**Editorial**

In extending our mandate for a further six months, the Security Council has expressed regret that “the gap between words and deeds remains too great for the Secretary-General to resume fully his good offices mission”, and urged “progress towards the resumption of negotiations for a comprehensive settlement”. The Council encouraged active participation in bi-communal discussions at the technical level, under the SRSG’s leadership, and welcomed resumption of UNFICYP activities, as well as the agreement of both leaders to meet for the installation of the 3rd Member of the CMP.

The Council noted with concern “the increase in un-authorized construction of building for personal and commercial use in the buffer zone”, and encouraged both sides “to engage in consultations with UNFICYP on the demarcation of the buffer zone, and to respect UNFICYP’s mandate and operations in the buffer zone”. It also expressed “concern at continued disagreement over construction activity relating to the proposed additional crossing point at Ledra Street” and urged “both sides to cooperate with UNFICYP to resolve this issue.”

The Council welcomed progress in demining and expressed strong support for UNFICYP’s efforts “to extend operations to Turkish forces minefields in the rest of the buffer zone”.

The Council also welcomed the SRSG’s emphasis on “greater cohesiveness in the efforts of the United Nations family in Cyprus.”

Meantime, we look ahead to the CMP meeting early next month when the two leaders join SRSG Møller in welcoming 3rd Member Christophe Gemmel. Immediately after comes the CMP meeting early next month when the two leaders: President Papadopoulous of Nicosia and President Cypriot of Cyprus.

**“Still Far From Home” / UNHCR T-Shirt Benefit**

World Refugee Day - 20 June

For the thousands of people forced to flee their homes each year, escaping with their lives and a few belongings is often just the start of a long struggle. Once they have found safety from persecution or war, they still face enormous challenges just trying to obtain things most of us take for granted — schooling, a job, decent housing or health care.

Hardship takes many forms, and hard choices must be made. Aid agencies with limited resources are often forced into painful prioritization exercises which is more important for thousands of children in refugee camp, a school or a health clinic.

In addition to their efforts to build new lives, many refugees bear psychological and physical scars from past abuses that can endure for years, even in a completely new environment. Families who face persecution in their own country may have to live under the protection of asylum, a school or a health clinic.

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Front Cover: Military Skills Competition

Back Cover: Abusing the buffer zone

**UNHCR T-Shirt Benefit – Nicosia**

UNHCR in Cyprus marked World Refugee Day with the launch of a fashion T-shirt in an effort to raise awareness of the global refugee problem as well as raise funds that will be used to benefit asylum seekers and refugees in Cyprus.

The T-shirt was launched at a ceremony opened by Mrs. Photini Papadopoulou at the Melina Mercouri Hall in Nicosia on 22 June. Cypriot designer Kika Ioannidou took up the challenge of designing the T-shirt with all the proceeds being donated to UNHCR. There are currently 600 recognised refugees and a further 12,000 asylum seekers living in Cyprus.

UNHCR Representative in Cyprus Cristina Planas said the T-shirt aims at being a “walking message” to spread awareness of the circumstances of the refugees, their rights and the overall right to a dignified life. “It aims at having much more impact than a banner that UNHCR could hang in Eleftheria Square by virtue of being transmitted by the people themselves, reminding each other of being sensitive to others that are less fortunate and happy than us. Mrs. Planas urged people to show their support by buying the T-shirts at designated retail outlets on the island (a list is available from UNHCR, tel: 22 359043). The proceeds from the sale of the T-shirts will benefit asylum seekers and refugees in Cyprus by enhancing UNHCR’s support, advocacy and supervision capacities.

**Keeping the Flame of Hope Alive**

Help us keep that flame of hope alive!

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

20 June 2006
Looking After Planet Cyprus

Desertification, which was the theme of this year’s World Environment Day, is of particular concern in Cyprus, where the water balance is increasingly negative, as a result mainly of agricultural activity, and where erosion is a major issue, as a result of mining and quarrying. Business plays a key role, both as a factor in environmental deterioration of the island, as well as holding the key to potential solutions.

