The Blue Beret
Volume 36 - April 2000

pilgrimage to Apostolos Andreas
blood testing in Ledra Palace Hotel
mast building at Camp Duke Leopold V
Fifteen years after he first came to Cyprus, an UNFICYP staff member returned for a five-month stay with the Force and found that much had changed in that time. In and around Nicosia, the spread of concrete and asphalt and denser traffic, mobile phones beeping everywhere, a booming stock market... Water shortages remained the same or worse, but efforts were starting to confront the situation, whether through desalination plants or an underwater pipeline... There was now at least some evidence of a desire to preserve some green space; the precious Akamas and Karpas areas were potentially threatened but still mainly intact.

Fortunately unchanged were the tantalizing smells of sheftali and kebabs on the grill, the jasmine-scented evenings, the friendly greetings of “kalimerai” or “günyüz”...

Of course, the returning staff member found a smaller Force than before - but it was still successful fully performing its tasks in the buffer zone. Some of the flags were new, but the spirit of cooperation and good humour among soldiers, police and civil staff of all nations composing the Force remained alive, as it was in the mid-1980s. The unmanning of some posts along the Green Line had eased tensions and reduced dangerous incidents. While the Cyprus problem had outlived the 20th century, there were now signs that through the effects of the EU and Greek-Turkish rapprochement, there may be a better chance of reaching an agreement if the necessary will is there. The staff member was glad to have had the opportunity for another stay on the island. Best of all would be to return again to a Cyprus whose people have found the way to a settlement, a Cyprus whose flag is the white one with two green lines. The large number of potential donors was necessary because the odds of finding the right match were estimated at about 30,000 to 1. While they await results of the blood tests, the boys are undergoing treatment abroad. Andreas and Kemal at a clinic in Texas, and Kemal at a hospital in London.

The campaign was initially launched by the Karaiskakio Foundation in Nicosia to find a marrow donor for Andreas, and the plight of Kemal was revealed later on. After
Hello, I’m Private Leigh Fowler from Stoke-on-Trent, England. I am 22 years old. Yes, you’re right, I do look younger.

This is the first time I serve abroad. What do I think of it? I like the Cyprus weather very much, and the beaches. Recently I went to do some adventurous training. A bit of jet skiing and para-sailing. It was great! Good to be away from serving in the buffer zone for a while. The bad thing about missions is that I miss my fiancée Joanne (Joe) Lawton badly. Only three more weeks until the end of April, before I will have my leave. Joe and I will go to Paphos to have a good time there.

I also miss Port Vale, my favourite football club. But maybe they miss me even more. Without me cheering at the pitch, they ended up at the bottom of the 1st division. They’ve finally won a game 2-0, after losing 10 games in a row. Although I’ll have finished my tour in Cyprus before Euro 2000, I don’t know if I’ll visit the tournament. It all depends on the financial situation. We’ll probably get married next year, you know.

My OP is UN Observation Post 62, on top of Ledra Palace. Do you want a tower brief, sir? Please take this set of binoculars.

Please follow me to the front of the hotel. I’ll show you how the buffer zone runs, and where Patricia Gate is. From this OP I have a perfect view over the area of responsibility of Ledra platoon. It’s a bit hazy now, but on clear days, I can see most of the Mesoria plains. Ledra platoon’s operations room is a bit dark. That’s why I always like to do my two-hour shifts here and get some fresh air. In winter time it can be a bit nippy, especially when there’s a strong wind.

When Ortona platoon was undermanned, I served three days in their area. I particularly liked to be in close contact with soldiers of both opfor. Up on my roof, everything’s a bit distant.

But I see a lot happening down below. Look there, that Landrover takes the shortcut over the gravel path. If the driver had followed the road, it would have been a violation. And after all, that’s what I’m here for, to observe and to report violations when they occur.

