

# The Blue Beret

Volume 36 - October/November 2000

**UNFICYP International Open Day  
Festival of Mutual Understanding  
Austrians to Depart**





# THE BLUE BERET

The magazine for UNFICYP's civilian, military and police personnel

Published monthly by the Public Information Office of the United Nations Force in Cyprus, HQ UNFICYP, PO Box 21642, Nicosia, Cyprus

Tel: (02) 864550/864416/864408

Fax: (02) 864461

E-mail: blueberetcyprus@hotmail.com

## Editorial Team

Sarah Russell

Maj Paul Kolken

Miriam Taylor

## Photography

Contingent Photographers

## Unit Press Officers

**Sector 1** Capt Jorge Mobilia

**Sector 2** Capt Fran Recchia

**Sector 4** Capt Andreas Scherer

Capt Zsolt Hatos

Capt Tanja Pecnik

**UNCIVPOL** Garda Cora Whelan

Sgt Mick Murray

**UN Flt** Lt Mariano Garvini

**MFR** Capt Martín Estrada

**FMPU** 1/Lt Yge ten Berg

The Blue Beret is the in-house journal of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. The views expressed are those of the authors concerned, and do not necessarily conform with official policy.

Articles of general interest are invited from all members of the Force. Photographs, together with captions, should accompany the articles.

The copyright of all material in this journal is vested in United Nations Publications. Any article or illustration may be reproduced with the written permission of the Editor.

# editorial

The past few months have seen UNFICYP involved in organising numerous major events. Ledra has hosted two big functions - the Festival of Mutual Understanding organised by political parties from both sides, and UN Day 2000, organised by UNFICYP with help from UNDP/UNOPS. Some 13,000 people from both north and south attended these two gatherings.

All three sectors have staged medal parades. Sector 1 put on a typically vamos display at San Martín Camp, at the foot of the Troodos mountains. Sector 2 laid on a spectacular parade against the backdrop of the Ledra Palace in Nicosia. Sector 4 invited the local community along to watch medals being presented in the main square in the old city of Famagusta on the occasion of Austrian National Day. Bolivia, Hungary, and Slovenia have all celebrated their national days. UNCIVPOL members also received medals and celebrated afterwards in the newly opened UNCIVPOL clubhouse.

Other notable occasions have included the UN contribution to World Clean-Up Day, and the military skills competition.

Meanwhile, the normal routine of patrols, visits, and meetings has continued in Cyprus. In Geneva and New York, the Secretary General's Special Advisor on Cyprus has held further rounds of proximity talks, as part of the UN's ongoing effort to negotiate a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus problem.

## Contents

Editorial/Contents	2
UNFICYP International Open Day	3
Sector 2	4/5
Sector 2	6/7
FMPU	8
Military Skills Competition	9
Beyond the Buffer Zone	10
Dogs in the Buffer Zone	11
National Symbol	12
National Celebrations	13
UNCIVPOL	14
Not Strictly Peacekeeping	15
Sector 4	16/17
Sport	18/19

## IN THIS BLUE BERET:



Front Cover: Festival of Mutual Understanding  
Back Cover: Sector 1 Medal Parade

Front and back  
photographs by  
Maj Paul Kolken

# UNFICYP INTERNATIONAL OPEN DAY



**A**lmost 5,000 people flocked to the Ledra Palace Hotel to celebrate UN Day 2000. The event, which was co-funded by UNDP/UNOPS with support from the US, took four months to organise, and involved around 300 UNFICYP soldiers, police officers, and civilians.



Sector 2 bore the brunt of the work, but Sectors 1 and 4, UNCIVPOL, the MFR, UN Flight and UNFICYP HQ personnel all did their bit to make the event a great day out for families from all over the island.



Photographs by Andreas Manolis  
and Capt JJ Simon



# Minden Day, 1st August

By Capt CD Walker

On 1 August, 32 (Minden) Battery 16 Regiment RA celebrated its battle honour of the Battle of Minden in 1759. The battle took place during the Seven Years War waged between Britain, Prussia and the Hanoverian Armies and France, Russia, Austria, Sweden and Saxony.



On the day of the battle, an allied force of 33,000 came up against a force of 51,000 French troops - and won. During a night march into battle, the British troops picked roses so they could carry the English national emblem into battle. Hence the battery symbol. Since then, all regiments who took part in the battle are entitled to wear a rose on 1 August - including the King's Own Scottish Borderers currently also serving in Cyprus.

On 1 August, all members of Sector 2 East were presented with a rose. That evening, a function was held on the top of UN OP 66, Maple House. Tradition requires the youngest officer in the battery (in this case 2Lt Kate Loveridge) to recite the Minden Poem with a northern accent, and then eat a specially marinated rose. And for extra atmosphere, a KOSB piper came up and played on the roof as the sun set over the city.



## Those Swimming Pool Blues

By Lt Al Eade

Never before has such a small expanse of water required such a high level of international cooperation and flexibility as the swimming pool at Ledra Palace Hotel.

Callously left to fend for itself over the winter, perhaps the most important welfare facility for the troops of Sector 2 was completely refurbished this summer. To understand why it is so important, you need only speak to the soldiers found by its side.

One Gunner was heard to say in August, "It's the only thing that makes this heat bearable; I don't know what I'd do if I couldn't swim in the afternoons."

Another, this one a Sapper went further: "I was set free! I dissolved in the sea, became white sails and flying spray, became beauty and rhythm, became moonlight and the ship and the high dim-starred sky! I belonged, without past or future, within peace and unity and a wild joy, within something greater than my own life, or the life of Man, to Life itself."

Well, anyway, the pool is clearly something people get worked up about, and something people have worked hard on.



The REME LAD (Light Aid Detachment) were given overall responsibility and set about their duties with enthusiasm, though the project was far from plain sailing, as the Finnish Engineers from UNPA found when they had to try to combine plastic fittings from the year 2000 with galvanised connections left from 1974.

# The City Line Tour

By Lt AJ Howell

Visitors to Cyprus are fascinated by the fact that the city of Nicosia is bisected by a buffer zone. Every month, the UN takes up to 200 people on a tour of the “Green Line”. Some of these are VIP UNFICYP visitors. Others have links with contingent contributing countries - many City Line tourists, for example, come up from the British Bases to see what their blue-beret-wearing colleagues are doing here in the capital.

The City Line Tour begins at Wolseley Barracks with an opening brief describing the geography, history and political situation in Cyprus. It also explains what the United Nations is doing on the island and how it achieves its mission.

