

The Blue Beret

December 2001



The Two
Leaders Meet



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UNFICYP Seasons Greetings 2001

Front Cover: The Two Leaders Meet

Seasons Greetings from the Chief of Mission

Dear colleagues and friends,

At this time of year, we traditionally pause to reflect on the twelve months that have passed, and on the twelve that are to come. As we approach 2002, there is much that fills me with hope.

It is your work in UNFICYP that particularly leaves me spirited and optimistic about the future. That you are far away from your families and the places you call home is constantly on my mind. Despite this privation, you carry out your duties on the island with commitment and professionalism. Each day, you demonstrate a dedication to the mission, to the people of the island, and indeed to the service of peace worldwide. I am indeed fortunate to be amongst you.

It is this unwavering commitment to peace that the Nobel Committee recognized when they awarded the Peace Prize this year to the United Nations and to our Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. It is your hard work and dedication that the Peace Prize celebrates, and each of you -- whether you are working in the military, administrative or political fields -- should feel very much a part of our United Nations family on this deeply significant occasion.

Whether you are monitoring a UN checkpoint, working on a bicomunal activity such as UN Day or helping to organize the restoration of the old city wall, you contribute to an atmosphere that fosters peace. You know that efforts toward peace depend on building trust and confidence - between the island's communities and the UN, and indeed amongst themselves. I have seen for myself on so many occasions how you do everything possible to achieve this for Cyprus.

As we celebrate our traditional festivities, I would like to thank you for all that you have done this past year, and for all that I know you will continue to achieve in 2002. Your efforts are valued, and appreciated. For every member of the United Nations in Cyprus, and your families and loved ones, I wish you seasons greetings, and the prospect of a new year of peace and prosperity.

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Our UNFICYP Padres

For the Padres serving with UNFICYP contingents, December can be a busy but joyful time of year. The role of Padre within a contingent is, however, an essential, year-round tasking, as they visit the troops within their sectors, provide pastoral care and counselling to those in need, and conduct religious services.

For Sector 2 Padre James Aitchison, who has also served in Berlin and Northern Ireland, his role here in Cyprus is much as it would be at home. "Ministry involves helping people and ministering to them wherever they be, and human nature changes little regardless of location," he explains.

In Sector 1, Padre Eduardo Castellanos (whose experience includes Kuwait) agrees. The only difference in being a Padre overseas, he says, is that the distance from loved ones means that the soldiers may need more spiritual support. "Here I can see to the man as real as he is, without shields or masks," he comments. "That helps a lot in my tasks."

Sector 4's Padre, the Rev. Father Miloš Krchnavý, has also seen how people can be more tuned to spiritual needs because they're away from their loved ones, and facing new cultural experiences. He finds that he can help by explaining differences between religions and historical backgrounds.

Homesickness and relationship difficulties are common problems that the padres encounter among contingent soldiers -- sometimes, a sympathetic ear is all that's needed; at other times, counselling can help. For the Padres, who felt God's calling in their decisions to



From the left: Rev. Father Krchnavý (Sector 4), Padre Aitchison (Sector 2) and Padre Castellanos (Sector 1)

join both military and religious life, the opportunity to help the soldiers is key to their time in Cyprus. And they also appreciate the chance to experience the different cultures here on the island, and indeed within the UNFICYP family.

We wish them all a very Happy Christmas, and thank them for their support to UNFICYP soldiers throughout the year.

Christmas Messages from the UNFICYP Padres

En esta fiesta de la natividad de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, Señor de todo lo creado, momento trascendente en la historia de la salvación, quiero hacerles llegar este mensaje de paz y alegría espiritual. Algunos se preguntarán como es posible estar alegres separados y tan lejos de nuestros seres queridos. Pero no debemos olvidar que esa separación es solo física y temporaria, porque nuestro espíritu, mente y corazón, están unidos íntimamente a nuestras familias.

Este día Dios nos regalará la gracia de sentirnos cerca de los nuestros, tan cerca que hasta podremos sentirlos y escucharlos cuando nos digan: "Feliz Navidad, te queremos mucho y no te desanimes porque de tu trabajo depende que la Navidad para otros, también sea Feliz".

Que Dios nos bendiga en estas fiestas navideñas.

Padre Eduardo Castellanos
Capellán FTA 18, Sector 1

You will have heard people say: "Christmas is a time for parties," well, yes, of course it is, but does that mean that those who are not in a family can forget about Christmas? Does it hold no significance for the person who is all alone at Christmas? No, of course not! Christ came to this world for everyone, whether they have a family or not; whether they have a whole host of people around to their house, or whether they are standing watch alone in an Observation Post.

The strange thing about Christmas is that though so much happiness is being spread around, there are those for whom the sense of loneliness and despair feels all the more acute. Please, remember this: the fact that God came in Christ to this world proves that he loves you, cares for you and is waiting for you to call on Him. So, whoever you are, and wherever you are, this Christmas say that prayer you have intended to say. Ask God to be with those you love and then ask Him to be with you.

The Lord bless you, Aye
Padre Aitchison, Sector 2

Milí priatelia

Tento rok budú vianoce pre mnohých z nás zvláštne. Sme d'aleko od svojich milých, sme v krajine, ktorá má inú klímu než je tá naša, sme v inej kultúre, ktorá vníma vianoce ináč. Je to určite veľká zmena pre nás všetkých a musím povedať, že aj veľmi zaujímavá.

Vďaka tejto zmene môžeme vidieť aj vianoce ináč, reálnejšie. Nevidíme sice nič z toho, na čo sme doma zvyknutí a povedzme si úprimne a na čo si tak veľmi potrpíme, keď hovoríme u nás o Vianociach. Stromček, najlepšie jedlička, sneh, sviečky, bohatý stôl, kapor, koledy a možno ešte niekoľko ďalších, zväčša sentimentálnych vecí, ktoré sú tak d'aleko od reality Blízkeho Východu, kde sa Kristus skutočne narodil.

