Welcome Back Mr. de Soto

The Secretary-General’s Special Adviser on Cyprus, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, arrived on the island on 29 August to begin a series of separate meetings with H.E. Mr. Glafkos Clerides and H.E. Mr. Rauf Denktash, and to meet with other UNFICYP personnel. The Special Adviser’s eight-day visit marks the climax of a month of speculation, announcements and pronouncements about moves to restart the talks process.

The Special Adviser noted that not too far into the future, he would be able to continue his proximity talks with the two parties. Later that day, the Secretary-General’s Spokesman said that the Salzburg meeting had been very good and very useful.

Slovak Minister visits

The Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic, Dr. Jozef Stank, recently arrived in Cyprus for his first visit to UNFICYP. On 31 August, he met with the UNFICYP Chief of Mission, Mr. Zbigniew Wlosowicz, and Force Commander, Maj. Gen. Victory Rana.

On 31 August, Mr. Stank visited Sector 4 to join the Special Adviser’s visits to the Salzburg meeting with Mr. Denktash had been very good and very useful.

Dr. Jozef Stank meets with Mr. Zbigniew Wlosowicz

has been transferred to Pyla, currently under the control of the UNFICYP Civilian Police.

The evening ceremony and the subsequent festivities in Famagusta were hosted by Sector 4 Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Milan Kovacs. The Force Commander inspected the troops and took the salute. A display of highleaping, fast stepping folk dance and songs from Slovaksia’s mountain areas. Guests and troops gave a rousing accompaniment of rhythmic clapping while whistling encouragement to the blurring whirl of dancers. Before being escorted off to the reception buffet, those closest to the corps de ballet were led onto the stage to join the lords and ladies of the dance. It did not go unnoticed that the CM is a wizard at whirling a waltz (www.com!).

Dakujem Slovensko!
She's Everywhere

By Charlotte Mortensen

You’ve seen her everywhere and in many guises, ranging from full combat gear to swimsuit: she’s driven pick-up trucks around the UNPA, kept a lifeguard’s eagle eye on swimmers by the pool and been in the frontline of various crowd control exercises.

Daynor Harris, had her dad had his way, should have been Gaynor, but her mother prevailed and her name was picked up from a bowl-full of paper on which girls’ names had been written. Daynor is one of the youngest girls serving with the 12 Regiment Royal Artillery in Cyprus. Only 18 years old, she is an avid soldier and a well-travelled one too. This is one of the reasons why she picked the military – “I knew it would give me an opportunity to travel and keep fit”, she says. A little more than a year after she joined the Regiment in Lancashire, she was posted to Senenlager, Germany.

During the Gulf War, her mother was one of a group organising “care packages” – shopping, packing and sending off boxes to local Lancashire lads serving with the Desert Storm. Daynor quickly got involved in the charity work alongside her mother, and soon found herself writing cards and notes to the soldiers. “It was this ‘work’ that got me thinking about the military as a possible career.”

No sooner was school over than Daynor applied for military service with the 12 Regiment RA in Lancashire. By her own account, she would have tried earlier but she had been told she was too young. She was one of only 30 girls applying out of many hundred young men – and she was lucky. She handled all the tests very well, both the mental and physical ones. Had she done any special training to meet the tough physical requirements? Daynor says: “I didn’t even think of it – a 16-year-old is always fit.”

Daynor’s success in the qualifying tests, where she completed them on equal terms, is not something she considers unusual or outstanding. After all, more and more girls are joining the British forces today and it has become a common sight seeing girls/women in uniform should-to-shoulder with their male colleagues. There are no longer any limitations as to what women can do in the forces. They now serve in most of the front line units (subject to the few remaining restrictions in the army).

Daynor was elated when she finally started her military career in August 1999. And her family was happy too! With Daynor now in the military, the Harris’s had become a two-soldier family, since one of Daynor’s older brothers now serves with the RAF. Another brother has chosen an entirely less uniform career path – that of a civilian!

While Daynor got her wish for travel fulfilled, it was at some cost – for the first time, she had to leave her parents’ house. She misses them every day, as she does her old schoolfriends. And, of course, she misses the shopping – she is a girl after all! Still, she makes a point of going back home for almost all her holidays. However, the next one will be an exception. She has decided to spend her two weeks off in Protaras with some of the other girls from the Regiment stationed at the Ledra Palace. In Daynor’s own words: “We girls will rock the town”. They have already rocked UNFICYP.

A Slip of the Tongue

By Charlotte Mortensen

Today, there are some 3,000 acknowledged languages spoken throughout the world. Of these, about 12 are spoken by more than 70 million people each -- one of them being English.

English has always been the lingua franca (such a versatile language!) in UNFICYP. It is one of the UN’s six official working languages, and because of its colonial past, is widely understood in Cyprus. Consequently, many of the mission’s contributing members have been either native English speakers or from English-familiar countries.