A quick bus ride to the east end of the old city walls and the tour enters the buffer zone at Jeep Gate on Flatro Bastion. The old city walls were constructed by the Venetians in the 15th century. Their 11 bastions are now in a mixed state of repair and currently undergoing renovation. Flatro is the only bastion on which both opposing forces stand. UNFICYP's City Troop therefore maintains a permanently manned observation post on the bastion.

One of the first landmarks is “Beaver Lodge”, formerly Ayios Kassianos School, a famous Greek Cypriot school located in what was formerly a Turkish Cypriot area of Nicosia. A Canadian Company occupied the position between 1964 - 74. In 1974, so the story goes, a visitor knocked at the door to warn the soldiers to get out as fighting was about to start. They took the advice and left. During the fighting that ensued, the school changed hands three times, and it is thought that between 800 - 1200 lives were lost in this small area.

Opposite Beaver Lodge lies another point of interest called Annie's House. Annie Couppis remained in her house after 1974 although the front of the building lay along the southern ceasefire line. Unfortunately she had no back door and so whenever she wanted to leave, the UN had to escort her to Jeep gate. Sadly, it appears that her family disowned her because she refused to move out and UNFICYP soldiers “adopted” her. In 1991, Annie died in her house. It is said that the soldiers organised and paid for her funeral. The house has been untouched ever since, and the rear wall of the building has collapsed.

Two hundred metres down the patrol track the tour turns left onto Konstantinou Drive. At the far end of the street is the narrowest part of the buffer zone: the ceasefire lines are a mere 3.3 metres apart.

“Spear Alley”, as the soldiers call the street, used to be one of the world's most militarised areas, with three companies of soldiers (UN and



opposing forces) living along a stretch measuring 100 metres in length. The opposing forces apparently regularly threw verbal abuse and objects at each other, and were renowned for jousting across the balconies with bayonets tied to poles, hence the nickname.

Over the past 26 years, buildings have become increasingly dilapidated. A number have been deemed unsafe and it is wise to be cautious when walking along. The Nicosia Master plan has ongoing projects to renovate buildings that abut the buffer zone and last year work was done by engineers from both sides to shore up buildings to ensure that they can be restored in the future.

Moving towards the centre, the visitor comes across small derelict factories and workshops before getting to Liperti Street - formerly the Knightsbridge of Nicosia. The tour continues past Tourist Bunker (where you may be photographed by a tourist standing at the end of Ledra Street) and the Olympus Hotel, where the ceasefire arrangement was reached in August 1974.

One block down is Maple House, the former shopping precinct where City Troop now lives. What fascinates most visitors is Toyota Corolla car, one of a consignment of 50 brand new, just-imported cars that got trapped in the basement garage in 1974. The Corolla on display was restored by 19<sup>th</sup> Regiment RA.

The tour then passes the abandoned yellow Morris Minor and Gobblers Gate before going through the Snake Pit (a garden reputedly full of reptiles) up onto the rooftops to continue west to Paphos Gate. The tour passes the Maronite Church and Mission and the RC Holy Cross Church before descending to the street at UN OP 65.

Walking through the foot tunnel and Paphos Gate the tour exits the city walls onto the Marcos Dracos roundabout, commemorating an EOKA fighter. A stroll back to Wolseley, past Roccas Bastion and the South Ledra Checkpoint, completes the tour.

## Sector 2



# The Tour So Far

After the task of moving the regiment from sunny England to an even sunnier Cyprus, the handover/takeover period kicked in with a vengeance. A very busy month lay ahead for the Battery and it certainly didn't exclude BHQ Troop. The activity within S2E was as busy as it gets.

Information and requests from the line troops came through thick and fast, spurring into action both the operations room and the logistical world of BQMS (No!) SSgt Dave Laidlaw. Requests for everything from bicycle puncture repair kits to air conditioning units certainly kept the Q and his team away from the pool until at least NAAFI break.

Meanwhile, Sgt Simon Brooks clocked up enough miles during driver training to circumnavigate the globe. The BSM WO2 Scott Dunn gave hope to the 30-something club by proving that age is no obstacle in the birth of his son Scott John Dunn Jr who he hopes will wear the England number nine shirt in the not-too-distant future. The pool of signallers is under my watchful eye, and with a rotation of 12 hours on duty and 12 hours off, the signallers put in more hours than most and are certainly earning their keep.

The Ops Info side of life is managed expertly by Capt Clive (nice chum) Walker and SSgt Terry (Yoda) Gaunt; the dynamic duo are often seen side by side, hiding behind PC monitors when not being a little off colour in helicopters. They meticulously scrutinise all the IMREPs and INFOREPs that come our way before passing them up to the JOC.

And last but not least, at the helm of the good ship S2E, is the BC, Maj Andy Welch, who kept the team going through the long, hot summer and into the relative cool of autumn.



## SECTOR 2 COCKTAIL PARTY

Lt Col Paul Lane (right) and Maj Peter Boonen welcome Force Commander Maj Gen Victory Rana and Mrs Padma Rana to the Sector 2 cocktail party. The evening was a first class opportunity to say thank you to many of the people across the island of Cyprus who help to make our mission possible.



## Kalimera, Guyadin

*By Capt Simon Thomas*

When we arrived in Cyprus we decided to host a series of traditional British breakfasts for the different regiments from the opposing forces we work with here in Nicosia.

A good idea, but one that tested our diplomatic skills to the hilt. Menu plans and seating arrangements were proposed, rejected, and rewritten. Long hours were spent finding out the correct spelling of the names for place cards. I had nightmares that we'd invited both parties to come on the same date and consequently rang the different interpreters over and over again to check that I'd got it all right. They probably thought I was mad or stupid - or, more likely, both.

Each breakfast began with a quick briefing on our guests' regiment's history and then it was off to Ledra Palace Hotel to await their arrival. Two officers were dispatched to either the checkpoints to pick up the guests and escort them through the BZ to breakfast.

Language is always a potential problem at this sort of event. On one occasion, our guests spoke very little English but their Commanding Officer had a good grasp of French. Luckily, help was at hand in the form of Capt JJ Simon (SO2 Ops Info) and Maj Paul Belcourt (OC MFR), both Canadians (though Paul clearly thinks he is British) who speak fluent French.

At the end of each breakfast, the Commanding Officer of Sector 2, Lt Col Paul Lane made a speech and presented a framed regimental picture depicting the Rapier Air Defence system in the field.