For World Environment Day, UNDP’s Action for Cooperation and Trust organised the “Eco Forum – World Environment Day,” a three-day event from 5 to 7 June. The event brought over 140 participants from both communities, including local and international experts, academia, NGOs, the media, decision-makers, educators and interested individuals to the Holiday Inn in Nicosia to discuss potential solutions to the problems of desertification in Cyprus. There was a strong emphasis on success stories on Corporate Environmental Responsibility within the framework of the United Nations Global Compact.

In a pre-recorded opening speech, SRSG Møller explained that both communities shared a common ecosystem, and he emphasized the need for bicommunal cooperation to preserve this shared environment.

“Everybody recognizes that the island is a single, island-wide ecosystem. One that knows no boundaries. One that recognizes no division. One that awaits no settlement,” Møller said.

World Environment Day was also marked by a series of clean-up operations in the buffer zone with UNFICYP linking up with local municipal officials to remove waste from a number of illegal dumping sites.

As can be seen from the photos, UNFICYP’s Sector 2 peacekeepers joined forces with municipal officials from Engomi to remove waste from illegal dumping sites in the buffer zone near the new Lakatamia housing estate on the outskirts of Nicosia.

In Dherynia, municipality workers under UNFICYP Sector 4 started working to clear rubbish dumped behind Dherynia Hospital and the abandoned Kouroupis factory.

Anything from furniture to the carcases of dead animals are deposited in these unsightly dumping sites. They are both an environmental eyesore as well as a serious health hazard. UNFICYP and the local authorities appeal to the public to desist from this illegal practice, and to show greater respect for the UN-controlled buffer zone.

Dherynia municipal workers tackled dump sites near OPs 141 and 142

Basic Precautions Against Buffer Zone/Grass/Forest Fires

The biggest fire hazard within UNFICYP at this time of the year is dry grass and vegetation. By taking precautions and paying attention, you can prevent fires and save lives. Following some simple rules can help prevent a fire, which can rapidly get out of control and threaten life and property.

1. Don’t throw away lit cigarettes and/or matches.
2. Don’t smoke in offices and accommodation buildings – use designated areas.
3. Don’t use dustbins as ashtrays in your smoking areas – use the ashtrays provided.
4. Don’t throw away glass materials such as empty bottles or broken mirrors.
5. Don’t park your car near dry grass or vegetation – the heat can cause a disaster.
6. Don’t leave your vehicle engine running – always switch it off.
7. Don’t have a barbecue anywhere other than in designated places.
8. Don’t leave your barbecue unattended – when finished, use water or sand/soil to damp down the fire.
9. Don’t burn sensitive material – contact UNFICYP Fire HQ, Ext 443/4 UNPA.
10. Don’t use water if electricity poles are involved in the fire, especially near UNFICYP OPs – use dry powder/C02 fire extinguishers or fire beaters/green tree branches.
11. Don’t use water if there is no water without having at least four fire beaters in your patrol vehicle (also check your 500/700 grams dry powder fire extinguisher and medical kit).
12. Don’t risk your life to fight a fire – your life comes first. If it is safe to do so, then try and help. Otherwise, wait for the fire crew.
13. Don’t fight buffer zone/grass/forest fires alone – always attack the fire in groups.
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15. Don’t forget when fighting fires that mines are present in the buffer zone.
16. Don’t spread buffer zone/grass/forest fire with your feet – always wash them as you leave the area.
17. Don’t forget the fire/emergency telephone no. 22-61-4777.

Civilian fire emergency telephone numbers: South-112 or 199
North-199

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Fire fighters from north and south helped extinguish the flames

UN vehicles refilling local fire engines

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UNFICYP’s Integrated Medal Parade

UNFICYP is working hard to encourage the opposing forces along the buffer zone to pull back and to diminish positions in old Nicosia, SRSG Michael Møller said when addressing the integrated medal parade on 13 June. An agreement to do so would send a powerful message of hope to the population of both communities that things are moving in the right direction, the Chief of Mission declared.

