

BLUE BERET

UNFICYP Magazine

UN Police from Ireland

Blue helmets
Austria, Canada & China

*A special look at the
men and women of JOC*

Interview
with the
Force Commander

*UN police reach
out to students*

Winter Medal Parades

BLUE BERET

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Front cover: Garda Sinéad O'Hara and Sgt Stephen O'Sullivan

Back cover: A member of The 2nd Battalion Royal Regiment of Fusiliers performing at UNFICYP's Winter Medal Parade

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Blue Beret

Published bi-monthly by the:
Public Information Office
United Nations Force in Cyprus
HQ UNFICYP
PO Box 21642
1590 Nicosia
Cyprus

Editorial Team

Executive Editor Michel Bonnardeaux
Managing Editor Rama Razy
Artistic Director Ersin Öztoycan
Sub Editor Neophytos Evdokiou
Military Public Information Officer
Capt Michal Harnadek
Force Photographer 1Sgt Martin Mruz

Unit Press Officers

Sector 1	Capt Augustin Savio
Sector 2	Capt Anthony Platt
Sector 4	Capt Mario Benca
MFR	Capt Owen Richards
UNPOL	Garda Sinead O'Hara
UN Flt	Lt Francisco Cravero

Tel: 2261-4634/4416/4408 - Fax: 2261-4461
E-mail: razy@un.org; unficy-mil-pio@un.org



Ireland has a long, rich and often blood-soaked history. While Europe was rutting in the dark ages, the light of civilization shined brightly in Ireland through a golden age lasting from the fifth through the ninth centuries. This period of calm was shattered by the Vikings which marked the beginning of 700 years of invasion and attempted colonisation by the Normans and English. Since joining the European Union in 1973, Ireland transformed itself from a largely agricultural society into a modern, technologically advanced economy dubbed the “Celtic Tiger”. The financial crisis in 2008 badly affected Ireland, as it did many other nations, and the country has since been recovering.

Their recent troubles notwithstanding, Ireland has continued to participate in global peacekeeping efforts and currently has 1,001 members of their national police force, the Garda Síochána, serving abroad. Gardaí officers have been an integral part of the UN police in Cyprus since 1994 with 334 officers having served thus far. In this edition, we feature the men and women who make up the Irish Contingent in Cyprus.

Since the 1990's, the People's Republic of China has made a remarkable turnaround in its former stance of UN peacekeeping missions becoming an eager supporter of, and perhaps more significantly, an important contributor to, many UN missions. In Cyprus, China is a relatively new comer, with Chinese military personnel starting their service with the UN mission in 2011. While their numbers are few, their role is significant as the military component of the mission is headed by Chinese Force Commander Major General Chao Liu. The Major General is only the second Chinese force commander to head a UN mission and the first to head a multinational force.

In an exclusive interview with the Blue Beret, Major General Liu speaks candidly about his early years as an infantry soldier in the Chinese army and a love of pub walks, tuna sandwiches and theatre that he developed whilst studying at the London School of Economics. Tellingly, the Major General acknowledges that he was a direct beneficiary of the evolution in policy that saw China enter the world of global peacekeeping. The big question for the future is how China will direct and perhaps, reshape, peacekeeping policy as it continues its rise as global power.

Austria and Canada, two countries which have played a significant role in Cyprus' modern history are featured this edition. While their contribution to the mission is less significant today than in the early years, they provide important support to the mission headquarters.

Austria maintained a 37-year military presence in Cyprus and over 15,000 Austrian soldiers served here. The Austrian military were responsible for the field hospital and during the ten years that the hospital was functioning, they provided medical attention to

65,000 patients! The Austrian battalion was an important part of the peacekeeping presence on the island and they were stationed at various times in Paphos, Larnaca, Famagusta and Nicosia. Austria also contributed significantly to the UN police and over 275 Austrian officers served until 1977.