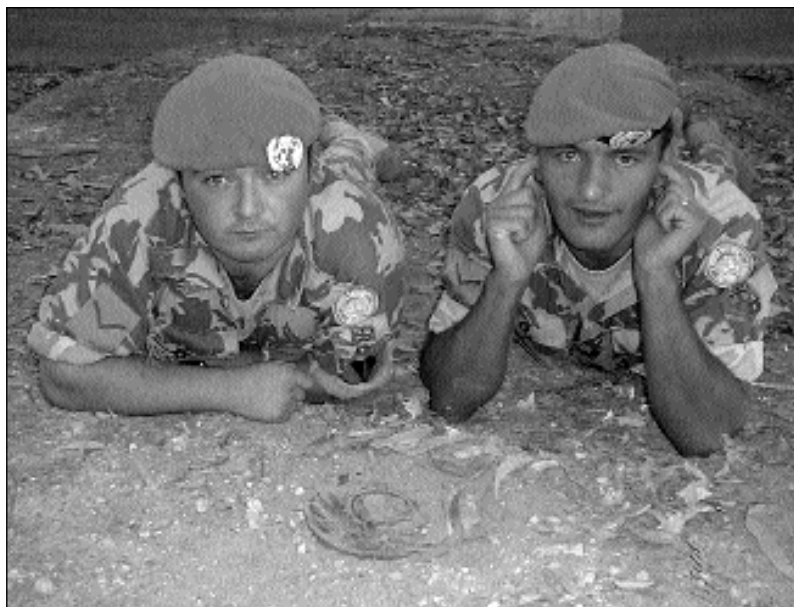
# BEST FOOT FORWARD

By Cpl Darren Perraton

It had been another long night shift for Three Section and the time had come for the last light patrol of Ledra Troop's area of responsibility. A few days earlier, one of the OPFORs had cultivated an area of disputed land within the Ledra area. So the troop sent out some of its finest soldiers - well, we sent LCpl Soroka and LBdr Sweeney - to walk across the newly cultivated land. LBdr Sweeney was impressed by LCpl Soroka's "ghost walk" while he brought up the rear, shining his torch on the disturbed ground.

And then a cry went up: "Stop! Mine!" Both stopped in their tracks as Sweeney called out, following the drills the section learnt during the CO's exercise. Suddenly appreciative of the training, the patrol started to look, feel, prod around. They uncovered the mine, and marked it, before withdrawing. As they left the area, they ensured that they marked out their route as a safe lane.

They reported the incident to Bdr Heron in the troop ops room



and the Royal Engineers detachment. Access routes to the patrol track were sealed.

A brave engineer, fully kitted out to deal with the situation, walked out to the suspected mine, ignoring all thoughts of danger to himself. He uncovered the mine, lifted it from the ground, and returned to the Ledra Troop Ops room.

Here it was decided that it was not actually a mine - even though its similarity is unbelievable. The suspected mine had obviously been recently dug up by the OPFOR while it was cultivating the land. Meanwhile, Ledra Troop is deeply relieved that it is now safe from dangerous looking hubcaps.

**Sector 2**

## LONG NORTH WIND PATROL

By SSgt C McQuillan

Sector 2 Civil Affairs Team (SCAT 2) undertake a range of tasks - humanitarian, economic and bicomunal.

One of the most important humanitarian tasks they do is the fortnightly Long North Wind Patrol to the Maronites living in the north. The south provides the supplies, which are delivered by UN soldiers, escorted by police from the north.

The SCAT assists in the resupply of food, medicine, clothing and fuel to Maronite communities. It also assists in the payment of social and welfare benefits, and at the same time monitors living conditions of the communities left behind in the villages of Karpasha, Asomotos and Kormakiti.



On each patrol, the SCAT takes a group of volunteer soldiers to help with the deliveries. Volunteers seem to enjoy the experience, which is quite a change from their normal duties. The villagers

are always pleased to see them, and the nuns of Kormakiti are famed for their hospitality. Coffee in winter, juice in summer - and mountains of cake: four slices each for new volunteers.



# HAPPY ARGENTINIAN MPs!

**W**OII Francisco Franco and SSgt Claudio Acosta are the deserving winners of the "Best Argentinian MP" award. Since their arrival in May, both soldiers have worked hard to improve their English language skills and learn the complexities of MP work.

In addition to the shared award, both soldiers



have been allowed to extend their tours to one year; so they have plenty of reason to smile!

# SLOVENIAN MPs ARE BIG GUYS!

**A**s SSgt Matej Praznik, our bubble-gum collecting, cigar smoking, 1.90-metre Slovenian leaves, he is replaced by an equally tall and imposing Slovenian, SSgt Albert Kocevar, who's an avid reader and a fitness fanatic.

All Slovenian MPs serving in the UNFICYP FMPU are professional policemen. They come from the same unit in Slovenia: the Military Police Unit within the 10<sup>th</sup> battalion for International Cooperation (10.bMS). The battalion was specially created to provide personnel for peacekeeping missions and for all kinds of international military exercises. MPs from this unit are currently serving in peace missions in Bosnia (NSU) and Cyprus (FMPU).

Before going on mission, all MPs have to successfully complete the UN military courses in Denmark-UNMILPOC Aalborg. They then have to undergo special training designed to prepare them for the mission in which they aim to serve. They also have to speak English very well.

MP work in the Slovenian Army is similar to work in FMPU in Cyprus. The main tasks are the same: traffic procedures, escorts, security duties,



care for order within the Slovenian army and all kinds of criminal investigations concerning Slovenian soldiers.

Sad as colleagues and customers are to see Matej depart, they should be consoled by the news that Albert looks sure to fill Matej's shoes admirably. Just look for the man behind the speed gun.



# HOME ON THE RANGE

**O**nce every two months, all members of the FMPU attend a range practice to qualify them to use side arms and shotguns on duty, should the need arise.

Here, Sgt Dave Garbutt coaches SSgt Claudio Acosta in use of the 12 bore shotgun. The military police occasionally use this gun to dispatch dangerous wild dogs in the buffer zone, as well as animals that have been caught and injured by snares and traps left by poachers.



# UNFICYP Military Skills Competition



*Paddling hard in the raft race*

No wonder we had some problems at the driving skills station - we'd forgotten how to use mirrors.

## **MFR**

The MFR military skills competition team consisted of British, Dutch, and Argentinian soldiers. Three nationalities = three languages = a distinctly bumpy training. We started the competition with the Olympic ideal that taking part was more important than winning. Afterwards, feelings were a bit mixed: Brits and Dutch weren't too thrilled at only coming fourth, but the Argentinians were happy to have beaten both Sector 1 teams by a long way.