UNFICYP’s third integrated medal parade ceremony was held at the site of the old international airport in the United Nations Protected Area (UNPA), close to UNFICYP’s headquarters in Nicosia.

Some 215 peacekeepers were presented with United Nations peace-keeping medals in the name of Secretary-General Kofi Annan at a sunset ceremony presided over by SRSG Møller and UNFICYP Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni.

The attendance included members of the diplomatic community as well as civilian and military personnel from UNFICYP and the UN agencies plus family members. The medals awarded were in recognition of the recipients’ contribution as peacekeepers and peacemakers during their service with UNFICYP.

SRSG Møller introduced UNFICYP’s new Force Commander, Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni of Argentina, to the assembled guests, giving a warm welcome to the FC and his wife, Maria Rosa, to the mission. The Chief of Mission noted that Maj. Gen. Barni is UNFICYP’s 15th Force Commander.

SRSG Møller told the gathering that the medal ceremony was being held at the site of the old international airport right in the heart of what, since the traumatic events of 1974, had been known as the United Nations Protected Area. “Since then, the UNPA has been both symbol and core of the buffer zone, our area of operations, even though the opposing forces continue to disagree on the exact delineation of its ceasefire lines. “This does not reflect a deterioration of the situation here on island, but rather the higher incident detection rate resulting from UNFICYP’s mobile concept of operations in effect since the Force down-sized to 860 in 2004. Most of these daily incidents occur in areas where the opposing forces come closest to one another, notably in the Nicosia area.

Mr. Møller said the medal recipients exemplified the highest standards of the UN Charter, and commended them for their dedicated professionalism while serving with UNFICYP. He wished those completing their tour of duty a safe trip home, a joyful reunion with families and friends and the best of luck and success in their future assignments.

Hungarian Ambassador H.E. Mr. Janos Kisfalvi presenting a Slovak soldier with the peacekeeping medal

Slovak Folklore lives through Children’s Dances

S lovaks have always expressed their joys and sorrows, longings and desires through singing and dancing, folk costumes and traditions. Although the modern lifestyle is bringing in new values, Slovak folk art has remained a permanent source of inspiration to which new generations return. Children, especially, have been discovering its magic by participating in folklore ensembles like KLNKA, based at Dubravka in Bratislava and supervised by Eugen Suchon Primary School.

This group recently visited Cyprus to participate in a Children’s Festival where they performed traditional Slovak dances. Under the guidance of dance teacher Ingrid Šankova and Mikulas Šivy Jr., the beauty of Slovak folklore was also brought to Camp General Štefánik in Sector 4 on 5 June.

The group has been travelling both in Slovakia and worldwide since being formed in 1978. The folklore dance group has performed in various festivals, charity and social events at home and abroad. On their “small voyage around the world”, the group has entertained viewers in the former Yugoslavia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria, Germany, Turkey, France, Italy, Spain, Mexico, Portugal, Ireland, South Africa, Canada, Tunisia, Korea, Egypt, Israel and the Island of Madeira.

Their repertoire comprises dances from various regions of Slovakia and dances of other nations including Irish, Egyptian and Balkan. In addition, the group has also been known to sing, especially Christmas carols.

As one of the children from KLNKA said: “We enjoy using our free time in this way, at the same time learning to be responsible and disciplined. We are also proud of being recognised by dance professionals, having been awarded many prizes both at home and abroad. “We believe we will be able to share our enjoyment with you, our audiences and friends for many years to come. Thank you.”

MSgt. Silvia Lojanová

Visits in June

Visits this month included an office call by Members of the European Parliament (High Level Contact Group) to the Chief of Mission on 2 June (top left).


