two children. Both patients recovered, and no additional cases were confirmed. The evidence suggested that poultry was the source of infection and the main mode of transmission was from bird to human.

**2003:** Two cases of Avian Influenza A(H5N1) infection occurred among members of a Hong Kong family that had travelled to China. One person recovered, the other died. How or where these two family members were infected was not determined. Another family member died of a respiratory illness in China, but no testing was carried out. No additional cases were reported.

**2003:** Avian Influenza A(H7N7) infections among poultry workers and their families were confirmed in the Netherlands during an outbreak of Avian Influenza among poultry. More than 80 cases of H7N7 illness were reported (the symptoms were mostly confined to eye infections with some respiratory symptoms), and one patient died (a veterinarian who had visited an affected farm). There was evidence of some human-to-human transmission.

**2003:** H9N2 infection was confirmed in a child in Hong Kong. The child was hospitalized but recovered.

## What is Avian Influenza?

Avian Influenza (AI) or Bird Flu is a disease of viral etiology that ranges from a mild or even a symptomatic infection to an acute, fatal disease of chickens, turkeys, guinea fowls, and other avian species, especially migratory waterfowl.

## When and where did Avian Influenza first originate?

Fowl plague was described in 1878 as a serious disease of chickens in Italy. It was determined in 1955 that the fowl plague (FP) virus is actually one of the influenza viruses. All influenza viruses affecting domestic animals (equine, swine, avian) belong to Type A, and Type A influenza virus is the most common type producing serious epidemics in humans. Types B and C do not affect domestic animals.

## Signs and symptoms, transmission and incubation

Type A influenza virus causes Avian Influenza. It is a contagious disease. The main way influenza viruses spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing called "droplet spread". The flu is different from a cold. Symptoms vary, with little or no mortality to a highly fatal, rapidly spreading epidemic (highly pathogenic Avian Influenza), depending on the infecting virus strain, host factors, and environmental stressors. Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Tiredness (can be extreme)
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Nasal congestion
- Body ache

Most people who get influenza recover in one to two weeks, but some can develop life-threatening complications (such as pneumonia). Anyone can get the flu (even healthy people), and serious problems from influenza can happen at any age. People aged 65 years and older, people of any age with chronic medical conditions, and very young children are more likely to get complications from influenza.

Waterfowl act as a reservoir of the Avian Influenza virus by carrying the virus in their intestinal tract and shedding it in their faeces. Avian Influenza viruses are spread to susceptible birds through inhalation of influenza particles in nasal and respiratory secretions and from contact with the faeces of infected birds.

The incubation period is usually three-to-seven days. A person can spread the flu starting one day before he or she feels sick. Adults can continue to pass the flu virus to others for another three-to-seven days after symptoms start. Children can pass the virus for even longer. Symptoms start one-to-four days after the virus enters the body. Some persons can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms. During this time, those persons can still spread the virus to others.

*Vaccination of persons at high risk of exposure to infected poultry, using existing vaccines effective against currently circulating human influenza strains, can reduce risk of co-infection of humans with Avian and influenza strains*

## No Need to be Alarmed United Nations Avian Influenza Update The Current Situation

Two samples from a small domestic poultry farm in Incirli/Makrasyka were taken on 12 January and tested positive for H5N1. Experts from the EU and WHO are working with both communities in Cyprus under UN auspices to further refine the comprehensive response plans currently in place. A committee has been established with representatives from various authorities and meets regularly to coordinate measures to be taken and to supply information to the public about this issue.

EU experts reaffirmed that proper personal hygiene standards and cooking poultry products are effective preventative measures against contracting Avian Influenza. They confirmed on 29 January that the probability of contracting the virus is remote. Extreme physiological or environment conditions are required:

- Close physical contact with sick or dead birds.
- A depressed immune system.

## How is UNFICYP dealing with this threat?

There is a contingency plan in place to deal with any threat of an outbreak in humans:

- The mission is stockpiling all necessary medications and protective equipment.
- All UN staff (international, national, military, police and all authorised dependants) are included in planning processes, as well as prevention and treatment as necessary through the application of Tamiflu, if and when necessary.
- UNFICYP Medical Centre and Sector Medical Stations will provide immediate support to all UN staff and authorised dependants. Local medical authorities are prepared to assist us, as required.