This may explain why some of us take it for granted that UNFICYP is entirely English-fluent, conveniently forgetting that for more than 50% of the force English is not a mother tongue (and probably not even a mother-in-law!).

Think of this - it’s true and it happened in the international mess just recently: Two soldiers pass each other (one whose mother tongue is English - let’s call him No. 1; the other uses English as second language - let’s call him No. 2).

No. 1: “Hello, mate.”
No. 2: “Hello, how are you?”
No. 1: “I’m not so good, it’s too warm.” (While saying this, he holds up an apple he has in his hand, maybe to dry off some sweat with the back of his hand.)
No. 2: “Two worms?”, says the second soldier, surprised.
No. 1: “Yes”, replies the first soldier with the apple, and walks on.

Following this conversation, the “No. 2” soldier walks over to his fellow countrymen, sitting at a table eating their lunch and warns them NOT to take any of the apples, because they have worms in them! That day, not more than a couple of apples were eaten at the Mess!

This is not an isolated case, and misunderstandings like this happen on a daily basis. Some of us love this international community where we can all learn from each other, whereas others may find it rather trying – but in any case, we all have to try, at the very least, to find common ground.

Much respect should go to all UNFICYP’s civilian staff and peacekeepers, many of whom perform their daily functions in a language other than their native tongue. And also much respect to those whose native tongue is English, but who still realise that not everyone is in that same linguistic boat and actually try to make themselves easily understood.

Note: We hope to return to this subject in future issues of the Blue Beret. If you have any examples you would like to send us, please do.

Until next time.

Hungary’s Day Celebrated

By Maj. Z. Jobbágy

Following the withdrawal of the Austrian Contingent from Sector 4, a decision was taken by the Hungarian Contingent to rename Camp Iza – to Camp Szent István (St. Stephen’s Camp). The reasons for this are many, but hereunder is a brief explanation of Hungary’s devotion to King Stephen, who was canonized in recognition of his deeds in converting the country to Christianity.

King Stephen, who ruled from 1000 to 1038, was the first king in the House of Arpád to officially recognise Christianity. By bringing Hungary’s nomadic tribes together, he also laid the foundation for the modern nation state. All in all, there was no person more suitable after whom the camp should be renamed.

With a small celebration on our national day, 20 August, soldiers of the 1st Hungarian Company unveiled the new sign of Camp Szent István, which also portrays the royal insignia. Speeches were given by Maj. Gen. László Sved, Surgeon General of the Hungarian Defence Forces, H.E. Ambassador László Kuti and the Contingent Commander, Lt. Col. Bela Berena.
12 Regiment Group  
Sector 2  
Road Safety Campaign

The second Road Safety Campaign, run in a competition format between various departments within Sector 2, was carried out by 12 Regiment RA Group on 21 July. The intention of the competition was for the Regimental Group Motor Transport Department to assess the driving ability, skills, and knowledge of each department. The competition was broken down into two parts, the first being a manoeuvring task within a certain area. This assessed the abilities of the commander and driver working as a unit around a difficult manoeuvring course set up by the Motor Transport Department. All vehicles had their windows blacked out (with bin liners) in order for the driver to have no view other than through the windscreen. This meant the driver had to follow instructions from the commander of the vehicle and not rely on his/her own instinct. In order to score highly, the competitors had no option other than to work well together as a team.

The second assessment for the troops was a written paper. The purpose of this was to assess the general knowledge and awareness of both the commander and driver on driving procedures under United Nations regulations.

The Road Safety Campaign was also used as further training for the drivers within Sector 2. In general, it has proved to be a great success, and will aid the Regimental Group throughout its tour when driving within the Buffer Zone and on the roads in Cyprus.

By the way, the winner of the road safety competition on 21 July was Bengal Troop.

Sgt. Tim Cadwallader and Bdr. Carl Leason, winners of the driving skills competition.

Lifeguard Training in Sector 2

Prior to deployment to Cyprus, Maj. Nick Makin, Second in Command of 12 Regiment Royal Artillery, was informed that it was within the responsibility of the six-month Rotation Regiment to act as lifeguards at the Ledra Palace and UNPA swimming pools.

With this in mind, six members of 12 Regiment attended the National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ) course at the Blue Pool in Rheindahlen, Germany.

Training includes:
- Recovering a conscious and/or unconscious casualty
- Recovery of a dummy from the deepest part of the pool
- Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation and Expired Casualty
- Practical Assessment
- Theory Exam
- Spinal Board Management
- Scenarios
- Surfboard Rescue
- Facial Mask and Breathing

The NPLQ is a civilian qualification, which can be used in any civilian establishment. The number of lifeguards who have been trained enabled both the Ledra Palace and UNPA pools to stay open for a longer period of time during the hot summer months. This ensured that all personnel deployed with UNFICYP could make maximum use of these excellent facilities for training, sport and recreation.