The Honorable James Short, Australian Special Envoy for Cyprus, arrived at HQ UNFICYP on 22 June, accompanied by Australian High Commissioner Garth Hunt, to make an office call on the SRSG (bottom left).
On a day when the United Nations and Secretary-General Kofi Annan marked International Peace-keepers’ Day, UNFICYP peacekeepers, led by Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni, celebrated the event at the mission’s twice-yearly Military Skills competition. With 10 teams in total and competitors from all three sectors, plus UNPOL, MFR and HQ UNFICYP, the stage was set for a demanding display of military prowess.

For those involved, the competition started well before 31 May. In the case of Sector 2, those selected for training had been working out since their arrival on island in ... recognition, UNFICYP knowledge, stripping and assembling non-issue weapons, marksmanship, and of course physical fitness.

On the morning of the event, the teams left bleary-eyed at 3.30 a.m. in order to register at EXCON by 4.15 a.m. First up was the kit check and weigh-in. All teams passed with ... terrain stretching along 2.5 km of narrow tracks and serious hard work saw the teams dashing for the finish line.

A quick gulp of water and the teams were seated down to complete an individual questionnaire that wouldn’t have looked out of place on the “Mastermind” programme. With that behind them, the teams went their separate ways to complete the round robin of other stands, which tested all of the competitors’ mental and physical strengths. These stands included cross country driving, incident reaction, navigation, ops information, ranges and foreign weapon stripping and assembling.

Gathering around EXCON for the final event of the day, all the talk was about who would emerge the winners. With the results a closely guarded secret, it was rumoured to be extremely tight between Sector 2, MFR and Sector 1. All would rest on one last push around the assault course. With all the teams back in, and an excellent crowd, Sector 2 Team A started the ball rolling. The determination demonstrated by all competitors was evident as they threw themselves from obstacle to obstacle before collapsing across the line to set the mark for everyone else to follow. Quick times followed from teams from MFR and Sector 1, before the second Sector 2 team, brought the whole event to a close with an excellent time, despite the heat and exhaustion of a long and tiring day.

With the final results still unclear, the teams assembled in the prize-giving area. Following congratulations from the Force Commander, the top three were announced, with MFR stealing the show, Sector 2 Team A tight on their heels and Sector 1 close behind.

Celebrations followed before the competitors retired, exhausted from an excellent day and a hard fought competition.

Motivated by what I had been told by my predecessors, 12 Battery from 12 Regiment RA, I knew when I arrived in Cyprus that I wanted to take some part in the Military Skills Competition. Participation became “full on” when I found myself nominated as the Mobile Force Reserve (MFR) team 2i/c!

Two things started to worry me. First, training for such an arduous and demanding event at the start of the summer months on a Mediterranean island. Second, finding some way to collect an enthusiastic group of volunteers. Unsurprisingly, the latter was harder. However, I found the majority of the young soldiers in my platoon volunteered with minimal fuss. With two Argentinians, two Hungarians, one Slovakian and a massive language barrier to overcome, I met up with my Team Captain.

Lt. Benjamin Baldwinson had the task of producing a training programme for the next six weeks. Being on an operational tour, timings slipped and classrooms were getting double booked, so the programme and the team had to be flexible and roll with the punches. After extracting as much information out of 12 Regiment as we could, Lt. Baldwinson and I had a good understanding of the challenge that lay ahead.

So the training started. Due to the daytime temperatures, we started physical training at 6.30 a.m. This ranged from light trainer runs and swimming sessions, to going over the assault course. It continued until every member of the team knew where they were supposed to be at any given moment. This also had to include orchestrating all the reserve members. Weekly orienteering and weights sessions were also completed, along with range days, first aid sessions and recognition training.

All too soon, the day of the event came around. I had started to wonder if we had done enough training for it. Only time would tell. On 31 May at 4.00 a.m. the day began with the weigh-in, and then we were off on the first of eight events, the stretcher race. This was won by a team from the Argentinian Contingent but we came a respectable third out of the 10 teams taking part.