Medal Parade in Sector 1

As is customary after serving 90 days duty with UNFICYP, the UN medal was presented to those soldiers serving with the 14th Argen-tian Contingent with UNFICYP. The first ceremony took place at San Martin Camp on 14th March.

As personalities from UNFICYP, families and other civilian and mili-tary organisations looked on, the UN medals were presented by the Force Commander, assisted by four sen-ior staff. The Force Commander then addressed the troops in a short but moving speech, praising the professionalism and responsibility shown by all members of the con-tingent.

Following the medal presentations, members of Sector 1 left the military atmosphere and put on a short demons-tra-tion of the Argen-tian culture for their guests including tradi-tional Argen-tian po-pular songs, folkloric dancing and, of course, the tango. As one guest commented: “We were very impressed with the performance of the dan-cers. We would never have guessed they weren’t professionals! Not only that, but we were also invited to take part in the dancing afterwards with the charming men and women from Sector 1. They did their best to make each and every one of us welcome, and we felt like we were in Buenos Aires and the pampas.”

Com civilian, de costumbre, después de haber cumpli-do los 90 días de servicio con UNFICYP, la medalla de las Naciones Unidas fue entregada a todos y cada uno de los soldados del 14º Contingente Argentino que han prestado sus ser-vicios con UNFICYP durante este período. La cere-monia se llevó a cabo el 14 de marzo en el Campo San Martín, estando presentes también, el person-al argentino de UN Flight, MFR y EMU.

Únicamente aquellos que estaban de turno, no pudieron estar presentes ese día, recibiendo sus respectivas medallas en una ceremonia similar que se llevó a cabo posteriormente, el 14 de marzo en el Anfiteatro Soli.

Personalidades de UNFICYP, familias y per-sonal tanto civil como militar de diversas organi-zaciones, presenciaron la entrega de medallas que fue hecha por el Comandante de la Fuerza, ayuda-do por cuatro oficiales más. El Comandante de la Fuerza dirigió unas palabras breves pero emotivas a toda la tropa, alabando el profesionalismo y responsabilidad mostrados por todos los miem-bros del contingente.

Después de la entrega de medallas, los miem-bros del Sector 1 dejaron el aspecto militar para brindar a sus invitados una breve demostración de su cultura, incluyendo canciones y música tradi-cional de Argentina, al igual que danzas folkloric-as, y por supuesto, no podía faltar el tango. Uno de los invitados hizo el siguiente comentario: “Pensamos que se trataba de artistas profesionales sin saber que solo eran aficionados. No solo eso, sino que también fuimos invitados por los encan-tadores soldados y soldadas del Sector 1 para bailar junto con ellos. Además, hicimos todo lo posible para que todos nos sintieramos como en casa, y en realidad nos sentimos como si hubiéramos estado en Buenos Aires o en la Pampa.”
The armoured gauchos

2/Lt Juan Ferrero

The Tacticas are the heart and soul of the APC platoon - but also the wrists of the MFR

The vehicle currently in use within the MFR’s APC platoon is the Tactica, a 4-wheel drive armoured personnel carrier manufactured in the UK by Glober Webb, now associated with Alvis. Designed for police, internal security and military uses, the Tacticas are used for patrolling and also for crowd control tasks. Here in UNFICYP, Argentinian personnel make up the APC platoon and have nine Tacticas under their control, with which they regularly patrol the length of the buffer zone.

The unit has a high level of mobility and ballistic protection. It can resist impacts of 7.62 (lateral 90 degrees and horizontal 50 degrees). The wind-screens are made of 5cm clear armour/protection of silicate and 6mm anti-silver polycarbonate. This also gives protection against fire or petrol bombs. The wheels have the ‘run flat’ system which consist of a solid “o” ring inside the tyre, allowing the vehicle to run for 20k after a direct impact. The chassis floor can resist the explosion of two hand grenades per m2.