Dotknutý touto realitou Blízkeho Východu a možnosťou vidieť vianoce reálnejšie, chcem Vám všetkým popriať krásne, radostiplné a duchovné vianoce. Nech Vám všetkým blízkosť kultúry Sv. Zeme, ktorú môžeme zažiť tu na Cypre prinesie nový pohľad aj na tieto krásne kresťanské sviatky.

Miloš Krchnavý, Chaplain Sector 4

Celebrating the Season

This time of year is rich in festivals and holy days for cultures around the world. Here, we recognize some of the celebrations, and their origins.



Christmas

Coming from the words "Christ's Mass" (Cristes Maesse), Christmas is the day that many Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus: 25 December. It was first celebrated in Rome in 336 A.D., and was designed to coincide with -- and replace -- the popular pagan celebration of Saturnalia, which recognizes the winter solstice. The tradition of gift-giving begins with the Wise Men, who brought the infant Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, and is reinforced by Saint Nicholas, who gave gifts to the poor and to children.



The Feast of Saint Nicholas

Saint Nicholas was a fourth-century saint who lived in Myra, in what is now Turkey. He was known for his humility and his generosity, and is often associated with helping children. His Feast Day is celebrated on 6 December, when, in Holland, children receive presents from "Sinterklass".



Epiphany

Also known as the Twelfth Day and The Adoration of the Magi, Epiphany is 6 January: the day that the Wise Men arrived in Bethlehem and saw Jesus, and also the date that John the Baptist later baptized Jesus. The Eastern Orthodox Church recognizes 6 January as the celebration of Jesus' nativity. Other traditions include that of Austria's Star Singers: between New Year's Day and Epiphany, children dress as the Wise Men and carol from door to door, collecting sweets or money for charity.



Hanukah (or Chanukká)

This Jewish festival celebrates faith, and begins on the 25th of the Jewish month of Kislev, which usually falls in December. The traditional story explains that when a small army of Jews was able to regain their Temple in Jerusalem after seven years of fighting in the 2nd century B.C., they found only enough lamp oil to last for one night...yet the oil miraculously lasted for eight nights, allowing fresh oil to be found. Hanukkah thus lasts for eight days, with a new candle being lit each night on the menorah, which holds eight candles plus a "helper" candle.



Ramadan

The ninth month of the Muslim calendar, Ramadan is when the Holy Quran is believed to have been sent down from heaven. A time of faith, contemplation and worship, it is also a time of daylight fasting, of prayer, and of visiting friends and family. The word Ramadan recalls the heating sensation in the stomach as a result of thirst, and it is also thought that Ramadan scorches out the sins with good deeds, as the sun burns the ground. When Ramadan ends, a three-day holiday called Eidul-Fitr, the fast breaking feast, features gifts, family gatherings, and prayer. The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar of 252-3 days per year, and the month of Ramadan shifts every year by approximately 13 days.



Kwanzaa

First celebrated 26 December 1966, Kwanzaa began as an African-American cultural holiday, and is now celebrated by many of African descent around the world. It lasts from 26 December to 1 January, with each day recognising one of seven key principles, including remembrance and rejuvenation. Founded by Dr. Maulana Ron Karenga, Kwanzaa comes from the Swahili phrase that means "first fruits", and is linked to the first harvest celebrations that take place in many places in Africa: it is a time of unity, contemplation and joy.



Pongal/Shankaranti

The popular Hindu harvest festival, known as Pongal in India's south and Shankaranti in the north, falls in the middle of January. The day marks the beginning of the sun's northern course in the heavens, resulting in longer days, with the sunshine symbolising life's brighter aspects. Festivities feature thanksgiving to the Gods and sharing a sense of happiness and well-being with family and friends. Thus, most southern households cook a sweet rice preparation in milk (the boiled milk should overflow, signifying good fortune and prosperity) to be shared with friends and relatives. Similarly, sweetmeats are exchanged in the north. Farmers also decorate their cattle and offer thanks to them for their labour.

WE CAN LOVE WHAT WE ARE, WITHOUT HATING WHAT – AND WHO – WE ARE NOT

Nobel Lecture by Secretary-General Kofi Annan: Oslo, 10 December 2001

Today, in Afghanistan, a girl will be born. Her mother will hold her and feed her, comfort her and care for her just as any mother would anywhere in the world. In these most basic acts of human nature, humanity knows no divisions. But to be born a girl in today's Afghanistan is to begin life centuries away from the prosperity that one small part of humanity has achieved. It is to live under conditions that many of us in this hall would consider inhuman. Truly, it is as if it were a tale of two planets.

I speak of a girl in Afghanistan, but I might equally well have mentioned a baby boy or girl in Sierra Leone. No one today is unaware of this divide between the world's rich and poor. No one today can claim ignorance of the cost that this divide imposes on the poor and dispossessed who are no less deserving of human dignity, fundamental freedoms, security, food and education than any of us. The cost, however, is not borne by them alone. Ultimately, it is borne by all of us – North and South, rich and poor, men and women of all races and religions.

Today's real borders are not between nations, but between powerful and powerless, free and fettered, privileged and humiliated. Today, no walls can separate humanitarian or human rights crises in one part of the world from national security crises in another.

Scientists tell us that the world of nature is so small and interdependent that a butterfly flapping its wings in the Amazon rainforest can generate a violent storm on the other side of the earth. This principle is known as the "Butterfly Effect." Today, we realize, perhaps more than ever, that the world of human activity also has its own "Butterfly Effect" – for better or for worse.

We have entered the third millennium through a gate of fire. If today, after the horror of 11 September, we see better, and we see further – we will realize that humanity is indivisible. New threats make no distinction between races, nations or regions. A new insecurity has entered every mind, regardless of wealth or status. A deeper awareness of the bonds that bind us all – in pain as in prosperity – has gripped young and old.

In the early beginnings of the twenty-first century – a century already violently disabused of any hopes that progress towards global peace and prosperity is inevitable – this new reality can no longer be ignored. It must be confronted.