Still holding our heads high, we progressed through the day, steadily climbing up the results table by scoring consistently across a variety of stands including marksmanship, navigation, cross country driving and to finish, the assault course. The team completed (and won) this final arduous test in just over seven minutes of hard work in 35°C and bright sunshine.

When the final results were confirmed by the Force Commander, the MFR (3/29 ‘Coruña’ Bty) had won by an impressive 120 points over the second place team and were proclaimed Military Skills Competition champions.

Sgt. Scott Henshaw, MFR
Cypriots Cooperate Against Trafficking

The Group was formed following UNFICYP’s International Women’s Day event when a panel of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot women spoke about how to join forces and combat the insidious practice of the trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and girls in Cyprus.

Many of the panelists and participants from the original International Women’s Day event – both from the private and public sectors on both sides, as well as from the international community – participated as members in the newly formed bi-communal group, whose main purpose is to combat this big, human rights problem in the small country of Cyprus. All present were activists in their own spheres, committed to women’s rights.

The purpose of this inaugural meeting was to establish the structure of the bi-communal group and to discuss recent developments and the major changes occurring in Cyprus. All agreed that the bi-communal nature of the Group is one of its major assets.

UNFICYP will continue to support the Group’s work by providing the facility of meetings at the Ledra Palace and/or by bringing in experts on the subject of trafficking.

Cypriots, Greeks and Turks plan to gather again in the near future for a longer workshop in which the specifics for the way forward and the group dynamics will be agreed upon.

The choir is of one too owned by the Tall Ships Youth Trust (www.tallships.org). The Trust, a UK-registered charity founded in 1956, is dedicated to the Tall Ship development of young people through the creation of opportunities. The ships are organised throughout the year, in locations from the Baltic to the Caribbean, in an excellent way of developing self-confidence and the ability to get on with people of all ages and backgrounds.

"Sailing provides a great environment for breaking down barriers and encouraging friendships among oppositives," said Tim Hawkes, a Director of Tall Ships Youth Trust.

At one of the early meetings of the ship, the young crew will be supervised by six professional officers and 12 volunteers. Maintaining a regular-rigged ship to international safety standards is not cheap, and the cost of the voyage is beyond the pocket of most young people. For this reason, a Cypriot team that includes representatives from Greenpeace, Seafarers’ Union and Youth Encountering Peace has been formed to help raise funds for the project. As a result, a group of 12 young people from the island will sail on a 60-metre traditional square-rigged sailing ship at Gibraltar on 3 August and sail 1,100 km to the Mediterranean island of Minorca.

The young people will keep regular watch for 24 hours a day, taking turns at steering, sailing-handling, cleaning and all the other tasks necessary to keep the ship seaworthy. This unique experience will offer them the opportunity to live and work together under the guidance of professionals to practise tolerance and communication skills. English will be spoken on board.

Cypriots who have sailed on similar international voyages in 2004 and 2005 have found that the experience of teamwork in a physically demanding environment is life-changing.

Simon Lavington, the project organiser and a volunteer Watch Leader aboard the ship, said: "The voyage provides a unique experience of increased international understanding that have been heart-warming. The Cypriot crews have held reunions, given radio interviews and presentations to various school children, and have been helping to organise the Cypriot participation in this year’s voyage."

Six Turkish Cypriots and six Greek Cypriots will be selected by the participating organisations for the project voyage. Further information about the project will be found at: www.sweetlemons.org.uk.

Singing for Cyprus

In Cyprus, some things change, but others frustratingly remain the same. It is almost 10 years since the “Peacemaking in Cyprus” was formed, and today, the “for Peace” part of its name is as relevant as ever.

Many of us hoped that a solution to the Cyprus problem by now would have led to the choir performing in a wholly different environment, its existence justifying the effort of its members. As the SG noted in his recent remarks to the UN Security Council, “UNFICYP has recorded a total of about 10.6 million crossings since the opening of the crossing points in April 2003 but three years after the first opening, there is little to no evidence of integration”.