12 Regiment Royal Artillery Group receives Miss Blackpool

One year ago, Natalie James was waiting for her A-level results and looking forward to starting university. Today, she is the reigning Miss Blackpool and a full-time model.

Blackpool is a large recruiting area for 12 Regiment Royal Artillery (the Lancashire and Cumbria Gunners). A couple of hard-working members of 12 Regiment, who were selected because of their efforts in raising the most money for bicomunal cancer charities in Cyprus, flew back to Britain in August as panelists in the Miss Blackpool 2001 finals.

In October, Natalie, accompanied by the future Miss Blackpool, will be visiting 12 Regiment Royal Artillery Group who are currently serving on Operation Tosca in Sector 2. 12 Regiment Royal Artillery Group are eagerly awaiting this visit.
The Argentinian National Day

By Maj. A. Alvarez

Argentina Day, 9 July, was celebrated by the Argentinians with a parade in San Martin Camp. With the prospect of (slightly) cooler weather and the hope of ensuring that our guests were comfortable, we decided to start the ceremony at 19:00 hrs. But despite our good intentions, the weather was left to its own devices and everyone in the camp had to endure a pretty hot event.

The ceremony was opened by both the Chief of Mission, Zbigniew Wlozowicz, and the Force Commander, Maj. Gen. Victory Rana. Troops were presented to the Argentinian Ambassador to Israel and Cyprus, H.E. Mr. Gregorio Dupunt, who then inspected and saluted the military, Next, the national anthem was sung. The Argentinian Ambassador’s speech invoked the spirit of the commemoration, and was followed by a religious invocation from ARGCOn’s Chaplain, Father Daniel Dominguez. Then the San Lorenzo march, which evokes the first battle of the War of Independence, was proudly sung by the troops. To close the ceremony, the Argentinian flag was hoisted.

This was followed by a folkloric group performing two of Argentina’s most traditional dances, “El Gato” and “La Chacarera.”

Guests then moved to the Officers’ Mess where a wonderful banquet was served, including such traditional Argentinian delicacies as roast beef and “empanadas.”

The celebrations continued until late in the evening. It was a day we shall all remember.
“Road” on the Air

By WOII C. Kapfer

To move away, even temporarily, from one’s natural habitat/environment/surroundings is always a difficult task for any person. Arriving on the island of Cyprus, seeing new traffic signs, watching TV or just listening to the radio, all in a foreign language, made us feel far from home. And it was because of this that we came up with a new idea.

It was the birth of “Making Road”, the radio programme of the 17th Argentinian Task Force that every Thursday, between 05:00 and 06:00 hrs, transmits via FM 106.3 “Blue Star”. The objective of the exercise is simple; for one hour, all Argentinian personnel of the 17th Argentinian Task Force will feel just a little closer to home.

The content is varied, including both cultural matters and news coverage from two member countries of the contingent. News is taken off the Internet by WOII “Cacho” Kapfer. Father Domin- guez offers spiritual support, and, of course, sports updates are provided by WOII “Toto” Lorenzo.

The voice of the programme is WO II Pablo Carrizo, supported by 1/Cpl. Cabral, who decides on the programme content.

And of course, this radio programme doesn’t lack humour and jokes. This is expertly provided by the “Maestro”, WOII Roberto Charlye, who invites us to stay happy and smile with amusing tales and short stories.

The programme would not be possible without the generosity of Mr. Kritos Tsialis, the General Manager of FM, Blue Star, who provides us with technical support, etc.

In future programmes, there will be interviews with special guests, live reports, and, of course, the wish that “Making Road” reaches everyone on the job, being the national companion of the Argentinian peacekeepers in UNFICYP.

Women at Ease in ARGCON

By Maj. A. Alvarez

There are six women among the 409 total strength of the Argentinian Contingent. Four are soldiers serving with troops, one is an NCO and one an officer. There are no restrictions under current regulations for female officers and NCOs in the Argentinian military.

2/Lt. Elizabeth Barvoza was born in Gualeguaychu, Entre Rios Province. “I chose to come to the mission to do something different from the 17th Argentinian. What I like most here is to work with Argentinians from other forces than the army as well as with people from other countries.” Lt. Barvoza is a professional nurse and works in the medical centre at Camp San Martin. Asked if, as a woman, she noticed any difference in behaviour, she replied: “I don’t feel different to anyone. I’m an officer with a profession, like everyone else in the Sector.”

1/Cpl. Vanesa Moreyra was born in the northeast-ern province of Corrientes. She works in the Logistics Branch, and UNFICYP represents her first peacekeeping experience. “I like to see how every branch performs its tasks in Sector 1, but I would also like to see how other sectors work too.” She agrees with her fellow female soldiers that they are treated as equals by their male comrades. As for her part of view of the island, she says she is amazed at how local people work to overcome the difficulties of the hard Cypriot land, particularly in this dry season.