The twentieth century was perhaps the deadliest in human history, devastated by innumerable conflicts, untold suffering, and unimaginable crimes. Time after time, a group or a nation inflicted extreme violence on another, often driven by irrational hatred and suspicion, or unbounded arrogance and thirst for power and resources. In response to these cataclysms, the leaders of the world came together at mid-century to unite the nations as never before.

A forum was created – the United Nations – where all nations could join forces to affirm the dignity and worth of every person, and to secure peace and development for all peoples. Here States could unite to strengthen the rule of law, recognize and address the needs of the poor, restrain man's brutality and greed, conserve the resources and beauty of nature, sustain the equal rights of men and women, and provide for the safety of future generations.

We thus inherit from the twentieth century the political, as well as the scientific and technological power, which – if only we have the will to use them – give us the chance to vanquish poverty, ignorance and disease.

In the twenty-first century I believe the mission of the

United Nations will be defined by a new, more profound, awareness of the sanctity and dignity of every human life, regardless of race or religion. This will require us to look beyond the framework of States, and beneath the surface of nations or communities. We must focus, as never before, on improving the conditions of the individual men and women who give the State or nation its richness and character. We must begin with the young Afghan girl, recognizing that saving that one life is to save humanity itself.

Over the past five years, I have often recalled that the United Nations' Charter begins with the words: "We the peoples." What is not always recognized is that "We the peoples" are made up of individuals whose claims to the most fundamental rights have too often been sacrificed in the supposed interests of the State or the nation.

A genocide begins with the killing of one man – not for what he has done, but because of who he is. A campaign of 'ethnic cleansing' begins with one neighbour turning on another. Poverty begins when even one child is denied his or her fundamental right to education. What begins with the failure to uphold the dignity of one life, all too often ends with a calamity for entire nations.

In this new century, we must start from the understanding that peace belongs not only to States or peoples, but to each and every member of those communities. The sovereignty of States must no longer be used as a shield for gross violations of human rights. Peace must be made real and tangible in the daily existence of every individual in need. Peace must be sought, above all, because it is the condition for every member of the human family to live a life of dignity and security.

The rights of the individual are of no less importance to immigrants and minorities in Europe and the Americas than to women in Afghanistan or children in Africa. They are as fundamental to the poor as to the rich; they are as necessary to the security of the developed world as to that of the developing world.

From this vision of the role of the United Nations in the next century flow three key priorities for the future: eradicating poverty, preventing conflict, and promoting democracy. Only in a world that is rid of poverty can all men and women make the most of their abilities. Only where individual rights are respected can differences be channelled politically and resolved peacefully. Only in a democratic environment, based on respect for diversity and dialogue, can individual self-expression and self-government be secured, and freedom of association be upheld.

Throughout my term as Secretary-General, I have sought to place human beings at the centre of everything we do – from conflict prevention to development to human rights. Securing real and lasting improvement in the lives of individual men and women is the measure of all we do at the United Nations.

It is in this spirit that I humbly accept the Centennial Nobel Peace Prize. Forty years ago today, the Prize for 1961 was awarded for the first time to a Secretary-General of the United Nations – posthumously, because Dag Hammarskjöld had already given his life for peace in Central Africa. And on the same day, the Prize for 1960 was awarded for the first time to an African – Albert Lutuli, one of the earliest leaders of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. For me, as a young African beginning his career in the United Nations a few months later, those two men set a standard that I have sought to

follow throughout my working life.

This award belongs not just to me. I do not stand here alone. On behalf of all my colleagues in every part of the United Nations, in every corner of the globe, who have devoted their lives – and in many instances risked or given their lives in the cause of peace – I thank the Members of the Nobel Committee for this high honour. My own path to service at the United Nations was made possible by the sacrifice and commitment of my family and many friends from all continents – some of whom have passed away – who taught me and guided me. To them, I offer my most profound gratitude.

In a world filled with weapons of war and all too often words of war, the Nobel Committee has become a vital agent for peace. Sadly, a prize for peace is a rarity in this world. Most nations have monuments or memorials to war, bronze salutations to heroic battles, archways of triumph. But peace has no parade, no pantheon of victory.

What it does have is the Nobel Prize – a statement of hope and courage with unique resonance and authority. Only by understanding and addressing the needs of individuals for peace, for dignity, and for security can we at the United Nations hope to live up to the honour conferred today, and fulfil the vision of our founders. This is the broad mission of peace that United Nations staff members carry out every day in every part of the world.

A few of them, women and men, are with us in this hall today. Among them, for instance, are a Military Observer from Senegal who is helping to provide basic security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; a Civilian Police Adviser from the United States who is helping to improve the rule of law in Kosovo; a UNICEF Child Protection Officer from Ecuador who is helping to secure the rights of Colombia's most vulnerable citizens; and a World Food Programme Officer from China who is helping to feed the people of North Korea.

The idea that there is one people in possession of the truth, one answer to the world's ills, or one solution to humanity's needs, has done untold harm throughout history – especially in the last century. Today, however, even amidst continuing ethnic conflict around the world, there is a growing understanding that human diversity is both the reality that makes dialogue necessary, and the very basis for that dialogue.

We understand, as never before, that each of us is fully worthy of the respect and dignity essential to our common humanity. We recognize that we are the products of many cultures, traditions and memories; that mutual respect allows us to study and learn from other cultures; and that we gain strength by combining the foreign with the familiar.

In every great faith and tradition one can find the values of tolerance and mutual understanding. The Qur'an, for example, tells us that "We created you from a single pair of male and female and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other." Confucius urged his followers: "when the good way prevails in the State, speak boldly and act boldly. When the State has lost the way, act boldly and speak softly." In the Jewish tradition, the injunction to "love thy neighbour as thyself," is considered to be the very essence of the Torah.

This thought is reflected in the Christian Gospel, which also teaches us to love our enemies and pray for those who wish to persecute us. Hindus are taught that "truth is one, the sages give it various names." And in the Buddhist tradition, individuals are urged to act with compassion in every facet of life.

Each of us has the right to take pride in our particular faith or heritage. But the notion that what is ours is necessarily in conflict with what is theirs is both false and dangerous. It has resulted in endless enmity and conflict, leading men to commit the greatest of crimes in the name of a higher power.