## What to do if you find a dead bird in the BZ

- Cordon off the area to a distance of five metres, depending on the situation.
- Contact the JOC HQ and inform them on 22-61-4555. The JOC will call the FHO.
- Sectors are to phone their SCAT who will call the Department of Veterinary services to come and remove the animal(s).
- Inform the JOC of the outcome.
- **If you must handle a dead bird**, wear rubber gloves and facial mask. Double plastic bag the dead bird to minimise contact. Thoroughly wash clothing and self immediately.

**For additional information** about Avian Influenza, please contact your local physician or your Sector Medical Officer:

Sector 1: 99-43 4474 or 22-61 4079  
Sector 2: 99-51 6597 or 22-61 4276  
Sector 4: 99-66 5637 or 22-61 4879

## Helpful health habits

**Avoid close contact** with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

**If possible, stay home** from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

**Clean your hands** often, especially after using the toilet. This will help protect from germs.

**Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.

**Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.



Contact with live or dead infected poultry is the source of human infection



Blue discoloured comb of an infected chicken on the left compared to a normal chicken on the right.

## What is an Influenza Pandemic?

An influenza pandemic is a global outbreak of influenza and occurs when a new influenza virus emerges, spreads, and causes disease worldwide. There were three pandemics in the 20th century. All of them spread worldwide within one year of being detected. They were:

**1918-19:** "Spanish flu" [A(H1N1)] caused the highest number of known flu deaths. 20-to-50 million people died worldwide, many within the first few days after infection and others of complications soon after. Nearly half of those who died were young, healthy adults.

**1957-58:** "Asian flu" [A(H2N2)]. First identified in China in late February 1957, the Asian flu spread to the United States by June 1957, causing about 70,000 deaths there.

**1968-69:** "Hong Kong flu" [A(H3N2)]. This virus was first detected in Hong Kong in early 1968 and spread to the United States later that year, causing about 34,000 deaths in the U.S. Type A(H3N2) viruses still circulate today.



# A look back at the year 2005

On **31 January**, UNFICYP military strength levels fell from 1,230 to just below 900 en route to the current 860 strength mandated by the Security Council 30% downsizing. However, it was peacekeeping business as usual with the switch to a newly invigorated concept of operations known as "concentration with mobility".

Earlier in the month, the realigned UNFICYP military component, while reducing in numbers, added a new capability – the MOLO, or Military Observer and Liaison Officer. The first MOLO training course was launched on 9 January.

UNFICYP's first integrated medal parade took place in the hangar by the disused Nicosia International Airport on **24 February**.

On **6 March**, six distinguished Cypriot women met under UNFICYP auspices in the Ledra Palace Hotel to mark International Women's Day and to discuss "Gender Equality beyond 2005 – building a more secure future".

On **14 April**, the first five police officers from Croatia joined UNCIVPOL.

European Commissioner for Enlargement Ollie Rehn and, representing the EU Presidency, Nicolas Schmit, Luxembourg's Minister Delegate of Foreign Affairs, visited Cyprus on **12-13 May** including a stop-over at the Ledra Palace for an UNFICYP briefing plus a short tour of the buffer zone.

On **24 May**, the Irish Defence Forces ended 41 years of peacekeeping service in Cyprus with a flag-lowering ceremony near the old International Airport in the UNPA. Lt. Col. Paul Quirke, the last serving member of the Irish military contingent, presented the flag to Ireland's Ambassador to Cyprus, H.E. Mr. John Swift.

USG Sir Kieren Prendergast arrived in Cyprus for talks on **30 May**. He met with the leaders of both communities during his seven-day stay, after which he travelled on to Athens and Ankara for further consultations before returning to New York.

**June** saw the extension of the UNFICYP mandate to **15 December 2005**.

On **8 June**, the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, met at the Ledra Palace with SRSW Wlosowicz, who later took him on a short tour of Sector 2's buffer zone area.

The 60th anniversary of the UN Charter was celebrated on **27 June**.

On **29 June**, the first four Argentinian police officers joined UNPOL.