Pte. Astrid Rotten is a representative of the Patagonian province of Neuquina. She is the Assis-
tant to the CO at San Martin Camp. “I volunteered for the mission because I thought it was a unique opportunity to visit another country, mix with people from different walks of life and share cultural experiences.” Her job involves hours in front of a PC as well as answering the phone. “This helps me to learn the UN procedures and improve my English, two things I regard as most important.” She also thinks women are not the odd ones out in ARGCON. “Personally, I would recommend the mission to everyone, male or female.”

Pte. Vanima Gomez, the Information Office Assistant, stresses the special companionship the small group of female soldiers share in every activity. “In this regard, ARGCON do nothing but follow in the steps of the army in our own country, which is to increase the presence of women in every branch of activity.” And if it were possible to see any difference, that would be the special motivation they display in every task they do.

Assess the Situation

By Maj. J. Dos Santos

What’s the first thing to be done in any critical situation?", a former Squadron Commander once asked me when I was a young Lieutenant. He continued, saying: “Nothing. Always take at least a couple of seconds to calm down, keep cool -- and assess the situation.”

That wise piece of advice saved my life 12 years ago, after experiencing a complete loss of control during a maintenance flight. It could also save other people’s lives -- including yours, dear reader, while executing actual MEDEVAC/CASEVAC and air crash procedures. Training is the key word. It lets you take split second decisions almost instinctively while leading or executing multiple tasks. No matter how shocking the sight of a burning helicopter or a severely wounded colleague may be, good training will leave troops in the best condition to handle such situations.

Since 8 May 2001 -- when ARGCON Task Force 17 took charge -- six M/C & A/C exercises have been carried out. Three took place at Sector 1 main camps -- San Martin, Roca and Brown -- and three at Oly. The following phases were included:

- Safety and signalling in the vicinity of a heli-copter with engines running.
- First aid prior to air evacuation.
- Handling of injured people into/out of a helicopter.
- Emergency access and engine shutdown in an air crash scenario.
- Practice with a 10-minute flight.
- Lessons learned.

The final piece of advice regarding this last point: don’t be afraid of asking anything. The answer to that silly question your fellow trainees laugh at today, may save a life tomorrow.

Chile Signs on as UNFICYP Newcomer

By Maj. A. Alvarez, and Capt. S. Hawa-Arellano

With the arrival of Capt. Samy Hawa-Arellano to the island as the first representative of the Republic of Chile within the Argentinian Contingent, ARGCON, a new nation adds its effort to our common mission. Capt. Hawa was born in the coastal city of Viña del Mar, a famous beach resort. He is a marine who joined the Naval Academy in 1988 and adds to his military background the degrees of “Polytechnic Naval Engineer” and “Maritime Law Master”.

Capt. Hawa was asked: “What is your assignment back in Chile?”

His post is as Battery Commander of the Marine Detachment “Lynch” in the Department of Ñuñoa, a salty and deserted landscape up north of Río Negro.

Recalling his appointment to Cyprus, he told us: “It was a surprise, considering that the navy had not participated in peacekeeping missions since Cambodia. I felt immediately the heavy responsibility of being the sole representative of my country in a national contingent”.

What are your expectations for the mission?

“This mission has a double purpose, first, to contribute to improving the bonds between Argentina and Chile, two brother nations within our branch.”

Pondering the Chilean participation in peacekeeping missions, he said: “This mission opens the door for further contributions. I would be very proud of being a member of a Chilean Contingent. Moreover, UNFICYP has some features that makes it particularly suitable for a country not much experienced in peacekeeping such as mine.

“For instance, I regard the daily incident reporting in UNFICYP as a school for novice peacekeepers.”

Argentina Task Force San Martin Camp Skoriotzai

Sector 1

July/August 2001 - The Blue Beret

Women at Ease in ARGCON

By Maj. A. Alvarez

T

women are among the 409 total strength of the Argentinian Contingent. Four are soldiers serving with troops, one is an NCO and one an officer. There are no restrictions under current regulations for female officers and NCOs in the Argentinian military.

2/Lt. Elizabeth Barvoza was born in Gualeguaychu, Entre Rios Province. “I chose to come to the mission to do something different from the 17th Argentinian. What I like most here is to work with Argentinians from other forces than the army as well as with people from other countries.” Lt. Barvoza is a professional nurse and works in the medical centre at Camp San Martin. Asked if, as a woman, she noticed any difference in behaviour, she replied: “I don’t feel different to anyone. I’m an officer with a profession, like everyone else in the Sector.”

1/Cpl. Vanesa Moreyra was born in the northeastern province of Corrientes. She works in the Logistics Branch, and UNFICYP represents her first peacekeeping experience. “I like to see how every branch performs its tasks in Sector 1, but I would also like to see how other sectors work too.” She agrees with her fellow female soldiers that they are treated as equals by their male comrades. As for her point of view of the island, she says she is amazed at how local people work to overcome the difficulties of the hard Cypriot land, particularly in this dry season.