It need not be so. People of different religions and cultures live side by side in almost every part of the world, and most of us have overlapping identities which unite us with very different groups. We can love what we are, without hating what – and who – we are not. We can thrive in our own tradition, even as we learn from others, and come to respect their teachings.

This will not be possible, however, without freedom of religion, of expression, of assembly, and basic equality under the law. Indeed, the lesson of the past century has been that where the dignity of the individual has been trampled or threatened – where citizens have not enjoyed the basic right to choose their government, or the right to change it regularly – conflict has too often followed, with innocent civilians paying the price, in lives cut short and communities destroyed.

The obstacles to democracy have little to do with culture or religion, and much more to do with the desire of those in power to maintain their position at any cost. This is neither a new phenomenon nor one confined to any particular part of the world. People of all cultures value their freedom of choice, and feel the need to have a say in decisions affecting their lives.

The United Nations, whose membership comprises almost all the States in the world, is founded on the principle of the equal worth of every human being. It is the nearest thing we have to a representative institution that can address the interests of all states, and all peoples. Through this universal, indispensable instrument of human progress, States can serve the interests of their citizens by recognizing common interests and pursuing them in unity. No doubt, that is why the Nobel Committee says that it "wishes, in its centenary year, to proclaim that the only negotiable route to global peace and cooperation goes by way of the United Nations".

I believe the Committee also recognized that this era of global challenges leaves no choice but cooperation at the global level. When States undermine the rule of law and violate the rights of their individual citizens, they become a menace not only to their own people, but also to their neighbours, and indeed the world. What we need today is better governance – legitimate, democratic governance that allows each individual to flourish, and each State to thrive.

You will recall that I began my address with a reference to the girl born in Afghanistan today. Even though her mother will do all in her power to protect and sustain her, there is a one-in-four risk that she will not live to see her fifth birthday. Whether she does is just one test of our common humanity – of our belief in our individual responsibility for our fellow men and women. But it is the only test that matters.

Remember this girl and then our larger aims – to fight poverty, prevent conflict, or cure disease – will not seem distant, or impossible. Indeed, those aims will seem very near, and very achievable – as they should. Because beneath the surface of States and nations, ideas and language, lies the fate of individual human beings in need. Answering their needs will be the mission of the United Nations in the century to come.

Thank you very much.

From the Outside Looking On...

Making History in the UNPA

December 4 began dry and fresh. In the mid-distance the rain clouds were hanging heavy on the mountains. Everyone was geared up and ready for action. The leaders were coming. H.E. Mr. Rauf Denktash from the north. H.E. Mr. Glafcos Clerides from the south.

And with them – well, actually ahead of them – a posse of 200 media people.

Signs arrowing the “Meeting” pointed the way to the Chief of Mission’s residence from the Foxtrot and Morphou Gate UNPA entry points. Since they were standard, UNPA-issue signs, they actually signified “UN Meeting”.

The Chief of Mission’s house looked bright and trim. Outside the front entry wall stood a platform riser covered in green baize, strong enough to support a team of heavyweight TV cameramen and photographers.

Inside on the driveway (and stretching across the approach road outside), a fence of sparkling white, crowd control barricades stood ready to separate the media from the message. UNCIVPOL, MFR, FMPU and MPIOs were in position.

First TV crews and satellite vans were manoeuvring into place by 6.30 am. Soon the designated areas adjacent to the house were chock-a-block with Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot TV channels ready to broadcast the day’s events live and wide. Among them were a number of off-island channels, including CNN Turkey.

The “scribblers” turned up last, the pen, paradoxically, being later than the lens. Then, in one fell swoop of swiveling cameras, the show began.

The Secretary-General’s Special Adviser, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, arrived to a chorus of questions about his role. He responded silently but eloquently by holding up a tiny notebook in one hand and a pencil in the other.



Photo by Ozmen Yilmazlar

Cameras clicked and flashes popped as he disappeared through the front door with Chief of Mission Mr. Zbigniew Wlosowicz.

Promptly at 10.00 a.m., Mr. Clerides drove up to be greeted by Mr. Wlosowicz. He too paused for

the benefit of the cameras, and then entered the house.

Four minutes later, Mr. Denktash arrived. Before going inside, he responded to a reporter’s shouted question by saying: “I love you”.

And the good news is...

At the meeting held on 4 December 2001 between H.E. Mr. Glafcos Clerides, the Greek Cypriot leader, and H.E. Mr. Rauf Denktash, the Turkish Cypriot leader, at the residence of the UN Chief of Mission and in the presence of Mr. Alvaro de Soto, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, the two leaders agreed to the following:

- That the Secretary-General, in the exercise of his mission of good offices, would invite the two leaders to direct talks;
- That these talks will be held in Cyprus starting in mid-January 2002 on UN premises;
- That there will be no preconditions;
- That all issues will be on the table;
- That they will continue to negotiate in good faith until a comprehensive settlement is achieved;
- That nothing will be agreed until everything is agreed.

Quickly, the two leaders emerged once more to stand alongside one another and provide the obligatory “photo-op” handshake before re-entering the snug comfort of the residence quarters to get down to the real business of the day.

Outside, the media were less fortunate. Commentators and anchormen were just getting into their stride, prognosticating and predicting, when the skies opened. The ensuing scramble for raincoats and umbrellas suggests that they were right to go into political commentary and not weather forecasting!

Fortunately, the UNFICYP contingency planners had consulted the meteorologists and a tent had been erected across from the CM’s house. Originally intended to serve coffee, it quickly became the shelter of choice where media from both sides mingled (to the degree one can when pressed together shoulder-to-shoulder).

An hour passed. Came the word. Mr. de Soto was about to make a statement.

Back into the elements raced a soggy but determined media, as they took up their positions in front of the entry again.

The Special Adviser, flanked by the two leaders, stood on the top steps. In the doorway, the Chief of Mission, officials and members of the security details.

Mr. de Soto attempted to read the statement above the clamour of reporters, shouting: “We can’t hear... louder please...”.