## **SECTOR 2 EAST**

"Military skills competition, but we're not infantry," we bleated. "That's no excuse," we were told, and 20 of us embarked on a punishing training regime. Seven victims were finally selected and duly turned up at the start point at 0550hrs, there to score maximum points on the kit inspection. The rest of the day didn't always go to plan, but the team kept their heads up, gritted their teeth, and got on with it. Trouble was, by the end of the day, no one really knew for sure who had won. Finally the Force Commander put us out of our misery and we staggered back home with the trophy.

## **SECTOR 4**

When we arrived at the map reading station there were three UNCIVPOL women waiting for us. Things were looking good - until we tried to use the Austrian roamer with a UN map. And then we found there was no way we could charm our way into getting extra points.

The weapons assembly station was really weird. We didn't seem to have any problem with other countries' weapons, but our own assault rifles gave us all grief. The station commander told us to take things apart that we are normally forbidden to disassemble.

Reversing unaided is strictly "verboden" by UNFICYP HQ.

## **UNCIVPOL**

Our Military Skills team was all Australian, and though the military would have been embarrassed by our performance, we thought we did pretty well. We still reckon we were unfairly docked 20 points on our kit inspection - even though we'd been promised this wouldn't happen as we'd had to beg, steal, and borrow gear from the military. Future UNCIVPOL military skills competitors, be warned! Thanks to AUSCON for the ammunition by the way - shame some of it misfired on the day. Another anti-police conspiracy?



*The winning team being congratulated by the Force Commander*

# Exercises



## A dog's life

By Maj Paul Kolken

Corporals Sam Drost and Laura Potma go through the list of points on the "KK-ridge" patrol. One of these is the Mammari garbage dump. On the right side of the path leading to the dump, an eleven-metre concrete pipe has been sunk so local butchers can dump animal remains. The aim is to deter stray dogs, who used to drag carcasses away through the buffer zone.

The UN soldiers stop to lift the heavy metal lid and check that nothing but animal remains have been dumped in the pipe. The terrible smell rising from the deep doesn't put them off any more. One of the corporals hands a torch to the other. It is switched on, and aimed at the bottom of the pit. There seem to be two dim little lights down there. The soldiers take a second look and realise they're looking at a puppy with big brown eyes - who has presumably been dumped in the pipe along with the unwanted bits of sheep and cow.

They finish the patrol and report back to Bengal troop. They can't forget those eyes. When Troop Sergeant Francesco Wessels returns to Bengal later that evening, they tell him the story. Wessels doesn't think twice. He grabs a ladder and some rope and returns to the pit, the two corporals in his wake.

The ladder proves not to be long enough, so they hang it from a piece of rope and Wessels lowers himself down the rope until he reaches the ladder. From then on it is easier, but every step he goes down, the stench becomes more intense.



When Wessels gets dizzy, he knows he has to go up again, empty-handed. He gulps down some fresh air, takes off his T-shirt, ties it in front of his mouth, and descends a second time. This time he gets to the base of the ladder, which swings a bit above the rotting mass of meat and the waiting dog. He reaches down, grabs the pup, and heads off back to ground level.

The puppy stays at Bengal for a couple of days, before being handed over to the Cyprus Society of Prevention of Cruelty Against Animals - and hopefully, eventually, to a good caring home.

### NEW AMENDMENT TO SOPS!

Please note that in order to restrict the number of feral and uncontrolled animals within UNFICYP, no unauthorised pets are permitted. Persons wishing to have pets (including the care/feeding of feral animals) must first obtain written permission from:

- a. UNPA - SO2 Pers, HQ UNFICYP;
- b. Sector COs or their delegated authority.

## Cancon returns

One pet around the Headquarters who should have the blessing of UNFICYP authorities is Cancon, the beloved dog of Capt JJ Simon who went missing for a short spell recently. Cancon's disappearance even made the local press, and countless searches were made until eventually, the owner of a local newspaper kiosk called from a village located near HQ UNFICYP. Cancon, looking even scruffier than usual, returned happily to her owner and trots around the Headquarters like nothing has happened. Perhaps next time he goes to watch an exercise, JJ will think twice about taking his beloved companion with him!





# Liaison in Leonarisso

*By Maj Paul Kolken*

The scent of freshly brewed Austrian coffee came wafting out of the Leonarisso liaison post: although he had only just moved in, our host SSgt Christian Wlach had already made himself at home. He hadn't found it difficult: this is the second time he's served as Commander of the Karpas Liaison Post, halfway between Famagusta and Apostolos Andreas Monastery.

"We're here to provide a liaison point for the left-behind communities in the Karpas area. We conduct social patrols, meet and talk with the local population

and make a special effort to keep in touch with the spokespeople in the different villages. We report to the Sector 4 Civil Affairs Officer, Maj Aznach. When he needs something checked out or followed up, he asks us to do it, which means he doesn't have to drive all the way from Famagusta."

Four Austrian soldiers man this outpost, but Christian is home alone today. He explains: "It is Tuesday today. This means my deputy, Cpl Jörg Stelzl, went to Camp Duke Leopold V for resupplies. Sgt Ulrich Glaser is driving him and our cook, LCpl Peyman Naserbacht, went too."

The four form a small family. "It is very important to get along well with each other," says Christian.

It is clearly with some pride that Christian shows off the trees in the back yard. Some of them he planted himself during his previous tour in Leonarisso and some are already bearing fruit.



## Hungarian UN-Soldiers Honoured by FC for Lifesaving

*By Capt Andreas Scherer*

Congratulations to Capt Zsolt Molnar and LCpl Laszlo Darida who recently received a citation from the Force Commander in recognition of their outstanding performance in saving the life of a Cypriot driver.

In mid-August, Capt Molnar and LCpl Darida were travelling with four other Hungarian soldiers when they spotted a burning car on the Nicosia-Larnaca motorway. They immediately stopped to help. The first thing they had to do was remove a full gas bottle from the burning vehicle. Only then could they take out the injured driver, who was seriously burned.

Professional emergency services arrived soon afterwards and carried on the first aid the soldiers had started. Thanks to their collective efforts, the driver made a full recovery.



## British Cemetery tidied up

*By WO1 Dudley Reid*



Tucked into the centre of Nicosia is a little-known British cemetery, run by the British Cemetery Committee. The Committee is appointed by the

British High Commission and is responsible for the upkeep and general maintenance of the area. It survives by the generosity of relatives and the hard work of the two principle characters, namely Mr Bob Crowther MBE (aged 84) and Costas Georghiou, the gardener. Bob was for many years a veterinarian employed in the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation.