The first four Italian police officers arrived in UNPOL on **12 July**, and were joined on **24 July** by the first two Bosnian police officers.

The first ever mixed Greek Cypriot-Turkish Cypriot football match took place in Pyla on **17 July**.

On **12 August**, Phase II of the buffer zone de-mining project was launched with

controlled explosions triggered after count-downs by SRSW Wlosowicz and Dr. Kezban Akansoy from the office of the European Commission Representation in Cyprus. (Phase I of the project was completed in July 2005.) [To date, under its new slogan "A step to the Future", the renamed Mine Action Centre in Cyprus (MACC) had cleared 656,016 square metres of land in the buffer zone, and has detonated a total of 2,252 mines.]

UNFICYP facilitated the opening of the island's fifth crossing point on **31 August**, connecting Astromeritis with Zodia/Bostanci.

In **September**, UNCIVPOL was officially renamed UN Police (UNPOL) by New York. On **1 September**, UNPOL took over responsibility for the SCAT (Social Civil Affairs Task) from the military component.

At the beginning of **September**, Senior Adviser Wlodek Cibor was posted to HQ UN New York on temporary assignment with the Asia & Middle East Division, Office of Operations, DPKO. The new Senior Adviser is Susan Allee, who arrived from UN HQ, New York.

On **15 September**, Col. Ian Sinclair, UNFICYP Chief of Staff, handed over responsibility after two years in the post to incoming COS Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell.

On **16 September**, 41.5 years after first stepping onto Cypriot soil, Finland's Contingent folded its flag and officially concluded its historic role as a founder member of UNFICYP's peacekeeping force. The first Finnish Contingent, consisting of 1,007 men, arrived in Cyprus in April 1964. Last man out was Capt. Juha Markus.

United Nations Day, **24 October**, was celebrated in unique fashion in Cyprus – a rooftop performance by local musicians of an original work by Dutch composer Merlijn Twaalfhoven in the heart of old Nicosia. Musicians literally took to the rooftops to join forces playing on either side of the buffer zone divide separating north from south in the Ledra Street commercial section.

On **6 November**, the first eight-member contingent of El Salvador joined UNPOL, giving UNPOL nine contingents and bringing numbers up to the approved strength of 69 from an initial 43 personnel at the beginning of the year.

Pyla was the site for the UNPOL medal parade on **17 November**. Organised in a spirit of strengthening the link between the people of Pyla and UNPOL, this was achieved in no small measure and the event was a great success.

On **9 December**, Pierre Guberan, Third Member i.a. of the Committee for Missing Persons (CMP), bade farewell after 20 years of service in Cyprus.

Resolution 1642 (2005), adopted by the Security Council on **14 December**, extended the UNFICYP mandate for a further period until **15 June 2006**.



Irish flag lowered for the last time



Military Observation Liaison Officers in training



Visit of EU EC Ollie Rehn



First bicomunal football match in Pyla



Finnish flag lowered for the last time



De-mining in the buffer zone continues



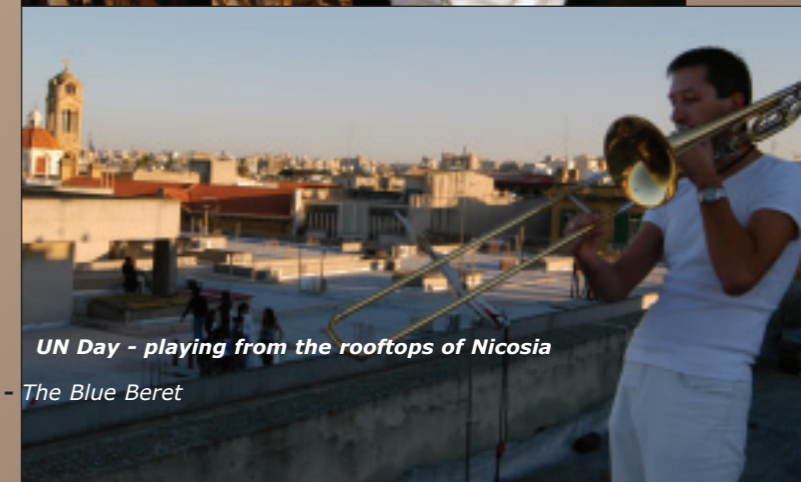
Opening of crossing connecting Astromeritis with Zodia/Bostanci



USG Kieren Prendergast reporting to the Security Council



Russian Foreign Minister's visit



UN Day - playing from the rooftops of Nicosia

## UNFICYP Mourns Slovak Forces Air Crash Victims

On 23 January, Slovak Ambassador to Cyprus, H.E. Ján Varšo, signed the book of condolences at UNFICYP Headquarters in memory of the victims of a Slovak air force plane crash.

