

The Blue Beret

April 2001



**St Patrick's Day
Festival of Hope
Vaz Visits**



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editorial

Although the buffer zone between the ceasefire lines has marked the island's division since 1974, there are areas within the BZ which fulfil the opposite role, providing a place for people to come together. The Ledra Palace in Sector 2 is the familiar setting for many types of contact between Greek and Turkish Cypriots - ranging from meetings of political party representatives to bicommunal discussion groups, lectures, meetings of professional groups, concerts and press conferences. The adjacent Fulbright Centre is also a hub of activity serving Cypriots, with its scholarship programmes, seminars and handicraft workshops. And in Sector 4, Pyla has been the site of gatherings of people of both communities, especially young people who want to know each other better.

The Festival of Hope held in the grounds of the Ledra Palace on 31 March, attended by more than 3,000 people (see page 3), was one of the largest bicommunal events held recently. At a time when the media stress opposing views and the airwaves are filled with mutual recriminations, Greek and Turkish Cypriots who met at the festival, talked and listened to music, seemed to share the pleasure of normal human contact - simply enjoying an afternoon together "under the same sun".

Such contacts, of course, are not limited to the BZ sites of Ledra Palace and Pyla. There are periodic visits of people across the Green Line, but arranging these visits is sometimes difficult. So the Ledra Palace and Pyla provide the meeting grounds. Thus the BZ, while continuing to separate the forces, also serves to bring people together.

FESTIVAL OF HOPE

The bicommunal Festival of Hope for youth was held at the Ledra Palace, the home base of the British and Dutch soldiers of UNFICYP, on 31st March. The four-hour event was organised by the youth branches of the Greek Cypriot political party AKEL and of the Republican Turkish Party (CTP). A total of well over 3,000 people from both sides attended, mainly young people but also many from the older generation.



The festival opened with music followed by messages of greeting in both Greek and Turkish. This was followed by speeches from the party leaders Demetris Christofias (AKEL) and Mehmet Ali Talat (CTP), a display of traditional folk dances and a performance given by the 50-member Bicommunal Choir. The day's events were then rounded off with performances by rock bands from both sides of the island.

The festival was thoroughly enjoyed by all who took part and attended, including UNFICYP personnel. It illustrated perfectly the hope of those present for peace and understanding in Cyprus.



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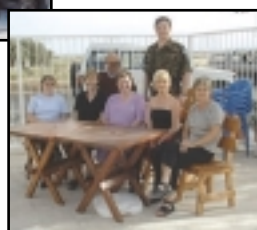
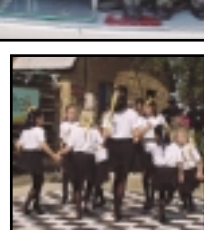
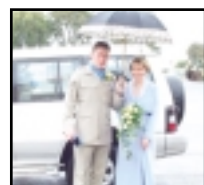
Turkish Cypriots Mustafa Abitoglu (centre) and Gürhan Garabli (right), both members of CTP, met Panayiota Arnou (Greek Cypriot, left) on 31st March for the first time. Sitting together in the grounds of the Ledra Palace Hotel, they were swapping e-mail addresses. For Mustafa and Gürhan, this was the first time they had attended a gathering of the two communities. Mustafa says: "As a newcomer to this kind of entertainment, I think this is the perfect occasion to meet and discuss the Cyprus issue - amongst other things - with Greek Cypriots". Panayiota, who is a member of EDON, says: "I come often to events held at the Ledra Palace, for instance last UN Open Day I was here. And I wish more people would attend - it is very important for us as Greek Cypriots to communicate and keep in touch with the Turkish Cypriots." Gürhan ended with: "I want peace in Cyprus as soon as possible - because there is only one Cyprus."

Nicolina Karaolia (left), a 16-year-old Greek Cypriot, and Melis Eroglu, a 14-year-old Turkish Cypriot, met through Youth Encounters for Peace (YEP) and have been close friends for the last eight months.

They first communicated in a chat room on the IRC, and consequently met face to face in Pyla in September 2000. They now keep in touch regularly through e-mail and meet up every chance they can. Asked if they have support from their family and friends, the answer from both girls is: "Definitely yes! And everybody can do this, if they really want to."

Natasa Loizou, an 18-year-old Greek Cypriot schoolgirl, and Salih Bayraktar, a retired Turkish Cypriot schoolteacher, sing together regularly in the Bicommunal Choir which was originally established in May 1997. Choir members, citizens from both communities, meet whenever possible, usually on Sundays, in the mixed village of Pyla. Natasa says: "There is a very warm feeling of friendship between us. In fact, we don't just sing - we have parties together."

The group travelled to London to sing in "A Concert for Peace and Friendship among the People of Cyprus" in November 2000.