The choir remains one of the few exceptions to the SG’s observation. When the choir sings, as it is in Greek, Turkish, or whatever other language, the audience cannot tell who is Greek and who is Turkish. Adequately, we once had a French member, who stuck out like a sore thumb.

When we travelled abroad on several occasions in the past to perform concerts, we made a conscious effort to share rooms with friends from “the other side”. But other things are depressingly the same. The Cyprus problem remains unsolved.

Many of the panelists and participants from the original International Women’s Day event – both from the private and public sectors on both sides, as well as from the international community – participated as members in the newly formed bi-communal group, whose main purpose is to combat this big, human rights problem in the small country of Cyprus. All present were activists in their own spheres, committed to women’s rights.

The choir remains the same. It is almost 10 years since the “Peacemaking in Cyprus” was formed, and today, the “for Peace” part of its name is as relevant as ever.

Some things change for the better, some are the same, some have changed for the worse. In the “bad old days”, we could only rehearse together at Pyla. On those occasions, it was a round trip from Nicosia of over 100 km (or when we had gone abroad to perform, we had to go to the Ledra Palace’s bicommunal room). Now our rehearsals take place unhindered every week at the Ledra Palace’s bicommunal room.

But other things stay the same. Those who did attend were as enthusiastic as ever in their applause for Cypriots so united in performance that one cannot tell who has Greek or who has Turkish as a mother tongue.

Some things change. The choir always used to end its performances with the words of Turkish Cypriot poet Nesse Yasim, “My country has been divided into two/which the two shepherds met to sing by well-known Greek Cypriot composer Marios Tokas.

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Indeed, the April 2004 referendum put a strain on the choir. While no one discussed it openly, it was clear that the split between how Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots would vote, that manifested itself in a year as a whole also occurred within the choir. Some Turkish Cypriot members, convinced that Greek Cypriots had made a choice in favour of living separately from Turkish Cypriots, “voted with their feet” and quit. But not all. Some of us felt the choir should have re-elected a new long-time member is Turkish Cypriot conductor Kürsat Tilki, who, in the six months since joining, has made his influence felt by introducing some highly effective arrangements of Turkish Cypriot songs previously performed by the choir. He has also enriched our repertoire by introducing new songs. As he said in a recent interview with the trilingual weekly newspaper, Dialogue, “We practically resurrected the choir from the dead.”

“Tilki says everyone in the choir favours finding a lasting solution to the Cyprus problem, a message of peace they chose to express via music. “We have lit a candle. The light will grow brighter with bicomunal events organised by the youth so that the torch of peace can be carried with hope into the future.”

The choir’s Greek Cypriot conductor Lena Melanidou, a founder member, told the same paper: “We want to show people who are still in the union, people can come alive and share this life. The referendum results caused a shock, but we set us back temporarily. The ‘no’ vote in the south has reinforced our Cypriot Turkish members and they stayed away for a while.”

She added: “We needed time to overcome our problems. We have to succeed for peace and friendship to succeed.”

In June, the reinvigorated choir made its presence felt with four concerts – on both sides of Nicosia, in Limassol, and in Kyrenia. It was an opportunity to present a new repertoire along with an old message – that Cypriots can sing and work together.

Some things change, however. The turnout for most of the concerts was quite poor. Apart from the first performance at the Nicosia Municipal Theatre, all the other venues were nearly empty. Three years ago, when the choir gave a similar series of concerts just after the opening of the crossing points, it sang to packed audiences. Indeed, that this time round, the performances coincided with televised World Cup matches also affected audiences. Still, the conclusion has to be that the widespread enthusiasm that existed three years ago seems to have ebbed.

But some things are the same. Those who did attend were as enthusiastic as ever in their applause for Cypriots so united in performance that one cannot tell who has Greek or who has Turkish as a mother tongue.