The crash claimed the lives of 42 Slovak soldiers returning home from peacekeeping duties with the NATO-led KFOR in Kosovo. It happened in Hungary just short of the Slovak border on the evening of 19 January.

UNFICYP Chief of Mission Michael Møller, the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Cyprus, and Acting Force Commander/UNFICYP Chief of Staff Colonel Peter Fraser-Hopewell offered sympathy and condolences on behalf of the mission to the Slovak Government.

Slovak forces have been serving with UNFICYP since 2001. There are 198 Slovak troops in the mission at present. Two of the air crash victims had served in Cyprus with UNFICYP in 2003-04.



Slovak Ambassador Varšo signing the book of condolences

**The Secretary-General said he was saddened to learn of the deaths, and extended his profound condolences to the Slovak Government and to the bereaved families while wishing a speedy recovery to the sole survivor.**



Slovak soldiers gathered together in the church at Camp General Štefánik at 6.00 p.m. on 23 January for a memorial service of the air crash.

Sector 4 Padre Stanislav Lipka led the service, attended by about 50 Slovaks and Hungarians from Sector 4 and HQ UNFICYP. During the service, Slovak soldiers paid tribute to their colleagues, two of whom had served with UNFICYP.

Simultaneously, a memorial service was held in Bratislava at St. Martin's Cathedral in the centre of the capital, attended by Slovak President Ivan Gašparovič and Prime Minister Mikuláš Dzurinda, together with cabinet ministers and official guests.

A second service took place in Slovakia, attended mainly by family and close friends, on 26 January in Prešov, the largest city near the home base of Trebišov, the town where the late peacekeepers' unit was based.

## Panicos – A Popular Man

UNFICYP was deeply saddened to learn of Panayiotis Loizou's sudden death from a heart attack on New Year's Day. The shock of his death is visibly and profoundly felt by all with whom he had daily contact and has filled our hearts with sorrow. It is difficult indeed to find words to express our regret at the death of this splendid and likeable man.

Panayiotis joined the United Nations on 7 August 1995, and served with distinction in the International Cafeteria, General Services and Integrated Support Services where he was assigned at the time of his death as an Inventory and Supply Assistant.

Panayiotis performed his duties with competence, diligence and an unselfish devotion to duty. He was a man of boundless enthusiasm for whatever task he took in hand, always ready to help in any enterprise and did so with good humour and a generosity of spirit that in all respects was worthy of the highest standards expected by the United Nations. He combined charm with unlimited energy and the highest integrity. His genial personality and charitable instincts will be missed by everyone. Truly, he was a highly valued member of the Organisation and the mission.

Despite the numerous demands upon his time, he was first and foremost a family man. He was a devoted husband to his dear wife, Irene, and an affectionate father to his three lovely daughters, Julia, Maria and Stefania. We extend to them our profound condolences and may God bless them and keep them in this, their hour of sorrow.

There is little that can be said in the way of consolation for his family and friends in this time of bereavement. His passing pains us greatly and our sorrow is deep and personal. He was a remarkable and unique personality whose loss will be deeply felt by a great many.

To Panayiotis' family, and to all who mourn with you, please accept our assurance of heartfelt sympathy and grief at his passing. May he rest in peace.

**Frank Clancy, Chief Administrative Officer**



**P**anicos symbolised every positive aspect of being a member of the UN staff. Words such as loyal, honest, efficient and dedicated easily come to mind.