Hungarian National Day

On 15th March 2001, the Hungarian Contingent serving with UNFICYP celebrated their National Day.

It was the 153rd anniversary of the revolution and war of independence (1848/49), one of the most crucial episodes in Hungarian history. Although Hungary was defeated by the combined forces of Austria and Russia during the war of independence, some of the social gains could not be withdrawn (for instance the abolition of the feudal system), and the revolutionary achievements of the period brought sympathy in Europe for Hungary.

About 200 members of UNFICYP helped Hungarian soldiers celebrate this special occasion at a cocktail party in Camp Duke Leopold V,



Famagusta, where national delicacies were served accompanied by Hungarian wine. The programme included a display of martial arts.

St Patrick's Day

By Garda Kevin Keys

There are 364 practice days, but only one St Patrick's Day, and on 17th March, members of the Irish Police and Military Contingents celebrated their national day with friends and colleagues.

The festivities started with a traditional St Patrick's Day mass in St Columba's Church at the UNPA. This was followed by an Irish coffee and smoked salmon reception at Civpol House, hosted by the Commander of the Irish Contingent, Ch Supt Jack Behan, and Lt Col Murt Farragher.



Cheers! From the left: RSM Noel O'Flynn, Coy Sgt Mick O'Neill and BQMS Joe Quigley

Children of the members of the Irish Contingents gave a display of traditional Irish dancing, and the harp (the symbol of Ireland) was played by Dr Irene Cotter. She was accompanied on the French horn by Insp Pat Collins' son, Enda.

The event was attended by the Honorary Irish Consul and the Chief of Mission.



Commander UNCIVPOL shares a joke with the Honorary Irish Consul, Mr Stephanos Stephanou



Multinational children doing the Irish jig

XV UN FLIGHT HAVE ARRIVED



It was quite an upheaval for many of the new personnel in XVUN Flight when they arrived in Larnaca, after travelling from Argentina - a distance of over 12,000 km. It is the first time for most of the contingent to serve in Cyprus, and during the four-day handover period, they were briefed in detail by the outgoing XIV UN Flight on the duties and taskings expected of them.

The new CO UN Flight, Lt Col Sergio Castro, took over command on 28th March.

All members of UN Flight are delighted to be in Cyprus, acting as the "aerial arm of UNFICYP". Their slogan is: "Always and Everywhere".

Opening of Le Café



The staff at Le Café with Col Jeremy Brooks

With the withdrawal of all YMCA establishments from the British Forces, the "Y", as it was fondly known in HQ UNFICYP, was also faced with the possibility of closure.

To the rescue came CESSAC (the Church of England Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's Club). On 2nd April, Gina Potter, the CESSAC representative from Episkopi, arrived for the opening ceremony. The Chief of Staff, Col Jeremy Brooks, said a few words of welcome, following which a delicious spread was uncovered for old (and hopefully new) customers.

Business hours are:

Monday to Friday: 0800-1500

Saturday: 0800-1400

Sunday: 0930-1030

A wider and more interesting menu is now available, so for further details, phone (02) 359308 for your order of the day.

Reminiscing on Old Times

As the saying goes, "*The more things change, the more they stay the same*".

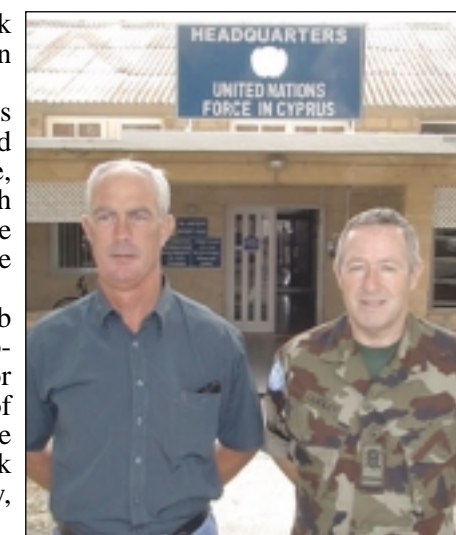
The day is 10th April 2001 as Pat (Neilan) and Joe (Quigley) reflect on times past. Be it coincidence, chance, fate or whatever, but to go back to 10th April 1973, the two (as young corporals) arrived in Cyprus as part of the Irish Company Group, then stationed in Larnaca as part of the peacekeeping force. Now, 28 years later, Pat is the RSM of UNIFIL HQ based in Naqoura, Lebanon. He came to Cyprus on holiday and to visit his comrade who is the Camp WO at UNFICYP HQ.

Just to continue the coincidence,

both are from the same locality back home in Ireland and have known each other since schooldays.