On a recent visit to the cemetery, the FOWO WO1(SSM) D Reid noticed that there was some heavy work to be carried out which he felt could be made easier with the help of British soldiers. Volunteers in the form of SSgt Nick Hill and Cpl Brian Nicol shifted two truckloads of rubble and stone, and have hopefully helped improve the general appearance and upkeep of this historic cemetery.

Beyond the Buffer Zone



# "OH TRIGLAV MY HOME"

By Capt Bernarda Volcanjk

These are the first words of a popular Slovenian patriotic song, which celebrates Mount Triglav, the highest peak (2864m) in the Julian Alps. It is also one of Slovenia's national symbols.

Slovenia borders Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia. Covering just over 20,000 sq km, the country boasts snow-covered mountain tops, broad plains, the Adriatic coast, the Karsts subterranean world, emerald-green rivers and lakes, lush meadows and shady forests.

Although Slovenia has this wide variety of landscapes, people say that you are not a real Slovenian if you haven't climbed Triglav at least once in your life. So it's no surprise that the Slovenian contingent within UNFICYP named their camp Triglav.

Triglav stands at the heart of the protected area (Triglav National Park) like a mighty centre and the valleys below fan out on all sides. Some believe that Triglav gained its name through having three heads (peaks). This is portrayed on the country's and military's coat-of arms.

Camp Triglav is located in an abandoned factory on the corridor road (British Sovereign Base Area) and it's home to 17 Slovenian soldiers, NCOs and officers. It also provides a refuge for 12 other members of the Slovenian contingent who are otherwise based in 2<sup>nd</sup> Coy, HQ Sector 4 in Famagusta and HQ UNFICYP.

Most of the contingent arrived in Cyprus in the middle

of September and will stay here for six months or a year. Having Triglav so close is somehow reassuring and gives a sort of domestic feeling, although everyone knows that the real Mount Triglav is more than 2,000 kilometres away.

All members of SICON are from the same unit, the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion for Inter-

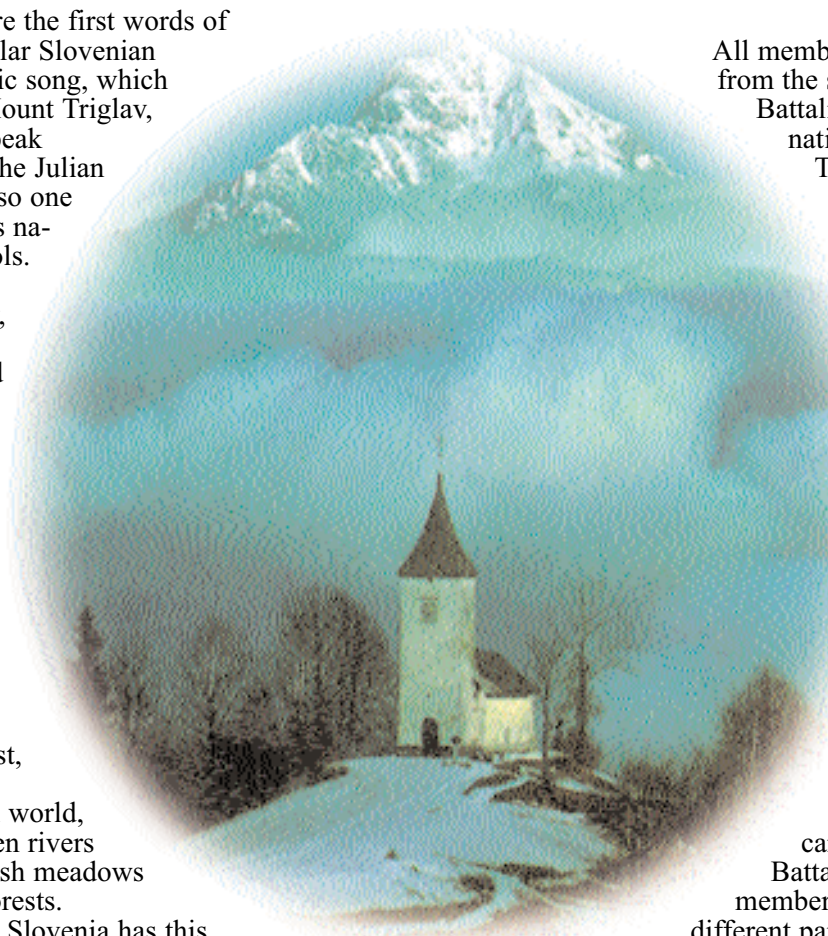
national Cooperation.

The basic task of this unit, besides being ready to defend the Republic of Slovenia, is the participation in international military activities. That also includes duties which Slovenia accepted as a UN

member in peacekeeping operations.

It is significant for the 10<sup>th</sup>

Battalion that its members are from different parts of Slovenia but Mount Triglav is our common pride. Camp Triglav is therefore a place where you can hear different Slovenian dialects and songs, the place where we celebrate Slovenian holidays, and where we are generally able to feel Slovenian. It is a very welcoming place.



Triglav Camp in Sector 4



# The Founder of Modern Hungary

By Capt Zsolt Hatos

**H**ungary's biggest national celebration takes place on 20 August when we pay tribute to St Stephan, our first king. Crowned 1,000 years ago this year, King Stephan brought stability to a nomadic and essentially warlike people and laid the foundations of the modern state. He also brought Hungary into the family of European Christian nations.

A little over 1,100 years ago, the Hungarians, a nomadic group of horsemen, settled in the Carpathian Basin. They were well trained and disciplined fighters who introduced new ways of rearing cattle and growing crops.

Their social structure was essentially tribal, and this, coupled with their military prowess and traditions, meant that they were very different to other Europeans. The Hungarians found it very difficult to adjust to life in Europe, and for decades much of the continent was subjected to a series of Hungarian military campaigns.

It is largely thanks to King Stephan that the nation did not wipe itself out. Due to his efforts,

the descendants of roving Hungarians would be mentioned by the bishops of Rome and the humanists of western Europe as promoters and protectors of Christianity.

King Stephan therefore achieved his objective - to tame his people, getting rid of the old political structures and creating a new lifestyle, based on Christian ideals. He and his successors worked hard to turn Hungary into a bridge between east and west, acting as an artery for both commerce and intellectual ideas.

For hundreds of years, Hungary flourished, but then, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, sweeping political changes were imposed and Hungarians found themselves largely isolated from western Europe. At the end of the century, however, those political changes were reversed, bringing Hungary back into the European fold and enabling it to join NATO.