But he was much more than that. In our conversations over the many Cypriot coffees we shared, he never once had a bad word to say about anyone. From the Chief of Mission to the most junior soldier, he treated everyone with the same respect. Nothing was too much trouble. Everything was done to the best of his ability without question. If I was away, he would say "Hey boss, no worries, I'll keep the unit running".

A young man of 36, Panicos lived for his lovely family. His interests included Grand Prix racing, a passion we shared, and we would often recall with laughter our trip to the Hungarian Grand Prix in July last year and discuss our trip to Silverstone in 2007.

A colleague much respected and loved by all those within the Supply Unit and ISS, rest in peace my friend - from us all.

**Maj. Alan Staples, Force Supply Officer**

**I** recall the day Panicos first arrived at Foxtrot Gate in July 1995. He had overslept and nearly missed his first interview for a job with UNFICYP. We had never met before, but I knew from the moment I collected him that I would have a friend for life.

I managed to persuade the interviewing officer to give him a chance for the position of kitchen helper in the International Cafeteria. He was successful. In his wildest dreams, Panicos could not imagine that one day, the lad that started his service off in the UN as a humble kitchen hand would end up as the Inventory & Supply Assistant, responsible for all matters within Camp Command. Panicos was "free spirited", never content with confining himself to an office chair. He just had to be with people and assist them in their daily needs.

I was with him when he was taken ill. I was with him when he passed away. You will be sorely missed, my good friend.

**John Phantis, Movcon**

## Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)



In line with UN Headquarters directives and UNFICYP's overall mission plan on training in the SEA and Gender areas for all categories of staff, the Gender Focal Point (GFP) Sally Anne Corcoran rounded off the mandatory training/briefing of all civilian and military staff in the mission on 29 December 2005.

Because some colleagues were unable to attend either of the two sessions open to personnel, a third briefing is being considered for some time in the future.

All incoming staff now receive an initial awareness/induction training upon arrival at UNFICYP.

From 1 January 2006, the function of focal point for sexual exploitation and abuse has been handed over to Mr. Ross Wickware, Field Security Officer. Sally Anne will continue as the UNFICYP Gender Focal Point.

## UN Flight Medal Parade



On 4 January 2006, the UN Flight medal parade took place in the disused hangar in the UNPA. UN Flight personnel had worked long and hard to prepare and decorate the hangar for this celebration.

Lt. Col. Osvaldo Albanesi presided over the ceremony. Seven UN Flight members were presented with their medals. Force Commander Hebert Figoli made the presentations, paying tribute to the medal recipients for their devotion to duty. This was a particularly moving occasion for him, since it was the last medal parade of his tour with UNFICYP and therefore the last time he would decorate mission personnel with their peacekeeping medal.

Following the parade, soldiers and guests adjourned to the Bandidos Club, where they shared a traditional Argentinian meal.

## Visitors to UNFICYP

During January, UNFICYP hosted a series of visitors to the mission, all of whom were welcomed by Acting Force Commander/Chief of Staff Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell before inspecting the customary guard of honour. They were then received by newly arrived Chief of Mission Michael Møller.



12 January – Gen Sir Richard Dannatt, KCB CBE MC, Commander in Chief Land Forces, is escorted into the Headquarters building by Acting Force Commander/Chief of Staff Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell

9 January – H.E. Mr. Karel de Gucht, Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, meets members of the Mobile Force Reserve honour guard



20 January – J. Hoogendoorn, Chief Constable of the Regional Police of Gelderland N/O, The Netherlands, is greeted by Senior Police Adviser Carla Van Maris



23 January – Director of East European Division Japanese Foreign Ministry, Mr. Akira Imamura, with UNFICYP Chief of Mission Michael Møller



## Commander in Chief's Commendation



Gen. Dannatt with Maj. Fred and Mrs. Maggie Reid

During his brief visit to UNFICYP on 12 January, Commander in Chief of British Land Forces Gen. Sir Richard Dannatt took the opportunity to present Maj. Fred Reid, the British Contingent's Property Manager, with the certificate for his Commander in Chief's Commendation. This was awarded for Maj. Reid's work as the Quartermaster and as Officer Commanding HQ Squadron 9th/12th Royal Lancers from February 2003 to March 2005.

During this period, the Regiment was tasked at short notice from Germany to the UK on emergency fire-fighting duties, and was also deployed on operations to Bosnia and Iraq.