Now they reminisce on days gone by and how UNFICYP and Cyprus have changed. Of course, UNFICYP's numbers are much smaller and Cyprus is a much more peaceful place than in 1973, but the division still remains.

As for Pat and Joe, the job continues. Whether it is peacekeeping with UNFICYP or UNIFIL, or continuing to serve as members of the Defence Forces back home, Joe says: "As in my country, I look forward to better and, hopefully, more peaceful times in Cyprus".



FORCE PROVOST MARSHAL - MAJOR MICHAEL BOTTOMLEY BEM

Maj Michael Bottomley enlisted into the British Army in 1968 at the age of 16 and served in a variety of roles up to the rank of Warrant Officer Class One (Regimental Sergeant Major).

He was commissioned into the Royal Military Police in April 1988 and took up the appointment of second in command of the Close Protection Unit. Between April 1990 and June 1992, he acted as the Close Protection Officer for Northern Ireland and commanded the unit that protected resident senior officers and visiting dignitaries, including members of the royal family.

In June 1992, he was posted as the Operations Officer for the Royal Military Police in Hong Kong and commanded the Sek Kong Detachment located in the New Territories.

In February 1992, he was promoted to the rank of Major, and was posted to command 170 Provost Company Royal Military Police located in the Castle, Edinburgh. In December 1996, he assumed the appointment as Provost Marshal 5th Division, located in Shrewsbury, England.

For the last two years, prior to taking up the appointment of Force Provost Marshal, Maj Bottomley commanded the Close Protection Unit



and was responsible to the Ministry of Defence and other government agencies for training and deploying bodyguards and close protection teams in locations as diverse as South America, Africa, the Middle East, the Balkans and other locations.

Married to Kay, they have three children. Michelle and Rachael are married with children of their own, and Daniel is studying Nautical Engineering in Glasgow.

Maj Bottomley's interests are wildlife, hill walking and gardening. He maintains he is too old to be a sportsman however, he likes to keep fit and swim, and says he plays golf badly.



MFR Air Manoeuvre Training

By 1/Lt Martijn Kitzen

Argentinian Marines, and SSgt Szabo of the Hungarian Airborne Forces. They check all their

In March 2001, the OC MFR, Maj Ian Gibb, developed a new operational concept for the MFR, which includes link up by air to speed up incident response times. To try out this concept, No. 3 Platoon MFR was asked to think of and execute this training programme to familiarise soldiers with helicopter boarding techniques.

On Friday 13th April, the first part of the MFR air manoeuvre training took place. The programme includes heli safety drills and heli handling procedures. Instructor for the MFR is SSgt Jerry Schuurman, a former Royal Netherlands Army Air Mobile Brigade instructor and a certified Landing Point Commander. For the UN Flight, Argentinian Air Force Commando 1/Lt Marcello "Pepe" Sanchez assists in this first part of the training.

Starting with a safety brief, SSgt Schuurman stresses the dangers of working with helicopters such as tailrotors, intakes and airdrops. After this he describes the way a section will be organised in the helicopter, followed by some practical training. The section assembles, kneeling at the 2 o'clock position.

When the pilot gives the thumbs up signal, the section approaches and then boards the helicopter. SSgt Schuurman explains to the soldiers where to look when boarding. Inside the helicopter, the emergency procedures are practised. During the training, it is discovered that different countries have different procedures. 1/Lt Sanchez watches this and says: "It is very useful to see how procedures differ. This is the benefit we gain in Cyprus: we can use and try other procedures out". SSgt Schuurman explains that the MFR use the NATO rules and regulations for helicopter operations, which, he explains, are slightly different from those practised by the Argentinian Air Force. This discussion creates a win-win situation: we finish our training using the best of both worlds!

Tuesday 17th February: time for the practical training. The scene is the MFR training area at Prince William Camp. To begin with, No. 3 Platoon finds itself cleaning the Heli Landing Site to make sure the helicopter will not be damaged by any objects. 15 minutes before the estimated landing time, the first section, led by Sgt Vos, prepares to board. Sgt Vos is assisted by two experienced members of his section: SSgt Villalba of the

equipment and make sure everything is secured. When every soldier is checked, they moved on to the 2 o'clock position to wait there for the helicopter. Then the Bell 212 helicopter arrives, piloted by Captain Vera and 1/Lt Gammarra, with SSgt Aza as loadmaster. After the first overflight, the helicopter is marshalled in by SSgt Schuurman, who communicates with the pilots by signals. After the thumbs up, the men board the helicopter and depart. This process continues nine times to make sure that every member of the platoon practises three times.

It is clear that this training is very beneficial. At the end, every soldier boards and disembarks from the helicopter in a competent, confident manner. Maj Estrella, Air Safety Officer, and 1/Lt Sanchez are very positive about this training: they add some minor points, indicating how we can do better in future. Afterwards, there is a debriefing for all personnel, and errors are reviewed so that they will not reoccur.