Pte. Astrid Rotten is a representative of the Patagonian province of Neuquina. She is the Assistant to the CO at San Martin Camp. “I volunteered for the mission because I thought it was a unique opportunity to visit another country, mix with people from different walks of life and share cultural experiences.” Her job involves hours in front of a PC as well as answering the phone. “This helps me to learn the UN procedures and improve my English, two things I regard as most important.” She also thinks women are not the odd ones out in ARGCON. “Personally, I would recommend the mission to everyone, male or female.”

Pte. Vanima Gomez, the Information Office Assistant, stresses the special companionship the small group of female soldiers share in every activity. “In this regard, ARGCON do nothing but follow in the steps of the army in our own country, which is to increase the presence of women in every branch of activity.” And if it were possible to see any difference, that would be the special motivation they display in every task they do.

Assess the Situation

By Maj. J. Dos Santos

“What’s the first thing to be done in any critical situation?”, a former Squadron Commander once asked me when I was a young Lieutenant. He continued, saying: “Nothing. Always take at least a couple of seconds to calm down, keep cool -- and assess the situation.”

That wise piece of advice saved my life 12 years ago, after experiencing a complete loss of control during a maintenance flight. It could also save other people’s lives -- including yours, dear reader, while executing actual MEDEVAC/CASEVAC and air crash procedures. Training is the key word. It lets you take split second decisions almost instinctively while leading or executing multiple tasks. No matter how shocking the sight of a burning helicopter or a severely wounded colleague may be, good training will leave troops in the best condition to handle such situations.

Since 8 May 2001 -- when ARGCON Task Force 17 took charge -- six M/C & A/C exercises have been carried out. Three took place at Sector 1 main camps -- San Martin, Roca and Brown -- and three at Oly. The following phases were included:

- Safety and signalling in the vicinity of a helicopter with engines running.
- First aid prior to air evacuation.
- Handling of injured people into/out of a helicopter.
- Emergency access and engine shutdown in an air crash scenario.
- Practice with a 10-minute flight.
- Lessons learned.

The final piece of advice regarding this last point: don’t be afraid of asking anything. The answer to that silly question your fellow trainees laugh at today, may save a life tomorrow.
Tailor-made in Cyprus

Mr. Savvas Georgiou is an essential part of UNFICYP life. Born in Famagusta and working in the British Camp there until 1965, Savvas moved to Nicosia that year and has been on the UN Base ever since.

In his shop, which is located next to the CESSAC Gift and Coffee Shop, Savvas supplies soldiers and families with gifts, flags and any tailoring specialty. He enjoys meeting all of his customers and always welcomes them with a smile and excellent service.

Very Accommodating

Maria Psillakou lives in Tseri with her husband. It takes dedication to drive for almost 1½ hours every day each way, just to get to work by 7:30 hrs, but she does it happily as she loves her job here.

Mustafa and Ali were started out in the CESSAC Gift and Coffee Shop without the cheerful face of Mr Maronis Hanna.

Supplier of sandwiches and coffee to hungry customers is what he does best and after 44 years previously working for NAAFI he follows on the tradition of providing high class service.

Born in Kornakiti and moving to Nicosia when he was 15, Maronis is enjoying the CESSAC takeover and will even sport a new uniform shortly. The only problem is that at 4'9”, a few alterations will be necessary in order for it to fit him!

Cleaning up our Act

Several offices in Head-quarters UNFICYP are happier and cleaner places, thanks to our two cleaning ladies, Eleni Sotiriou and Irini Charalambous are always helpful, smiling and ready to assist anyone who needs their expertise.

Eleni has worked within the UNFICYP complex for 25 years and has enjoyed meeting people from all over the world. Irini is a relative newcomer with only two years’ working experience within the UN, but really enjoys the international atmosphere.

Both ladies are highly regarded by all staff members, who wish to let them know how much they mean to us!

A Close Shave

This photograph looks like a scene from an old western movie, but if scissors were the order of the day back in the times of Billy the Kid, then this ruthless pair have no mercy, as Pieris has been seen cutting the heads of women and children.

George two years.

Christakis and Michael, two Greek Cyriots, who work closely with their Turkish Cypriot colleagues, Mustafa and Ali, maintaining the Married Quarters on the British Retained Site within the UNPA.

You will always find a pleasant smile and helpful manner if you visit the British Retained Site Housing Office and meet Mr. Ali Yusuf. Ali, as he is known to the many families whom he caters for, is a Turkish Cypriot living in Nicosia and has been employed by the Accommodation Services Unit for two years now, responsible for the furniture, crockery and cutlery for the houses on the site.

Born in Mari Village near Larnaca, Ali started his working life at the Sovereign Base Area Workshops in Dhekelia in 1970. After various promotions and 29 years, the UNPA were lucky to gain from all of his vast experience. When asked how he feels about his current position, he replied: “I should have come here 10 years ago!”