In his citation, Maj. Reid was particularly commended for his energy, leadership, determination and management over a protracted period of time, qualities which were considered to be most worthy of public recognition.

## Sport: Rugby in Sector 2

December was a busy month with four fixtures in four weeks. First to kick off was the game against Dhekelia away. We really played our patterns and emerged as 45-8 winners with the team Veteran BSM "Hatchet" Hall running in a try and Gnr. "Ian" Sauliga grabbing three.



A trip down to Paphos Tigers was to be our hardest game of the month. The Tigers won last year, so a win was vital to our quest to top the league. The game was a bruising affair from the start, with the majority of the Tigers side having arms bigger than our legs. Although we didn't play to our game plan, we dug in and came out 10-0 winners.

Episkopi Eagles and a rare home game was next. The Eagles, bolstered heavily from the Royal Highland Fusiliers, brought along 20 Fijians. The Eagles scored first. We soon replied, and with some outstanding forward play as well as expansive moves in the backs, we came away 46-17 winners with braces of tries for Gnr. Sauliga, Gnr. Qarau and one each for Gnr. Duilomaloma and our Argentine export player Guideon.

The Ayios Nicolaos Stags rounded off the month's fixtures with a hard but rewarding game. Once again it was the Stags who scored first, and it was at this point that we went up a gear, both up front and in the backs. Gnr. "Scooby Bear" Duilomaloma ran in an impressive four tries, winning himself the "man of the match". A try each for Carter, Waller, Vodokinsaladi, Kaumaitotoya and Kimmett sealed an impressive victory.

This marked half time for the league season, with the Stormers top of the table and hoping that the New Year will bring more of the same.

The end of December saw the Stormers head to Kyrenia to give the American University club a taste of how we train, and also to give the north's only rugby club some match practice.

A two-hour mix of drills and skills gave the northern side a lot to add to their own sessions. At the end of the mixed sessions, we split down for the main event of the day, Nicosia Stormers vs American University.

Once the Stormers got into the game, Scooby Bear ran in four tries. Big Jim added one as did countless others. Even LBdr. "Gun Boat" Gunn added to the score with a 30-yard conversion.

Afterwards, the home club proved to be excellent hosts. We returned to Nicosia, happy to have helped promote rugby in the north and to have brought on some promising new players.

We look forward to another visit soon.

## Long Service Medal

Mrs. Nitsa Philippou, currently employed as the British Retained Site Property Management Clerk, was presented on 16 December with a Long Service Certificate by UNFICYP Chief of Staff Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell in his capacity as COMBRITCON. The award was made for over 36 years of loyal and dedicated service to the British Forces in Cyprus.

Nitsa started work for the British Ministry of Defence in 1965 as a teleprinter operator at Royal Air Force (RAF) Nicosia. In 1974, she was posted to the Cyprus Establishment and Pay Office (CEPO) in Dhekelia as a Records Clerk. In 1976, she resigned and was re-employed in 1978 as a Clerk II at the Quartermaster's Dept, Support Regiment, UNFICYP in Nicosia. In 1991, she was promoted to Clerk I. On closure of the British Support Unit in 1994, she relocated to HQ BRITCON where she took up her present duties.

Nitsa deals on a daily basis with numerous contractors, civilians and military personnel. She is extremely hardworking and dedicated to her job. Added to this, she is always charming and helpful to everyone, so much so that she has earned the respect and admiration of all ranks within Headquarters BRITCON, both military and civilian staff of Headquarters



Nitsa (centre), flanked by Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell and Maj. Fred Reid and colleagues from the PROM's office

UNFICYP and that of the Command Secretariat of British Forces Cyprus.

Over all these years of service, Nitsa has been an exceptionally loyal employee, held in high esteem by all. She will retire on 31 March this year, and we take this opportunity to wish her a long, happy and healthy retirement.

# Xmas in the Sectors...

## Sector 1

Argentine Navy Deacon Father Germán Carmona, the senior Navy chaplain, visited UNFICYP's Argentinian Contingent from 20 December to 3 January.