At the end, SSgt Schuurman smiles and compliments all soldiers: "Well done, another great success!"



THE BLUE BERET CAPTION COMPETITION



*what
title goes
here?*



Last month's caption competition was won by Capt Martin Estrada, 2i/c of the MFR, who entered the text shown above. Martin is invited to come to the PIO, where he will have his photograph taken, printed and mounted.

The photo needs a title. Any good ideas? Again, the winner will receive a full colour portrait.

All entries to the PIO by **21 May 2001**.

VISIT OF AUSTRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

The Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner paid a visit to UNFICYP on 12th April. Following meetings with the Chief of Mission and Force Commander, she flew to Sector 4 and attended a briefing by the CO, Lt Col Kienberger, a lunch in Camp Pyla and a wreath-laying ceremony at the monument near Goshi, where three Austrian soldiers lost their lives in 1974.



Slovakian Recce Team arrives in CDL V

The first Slovakian recce team arrived in CDL V in April, following the decision that Slovakia will take over responsibility for Sector 4 from the Austrians and Slovenians in June 2001.

The aim of this first meeting was to get a feel for Sector 4, and to gather background information necessary for the preparation of a timely handover.



Austrian Teachers Visit Sector 4

A group of 41 teachers and educationalists from Austria visited Sector 4 from 11th to 12th April. Their aim was to learn about Cyprus and the work of the Austrian peacekeepers.

This is the last opportunity for a visit to the Austrian blue berets, prior to the withdrawal of the Contingent which begins next June, following approximately 38 years with UNFICYP.



AUSCON's Easter Service at Ayia Marina

After some consideration, the Chaplain of Sector 4, Maj Diebl, decided to hold the Easter Service of Sector 4 personnel at Ayia Marina. This is a small church in the buffer zone near the village of Dherinia, approximately 1,5 km from UN 146.

The picturesque church is located by the side of a small river, which rarely contains water. The area is, however, humid enough for vegetation such as fig and eucalyptus trees. It is, indeed, a beautiful place for meditation or simply for a short prayer in the church. AUSCON has celebrated many religious feasts there, in particular Easter. It has been the scene of several marriages, pilgrimages and a number of annual church services. The church of Ayia Marina, which was burnt down in 1974, was renovated by the municipality of Dherinia and AUSCON members.

On 15th April, the Easter Vigil of Sector Four was held at the church. A better place to celebrate



the festival of peace and of the resurrection seems hard to imagine. The holy mass was attended by a large number of soldiers and their families. Padre Diebl arranged the event, and the service began with the traditional Easter fire. Everyone was involved by reading lessons in German and English. The approach of dusk put everyone present in the appropriate mood for the holiest night in the Christian year.

After holy communion, the blessing of traditional dishes concluded this celebration that will live long in everyone's memory.

Austrian Satirist Helmut Hüller on Welfare Tour

Helmet Hüller has been a welcome guest at UN missions ever since 1989. That's when he first visited Austrian soldiers

based at the Golan Heights. Last year, he visited soldiers of Sector 4.

To enable all Austrian soldiers to enjoy extracts of Hüller's programmes "Sapperlot" and "Postfach 30", performances took place during the month of April at Camp Pyla, as well as in CDL V, Famagusta.



General Staff Members Retire After 86 Years of Combined Service

Georgoulla Ioannidou started her working life in 1959, primarily for the British Forces in Ayios Nicolaos. She continued working for the British Forces Cyprus until 1977, during which time she was posted to Dhekelia, Episkopi, Akrotiri and RAF Nicosia.



Pavlos (left) with Georgoulla (right) at their recent farewell reception

Then in summer of 1977, she moved on to work for UNFICYP under the umbrella of CEPO (Cyprus Establishment Pay Office). Her first posting was in the Inventory Control Unit under General Services, but in 1983, she was transferred to the Finance Section where she remained until retirement.

Georgoulla was a very caring staff member, and after almost 43 years of service, she will be much missed by her friends and colleagues.

Pavlos Hadjiantoniou first joined the British Forces in 1958. He started in the transport section, driving many types of vehicles, including ambulances. Pavlos continued working for the British Forces until 1982, when he joined UNFICYP, where he stayed until April 2001.

Apart from working on his land producing a variety of vegetables and fruit trees, Pavlos will spend part of his retirement helping to look after his 11 grandchildren!

His colleagues in the Transport Unit wish him all the very best.