Canada was the first nation to respond to Secretary-General U Thant's request to supply troops for the new peacekeeping mission in Cyprus. The first Canadian troops arrived in Cyprus on 15 March 1964 and by the end of April, the Canadian contingent numbered 1,150 officers and men. In almost 30 years of contribution to peacekeeping mission, virtually every Canadian infantry battalion had served in UNFICYP. A staggering 50,000 troops would serve in Cyprus. The Canadians were based in the now-defunct Sector 3, which was located between Sectors 2 and 4 and encompassed parts of Nicosia and the UN protected area. With the departure of the Canadians troops in 1993, Sector 3 was absorbed into Sectors 2 and 4, but the sector names were not changed to reflect the changing boundaries. So to this day, the ghost of Sector 3 continues to haunt the buffer zone!

The behind-the-scenes coordination involved in running any UN mission is not always known. In this edition, we look at the men and women who man the 24-hour Joint Operations Centre who gather, assess and report on the unrelenting stream of information that flows daily in the mission headquarters.

UN police continue their vital community outreach work in the buffer zone. A joint effort involving UN police, military and local community members to clean-up a dump in the buffer zone was well received. As was a school visit by the UN police to meet students and explain the daily work of an UNPOL. Further such school visits are planned and we applaud this initiative which lies at the heart of community policing.

With the New Year comes the first of the two annual rotations of the military men and women serving with UNFICYP. By the end of February, the Argentine contingent will have left, followed by the Slovaks, Hungarians, Croatians, Serbians and lastly, the British. Most of the peacekeepers will return to their home country, but a few will go onto re-deployment training and be posted to other, non-UN missions with some of these troops going on to Afghanistan. The Blue Beret has over the past year featured many of these men and women, using stories and images to highlight their work in the buffer zone. We hope that they take with them good memories of this mission, many of which have been captured in the Blue Beret. From our editorial team, we wish you all the best!

Serving UNFICYP's civilian, military and police personnel



Medal Pa





Grades



Ireland

GUARDIANS OF THE PEACE

Garda Síochána na hÉireann which translates from Irish as "Guardians of the Peace of Ireland," is the national police service of Ireland. Established in 1925, the An Garda Síochána is one of the few remaining unarmed police services in the world. It is a community-based organisation with over 14,500 Garda and civilian employees who serve all sections of the community. They are headquartered in Dublin's Phoenix Park, and represented in every county in Ireland, listening to, acting and working with the community.

"People are always intrigued when I tell them that we are an unarmed police service. We police by consent and work closely with local schools, communities and businesses in Ireland," explains UN Police Officer, Garda Sinéad O'Hara. "When I tell them that An Garda Síochána translates as Guardians of the Peace, people usually have a very positive reaction, in fact most people smile."



THE
GARDA
CREST

"As a Garda you learn to handle situations and develop strong communication skills that assist you to find a resolution without having to use force, which is always considered to be a last resort. You will find we develop good relationships with the people we work with."

"In our work here as part of the UN mission in Cyprus, it is great to have the assistance from our local Mukhtars (community leaders), Cyprus police and UN military."

"The local knowledge we gain helps us to continue the Irish tradition of guarding the peace in the buffer zone."

Irish peacekeepers

An extract of an article written by Ms. Bronagh McCrystal first published in the Garda Review in March 2011

When thirty-five members of the An Garda Síochána boarded a UN plane on 14 April 1989 bound for Windhoek, the Namibian capital, they were united in facing the unknown. It was the inaugural overseas mission with the United Nations. The government had only recently passed the Garda Síochána Act (1989) which, for the first time, permitted members to serve with the UN civilian police component on overseas missions. A further 15 Gardai travelled out in August 1989.

Since its first overseas mission, An Garda Síochána has continued to play a major role in United Nations peacekeeping missions to Angola, Cambodia, Mozambique, South Africa, Bosnia, East Timor, Kosovo, the former Yugoslavia and Cyprus.

In Cyprus

The Irish presence in Cyprus can be traced back to 1994, and to date 334 Garda officers have served with the UN mission. Today, two sergeants and 10 Gardai form the 20th Irish Contingent. In total 1,001 members of the An Garda Síochána have, or are serving overseas, continuing the relationship between Ireland and the United Nations.