During the holiday period visit, Father Germán travelled around Sector 1, visiting both camps and all four patrol bases. He also met with the Argentinian troops stationed at the UNPA. Father Germán celebrated Christmas Eve Mass at Camp San Martín, and stayed with the troops for New Year before returning to Argentina to continue his work in the Navy.

Mass was held in the small church in St. Martín Camp at 8.00 p.m. Then, as is customary back home, all soldiers and the families present congregated in the two Messes to bring in Christmas. Dinner was served at



**Father Germán with troop members from OP 32, Astromeritis**

around 10.00 p.m. Following the meal, Sector 1's padre Father Gaston, dressed as "Papa Noel", distributed gifts to the children of serving members.

At midnight, Christmas Day was brought in with a festive glass of good cheer!

On Christmas Day, mass was held at 10.00 a.m. On this occasion, Sector 1 personnel were joined by members of the Irish component of UNPOL, some accompanied by their families. The Irish had come, laden with gifts, and following mass, all gathered together to celebrate the festive season Irish fashion - with a good taste of Irish whiskey!

## Sector 2



Christmas Day celebrations in the Ledra Palace started with all Officers and SNCOs congregating in the WOs' & Sgts' Mess for a briefing on the day's activities from WO2 Battersby.

First on the agenda was for Officers and SNCOs to serve a well-earned Christmas lunch to the troops, but this was not before the judging of the "best decorated troop table" by Mrs. RSM (Dawn). The result was a draw between Support Troop and East Troop.

Once the soldiers had been served, it was time for the Officers and SNCOs as well as those families who had travelled over for the Christmas period to relax in the WOs' & Sgts' Mess for the day's activities. This was kicked off with Christmas lunch accompanied by champagne. After a most enjoyable meal, Santa arrived for all WOs,

**WO2 Battersby, carving the turkey**

SNCOs and kids to sit on his knee and receive their presents.

Once Santa had completed his duties, everyone was left to enjoy their presents and relax over a few drinks to the Christmas tunes of DJ Wegers (Sgt. Westerman).



**OC Sector 2 Maj. Mark Ross and OC MFR Maj. Matt Young**

## Sector 4

As in all countries which celebrate the birth of Christ, Slovakia has many festive customs which have been handed down through generations. Sadly, some of these customs are dying out, so it was a very special occasion for members of Sector 4 to witness the performance of Slovak soldiers enacting one of these rituals on Christmas Eve in Camp General Štefánik.

It is the tradition for an "angel" to knock on the doors of village houses, carrying a nativity scene, usually carved from wood, and announce the birth of the baby Jesus. With him are the three shepherds who recite traditional poems and sing Christmas carols.

Accompanying them is "Kubo", a clown who tells jokes and funny stories. This quintet is welcomed into homes and offered traditional refreshments before moving onto the next house.

And so it was in Sector 4! Organised by Padre Stanislav Lipka, this tradition was performed in all three Messes within the Sector by SLOVCON lads, and much welcomed by all their compatriots, some of whom had never seen this ritual



before. As one said, "How strange that we spend this festive time so far from home, and witness this traditional custom for the very first time!"

# Force Commander Figoli's Farewell

The outgoing Force Commander, Maj.Gen. Hebert Figoli, left HQ UNFICYP for the last time on 5 January at exactly 3.00 p.m. Accompanied by the Chief of Staff, Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell, he moved first to the front door area of the HQ to sign an official handover certificate with the Chief of Staff who will act as Force Commander until Gen. Figoli's successor arrives.

The FC then inspected an MFR Honour Guard before bidding farewell to senior military staff. This done, he said goodbye to civilian and police colleagues. The large turn-out was a measure of

General Figoli's universal popularity with all elements of the mission.

Gen. Figoli was then "arrested" by Police Chief Commr. van Maris and Cdr. Speedie from UNPOL and "loaded" onto the back of an L200 pick-up truck. The truck was pulled out by senior military (COS, COO, CPLO, CO S1, DCO S2 and CO S4) to an awaiting helicopter.

Before departing, Gen. Figoli, watched by family members including his wife Nelida Scarone and by senior officers from his headquarters staff and Sector 1, lowered the Uruguayan flag outside his house for the last time.