With a Mercedes Benz diesel engine (MB 366A), the vehicle can transport the driver, platoon/sector commander and eight riflemen in the rear. It is air-conditioned and also has a ventilation system installed in case of smoke inside the vehicle.

Among its main specifications, the Tactica has an empty weight of 6.500 kg and combat weight of 10.000kg. It can reach a maximum speed of 120km/h. Its fuel capacity is 167lts, giving it a maximum road range of 650km. It can reach a vertical obstacle of 0.3 m, a gradient 60% and side slope at 30%.

In addition to the roles already mentioned, the Tactica can be used as an ambulance with provision for two stretcher beds in the rear compartment. This is a very useful feature when it may be necessary to evacuate casualties in an operational situation.

The Tacticas, a British-made vehicle adopted by the Argentinian Army, arrived on the island in 1997. Since then they have been on duty providing the MFR and other UNFICYP units with the ability to carry out their mission successfully.

Crime prevention advice:

Did you know that there are three basic elements to any crime, namely:

1. The Victim,
2. The Opportunity, and
3. The Criminal.

If you remove any one of these three elements, then the crime cannot be committed. It goes without saying, therefore, that the most common reason criminals strike is because we have supplied them with the opportunity.

Don’t forget that criminals do not always go out each day looking for crime: sometimes they just happen to come upon it. Take, for example, when you go down to the beach and, after relaxing for some time in the beautiful sun, you decide to go and have a dip in the sea. Where do you leave your beach bag containing your purse or wallet or other property? More than likely than not, under your sun bed.

To steal this property couldn’t be easier. You have supplied the perfect opportunity for the criminals to commit the offence. It was easy for him, it takes him seconds and it’s likely that nobody will witness a thing. You then become a victim of crime, your wallet containing your ID cards, driving licence, credit cards, money. So now you’ve got to start contacting all these agencies to replace or stop the necessary plastic. To make matters worse, your bag could have contained your car keys, so now, to add insult to injury, you are also walking.

I think we all get the picture. Do not let this happen to you. Always take the minimum required when going to the beach, and always lock your valuable property in the boot of your car out of sight when parking and securing your vehicle.

Road safety training for kids

In mid April, the Force Military Police ran a week of Cycle Safety Training for the children of UNFICYP personnel. The training was also open to local embassy families. Children from a total of eight countries participated.

The training took place in the UNPA Nicosia. It began with all important theory on the do’s and don’ts of road craft, and progressed to practical lessons in how to ride a bicycle safely and legally on the public road.

Chief Instructor, Sgt Nigel King, and his wife, Sgt Jayne King, are both British MPs who have been trained to British Road Safety standards and have a wealth of experience in teaching road craft to youngsters. “I found this week particularly stimulating,” said Nigel. “The children have all been so keen to learn from us and each other. Having kids from so many nations working together has given us a lot of pleasure and sats-faction, and it is a real advert for UN cooperation!”

The course ended with a theory exam, similar to the one required for most driving tests, and a practical test where children were required to demonstrate that they could ride safely whilst correctly acknowledging road traffic signs.

Each child who passed the course was awarded a certificate and medal presented by the Force Provost Marshal, Major Richard Moore.
I t was just before 4 am when Andri Christodoulidou’s alarm woke her up on Thursday, 6 April. Today, Andri would accompany her mother-in-law and a group of travellers on a journey through the north-eastern part of Cyprus. As a tourist guide, this was common practice for her, but this time it would be different. Her objective was not sight-seeing in and around Paphos, the company wouldn’t be tourists.

Today, Andri would be one of the group of 407 pilgrims, travelling to the Karpas peninsula to pay homage at the holy site of Apostolos Andreas.

At the Ledra Palace checkpoint, Supt John Courtney checks his list of eleven names of United Nations Civil Police officers. All are present, awaiting orders. Then John walks to both sides of the checkpoint to meet and greet the Cypriot police on duty. All procedures are discussed beforehand, everybody knows what to do. Except for one detail, John is satisfied.