Clearly a happy man who loves his country for the sunshine, peace and quiet. We hope you’ll be with us for the next ten years, Ali!

Also off the record, these are two nice characters, so you won’t find any “wanted” posters lying around. They are fluent in Spanish, and always try and speak in the customer’s mother tongue.

Off the record, these are two nice characters, so you won’t find any “wanted” posters lying around. They are fluent in Spanish, and always try and speak in the customer’s mother tongue.
A Woman’s Perspective

By Charlotte Mortensen

B eing absolutely new to the world of soldiers, (I don’t think there ever was a soldier in my family), I must admit that I’m loving it. I have never been in an environment where I could observe the lives and work of so many soldiers from so many different countries before. Every single day I watch them and learn — and it has been very entertaining and educational so far.

How would I ever have known how important it is to wear summer boots in summer (WHO designed the Irish ones?), or to have your hair cut in exactly the same style every three weeks? Of course, every single soldier I have met thinks that their hairstyle is unique - but between you and I, it’s the same; short, short and short. An old Danish saying goes: “big hair, small brain”, so I consider myself to be very lucky being surrounded by so many well-trimmed men! And I would never ever have realised the importance of meal times (nothing comes between a soldier and his 12 o’clock lunch) if it weren’t for this great meal times (nothing comes between a soldier and his 12 o’clock lunch) if it weren’t for this great opportunity I have been given with my assignment to UNFICYP.

Coming from New York, which also has a whole lot of rules, there are still huge differences. Here a meeting starts exactly on time; when the military says 09:00 hrs, they MEAN it. Here, everyone dresses up — in smarter uniforms than others, but it’s a welcome change from all the dress-down-look-casual-black in New York. And let’s not forget about physical fitness. In civilian life it’s “in” to be fit: in UNFICYP, people are fit because they want to be, and because it’s in their line of duty. I have never been surrounded by so many well-trained people before — it puts a certain pressure on a woman, so it’s with undeniable relief that I meet some of the same people again in their dress-uniforms, which probably fit them fine several “moons” ago, but are now somewhat tighter, putting an unreasonable pressure on buttons and belts ..... ah, it puts it all in the right perspective.

I must say I’m very impressed with the life of a soldier. It’s not a bad life at all, whether you are only “in” for a few years or have chosen to make it your career path. Now I just have to find a way to accommodate my five-year-old son’s wish to become a peacekeeper as soon as possible.

Caption Competition

The best caption for the above photograph will receive a prize — to be decided. All entries should be submitted to the Public Information Office by: 30 September 2001

MINI FOR SAIL

Slovak Pioneers -- New Members of the UNFICYP Family

By Lts. L. Klíma

The first group of Slovak soldiers landed at Larnaca Airport on 27 May 2001 to become the pioneers of the Slovak Contingent in Cyprus, starting to write the history of a new contingent in this peace-keeping mission.

Although Slovakia lies in central Europe, for many people, including Europeans, it is still quite an unknown country, rich in valuable cultural and histori-cal sites. So, for the benefit of those who don’t know, here is a very short portrait of this small but beautiful nation.

The mountain range of High Tatras in the north and the huge river Danube in the south are boundaries of a small country in the heart of Europe. The area, less than 40,000 square kilometres, has a population of 5.3 million people, well-known for their industry, hospitality and kind-heartedness.

The old Slavs, ancestors of today’s Slovaks, poured into the lowlands and highlands of the Great Carpathian Bow range centuries ago to find their new homeland right here. Nature gave them fertile plains, towering mountains, rivers with an abundance of fish, immense forests, rare and unique species of animals and plants. The nation which emerged in this land has never attacked, or even threatened, any of its neighbours.

Bratislava, with nearly half a million inhabitants, the seat of the president, parliament, gov-ernment and many of its central institutions, is the capital of Slovakia. It is renowned for its mediaeval cultural sites, impressive palaces, old alleys and picturesque scenery. It is also the ancient stronghold of Devin, a silent witness of the rise and fall of the Great Moravian Empire, situated at the conflu-ence of the rivers Moravia and Danube.

Western Slovakia is a coun-try of grain, wine and developed industry. The central part of Slovakia is notable for its mountain ridges, healing waters and spas, and its attractive tourist trails. The east of the country consists of lowlands as well as hills. Three places in this small but wonderful country are registered world cultural heritage sites: the city of Banska Stiavnica, the village of Vlkolínc and Spissky Castle and its surrounds. Slovak borders on Austria, Hungary, Ukraine, Poland and the Czech Republic, and is a traditional crossroads linking north to south and east to west.

An independent state since 1 January 1993, Slovakia has been trying to become a member of the pan-European organisations while adding to the stability of Central Europe.