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But other things stay the same. Those who did attend were as enthusiastic as ever in their applause for Cypriots so united in performance that one cannot tell who has Greek or who has Turkish as a mother tongue.
Bridge-building Engineers Make Their Mark

The old culverts just south of the Famagusta Gate in Sector 2... ... get a new look

The long-term plan of the Engineering Unit based at HQ UNFICYP in the UNPA is to ensure that track conditions within each sector’s AOR are safe and secure for the soldiers to patrol. These tracks often fall into a bad state of repair, particularly during the rainy season when landslides can cause heavy damage. These repairs are not simple, easy tasks, and are usually tackled during the dry summer months.

One major problem existed at the Lefka crossing point in Sector 1’s AOR last winter when a bridge, located in a valley, fell into a very bad state of repair.

1/Lt. István Orovecz of the Engineering Unit inspected the site, and briefed Force Engineer Maj. Karol Kubic on the situation. It was decided to retain part of the old construction and rebuild the remainder as the rainy season was close. The bridge was frequently submerged and there were fears for Sector 1’s patrols. In December, the reconstruction work started. Water was already flowing along the river and had to be diverted to allow the engineers a dry surface. Nevertheless, within three weeks, the bridge was totally renovated, and the river now flows uninterrupted by debris.

The engineering team then moved on to Sector 2’s AOR, just south of the Famagusta Gate on the main patrol track of Sector 2’s East Troop. The engineers had been called in because the original construction of "Liri Bridge" had deteriorated and was in a hazardous condition.

An inspection of the site showed there were many problems to correct. A plan was drawn up by the Force Engineer and his assistant on 1 April. First of all, the river bed was too narrow for the speed of water flow. Rubbish was being carried down to the bridge and blocking the culverts. Both the river and bridge had to be widened. However, patrols could not be interrupted, so provision had to be made for use of the tracks during the repair works. The surface conditions were extremely bad in the area, so much so that when the bulldozer started excavating land on either side of the river to widen it, the machine sank into the soft clay and had to be hauled up, a job that took eight hours!

This bridge is part of the patrol track in the buffer zone, but it is also widely used by civilians with fields in the area. It is now easily accessible for local farmers and their machines. The bridge was opened on 10 May.

Then in June, a completely new bridge was built on the Montgomery patrol track near Sector 2’s OP 86, the largest undertaking by the Engineering Unit to date. Fifty-five cubic metres of concrete and 30 culverts were required to complete the job. “And a lot of sweat too,” says 1/Lt. Orovecz!

1/Lt. István Orovecz

The old culverts just south of the Famagusta Gate in Sector 1’s AOR last winter when a bridge, located in a valley, fell into a very bad state of repair.

1/Lt. István Orovecz

The official Order of Day, signed by the Carabinieri Commander General Luciano Gottardo, was read by Civil Affairs Police Liaison Officer Insp. Marco Tupini. He then recited the “Carabinieri’s Prayer” in honour of the Italian victims in Iraq and other military and civilian victims of peacekeeping operations. A promotional film, outlining the duties and activities of the Carabinieri, was shown as well.

There may only be four Carabinieri on island, but their presence is indeed recognised!

Although only four in number, the Italian Contingent of UNPOL made a great impression on their guests whom they invited to help celebrate the 192nd anniversary of the foundation of the “Arma dei Carabinieri”.

At 7.00 p.m. on 8 June, Ledra SCAT Commander Ch. Insp. Salvatore Masia, Commander of the first Italian Contingent, welcomed everyone and invited all to stand for the national anthem. Addresses were made by Italian Ambassador Dr. Luigi Napolitano and Senior Police Adviser Carla van Maris. Both praised the work of the Carabinieri in Italy and in all peacekeeping missions.

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The UNPOL club was full to the brim. Once the film was over, guests spilled outside to the cool of the patio and a delicious spread of Italian dishes including traditional delicacies. The crowning touch was the Carabinieri’s celebration cake!

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Argentina – Young at 196 Years Old!

Serving at such a huge distance from home, in a multinational environment like UNFICYP, working with great South American soldiers integrated in our Argentinean ranks, makes for a special 25 May celebration. This is why all Argentineans stationed in Cyprus feel so proud to serve on the island.