“The buses still haven’t arrived,” he says. “They should have been here ten minutes ago.”

The only bus in the vicinity is the LIN minibus, parked just behind the concrete barrier at the southern side of the checkpoint. Pte Rob Galli from the Motor Transport platoon is behind the steering wheel. He, too, knows what to do.

“I’ll shuttle between both sides, to transport those who have trouble walking the distance of about 300 metres. Since most of the pilgrims are cancer and heart patients, I expect to have several passengers.”

At 6.30 am, Sgt Cora Whelan escorts the first group of 40 pilgrims through the checkpoint. Most are carrying lunch boxes, masses of candles to light at the monastery, and empty jerricans or water bottles to fill with holy water to take home.

For safety purposes, each bus will have a nurse and a doctor, volunteers from several hospitals, on board. Joe Christodoulou, a UK-qualified nurse from Limassol, is a little upset when she finds out that some of these teams are split up over different buses. “This way, it is possible a doctor is in one bus, and the equipment he needs is in the other,” she complains.

UNCIPOV officers liaise to make sure all pilgrims will have sufficient medical support during the two-hour drive.

Once the groups start transferring, Rob Galli’s shuttle bus comes in handy. Several times, pilgrims decide to walk to the buses by themselves but prove unable to keep up with their group. To ensure that the convoy can set off promptly, Rob offers his shuttling services half way down the checkpoint yet again. This time, more people get in.

Pte John Killy and LCpl Chris McFarlane hope they will not have any passengers today. Quite understandable. They are medics, escorting the convoy of 16 buses with their ambulance.

“It’s always good to feel useful,” according to Chris. “But for us, it’s best when we don’t have to use our skills. We are looking forward to the trip. We’ve heard that the Karpas is a beautiful area, especially in April when the flowers are in bloom and the area looks fresh and green. The weather looks good, and besides, it’s always fun to be a day away from your barracks.”

When the convoy heads off, a Turkish Cypriot ambulance joins the link of vehicles. Later that day, this ambulance transported one of the pilgrims with heart problems from the monastery back to Nicosia. “It’s obvious: everything is very well organised.”

When the vehicles finally stop at the monastery, the pilgrims rush towards the holy site, carrying the many candles they have brought along. People help each other to light them, after which they join the crowd inside to pray. Several are visibly moved when they experience the atmosphere inside. Many wait patiently until it’s their turn to kiss the icon.

Vera Miliona from Limassol is one of the many who haven’t been to Apostolos Andreas since 1974.

“I’ve really been looking forward to this trip. I’m so happy to be back here, and it’s good to be taken care of this well,” she says, gratefully looking up at Pauline Andrew and Joe Christodoulou, who together make sure Vera and her wheelchair are manoeuvred safely through the crowd. “They are my guardian angels,” smiles Vera.

After all pilgrims had had the chance to pray inside and eat their lunch over-looking the Mediterranean, Vera still stands through the arches of the monas-tery, catching every ray of sun she can. Finally, pushed by her guardian angels, she too heads for the buses to start the return journey. She left her candles behind, but brought back with her holy water and the memory of a great experience.

Vera and her “guardian angels” Joe and Pauline

prayers and pilgrims at Apostolos Andreas...
In Denmark, it's a tradition that you go on a study tour when you're in high school. My class chose to go to Cyprus because of its interesting history. We travelled with our history and geography teachers, so we studied these two subjects thoroughly beforehand. My choice was influenced because I wanted to see if there is hatred between the two communities as I've always been told. That is why I, Nurten Celik, a 19-year-old Danish girl of Turkish descent, came to Cyprus, south of the buffer zone.

My grandfather arrived in Denmark in the 60s with my father. Later my father married my mother, who then came to Denmark from Turkey. My siblings and I were all born in Denmark, but raised as Muslims. I've only been to Turkey four times in my life.