King Stephan, one feels, would be relieved and pleased to see the country he founded enjoying this second renaissance.

## National Celebrations

# BOLIVIA CELEBRATES

By Capt Eddy Vidal Flores and Sbtte. Cab. Erick Pacheco Palenque

**O**n 6 August a special ceremony took place in San Martin Camp, Sector 1: Bolivian Independence Day. Two Bolivian officers, Capt Eddy Vidal Flores and Lt Erick Pacheco Palenque made a speech about the significance of the day, and pledging Bolivia's support to the peacekeeping mission in Cyprus.

Until 1825, Bolivia was ruled by Spain. Its first national government came into existence on 6 August that year. Soon afterwards, the government established a National Army to defend and consolidate the security and freedom of the new state. This year, Bolivia celebrates 175 years of independence.

Bolivia is a cosmopolitan country located in the centre of South America. Two of our most famous generals were Simón Bolívar and Antonio José de Sucre, who brought freedom to our

country. As Bolivian officers working in United Nations Peacekeeping Operation in Cyprus in 2000, we are both proud to be here and proud of our country.



## CELEBRACIÓN DE BOLIVIA

**U**na particular ceremonia tuvo lugar en Campo San Martín - Sector 1 celebrando el día de la independencia de Bolivia el 6 de Agosto de 2000, dos oficiales bolivianos (Cap Eddy Vidal y Sbtte. Erick Pacheco) dieron una conferencia sobre el tema. Bolivia toma parte en UNFICYP con personal militar y en el Contingente Argentino (FTA - 15); de esta manera estamos trabajando juntos para mantener la paz.

A manera de historia, hasta agosto de 1825, Bolivia estaba bajo el dominio directo de la Monarquía Española. El primer Gobierno constitucional se forma el 6 de Agosto de 1825, tiempo después el gobierno

establece un Ejército Nacional para defender y consolidar la seguridad y la libertad del nuevo Estado, conmemorando hoy el 175 aniversario de su independencia.

Bolivia es una sociedad cosmopolita ubicada en el centro de Sudamérica donde podemos apreciar una variedad de climas. Algunos de sus generales más importantes fueron Simón Bolívar y Antonio José de Sucre quienes dieron la libertad a nuestro país.

Como oficiales bolivianos trabajando en Operaciones de Mantenimiento de Paz en Chipre, queremos enviar desde aquí nuestros mejores deseos y felicitaciones a Bolivia FELICIDADES!!!



# CIVPOL Club Opening

*By Sgt Mic Murray*

**O**n a balmy September evening, Commander (UNCIVPOL) Graham Gartside and Chief Superintendent Jack Behan officially opened the CIVPOL club on the UNPA. An estimated 200 well-wishers joined ranks with members of the Australian 63<sup>rd</sup>, 64<sup>th</sup> and Irish 8<sup>th</sup> Civilian Police contingents.

All UNCIVPOL members had put in a lot of hard work preparing the site over a two-month period before the club officially opened for business. The club is a place the civilian police can call their own, where they can get together for official contingent meetings, social gatherings and provide a badly needed home base for the police officers scattered across the island.



## CIVILIAN POLICE REMEMBER FALLEN COLLEAGUES

*By Sgt Mark Creighton*

**E**very year on 29 September, police forces around the world hold memorial services for Police Remembrance Day. Police officers pause for a few moments to remember those men and women who have died whilst serving their community, to preserve the peace most people take for granted.

On 29 September this year, Australian and Irish members from UNCIVPOL held a memorial service for their fallen colleagues at home, and to commemorate the three Australian members of UNCIVPOL who have lost their lives here in Cyprus since 1964, Insp Mark Hackett, Sgt Llewellyn John Thomas, and Sgt Ian Donald Ward. The service was led by the padre, Rev Patrick McCormack, at a cairn on the Lefka Road in Sector 1, close to where Sgt Ward was killed on 12 November 1974 while taking a Turkish Cypriot family to safety in Lefka. His Land Rover ran over a land mine which detonated.

UNCIVPOL Commander Graham Gartside

laid a wreath on behalf of all UNCIVPOL members present.

Special thanks to Rev McCormack, and also to Sgt Bill O'Keefe for his work in painting and polishing Ian Ward's memorial cairn to such a high standard.



## New Australian Faces around HQ UNFICYP





# WORLD CLEAN- UP DAY

**U**NFICYP soldiers, police officers, and civilians turned out in droves to do their bit for World Clean-Up Day on 22 September. Led by the Chief of Mission and Force Commander, and armed with gloves and sacks, they loaded up trucks with the plastic bags, tin cans, oil drums, paper and cardboard, old fridges, discarded furniture, bits of concrete that appear in the buffer zone.

Four areas of the UNPA are now relatively debris-free, and notable improvements have been made in selected garbage blackspots throughout the buffer zone.

At the same time, thanks to an initiative launched by Sector 2 East, UN soldiers worked alongside the National Guard and Turkish Forces to clean up two areas along the edges of the buffer zone, on the ceasefire lines. In Aglandjia, the municipality and National Guard



joined UNFICYP soldiers cleaning up the area north of the New Nicosia Cemetery. In central Nicosia, the Turkish Forces helped UNFICYP clean up rubbish lying at the foot of the Roccas Bastion.

Officers from both OPFORs told UNFICYP how enthusiastic they were about the project, and in both locations, offers were made to carry out further clearance work in the future.

## TANGO AT THE UN FLIGHT

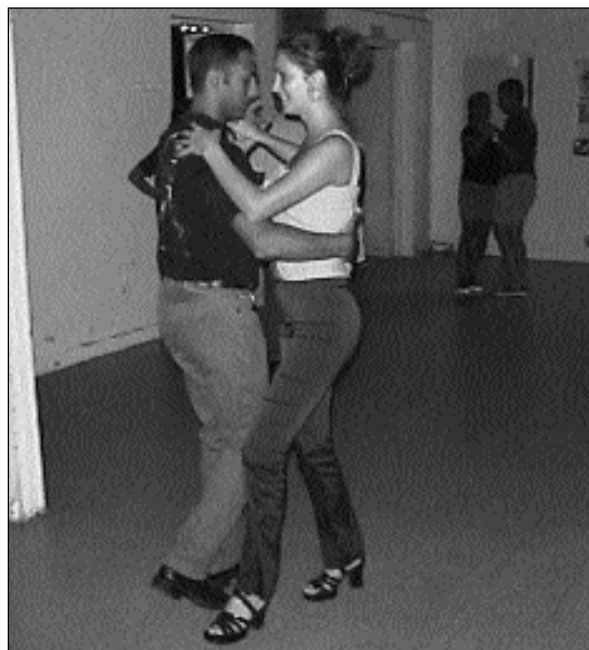
*By 1/Lt Adrian Ferrari*

**B**uenos Aires is a city of sounds, and no sound is more typical than the strains of the tango.

It is impossible to hear the tango without wanting to dance. The dance is complex and delicate. It is also impossible to hear it without being moved - the music inspires a host of emotions and memories.