Moving nearer to be more clearly heard, Mr. de Soto almost lost his footing on the slippery steps. He recovered and under the yellow folds of the umbrella of the Spokesperson began to read “*And the good news is...*” (see text box, left).

Mr. Denktash and Mr. Clerides left immediately afterwards, only to come together the following evening for a dinner at Mr. Denktash’s house honouring Mr. de Soto.

Photo by Christos Theodorides



Force Commander Maj. Gen. Victory Rana Wishes UNFICYP and Cyprus a Lasting Peace



On 15 December, UNFICYP Force Commander Maj. Gen. Victory Rana departed Cyprus for his next posting, as the Quarter Master General of the Royal Nepalese Army, stationed at Army Headquarters in Kathmandu. Before he left, however, he spoke to *The Blue Beret* about his time here on the island, the changes that he has seen, and his hopes for the future.

Maj. Gen. Rana remembered arriving in UNFICYP in December 1999 to find a very good team of high calibre individuals, including Chief of Mission Mr. James Holger, whom he describes as an invaluable source of advice, a very experienced diplomat, and a great support in his first months with the mission. "I found an organisation as committed to the ideals of the United Nations and UNFICYP's mandate as it was when the mission was established," he said. "This I attribute to the people, military and civilian, who have gone before me."

The Force Commander commented that while he had experience working in a multinational force (UNIFIL), this was his first command of such a force, and that he has enjoyed the experience immensely. "It is relatively easy to command a force when you have the support of a good team of people," he said. "Many of the people who work and serve in the force have previous experience in this mission or in other UN missions, and have a thorough knowledge of the Cyprus Problem."

When asked how he approached his appointment, Maj. Gen. Rana explained that as any military commander would, he examined the mandate to see what it was the force had to achieve. "As in any organisation, the best resource is its people and it was clear to me that a lot remained to be done to improve the lot of soldiers on the line across the Buffer Zone," he said: "I established as a primary objective the improvement in living conditions for soldiers across the Buffer Zone. I am delighted to see that this is showing results in all sectors and I hope it continues."

Another of his operational priorities was developing the liaison arrangements between the opposing forces on the island. At every opportunity, including meetings with the commanders of both forces, he emphasized that liaison at the lowest levels was the most effective way of preventing operational problems from escalating. "We now have a low level liaison system that I believe is unique in peacekeeping terms," he noted. "I don't know of any other mission where individual private soldiers on the line have such an influence on the mission's success. This has the added effect of making it easier for opposing forces to relate to the mission at higher levels, because many of the problems are solved at the lowest level."

He noted that cooperation with the opposing forces is generally very good, and that they understand that UNFICYP's credibility as an impartial force depends on the consistent way in which the rules are applied to both sides.

As for the island itself, he said that he and his family had found all of Cyprus to be a very beautiful place. They particularly enjoyed Polis, with its picturesque scenery and quiet, peaceful atmosphere, and "Turtle Beach" in the north, which they often visited for its beauty and tranquility.

His tour has also been special in that he and his wife Padma had both their daughter Pooja, 24, and son Mandir, 20, living with them. "Both undertook courses at Intercollege, which is affiliated with the University of Indianapolis in the States. My daughter has followed computer sciences and my son has taken a course in business administration, so it has been lovely having the four of us under one roof, even if only for one year."

Maj. Gen. Rana said that someone recently told him that you do not make friends on a tour like this; you make acquaintances. He believes this to be completely untrue. "My family and I leave UNFICYP with some sadness that we are parting from good friends, but we also have the comfort of the happy memories of our time here. Memories may fade, but good friendships will always last."

He also mentioned that he will miss the friendliness of the people of Cyprus. "I was so pleasantly surprised to see how friendly and hospitable the people are, both to myself and all my family. On the military side, I shall miss the multi-national atmosphere of UNFICYP. I have met so many military and civilian professionals working in this environment whom I've enjoyed working with very much," he adds.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank all in UNFICYP for the support given to me," he said. "I am leaving with a sense of satisfaction that UNFICYP is working well and fulfilling its mandate. I wish the Force and all of you continued success in the future. Be assured that I will follow the progress of the mission with great interest."

In the meantime, he said that he was very happy to see the two leaders come together on 4 December, and to hear they have agreed to meet again under the auspices of the United Nations in mid January next year. "I am very optimistic that, through these latest developments, the Cyprus problem will come to an end and that a lasting and peaceful solution will be found that will be beneficial to all Cypriots. This is my wish."

32nd Regiment Royal Artillery Group



32nd Regiment Royal Artillery Group deployed to Cyprus to take over from 12 Regiment Royal Artillery after their six-month tour.

The Regiment took over Sector 2 on 5 December 2001, and will remain until 5 June 2002, when it will be replaced by 16 Regiment Royal Artillery.

32nd Regt RA Gp comprises 18 (Quebec 1759) Battery, 74 Battery (The Battle Axe Company), 46 (Talavera) Headquarters Battery, K (Hondegghem) Battery (5 Regiment RA) and a detachment from 69 Gurkha Field Squadron, Queen's Gurkha Engineers.

32nd Regiment Royal Artillery was raised as VII Medium Brigade Royal Artillery on 1 April 1927 with 25 (Battle Axe Company), 26, 27 and 28 Medium Batteries. Each battery had four guns, either 60 Pounders or 6-inch Howitzers. In 1938, as part of the overall reorganisation of the Royal Artillery, the term Brigade was replaced by Regiment and the Regiment was re-designated 7 Medium Regiment Royal Artillery.

The Regiment played a distinguished part in the Second World War. In 1944, Field Marshal Montgomery was to say of the Regiment: "I know this Regiment has been through the whole show, and I consider 7th Medium Regiment to have been the backbone of the whole show". The Regiment arrived back in England in 1943, eleven years to the day since departing for India in 1932. It did not remain there long, and landed in Normandy on D-Day. In July 1945 it was renamed 32 Medium Regiment. The Regiment served in Hong Kong, Korea and Germany before returning to the UK in 1972, where it was re-equipped with 105mm Pack Howitzers.