A month before the trip, my class was split up into groups. Each group had to find facts on a subject on something specific for Cyprus. One example is the UN. A group had to find information about the UN troops on Cyprus. When we were driving from our hotel in Esentepe, Nicosia, we told the other students about it. Every time we were about to visit churches, ruins, graves, or the Troodos Mountains, a group present-ted the results of their fact-finding mission about that particular subject.

I must admit that I didn't think I'd get that much attention wearing a headscarf. I thought about the fact that not many other people in Paphos would be wearing one, but I hoped that I wouldn't be the alone. Actually, I only saw one other lady with a headscarf. She greeted me with a greeting from the Koran. I was really happy to meet her, a person looking more like myself. However, I'm sure she took me for an Arab, just like all the other men who called at me saying "ya habibi, ya habibi" which means "I love you". They were very surprised that I was from Denmark and not from an Arab country. They told me that they were proud of me because I wore a headscarf and had kept my religion, even though I lived in a Christian country.

Some people knew right away that I was Turkish and this made me nervous; what if everybody could see that I wasn't Arab? I told most people that I was from any Arab country that came to mind because I wasn't sure if I could say that I am Turkish without getting into trouble.

I told some people though that I have a Turkish background and they all reacted very positively. One Cypriot guy asked me to marry him, and when I reminded him that I was Turkish, he told me that that wasn't a problem. He'd love to be a Muslim if I wanted to marry me, but he said that he would do anything for me.

According to him, there is no enmity and hatred between the two communities. When we were in the buffer zone, I was sad that there was no time for me to cross to the north and visit the Turkish Cypriot people on the other side. I wanted to see how they lived, I wanted to talk to them, and I wanted to meet people of my own origin. When we were walking around in Nicosia near the Green Line, my Turkish friend Gülinümse and I heard the praying from the mosque on the other side. We wanted to go there and we had tears in our eyes... we hadn't heard that sound for a very long time.

I've told my friends and my family about my experiences with the Greek Cypriot people, and they were all surprised that the response I received was so positive. They had also expected some difficult situations, but there were none. My family was glad that I had the chance to go to Cyprus, but they felt sorry I wasn't able to cross to the north. That would have been a memorable experience for me.

I think the day in Nicosia and in the buffer zone was the best day of our trip. We all thought it was a very educational day with a lot of excitement and interesting information. I think it's a good idea that UNIFCYP takes school classes to visit the UN headquarters. Visitors get a broader understanding of the problems on Cyprus, and you can see exactly how serious the situation is when you walk through the buffer zone and the abandoned airport of Nicosia.

I was very happy I was able to go to Cyprus and meet the Cypriots who are very nice and hospitable people. Even though we are of Turkish descent, they didn't have any prejudice against Gülinümse and myself. I don't think there is any hatred between the two people; they just have to learn to live together again.

This trip has answered many of my questions and I hope the conflict will soon come to an end. Then it will be possible for me and other Turks and Greeks to travel around the whole island. It's really worth visiting.

By Nurten Celik

In the meantime, Tim came down to assist Mahmut. “Ah, a report for the Blue Beret. Good. Then Mr. Clemens Azman (Chief Administrative Officer) said we actually do work, Tim joked. On a more serious note he added: “We’re in a hurry. Yesterday the weather was fine, but look now, the temperature is rising quickly. This is hard work. Each of the 10-foot sections weighs 35 kilos. The United Nations uses this American mast system in all their operations. Thanks to this magic winch”, he gats a device at the foot of the mast, “it’s possible to build this mast without the help of cranes. There are two more masts to replace. One of these is in Dherinia, the other is in Rocca Camp. And we have to be ready before summer strikes hard.”

When AB takes off, he puts his safety harness, he confesses that sometimes he feels a bit shaky up there. “Look at the leaves,” he says, pointing towards the treetops. “Down here it seems to be a calm day, but I can assure you that above the trees, there’s a firm breeze. When the ground team is not as experienced as this one, sometimes there’s a sudden jerk on the cables that are used to working at these levels. You could say I hold a top position at UNIFCYP.”