FONDOUK DAY

By Lt Alex Martin

Early on Monday 9th April, members of Sector 2 were rudely awakened by loud shouting and screams, and the crash of doors being thrown open. Some thought that the Ledra Palace might be under attack, but the reality was that the age old tradition of 'morning "Gunfire"' (tea with rum) was being carried out by a particularly enthusiastic Regimental Sergeant Major (WOI Stirling), ably assisted by the HQ Squadron Sergeant Major (WOII Simon Fox), to commemorate the Battle of Fondouk, the Regimental Battle Honour of The Queen's Royal Lancers.

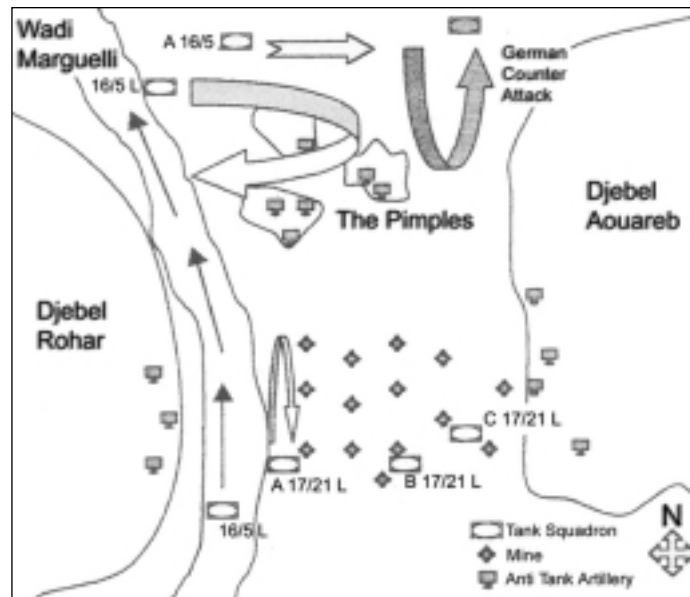
The Battle of Fondouk was adopted as the Regimental Battle Honour of The Queen's Royal Lancers because it is a battle in which both parent Regiments (16/5L and 17/21L) took part.

The Battle of Fondouk:

In an attempt to shorten the war in 1943 in Tunisia, 9th Corps were ordered to attack through the Fondouk Pass. They were then to push through onto the coastal plain in order to cut off the Axis forces withdrawing in front of the 8th Army; it was to be completed by 10th April 1943.

The Pass itself is a river plain approximately 1,000 yards wide lying between two low rocky ridges. The Pass had been well prepared by the Axis; the valley bed had been heavily mined and was defended by five infantry battalions and 13 anti-tank guns, supported by artillery and mortars. The Corps plan was for the British 128th Brigade to capture the left ridge, while the US 34th Infantry Division was to capture the high ground to the right before pushing 6th Division through the Pass.

The initial plan was not successful, as the 34th Division failed to capture their objectives. With 8th April drawing to a close, Gen Crocker was left with a dilemma. The heights around the Pass still lay in enemy hands, the valley floor was still heavily mined, and when B Squadron 17/21L carried out an initial reconnaissance, they lost four tanks. Time was, however, at a premium and as a result, Crocker ordered 6th Armoured Division to try and take the Pass before the mines or the



heights had been cleared. 17/21L were to lead the assault.

On the morning of 9th April, 17/21L conducted what can only be described as a modern Charge of the Light Brigade. The Regiment was led into the Pass by B Squadron, who were decimated, with only two tanks surviving the mines and anti-tank guns. C Squadron advanced to the rear and right of B Squadron doing no better, entirely losing its forward troops before being directed to withdraw. A Squadron manoeuvred closer to the riverbed and, as a result, did slightly better but were also eventually held up by the mines and the ferocity of the anti-tank fire. With the 17/21L assault now stalled, the divisional commander launched 16/5L down the Wadi Marguelli, a dried up riverbed. 16/5L made much better progress as the Wadi had only recently dried and, therefore, the Germans had not had the opportunity to mine its bed. Further to that, the Regiment was protected during the advance by the Wadi's 20-foot high banks and a sudden dust storm, both of which served to obscure the enemy's view of their advance.

When 16/5L eventually emerged from the Wadi, they found themselves to be facing due south, one and a half miles east of Fondouk - in effect, to the rear of the three 'pimples' which dominated the Pass and which had eluded 17/21L all morning. 16/5L then proceeded to advance slowly back towards the 'pimples', destroying anti-tank guns and machine gun posts as they advanced. B Squadron 16/5L also foiled an attempted counter attack by five German tanks, engaging and destroying three and forcing the remainder to withdraw. 16/5L held their ground throughout the night of 9th April, capturing the 'pimples' the following morning unopposed.

During the action, 16/5L had destroyed 15 anti-tank guns and three tanks for the loss of two tanks of their own, proving the ability of manoeuvre to achieve what firepower could not.