In 1990, the Regiment deployed to Kuwait on Op Granby with the M110. In 1992-93 it converted to its current weapon system, the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS). Currently based in Larkhill, the Regiment is comprised of two MLRS Batteries, a Phoenix Locating Battery – 22 (Gibraltar 1779-83) Battery, and HQ Battery. It is one of three MLRS Regiments in the British Army, all of which are based in the UK. The Regiment has also deployed on tours to NI, Falklands, Bosnia and Kosovo. This is the Regiment's 2nd URR tour to Cyprus.

A Brief History



Col. Fletcher, COS UNFICYP, talking to Gnr. Hammersley (74 Bty) during his visit to 32 Regt RA during Pre-Op TOSCA training on Salisbury Plain

Commanding Officer Sector 2 - Lt. Col. Colin Brundle

Lt. Col. Colin Brundle assumed command of 32nd Regiment Royal Artillery in February 2000. Prior to that he was an Instructor at the Kuwait Staff College. He was commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1979 and posted to 2nd Field Regiment, Larkhill. Moving to Germany, he served with 1 RHA, 1st British Corps as an ADC and with 3 RHA as a Forward Observation Officer.

Lt. Col. Brundle returned to the UK in 1987 as a Platoon Commander at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS), and attended the Army Staff College in 1991. Following a staff appointment, he

returned to 3 RHA in Topcliffe as Battery Commander of D Battery – equipped with the AS90 and the Warrior – from 1994-1995. He then returned to the RMAS as a Company Commander before going to the Joint Services Command and Staff College as an SO1 DS.

Lt. Col. Brundle is married with two children, and is often seen with his chocolate Labrador "Monty". He enjoys all sports; other interests include gardening, bridge, DIY and military history.

Lt. Col. I.J. Bayless (12 Regt RA) handing over command of Sector 2 to Lt. Col. C.J. Brundle (32 Regt RA) on 5 December



Settling Down in Sector 4

By 1/Lt. L. Klima

Five months ago, SLOVCON took over the command over Sector 4 and it seems as though the time has passed too fast.

All beginnings are difficult, and the start of the mission for Slovak soldiers has been no exception. The great advantage for a large number of them, however, was experience gained during peacekeeping missions in the former Yugoslavia. Although Slovakia is a relatively small country, its soldiers have been participating in UN missions all over the world.

While the main responsibility for fulfilling mission tasks in Cyprus remains with personnel dealing with operational matters, the supporting unit personnel play a very important role. It is hard to imagine a contingent without sufficient numbers of professionals such as cooks, engineers, carpenters, plumbers and electricians, who try hard to make the living conditions more comfortable for all of us. Their assistance is of tremendous help.

One of the problems facing

the newly arrived soldiers was the different climatic conditions: when they left Slovakia, the temperature was about 15 degrees (very unusual for June, even in Slovakia!), whereas Cyprus was already reaching the 40s.

Another hurdle to overcome was a partially imperfect knowledge of

English – in this mission, most positions need at least a basic knowledge of English. This caused some problems, especially for COMCEN. The strong-willed guys have been working really hard to overcome that disadvantage, and now you may see their significant improvements.

It takes time to get used to different systems of work and working conditions, but the members of SLOVCON are ready to solve any problem, and to fulfil their duties with excellence. They appreciate the honour and the trust that were placed in them after they took over command of Sector 4.



Cpl. Tapajna

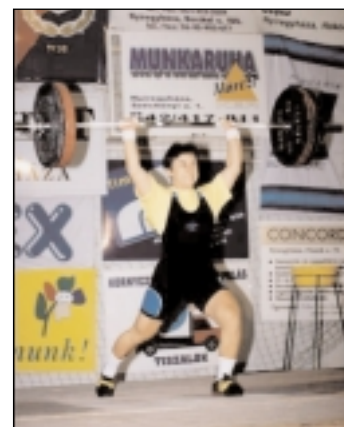


Cpl. Tatarkovic

Champion!

When you visit the gym in Camp Saint István, you will likely find Cpl. Magdolna Petróczki ("Magdi" to her friends) training there.

With a personal best of 185 kg in the death lift, and 170 kg in the squat, Magdi is no beginner in the gym. Her usual training unit lasts two hours, and she trains four times a week, so she spends a lot of her free time there. Although she is not very tall, her physical strength is indeed breathtaking.



Magdi has loved the sport of power lifting since 1993, and began weight lifting two years later. Immediately after she started power lifting, she won the Hungarian Championship in the 56 kg category. Since then, she has won the championship nine times and she would like to



win the 10th national title to create a new national record. She has good memories of the Power Lifting European Championship in France in 1999, having finished there in third place. The atmosphere at the championships evidently suits her, because she always makes her personal best there.

Magdi joined the Hungarian army in 1997, and at home she works in 34 Bercsényi László Reconnaissance Battalion in Szolnok as a radio operator. Here in UNFICYP, she works on the COMCEN at Camp Saint István in Athienou in Sector 4.

Magdi provides a shining example of how successful women can be in the areas of power lifting and weight lifting, and we wish her continued personal bests!

Argentinian "Marines" Day

By WO3 Roque Eugenio Retamar

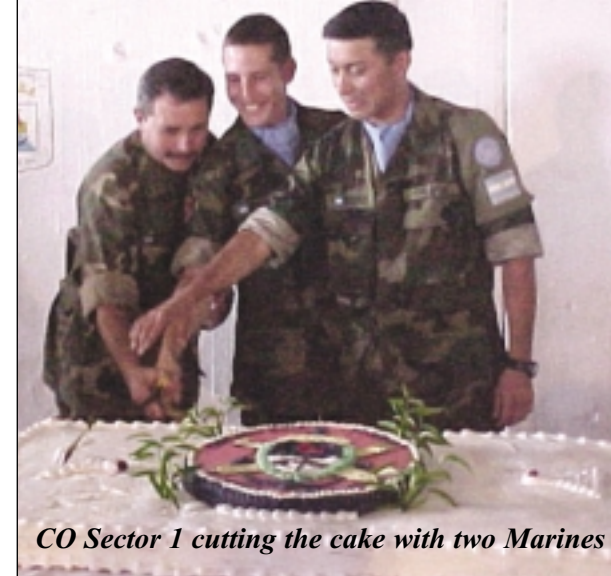
Marines: Patriae Semper Vigiles!