Avedis points out that the team members are very committed. “Yesterday we were really working hard. We even didn’t even have a cup of coffee, let alone take a lunch break.”

But Tim, the team leader, assures everyone while, he takes off his bright blue over-all; “Today we will have lunch.” And to prove his point he connects a safety warning to the foot of the mast, and escorts his colleagues to the Mess.

By Maj Paul Kolken

Civilian personnel

Holding a high position

First person to the mast has lunch.

Grievous crew and mast banner - a balanced team.

April 2000 - The Blue Beret
Top cops

By Sgt Mark Yarrow

With the return of Graham Taylor to Australia in February, Chief Superintendent Michael Fitzgerald has stepped up from his post as Deputy Commander to become the new Commander UNICYP.

Chief Superintendent Fitzgerald is a career police officer with 15 years service in the An Garda Síochána, the Irish Police Force. During that time, he has worked in uniform Garda duties, the Technical Bureau, crime and anti-terrorism investigation, the Immigration Unit, VIP protection and management.

Recounting some of his memorable experiences as a police officer, Michael spoke of his involvement in investigations into the Dublin bombings in 1974, an aircraft hijacking, kidnappings and 30 murders. He is frequently invited to give a lecture.

During his time with the An Garda Síochána, he has also qualified as a fingerprint expert, not an easy field of policing.

Michael arrived in Cyprus in June 1993 where he is accompanied by his wife, Margaret, who, as time goes by, is enjoying her Cyprus experience and recently moved to a house currently teaching bridge to her international friends, and finds this activity a tremendous source of satisfaction.

The holding of his UNICYP experience to date, the new Commander UNICYP Commander said: “I find it great to integrate with others people through the United Nations and, as the work is quite different to my previous role, my position with UNICYP is a challenging experience which has been of tremendous benefit.”

Supporting Chief Superintendent Fitzgerald in the management of UNICYP is Commander Graham Gartsive of the Australian Federal Police, who has taken over the position of Deputy Commander UNICYP.

Commander Gartsive is no stranger to Cyprus, having previously served with UNIFCYP from 1987 to 1988. At that time, he held the position of what is now known as United Nations Liaison Officer (Police).

Graham has also been fortunate enough to work overseas as the Australian Senior Police Liaison Officer in London from 1993 to 1998. His area of responsibility in that role not only covered the United Kingdom but also Western Europe, the former Soviet Union, Ireland and the Channel Islands.

While working with UNICYP in 1988, he was accompanied by his family and again his wife, Joy, has made the journey from Australia. Joy has a passion for archaeology. She is happy to have the opportunity to roam the Cyprus Museum and other archaeological sites, and would love to be involved in an archeological dig. She is also learning Turkish.

When comparing his past experiences with his current one, Graham said: “The integration of the UN civilian police force provides a new experience and variety, and I believe that one of the benefits is the sharing of work practices and cultures with the Irish Contingent.”

Further reflecting on UNIFCYP in general, he said: “Although UNIFCYP was a larger and more vibrant community in 1988, the air of friendship, camaraderie and the positive attitudes of the personnel are still as strong as ever, despite the reduced numbers.”

Come celebrate with us

By Sgt Cora Wheelan

The Hibernian Club at the UNFPA, Nicosia was the place to be on 17 March 2000 for those who wished to raise a glass to Saint Patrick and to celebrate Irishness.

The entire Irish Contingent currently serving within UNICYP turned out to offer a traditional “Cheers” (probably took on the role because of tax incentives and there is no evidence that Patrick came from a particularly religious family. At the age of 16, Patrick was taken prisoner by a group of Irish raiders who were attacking his family’s estate. They transported him to Ireland where he spent six years in captivity. There is some dispute over where this captivity took place. Although many believe he was taken to live in Mount Athenry in County Antrim, it is more likely that he was held in County Mayo near Killala.