Personnel from San Martín and Roca Camps were joined by Argentinian personnel assigned to UN Flight and UNFICYP’s HQ, and celebrations continued well into the evening.

Argentina Folklore

Later in the evening, contingent members, now relaxed and out of uniform, joined our guests to watch a folklore show. It was pure Argentinean production, much enjoyed by all UNFICYP’s South American personnel. The Argentinian families, some with children who added even more cheer to the national pride, were delighted with the show. Soldiers from the Army and Marine Corps put on a medley of folklore songs and even ventured as far as pop music, to the audience’s delight.

Meantime, a delicious spread of empanadas, pastries and Argentinian wine was laid on.

Sector 1’s personnel attended a parade at San Martín Camp, headed by Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni. Every Sector 1 South American component (Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Peru) was present at the parade, reflecting the brotherly spirit which unites these soldiers into one integrated and united unit.

During the parade, the Argentinian flag was raised and the message of congratulations sent by the Argentinean Minister of Defence was read out. Before the end of the ceremony, Sector 1 Chaplain Father Enrique Sagüez offered a blessing for the Argentinian nation. Subsequently, all personnel and guests tuck into a celebration breakfast, catered for all tastes.

Argentina Origins

Argentine, like much of South America, was a colony dependent on the Spanish crown. This process started after the American continent was discovered by Cristóbal Colón in 1492 and ended around 1810 with the independence of some former colonies. The “United Provinces of River Plate” (as Argentina was first known) became the first Spanish possession in America to break free of the political domination from the crown of Spain.

Since that time, Argentina grew as a nation by consolidating its territory, organising political structures and encouraging population growth with pre-immigration policies. All this took more than 100 years. Spearheading these efforts were figures such as San Martín, Belgrano, Sarmiento and many others who contributed to creating the awesome country we enjoy today.

Argentinians serving at UNFICYP salute and respect all the other nations that we work alongside. We all work for the same goal – making stronger links with each other day-by-day for the future.

Argentina – Young at 196 Years Old!

Running, Swimming, Biking for Gold!

Despite ferocious clams of arm-wrestling towards preparatory training, several weeks of secret race practice had taken place prior to the UNFICYP Triathlon, held on 8 June.

Starting at 6.00 a.m., 54 blurry-eyed competitors arrived at the start line. Eight teams had entered, each with six competitors. Only the fastest four times would count towards the overall results. The Triathlon started with a 400m swim in the UNPA pool, followed by 16km on bikes and ending with a 4.5km run. The route turned out to be an unpleasant surprise. The event’s organiser,Capt. Sheldon of Sector 2, had managed to find every hill in the UNPA and even arranged for head-on wind for the flat bits! Thankfully, there were plenty of marshals along the route offering encouragement and much needed water.

The first team off the line (from Sector 1) clearly had their sights firmly fixed on “Gold”, with WOII Luis Neira gliding through the pool like a fish and making his first triathlon look very easy. The remainder of Sector 1’s personnel followed before Anne Bursey of the P10 caused the other female members some consternation as she too cut through the water at considerable pace. Next up was the Sector 2 “A Team”, who all came out of the pool in extremely fast times with Capt. Jagger and Sheldon side-by-side during the first transition. The Sector 2 “B Team” followed on and were clearly enjoying themselves on the patrol bikes. The HQ BRITCON team, with the Chief of Staff driving them on, preceded the MFR and a team from Sector 4.

Following a well-earned breakfast at the end, Force Commander Maj. Gen. R. J. Barni announced the results. Awards were given for the fastest two individual male, female and veteran competitors and to the fastest three teams. The winners are:

**Team: Sector 2/Team A**

Male: Capt. Sheldon
Female: Maj. Halford
Veterans: Sgt. Gumbrell

An extremely demanding race overall, everyone claimed to have enjoyed themselves – indeed, some have even expressed interest in doing it again!
Abusing the buffer zone