When I hear tango here in Cyprus it conjures up memories of the house where I was born, the window bars, the vine arbor, the old corner carrousel, my grandfather sitting next to me drinking a very hot maté on the flower-filled patio, listening to tango on his old radio. I remember him telling me that when he heard tango it brought back memories of his Tanguero past, when Carlos Gardel was the voice of Buenos Aires, and when he first invited my grandmother to dance.

I grew up living near an airport, with the mixed sounds of aeroplanes, helicopters, and tango. So it was inevitable, perhaps, that I should become a helicopter pilot and a tango dancer.



**Not strictly peacekeeping**



# Medals in Famagusta

*By Capt Andreas Scherer*

## Sector 4



**O**n 26 October, Austria's National Day, more than 100 soldiers from the Austrian, Slovenian and Hungarian battalion received their UN medals in the spectacularly restored central square in the old city of Famagusta.

Because Sector 4 does not have a military band, the brass band from Micheldorf in Austria kindly volunteered to come to Cyprus, at its own expense, to play for the soldiers and their guests.

After the medals had been presented, the band performed the Grand Austrian Military Tattoo in honour of Austrian National Day. The musicians then led the guests into a splendid buffet in the old Othello Tower. Later in the evening, the band played a composition the director had written especially for the occasion: "Goodbye, Auscon camp of UNFICYP".





# AUSTRIANS TO LEAVE CYPRUS

**A**t the end of October, Austrian Chief of Defence Staff General Horst Pleiner came to Cyprus to visit the Auscon peacekeepers. It was then that a formal announcement was made that, after 36 years, Austria was withdrawing from UNFICYP.

The aim of the General's visit was to get an idea of Auscon's duties, performance and problems from the personnel here on the ground. He also came to obtain information to help prepare for the withdrawal. This meant he embarked on an intensive programme, featuring discussions with civilian and military representatives of UNFICYP in Nicosia as well as direct contacts with the commanders and soldiers of Auscon.

Austria was one of the very first countries to contribute to UNFICYP when the mission was founded in 1964. It initially contributed a medical unit and civilian police, and it was not until 1972 that an infantry battalion was sent to the island. This was originally exclusively Austrian, but in 1995, Hungarian soldiers joined the battalion followed by Slovenians in 1997.

Today, the UN Austrian Slovenian Hungarian Battalion (UNAHSB) is responsible for Sector 4, the most easterly sector. It consists of 336 soldiers: 214 from Austria, 83 from Hungary and 27 from Slovenia. An additional 42 soldiers from these contributing countries serve within the HQ of UNFICYP and within the Mobile Force Reserve in Nicosia.

During his visit, General Pleiner was kind enough to talk to *The Blue Beret's* correspondent in Sector 4, Capt Andreas Scherer.

The General explained that Austria has recently increased its engagement in international peacekeeping missions. Beside contributing to several observer missions and international humanitarian, disaster relief and search and rescue operations in Europe, Asia and Africa, Austria has to man battalions in

Kosovo, on the Golan Heights and in Cyprus. An additional mission in Nagornij Karabach is currently planned - and a new military crisis reaction element for the European Security System is to be built up in the near future.

In March 2000, Austria sent abroad more soldiers for its size than any other country in the EU - despite having the lowest defence budget in Europe. It is therefore having to do some serious reorganising in order to fulfil all its obligations, now and in the future. For this reason, the Austrian Government had to reach the decision to withdraw from Cyprus.

The General said that Austria had felt it would be easier for the UN to find replacements for Cyprus than for the Golan Heights. He said that no timeframe had yet been fixed for the withdrawal, though he added: "I personally think - if present conditions remain - that the withdrawal of Austrian elements will start in June or July next year and should be finished by September. To ensure an orderly handover/ takeover, there some transition elements could remain in Cyprus, at HQ and in the sector." But he stressed that nothing had been confirmed. He also said that several countries had signalled an interest in replacing Austria - but that no decision had been made yet.

The General emphasised: "Even when funds and personnel are in short supply, missions abroad will remain one of the most important tasks of the Austrian Armed Forces".

His parting comment was: "I am deeply impressed by the efficiency and professionalism, the willingness and the calm, with which our soldiers fulfil all their different duties and functions here in Cyprus. I am also deeply impressed by the spirit of cooperation that exists between the contingents within the UNAHSB as well as within UNFICYP in general. I am confident that our soldiers serving here enhance the reputation of both the Austrian Armed Forces and the Republic of Austria."



## Sector 4

### German Parliamentarians visit the Karpas

*By Capt A Scherer and Sgt Reinhard Geisler*

**O**n 22 September, six German parliamentarians went to the Karpas to get first-hand information about the situation and the tasks and duties of the UN peacekeepers working there.

They were greeted with true Austrian hospitality and the Sector 4 Civil Affairs Officer, Maj Aznach, provided a briefing about UNFICYP's tasks in the area.





# SPORTS DAY: 20 AUGUST 2000

## Sport

Bedraggled and sunburnt from a day off at Nissi Beach, members of 11 (Sphinx) Head-quarter Battery returned prepared for battle in the first departmental competition since arriving in Cyprus.

*Hanging on for dear life*

*Lt Brekenridge, concentrating very hard on that egg*

*On your bike*

*Move over please...*

## IN THE NAME OF THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

### Sector 2 Sub-Sector Football League

The league table so far:

Team	Played	Won	Lost	Drawn	For	Against	Points
I.PH	4	2	2	0	15	15	4
S2E	4	2	0	2	13	5	6
MFR	4	3	0	1	15	4	7
S2W	4	0	3	1	5	17	1
BRITCON	Retired						

Britcon had to retire from the league due to injuries and other commitments.