The Shemshah or, at one time called the "Shemagh", symbolizes the cross and blessed trinity. Before the Christian era it was a sacred plant of the Druids of Ireland because it leaves formed a triad. The well-known symbol of the Shemshah connects it definitively to Saint Patrick and his teaching. Praying in the open air on the doctrine of the Trinity, he is said to have illustrated the existence of the Trinity in One by placing a shemagh from the grass growing at his feet and showing it to be the compenent. The legend of the shemagh is also connected with that of the banishment of the serpent tribe from Ireland by a tradition that makes are never seen on trodes, and that it is a remnant against the stings of serpents.

The trod in Arabic is called shemshah, and was served as an emblem of the first blood of the shemagh, as noted right, being a sacred plant among the Druids, and being a mystical symbol in the Celtic religion as well as all others. The fact that Saint Patrick must have been aware of the significances of his illustration.
SGTS’ MESS SEC 2 GRAND PRIX

By WO2 J Kennedy

Sgt’s Mess held a go-kart afternoon. Four-man teams from 2E, 32, the Leda Palace and the MFR competed for the prestigious Road Rage Trophy. The first race started tentatively as the racers got used to their karts and the track. A cunning overtaking maneuver by Sgt Lister, MFR, in the first heat was swiftly punished by C Sgt Billings (32W) who took great pleasure in introducing young Lister to the tyre wall at great speed.

As the racers got into the swing of things, so the speed and daring of the more experienced competitors increased. Size played an important part. The bigger driver’s weight was an advantage on the bends, but the lighter drivers had the advantage on the faster parts of the course.

The afternoon finished with one kart damaged, and so a final race of three competitors was held to decide the overall champion. The final result saw a commendable performance by WO2 Steve Prowse (Chief Clerk Sec 2) in third place, Sgt (Pty) Doris of the MFR finishing in second but the outright winner was C Sgt (Sgt Major, in wet clothes) Lester of the MFR, winning the final race by some 100m.

Special thanks go to Patie McCormack who runs the go-kart events. His powers of tolerance are to be commended, as he remained cool throughout.

The go-kart facility is available every Tuesday afternoon, and anyone wishing to stage a similar event should contact Patie McCormack at the UNPA on (08) 457275 or (02) 819108.

INTERSERVICES HOCKEY CYPRUS

By Lt Catherine Tye

Friday 3 March saw the annual interservices hockey competition between the RAF, Army, and Navy. The Army team was selected from all units within BFC, including the personnel currently serving with the United Nations in Nicosia. 2Lt Catherine Tye, Sgt Kath Munro MBE and Cpl Lisa Watson, all AGC (SPS) personnel serving with 1 Staffords, were selected to represent the Army in this high profile event.

At first, the RAF appeared to have the upper hand, scoring within the first five minutes of the whistle blowing. The army, determined not to be defeated in this annual battle of the ser- vice regiments and group scored the equaliser.

The Army then went from strength to strength, soon dictating play in the midfield. Following several high quality build-ups, the Army strikers went on to score two more goals.

At half time, the score was 3-1 and the RAF were beginning to show signs of distress. The Army were encouraged by the local Dhelkedia primary school, chanting at the sideline. Fully enthused by the support and their own confidence, the Army continued to control the momentum of the match and went on to score a further two goals.

Due to the increase in temperature, the umpires found it necessary to introduce a water break. The RAF, determined not to be defeated, fought hard in the final quarter and scored two goals against a now exhaust-ed Army defence.

The final score was 5-3, the Army regaining the trophy after last year’s narrow defeat on penalties.

Popular passion

By Capt Carlos Ferrerya

As most people know, football is the most popular sport in Argentina. It is, therefore, very difficult to select team players for any football match from Sector 1, as the entire contingent wants to participate.