WO2 Si Fox delivers "gunfire" to Sgt Martin Hepworth

UK Minister for Europe Visits UNFICYP

By Lt Alex Martin

On Wednesday 14th March, Mr Keith Vaz, the British Minister for Europe, visited Sector 2. During his tour of City Troop, he met members of Sector 2 East and then enjoyed afternoon tea at the Sector 2 Officers' Mess with several young people from

both Cypriot communities.

Mr Vaz seemed to enjoy his 'whistle stop' tour of the line and was clearly exceptionally interested in the Cyprus problem.

Before leaving Sector 2 to return to the UK, Mr Vaz held a press conference in the Ledra Palace.



Mr Vaz meeting the CO Sector 2 and British soldiers on line duty

Love on the Line

Cpl Paul Cattermer, MT troop in Sector 2, and Carol Addison from the UK married at the Registry Office in Nicosia on 5th January this year. However, since relatives were unable to be present on that occasion, they decided to have their marriage blessed at St Paul's Church in Akrotiri on 7th April.

Many members of Sector 2 attended the service, and the couple were escorted by a Lance Guard in keeping with regimental tradition. Less traditional was Carol's decision to dispense with the usual bridesmaid and enrol her Cypriot Poodle 'Scruffy' as her 'bridesdog'.

Following the service, the couple held a reception for family and friends at the Akrotiri Go-Kart Club - though sadly, the weather prevented any of the guests from demonstrating their racing prowess.

FARMER JOHN DOES HIS BIT

By Sgt Pete Scott

Life for United Nations troops on the outskirts of Nicosia is not always easy; long hours, bad weather in the early part of the year and, of course, the never ending job of keeping the peace. Patrolling the buffer zone can be a difficult task, not made any easier in heavy rain which leaves the patrol tracks in a terrible state and makes patrolling these tracks in the UN vehicle, a Mitsubishi L200 pickup truck, a very difficult task.

Enter stage left Yiannakis Massouhs or, as he is more commonly known by members of Liri Troop who patrol this particular area of the BZ, 'Farmer John'. A quick phone call to him or simply flagging him down as he passes will result in him providing vehicles with assistance. Not only will he pull stricken L200s from mud, but he has also recently repaired a bridge that was damaged during a storm and blocked a part of the patrol track. He has recently begun to cut back tree branches from the tracks, which, now that summer is fast approaching, have started to block movement along

these tracks which is vital to the continuing success of UN patrols in the area.

A particular problem in Liri Troops patch is 'Blue Tractor Minefield', an area wellknown to members of the UN in this part of the BZ, so called after an unfortunate incident a few years back when another local farmer strayed into a minefield and had his tractor destroyed in an explosion. Over recent weeks Farmer John has continued to improve the quality of the tracks around the area, which will aid in preventing any further accidental intrusion into the minefield.



SECTOR 1 MEDAL PARADE

By Capt Jorge Mobilia

Once again, Sector 1 celebrated the occasion of their Medal Parade when Argentinian, Bolivian, Brazilian, Paraguayan and Uruguayan peacekeepers were decorated with the United Nations medals.

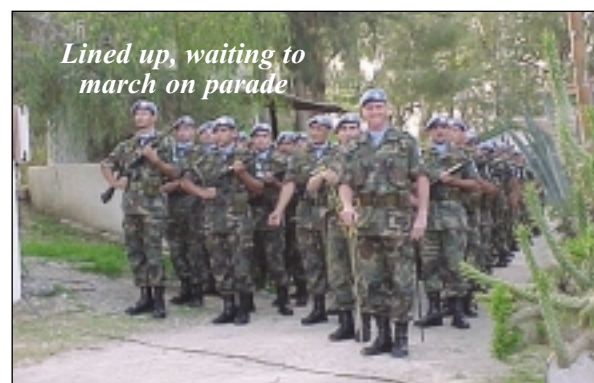
In the presence of families and friends, approximately 250 peacekeepers marched on to the parade ground where they were presented with their medals by the Chief of Mission, the Force Commander, CO Sector 1 and 2i/c Sector 1. An



Stoking the fire for the barbecue

impressive demonstration of military skills followed, carried out by members of Alpha and Charlie Companies. The Force Commander then addressed the troops, and the event ended with a dinner where traditional Argentinian delicacies were served.

On 27th March, a second Medal Parade was held in the Soli Amphitheatre for those peacekeepers who were on duty on 20th March.



Lined up, waiting to march on parade



A display of military skills by the Argentinian peacekeepers

EASTER IN CYPRUS

It was a great experience for ARGCON members to celebrate Easter in Cyprus. Their traditional costumes are like those worn by Greek Cypriots, and they have some similar customs, for instance special cakes, chocolate eggs, etc.