"The Garda Síochána will succeed not by force of arms or numbers, but on their moral authority as servants of the people."
Michael Staines, the first Commissioner of An Garda Síochána.

Ireland's Call

The two countries that make up the island of Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, come together on the pitch for the global cultural leveller, sport! More specifically, rugby. Players from the 26 counties in the Republic and six from Northern Ireland don green jerseys to form the Irish Rugby team. As the island unites for this team, a unique anthem written by the Derry-born composer Phil Coulter was created to reflect the special partnership between the countries. Sung before every game, the anthem is aptly named *Ireland's Call*.



COUNTRY PROFILE

Official country name: Éire

Area: 70,182 sq km

Population: 4.5 million

Capital city: Dublin

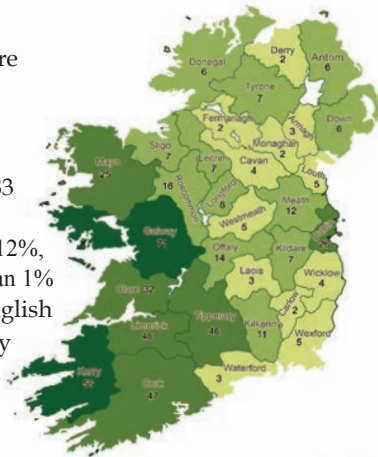
Life expectancy: Women, 83 years; men, 78 years

People: Irish 83%, European 12%, African 2%, Asian 2%, American 1%

Major languages: Irish, English

Major religion: Christianity

Currency: Euro



The world's most famous stout



Walk into any bar in Ireland and ask for a "pint of plain," or the "good stuff", "your best", or "Irish mother's milk," and what you will get is Ireland's most famous export, Guinness.

This famous stout is brewed in more than 50 countries and sold in more than 150, including Nigeria and Indonesia. In fact, 40% of Guinness is actually sold in Africa!

Pouring a glass or pint of Guinness is a skill. A "perfect pour" should take 119.5 seconds. This is the result of pour at an angle of 45 degrees followed by a rest, then pour again. What is handed across the bar should have a creamy head and should be served at exactly 42.8F.

A pint of Guinness only has 198 calories... less than most light beer. Liquid diet anyone?

Sir Walter Hugh, the Managing Director of Guinness Brewery in 1951, developed the Guinness Book of World Records. He had a question he wanted answered: what was Europe's fastest game bird?

In Memoriam

A former colleague of the Irish UN police officers in Cyprus, Detective Garda Adrian Donohoe, was fatally injured on 25 January this year in Co. Louth, Ireland. Adrian was 41 years of age and joined An Garda Síochána in 1994 with his wife

Caroline. The married father-of-two was killed while on escort duty at a local credit union. Garda Donohoe was the first Garda shot dead by criminals in 17 years. The Irish contingent of the UN police would like to thank their UN colleagues and friends in Cyprus for all their support.

Ar dheis láimh Dé go raibh a anam



Spotlight on Garda Joseph Ryan

Garda Joseph Ryan came with his wife Aisling to Cyprus in May 2012 to take up a one-year assignment with the UN police. Their son Cathal was born not long after in Nicosia in September 2012.

"It's been great to be here, but also quite difficult, especially for my wife as we don't have our families around. Our colleagues at the UN have really stepped up and provided the support that we need. But as tough as it's been, we're really happy to have come over and experience a new culture. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me," said Garda Ryan.

"I'm a traffic officer back home, so I find the driving here interesting, for want of a better word. But I love the food- especially the mezzes, and I really enjoy being 20 minutes away from both the mountains and the sea."

Garda Joe Ryan received a Scott medal in 2006 for foiling an armed bank robbery in which €8,500 was stolen and recovered.

The Scott Medal

First established in 1925, the Scott Medal for Bravery is the highest honour for bravery and valour awarded to a member of the Garda Síochána. The first medals were funded by Colonel Walter Scott, an Honorary Commissioner of the New York City Police, who took an interest in policing.