On 19 November, ARGCON celebrated the 122th anniversary of Argentine President Avellaneda issuing the order organizing the first Marine Unit.

The ceremony took place at Admiral William Brown Camp, where Marines from Sector 1 (Charlie Coy) are posted. Sector 1 CO Lt. Col. Cimmarusti presided, and many members of the Sector staff and our UNCIVPOL fellows

from Dhenia and Linou stations attended. The Marines hosted their guests with the traditional empanadas (minced meat wrapped in pastry), a delicious chicken cazuela (something like a chicken stew), a very rich cake, and wonderful music played by the contingent band.

Celebrating the Argentinian Marine Corps' Anniversary proved an excellent opportunity to consolidate comradeships among UNFICYP members.



CO Sector 1 cutting the cake with two Marines

Celebrating Music

By T.N.I.M. Vera

November 22nd is a special day for Argentinian military musicians, who celebrate the International Day of Music, which is also the day of their Patroness, Saint Cecilia.

Since the Independence War days against the Spaniards, military bands have accompanied our troops, enhancing esprit de corps. They also provide an accurate frame not only for military parades and ceremonies, but also in schools, squares and every place where military music provides an important link between servicemen and the civilian population.

Here in Cyprus, Sector 1 band members feel very proud and honored to be serving with the United Nations. We may be far away from home, but we are happy at the opportunity to share our traditional music, our military marches and our "Argentinian touch", to make our comrades feel at home.

Being here is also a professional challenge for us, because we are playing music from different



Argentinian military musicians

ARGCON contributing countries such as Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, plus national anthems and tunes from the many countries with whom we share responsibilities in UNFICYP.

That it is why now, as in the past, Argentine military musicians work together to accomplish our mission, following the trail traced by our ancestors.

Saint Barbara's Day in Sector 1

By 1/Lt. H. Fantoni

On 4 December, Argentinian Gunners commemorate the day of the artillery branch and of our holy patroness, Saint Barbara. On this day, we remember her unyielding Christian faith, even as she was executed by her own father, Dioscorus, for refusing to deny Christ; and we remember the resulting lightning bolt that killed her father. Today, Saint Barbara protects those at risk from explosions and storms. For that reason, gunners worldwide come under the sacred mantel of her protection, wherever we are.

Today we are very far from our artillery pieces, and absent from the magazines. It is not the task of controlling firing effectiveness that places the binoculars in front of our eyes, but rather the observation mission in our area of responsibility; there are not displacements to occupy new firing positions, but rather our patrols that are monitoring the status quo in Cyprus. We have exchanged calculations in the firing control centre for reports dealing with the accomplishment of fire ceasing in our area of responsibility; and the mimicked coif that covers our helmets in Argentina has been supplanted by the blue beret that distinguishes the United Nations Soldier of Peace. Today, we serve next to comrade gunners of

the Argentinian Marine Corps, integrating into a Combined Task Force with brother countries like Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, very far from our Units and our families...

But there is something that keeps intact a feeling that fills us with immense happiness, as much as the accurate firing of our Howitzers: it is the satisfaction of accomplishing accurately and with effort, with detail and self-denial, with care and professionalism, each mission that we are tasked with, so that we can take pride in the high honour of our legacy, sung in verse by a chaplain of the Spanish Army:

*Barbarian are
your Howitzers,
Barbarian are
your mortars,
Barbara is your
holy
patroness...
What you will
be, Gunners!!*



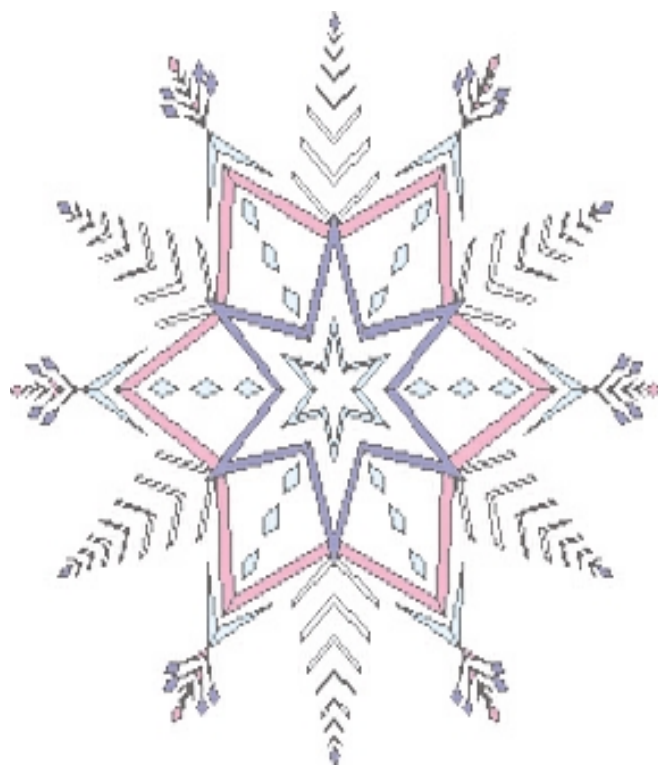
A Little Bit of Snow -- Plleeeezzzeee

By Charlotte Mortensen

- - - or at least a little bit of cold. Just for Christmas. I am struggling to get into my usual Christmas spirit, being surrounded by palm trees, sun and fairly warm weather. Especially for a Scandinavian, these are unusual conditions for the month of December. As a matter of fact, I think most of us here in UNFICYP are used to different weather. The Slovaks are experiencing fierce snowstorms back home, the Hungarians are facing bitter cold, in Ireland and England -- let me take a wild guess here -- it's cold, grey AND raining. The Argentinians and Australians -- of course -- are used to a warm and sunny Christmas. Maybe I should talk to them to receive some advice as how to cope with temperatures DROPPING to 18 degrees.