Nevertheless, Sector 1 have picked a team and have held several matches, two recently with Sector 2. The first was won by Sector 1 with a score of 6-0. During this game, the British team had one female player who had problem settling the dispute of who was going to exchange T-shirts with her.

The second match, again against the Staffords, saw the British team winning this time, 3-1.

Sector 1 is now holding an inter-contingent championship. But they’d like to play another “international” match before the end of their tour in the hope of exchanging goals, camaraderie and T-shirts with their counterparts.

UNDERWATER ESCAPADES

By Lt Andy Thornton

Since deploying to Cyprus in Dec 00, members of 1 Staffords have been involved in underwater escapades in the form of SCUBA diving.

Most individuals have opted to do PADI courses run by civilian instructors. The use of civilian instructors allowed the courses to be tailor-made to the working hours of those on the line.

Classroom work after ‘office hours’ were followed by pool sessions and then ocean dives at local dive sites such as Cape Greco. Enthusiasm knew no boundaries. Gear was purchased in vast quantities with individuals buying just about every item of diving equipment that is manufactured. Fortunately, MFO boxes are not large enough to accommodate diving bells or support ships or those who would certainly also be acquired.

Only peer pressures stopped some individuals from testing their ‘underwater combat diving knives – the bigger the better’ during pool sessions.

The first experience of ocean dives were for many training experiences. The lower temperatures at 20 to

30 metres deep offered a fantastic opportunity to purchase yet more gear in the form of hoods and gloves. The additional pressure underwater meant the normal military solution to illness of gutting one’s teeth and getting on with it just did not apply. With minor colds on the surface quickly becoming unendur-able at 2 to 3 atmospheres (10 - 20ma) even if one had completed several courses at Brecon.

Cyprus offers many exciting opportunities to go diving. Hopefully interest will be maintained on returning to UK in June 00.

UNPA Sports Day

By LCpl Paul Mather

We started off with football, volleyball and much shouting from the Chief Clerk, whose bird man impression as HQ CoY’s godas was superb. I went with the volleyball team. We beat 3E but suffered two defeats by the MFR and HQ. Unfortunately for them, the bird man’s efforts, HQ company’s football team was beaten by 32W and also the MFR.

The afternoon’s events consisted of basketball and water polo at two different locations. I went to play basketball where the language barrier was a slight problem. During the game, instructions in Dutch meant nothing to me, however despite some confusion, we still managed to beat the MFR and 3E. We did suffer a defeat at the hands of HQ (although the referee was HQ: not that he would have been bad either.

Other than some Dangerous Brian hats, I didn’t see any of the water polo, but all the teams assembled at the pool afterwards, giving LCpl Tommy Neoka the perfect opportunity to take his top off and show everyone he had been to the gym once or twice.

The final event was the swimming relay which was won by MFR with 32W coming second, HQ third, and S3E fourth.

We then had the prize giving and a delicious barbecue without anyone getting food poisoning, which was nice.

All in all, a lovely day at the UNPA!

ARGENTINIANS RUN IN TSERI

By Sgt Sergio Castillo

Every year on 31st March, hundreds of runners turn up at the peaceful and picturesque village of Tseiri for the 5,000 metres Christos Saldivas Race. The event has become a tradition since 1986, and is carried out to commemorate Christos Saldivas who was born in that small village and died there in 1963.

As is customary, men, women and children are grouped into their categories according to age. Adults run 5,000 metres and children 3,000 and 1,000 metres.

UN troops are also invited and generally come from the sectors representing their nations. However, this year only two Argentinian families serving in UNFICYP attended the event, those of WO II Jiminez from Sector 1 and Sgt Castillo from HQ UNFICYP.

Even though the challenge was difficult, every member of both families finished the race in good time – and all within the first 10. Therefore, trophies as well as medals were awarded to them.

The Blue Beret - April 2000
UNFICYP’s road safety training for kids