Ayia Marina Church Service 2001

By 1/Lt. L. Klíma

On 27 May 2001 the Blue Berets of the Slovak Contingent arrived in Cyprus, they had to show their organisational abilities during the annual Ayia Marina church service on 19 July. This mediaeval Orthodox church is situated in the Buffer Zone west of Dherinia.

Between 06:00 and 12:30 hrs, 962 Greek Cypriot soldiers were escorted into the Buffer Zone and transported to the church by SLOVCON. A service was held in the morning. Members of UNICYPOL assisted in the arrival and departure of the pilgrims. The worshippers were grateful for the opportunity and for the assistance given to them. The emotion was obvious on the faces of all those who returned from the pilgrimage. Dherinia Mayor Flora Ioannides, who was among the pilgrims, thanked the UN for their cooperation.

Three places in this small but wonderful country are registered world cultural heritage sites: the city of Banska Stiavnica, the village of Vlkolínc and Spissky Castle and its surrounds. Slovak borders on Austria, Hungary, Ukraine, Poland and the Czech Republic, and is a traditional crossroads linking north to south and east to west.

An independent state since 1 January 1993, Slovakia has been trying to become a member of the pan-European organisations while adding to the stability of Central Europe.

Ayia Marina Church

Chairs are also placed outside in case the church becomes overcrowded.
The multinational element of the MFR challenges soldiers of all nations in many areas. Days on the ranges are an example of how all soldiers benefit from this environment. Platoons conduct training in all four nations’ weapons, the SA 80 (Britain), F.A.L. (Argentina), AK 47 (Hungary) and the SA V2 59 (Slovakia), providing valuable experience and knowledge to all those involved. In the current climate of international responses to crisis, familiarization training of this type is essential to operational effectiveness in future conflicts.

New Arrivals

Coming up for air

Lt. Ray Taylor

“Anyone seen the OC?”

“Is that the safety catch?”

BZ Hunters

New UNFICYP COS
Colonel H. M. Fletcher C.B.E.

Hamish Fletcher was commissioned in 1970 as a university cadet, having read law at University College, London. After attending the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, he served in various junior officer appointments in 2 Parachute Regiment. Between 1980-1982 he was adjutant of 1 PARA. Post Staff College, he was appointed Chief of Staff of 6 Airmobile Brigade in the British Army of the Rhine (Germany) and then commanded A Company, 2 PARA from 1986-1988; this included a six-month tour of Belize.

He commanded 3 PARA between 1988-1991, of which two years was in Northern Ireland. He then served as a Grade 1 Officer at the Army Staff College, Camberley. After a short spell in a doctrine job, he escaped to BMATT (the British Military Advisory and Training Team) South Africa, just after the African National Congress had won the elections there.

Promoted Colonel in 1994, he became the Regimental Colonel of the Parachute Regiment for a year before serving as Chief of Staff of the multinational brigade in Bosnia in 1995 - this was part of the UN’s Rapid Reaction Force. A tour as a Divisional Director at the Joint Services Staff College, Bracknell followed before he assumed his last appointment as Deputy Military Delegate in Brussels, initially to the Western European Union, but for the last year to the EU.

Col. Fletcher was appointed OBE in 1991 and CBE in 1996. He is married to Christina (Chris) and they have three children. He enjoys sports and outdoor pursuits and is a keen ornithologist.

Hamish Fletcher

New Commander UNFICYP
Commander Fred Donovan

Comd. Fred Donovan has been a member of the Australian Capital Territory and Australian Federal Police Services for 32 years. He has extensive experience in community policing and federal operations, and has held senior management positions in both areas.

In November 1999, he commanded the 40-strong AUST-CIVPOL Contingent to East Timor with the United Nations Transitional Administration to East Timor (UNTAET), and was allocated the role of UNFICYP Chief of Personnel. At that time, 600 civilian police from 35 countries served with the mission.

Prior to his deployment with UNFICYP, Comd. Donovan was the Officer in Charge of External Policing, responsible for coordinating and monitoring the Australian Police commitment in Cyprus, East Timor and the Solomon Islands.

Comd. Donovan is accompanied by his wife Anne. They have two daughters living in Australia.

Fred Donovan

New UNFICYP CAO
Mr. Jan Johansson

Jan Johansson, a native of Sweden, joined the organisation in 1974 and was assigned to the Finance Dept at HQ United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) in Jerusalem, followed by a tour with UNFICYP. He then served for five years as Deputy Chief of Mission for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Special Mission in Cyprus (UNCHCR).

In 1985, Mr. Johansson joined the United Nations University (UNU) as Head of Administration and Finance to establish the administrative and accounting system at the World Institute for Development Economic Research (UNU/WIDER), the University’s first research and training centre in Helsinki, Finland.

In 1991, he was transferred to Maastricht, the Netherlands, where he was instrumental in establishing a second research and training centre, the Institute for New Technologies (UNU/INTECH). Mr. Johansson returned to the field of peacekeeping in March 1995 on secondment as CAO at the UN Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP).