So they were very pleased when a team from the British Broadcasting Corporation visited Cyprus and asked them personally about their experiences, spending Easter away from Argentina on this sunny island in the Mediterranean.

The team also asked Hungarians about their Easter customs. Apparently, it is traditional for Hungarian men living in the countryside to leave

home early on Easter Monday and visit female relatives for the "sprinkling of water". Either fresh water or cologne is sprayed over all the young girls, since once upon a time, it was strongly believed that by doing so, "these girls would stay fresh and lovely, just like the first flowers of spring".



Argentinians relating their Easter customs to the British Broadcasting team

RSM Noel O'Flynn, from the Irish Contingent, was asked how he felt spending Easter away from the Emerald Isle. "The Orthodox Easter was celebrated together with the Roman Catholic this year," he said, "and since I am lucky enough to have my family with me, I felt very much at home." Noel is one of the lucky ones.

The FC Visits... ...UN Flight



Outside the UNFICYP Medical Centre



At UN Flight

The Force Commander, Maj Gen Victory Rana, regularly pays visits to the sectors and units of UNFICYP as a matter of courtesy, and also to ensure that his personnel are happy in their work and satisfied with conditions.

26th April was the date set for his visit to UN Flight. On arrival, he was greeted by Lt Col Sergio Castro, who took over the mantle of Commanding Officer at the end of March 2001.

The Force Commander inspected a parade of all available members of Flight, meeting each one individually. He was then given a detailed briefing by the Commanding Officer. During his visit, the FC was accompanied by operations and logistics staff from the headquarters.

At the end of his visit, Maj Gen Rana complimented the Commanding Officer and his team for the excellent service they provide to the mission.

...the UNFICYP Medical Centre

On 27th April, the FC was invited to visit the Medical Centre, named after his predecessor, Maj Gen Evergisto de Vergara. Ten minutes prior to the visit, his office was called to say there had been an emergency: a civilian electrician, working on top of the EDP unit, had slipped and fallen and was at that moment being driven to a Nicosia Hospital for more specialised treatment than the UNFICYP Medical Centre could offer.

So, the visit was re-arranged and took place the following day. The FC was escorted on a brief tour of the Centre and left, content that everything was in good working order.

And happily, due in part to the special care provided by the Centre, the civilian electrician is well on the road to recovery.



JOC SECTOR 1

By Cpl Mariana Rivadeneira

Not many members of ARGCON speak fluent English, so it can sometimes be a problem to those personnel in the JOC who have to communicate in English - and sometimes in Greek or Turkish - with callers on a daily basis.

Phones ring all day and radios are calling, but the JOC personnel in Sector 1 carry on with their tasks as best they can. They are now rotating back to Argentina, having gained a lot of experience in communications!

Episkopi Rugby 7's Championship

On Saturday 14th April, the Unicorns sent a team to the Episkopi Invitational 7's Competition being run at the Happy Valley sports ground.

In all, 14 teams took part with both cup and plate competitions being run. The Unicorns won the

initial group stage, but unfortunately lost to a very strong, well-drilled Cheshire Regt side in the first round of the cup.

The final winners of the competition were an exceptional team made up of Fijians from the King's Own Royal Border Regt.



The Unicorns in action

Sector 2 Cycling Race

By 2/Lt Ronald Verkuil



CO Sector 2 awards second place to the Gurkha team

On Friday 16th March, Sector 2 organised the second in a series of three cycling races.

The first was a relay race, but this event was the first really serious individual cycling test.

The 2.6km track was set out around UN OP 48, south of the UNPA. The challenge was to complete as many laps as possible in one hour. The eventual winner completed 11.

It was a warm day, and the start was crowded with 30 cyclists competing. At the end

of the first round, Capt Van Strien already had a solid lead.

The second round was unfortunate for some, with SM Laarman falling off his bike, breaking his hip. Capt Dowson was also the first to suffer a punctured tyre.

The rest of the race passed off well. NB: The third - and final - event is scheduled for Friday 11th May.

Winners: Individuals (men)

1. **Capt Remi van Strien**
2. **2/Lt Ronald Verkuil**
3. **LCpl Sujun**

12 SU Walkabout 2001

11 teams from UNFICYP took part and managed to complete the 12 Signal Unit Walkabout 2001 on 7th April.

This annual long distance orienteering event, for teams of three, requires a high degree of physical fitness and stamina, combined with a sound map reading knowledge to complete the approximately 30 mile course. Each team member is required to carry certain items of basic safety equipment, and team members must stay together throughout the often rough and rugged terrain of the course, which takes competitors through five checkpoints to the finish at the Episkopi Garrison.