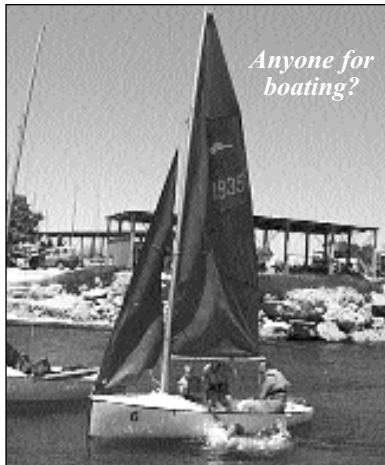
The league seems to be turning into a two-horse race between S2E and the MFR, who play each other in the last game of the season.



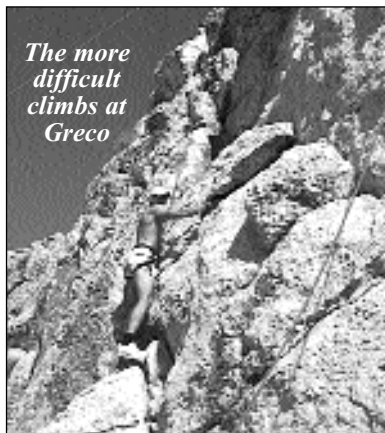
# Adventure Training

Adventure training is one of the more popular aspects of the Sector 2 Cyprus tour, but it's a nightmare to organise: the MFR, S2E and S2W all have different rotation plans, so the training system has to accommodate three, four, or five-day rotations. This calls for a great deal of patience and flexibility from the instructors and students alike.

At the outset, before any of the water sports can get under way, all participants have to do a swim test to prove that they can tread water, swim 25 metres to a sail board and climb on and off, swim back and tread water for a further two minutes before returning to the board to duck dive underneath. This shows instructors and students that, in the unlikely event of a capsizing,



*Anyone for boating?*



*The more difficult climbs at Greco*

everyone will be able to survive in the water until a safety boat turns up.

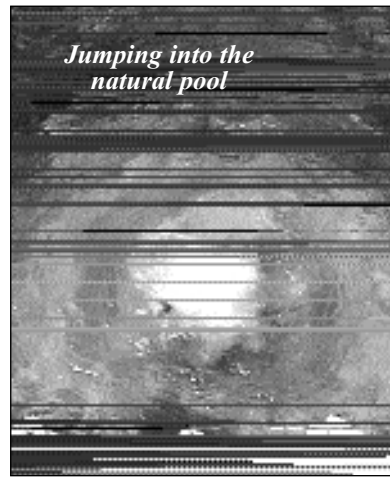
One of the most popular activities is sailing at the Dhekelia club. The current Sector 2 joined the club at the start of the tour, paying a fee that allows soldiers to use all the club's facilities and equipment during their tour. This includes the sailing boats and the power boats used for safety.

The club is run by Rear Commodore Colin Leigh whose advice has been invaluable, particularly in assisting soldiers to gain qualifications in sailing dinghies and powerboats. Our thanks also go to LCpl Mick Batty for his sterling efforts in keeping the powerboats on the water so effectively.

The initial plan was for half-day training sessions, but

soaring temperatures and high levels of enthusiasm meant that it soon became impossible to get students to come in off the water at the end of the day.

UNRRATT isn't only about water sports, of course. Would-be rock climbers learn the rudiments of rock climbing on an UNRRATT wall, before progressing to the more difficult climbs at Greco and then on to Troodos and Droshelia (Episkopi).



*Jumping into the natural pool*

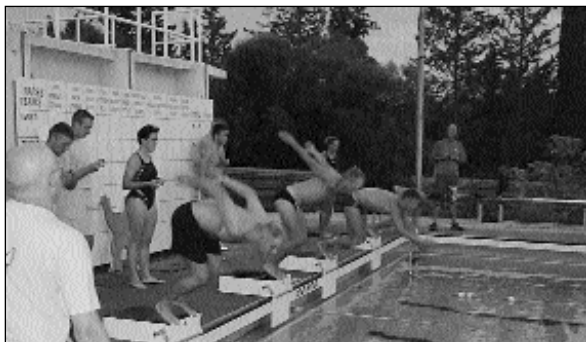
Then there's cliff jumping, rafting, mountain biking.... Does this all sound too much like a holiday? I can assure you that being part of the UNRRATT team is pretty hard work. But at least we're keeping ourselves and the Sector 2 soldiers fit, healthy, and ready for action.

**Sport**

## SINK OR SWIM!

The Sink or Swim gala provided a unique opportunity for Sector 2 and the MFR to demonstrate their skill - or lack of it - in the swimming pool.

In fact, as the Commanding Officer put it, "There was a handful of talented swimmers but a great deal more who showed grit and determination."



The general consensus was that the pool was longer than anyone had expected. Nevertheless, everyone threw themselves into the 11-item event with enormous enthusiasm.

The highlight was undoubtedly the 16-person relay. The first four legs were swum normally, the next four with a float, the next four wearing a pair of combat trousers and the final leg wearing combat trousers and jacket.

Two points should be made here. First, swimming 50 metres with clothes is very unpleasant. Second, the combats provided were made out of the old heavy material, not the nice comfortable thin stuff issued to HQ UNFICYP personnel.

The scores on the doors at the end put S2W in fourth position, MFR third and with one point to separate them, Ledra Palace second and S2E top of the league.



# Medal Parade in Sector 1

**On 15 September, Sector 1 got dressed up to receive its peace-keeping medals. Once again, San Martín Camp provided a beautiful setting for the occasion.**

**After sunset and in the presence of guests of honour, families and friends, 316 proud members of Sector 1 (from Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia) lined up and marched on parade to receive their medals from the Force Commander.**

El último 15 de septiembre, el Sector 1 se vistió de fiesta para recibir la medalla que otorga Naciones Unidas por haber cumplido con el período de servicio en UNFICYP. El Campo San Martín fue el lugar elegido para el desarrollo de la formación a la cual sólo faltó el personal que se encontraba de turno, quienes recibieron su medalla el 29 de septiembre en un evento similar.

La ceremonia contó con la presencia del Comandante de la Fuerza quien junto a personalidades de UNFICYP, familiares, personal civil y militar presenciaron la entrega de medallas al personal argentino (Bolivia, Brasil, Paraguay y Uruguay). El Comandante de la Fuerza durante su discurso resaltó el profesionalismo y la responsabilidad demostrada para el cumplimiento de tan noble misión.

Luego de la ceremonia militar, el Jefe del Contingente Argentino, invitó a presenciar un espectáculo, en el cual se puso en escena parte de la cultura argentina e.g. canciones típicas, danzas folklóricas y tango. Los invitados además pudieron degustar algunas de las comidas más típicas. Aquella fue una jornada inolvidable para todos los presentes.