Mr. Johansson is accompanied on this tour by his wife, Jean.

Jan Johansson
A Sector 1 Walkover

By Bdr. M. Brookfield

1600 hrs, 22 officers and a football -- it’s time to get on with it!

At a fast pace, the ARGCON strikers were first to find the net with a great solo run. This set the pace for the rest of the game, and it didn’t take them long to find the net again. BRITCON never looked like they would score, even with the pace of the 2ic down the right side. The Quartermaster, showing he had played a bit in the past, tried to hold and lay off the ball -- but with no luck. The ARGCON midfield, looking fast and sharp and ripping apart the BRITCON team, were soon 4-0 up. The ARGCON goalkeeper was not called into action all day, so sunbathing was his main aim.

The second half came and went with the ARGCON officers bagging another three goals. The day ended with a final score of 7-0 to Sector 1 -- and training for BRITCON.

Synchronized Swimming

A coachload of members from 12 Regiment Royal Artillery Group were bullied into volunteering to swim a mile for charity, even if the most enticing factor was a free t-shirt!! The swim was held in Dhekelia on 7 July with approximately 50 participants from all over the island. Everyone from 12 Regiment Royal Artillery Group who took part completed the mile, with particular success in the female category. Capt. Nicola Swindell received second place and Sgt. Lou Bunch third, with a soul-destroying start from Nicosia at 04:00 hrs. But at 07:15 hrs, the competitors were in the sea, enjoying the feeling of being cold!

Sector 2 swimmers did well with the UN female team coming in second overall. Capt. Swindell picked up third female overall, and Cfn. Barnes received his 18-and-under medal -- despite being 18 and 3 days!

It’s amazing the lengths we are prepared to go to for a day out!!

Reach for the Skies

By Sgt. S. Allan

The helicopter hangar at the UN Flight was used for a different purpose recently, when ARGAIR challenged UNCIVPOL to a game of volley-ball. ARGAIR had the home advantage -- but UNCIVPOL had the benefit of most of the new Irish Contingent being over 1.80 m tall!

Spectator numbers were estimated to be about 1,500 -- unfortunately some disappoint- ed people had to be turned away due to the capacity attendance. Those fortunate enough to watch the match witnessed a number of highly tuned athletes from both contingents play volleyball with the precision and grace of ballet dancers. Swan Lake springs to mind. It would appear that the ARGAIR motto was “Reach for the Skies”, whereas the UNCIVPOL one was “Win at all Costs”, in keeping with their respective professions.

Players of the match were Sergio Castro, ARGAIR, and Sandy Allan, UNCIVPOL. Oh… did I forget to mention? ARGAIR won.

Tug-of-War Team flies to Scotland

By Gnr. J.G. Winter

Since arriving on the island in June, the 12 Regt RA tug-of-war team have been in serious training for the Royal Brammer Games which are being held in the Highlands of Scotland on 1 September. Members of the Royal Family will be present at this event.

The Regiment got off to a rocky start to the tour with UNCIVPOL. First there was the setting-up in period, and soon after a number of demon-
strations took place. Nevertheless, we got down to the training area and practised with what we had available. After the first two weeks of intense rope work to get the team’s hands into shape, we began to train as one. With a little looking around and asking nicely, we managed to get together a makeshift derrick, used as a training device which simulates the weight of an opposing team. By this time, the lads were training five nights a week, with only weekends to rest.

Trying to get the full team together was a difficult task due to shift patterns. But Sgt. Weaver took the team members available to the edge. As a whole, when we are together, we are pulling as one.

We have come on leaps and bounds and hope to do well at the games, but we face hard opposition with teams that have been training since February. However, many of our members are well experienced, and one even went to Blackpool last year to pull for the Army and Combined Services team at the World Tug-Of-World championships. So, we are sure we will put up a good fight, hopefully returning with some silverware.

UNFICYP Golf Championships at Secret Valley

The Secret Valley Golf Club was the venue for the UNFICYP Golf Championships which took place on 23 August. Even though it was an early start, with departure from Nicosia at 05:00 hrs to tee off at 08:00 hrs, the competition was well attended with participants from Australia, Austria, Canada, Ireland and the UK.

The competition was split into two categories, stapledoff and stroke, offering a prize for best gross and best nett.

In order to ensure an even distribution of prizes, the stapledoff competition was graded by handicaps, i.e.

Group 1: Handicap 1-18, Group 2: Handicap 19-28, Group 3: Beginners

Due to popular demand, there will most likely be a similar event organised in the very near future.

Best Results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Best Gross</th>
<th>Best Nett</th>
<th>Category 1</th>
<th>Category 2</th>
<th>Category 3</th>
<th>Longest drive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

By Sgt. S. Allan
During the ARGAIR medal parade which took place on 2 August, medals and numerals were presented to the pilots and technicians currently serving with UNFICYP.