Christmas celebrations in most countries start as early as November, and that was when my children and I put bright, beautiful and very colourful lights in a palm tree we have on our balcony. We are definitely the only family in our building complex with such a creation. I cannot lie to you and say that it looks good, but the kids seem happy and it does succeed in giving me some sort of Christmassy-feel when I look at it.

I have noticed that going into the month of December, Cyprus is beginning to look a lot like Christmas too, and I love all the street lights and

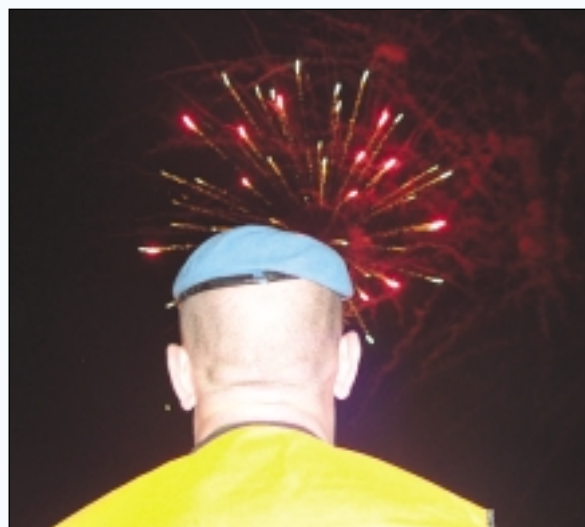


decorations, forcing the children out at night-time to drive around and look at them.

Soon we're off to the Troodos Mountains, where rumours have it that a little bit of snow has fallen. We will be the ones rolling around in one-inch of snow!

Have a WONDERFUL holiday season....

Caption Competition



- SSgt Curtis from Bengal Tp has an idea -- it doesn't happen often!
- Bob's hair transplant was a bit off-kilt.
- ...but it was nothing that a couple of aspirins couldn't cure...
- Those blue berets aren't much protection; better order helmets instead.
- And so the UN was once again contacted by aliens.
- More proof that it really IS better not to drink and drive...
- *Nah, he's just in love! (WINNER)*

With very short notice, we did well again in this competition with the captions creating much merriment. It's surprising what inspiration can descend upon us...



So what will we come up with next? All entries should be submitted to the Public Information Office by:

14 January 2002

FINCON Celebrates

Finland gained her independence on 6 December, 1917. To recognise this important part of their country's rich cultural heritage and national identity, the Finnish members of UNFICYP held an evening reception at the Hilton Hotel in Nicosia on 6 December 2001 -- the 84th anniversary of Finnish Independence Day. The day's celebration also included presenting Capt. A. Partanen with his UNFICYP medal.

In 1155, Finland was incorporated into the Kingdom of Sweden. The border between Finland and Russia was changed five times during constant war in 1809. Despite the exhausting wars, firm foundations for an independent judiciary, public services and political system were laid.

In October/November 1917 the turmoil in Russia led to a revolution. Finland took the opportunity and unilaterally declared independence, managing to consolidate it in favour of the government after a short but fierce civil war against the "Reds" (Russian communist-backed troops).

Finland became a member of the United Nations in 1955. The following year the first Finnish peacekeeping force -- a company of over 200 men -- was sent to Sinai. Since that time Finland has been involved in almost all



From the left: Maj T. Makela, Capt. V-P Raunio and Capt. A. Partanen

UN peacekeeping operations, by contributing either military forces or military observers. Today some 1,350 Finnish soldiers serve overseas. Only 50 of those serve under the UN flag, as most of them operate in NATO-led operations. The total number of Finnish soldiers who have been in the service of peace is over 42,000. Out of those, more than 10,000 have served in Cyprus since 1964.

12 SU Walkdown 2001

By Angela Milne

It was a cold, dark and raining morning when five teams from UNFICYP met to check in for this year's 12 SU Walkdown, held on 1 December 2001. The race is 18 miles on road, track and bondu from Platres to Episkopi in teams of three. During the race you must navigate through three checkpoints to the finish in the fastest possible time.

In the mixed category, UNFICYP took home first, second and third place. The winners, "UN Mixed 2" from Sector 2, consisted of L. Bunch, G. Lamb and Hall. "Get back in the van, you're embarrassing us all", comprising J.J. Simon, Angela Milne and Jan Gajdos, came in second, only 41 seconds after the winners. Not far behind them were the "UNFICYP All Stars" of Madeline Garlick, Walter Absmann and Kyriacos Michaelides.

Sector 1 entered a true UN team, with members from Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. The "Mercosur" team of M. Villegas Zanon, W. Paiva and S. Marancovich, after only having one week to train, finished in just over four hours, beating many teams who had trained for months. We are going to look out for this team in the next race.

"Forrest, Gump & Co Mark 3" made its third 12 SU Walkdown together with team newcomer Kathleen Quigley. William Style and Janet Forrest have finished the race three years in a row -- William travelled from England



UNFICYP prize winners

this year to compete with the team.

The teams would like to say a special thank you to Andy Townsend for driving and to Diana Bridger for all of her help getting the teams ready to compete. The 12 SU Walkabout (a 50 km long-distance event) is on 6 April, 2002 and the challenge is on...

So come on sectors, get training!

The Globe Trotters

Debasis De and his wife Florentina Grosu, the globe-trotting peace promoters, visited UNFICYP in the course of their trip to Cyprus.

De has visited 75 countries and some 3,000 schools covering over 120,000 km since he embarked on his world walk in 1991 to promote peace, racial harmony and non-violence. He is a devout believer in

Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence.

De, a 40-year-old Indian from Calcutta, is a former schoolteacher. He makes a point in his peace pilgrimage of visiting UNESCO affiliated schools and institutes of learning. He met his 21-year-old wife in Romania, where she joined him on his walk a year ago.



Farewell to Force Commander, Major General Victory Rana