*Drenched Celtic Tigers consult the map
Maj Lorimer, CS O'Neill and WO1 Quigley*



Some of the UNFICYP teams with their prizes after the finish

It was one of the foulest days of the year and it continued to rain on and off. Not one team escaped a decent drenching at some point or another.

The honour of top UNFICYP team fell, believe it or not, to the "HQ UNFICYP Ladies" team, of civilian staff members Madeline Garlick, Angela Milne and Diana Bridger, who finished in fifth overall, in a very creditable time of 6 hrs 14 mins. The next UN team (including a member from the US

Embassy), of LCpl Oliver, Gnr Bale and Mr J Bisesse, was some half an hour behind them.

Maj Ray Lorimer, WO1 Joe Quigley and CS Mick O'Neill who formed the UNFICYP veteran team - the "Celtic Tigers" (pronounced with a hard 'K' and not a soft 'C' please!) also won their category and finished in 7 hrs 14 mins - just five minutes ahead of "The Glory Boys" from Sector Two - Lt Col James Everard, Capt Nick Melson and RSM Stirling.

EASTER EGG ORIENTEERING COMPETITION

Controls could be visited in any order. At each control was a punch and the idea was to punch the correct box on your control card. The event was run similar to an orienteering score course with each control carrying points. The controls furthest away obviously carried the most points. The idea was to find as many controls as you could and be back within an hour. Points were (supposedly) deducted if you were over the time limit!

The person/team with most points in the fastest time was the overall winner - this year Colin and Caroline Gent

managed to pip Kyriakos Michaelides. At the finish control cards were exchanged for packets of chocolate Easter eggs. Colourful rosettes were presented to all the children by the CAO, Mr Clemens Adams. Alan O'Neill was first in the under-18 class, followed by Martin and Johannes Adams, with Lauren Whitehall claiming third place.

Everyone, including the numerous pet dogs, who took part, enjoyed themselves and agreed a fun morning was had by all. A special mention should go to two teams of youngsters who managed the course without adult assistance - Charlie Butt and Florian Kolken, and Simon and Jonathan Bird.



Marie and Povl Schmidt receiving their prizes from Clemens Adams

On Easter Monday more than fifty adults and children turned up at the Officers' Club, UNPA for an Easter Egg Orienteering Hunt.

Although no chocolate Easter eggs were actually hidden out on the ground, 12 orienteering control markers had been strategically placed round the UNPA and it was these that had to be found.

Competitors were given a set of clues, a control card and a map. Start times were staggered to prevent people from following one another. At their given start time family teams ran to the master map table and copied the control points onto their own map. Then it was off round the camp to find the controls.

OPENING OF THE DOLPHIN SWIMMING POOL

On Friday 27th April, the Dolphin Swimming Pool once again opened its gates to the public. The pool is situated in the heart of the UNPA and provides a much-welcomed diversion from the rigors of work and the ever-increasing heat of the Cyprus summer.

By courtesy of Commander BRITCON, Col Jeremy Brooks, the pool is available as part of the UN welfare package. It is free to military members of HQ UNFICYP and UNFICYP independent sub units co-located in the UNPA. Families of attached military personnel, HQ UNFICYP civilian staff and members of the Diplomatic Corps, together with their immediate family, are able to join on repayment. Private functions can also be arranged outside normal pool opening times.

The pool management board of CPLO, (Lt Col Max McNamara), UK Property Manager (Maj John Hunt), Cyprus Works Unit Manager (SSgt Rick Crawford) and accountant (Christina Ignatiou), run the pool, and are keen to hear from anyone with constructive comments as to how the pool might be improved. MFR play an vital part in the day-to-day management of the pool, as well as providing the all-important lifeguards.

This year, new restaurant facilities are on offer with British, Greek and Chinese menus as well as a salad bar. Hopefully in a short while, café goers will be able to take pleasure in a beer or glass of wine as the sit under umbrella-covered terraces enjoying a meal from the new menu. The café also hopes to offer a full

take-away menu in the near future. For the children, the normal fast food items such as burgers, hotdogs and chips will be available, together with their favourites of fizzy drinks, sweets and ice cream.

The pool is now open right the way through to November. If adequate funding becomes available, it is hoped to introduce solar panels to heat the pool to a comfortable temperature in the region of 25°C-28°C.

Prices:

Adult Day Ticket: £2.00
Child (2-18) Day Ticket: £1.00
Single Monthly Ticket: £12.50
Family Monthly Ticket: £25.00/30

Seasonal Opening Times

April-June: 10 am - 6 pm
July - Sep: 10 am - 8 pm
Oct - Nov: 10 am - 6 pm

**Late night opening:
Wednesdays and Saturdays**

The FC Inspects UN Flight