The medal is in the form of a Celtic cross. There are five panels on the face of the medal that depict the words "The Scott Medal", "For Valour", the eagle and the shield of the USA, the harp and sunburst and the Garda Crest. The icons on the medal are a mix of American and Irish symbols, placed together to denote the relationship between the two countries. The reverse of the medal carries the inscription, "Garda Síochána na h-Éireann". The four outside panels are the arms of the four provinces of Ireland - Ulster, Munster, Leinster and Connaught.



THE IRIS

IN CY



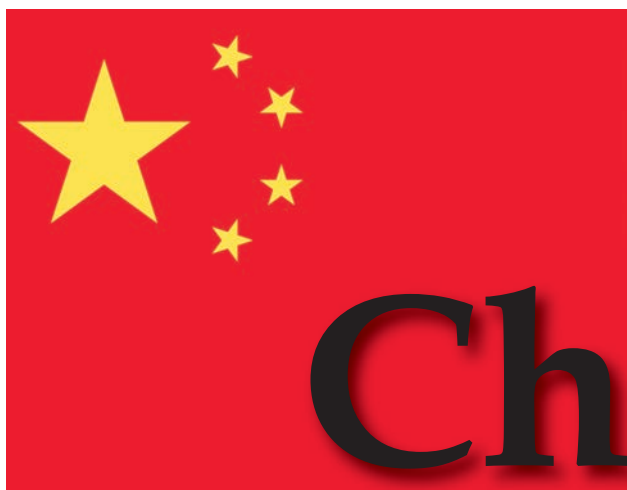
From top left: Garda Joe Ryan, Garda Pat McCann, Garda Damien Callina
Bottom left: Deputy Contingent Commander Sgt Stephen O'Sullivan,
Garda Michael Doyle, Contingent

SH TEAM

PRUS



linan, Garda David Farrell, DetGarda Senan Behan, DetGarda John Lynch.
van, DetGarda Tom Power, Garda Cheryl Kelly, Garda Sinéad O'Hara,
ngent Commander Sgt Ger Quinn.



CHINESE PEACEKEEPERS

China has consistently supported and actively participated in UN peacekeeping operations since 1990 when the People's Liberation Army (PLA) sent five military observers to the UN Truce Supervision Organization. As of December 2010, China had dispatched 17,390 military personnel to 19 UN missions. Nine officers and men have lost their lives on duty, according to a white paper issued by the Information Office of the State Council.

By 2010, the Chinese peacekeeping troops had built and repaired over 8,700 km of roads and 270 bridges, cleared over 8,900 mines and various explosive devices, transported over 600,000 tonnes of cargo across a total distance of 9.3 million km, and treated 79,000 patients.

As of December 2012, the PLA had 1,869 officers and men serving in nine UN mission areas. China currently has more deployed peacekeeping personnel than any other permanent member of the UN Security Council.

In Cyprus, three Chinese military officers have served since 2011. The military component of the mission is currently headed by Force Commander Major General Chao Liu, the second Chinese Force Commander to serve in a UN mission.

YEAR OF THE WATER SNAKE

The Chinese New Year, the Year of the Water Snake, was welcomed worldwide on 10 February with spectacular fireworks displays, none bigger than in Beijing, where people braved freezing temperatures to usher in the lunar New Year, bursting firecrackers to ward off evil spirits. The New Year is a very important day for Chinese. Families whose members are spread across the world reunite for this occasion. The BBC reported that an estimated 200 million people returned to China in what is believed to be one of the biggest planned human migrations.

Chinese mythology considers the snake a powerful creature. The Snake is associated with the element of fire and is therefore believed to generate positive feelings of light, warmth and comfort. However, like fire, it is also associated with the negative quality of burning when treated without respect. Snakes are also associated with karmic signs and Chinese astrology says that karmic problems are common among people born under this zodiac. Therefore, people must try and strike a balance between their emotions and actions to avoid problems with Karma!

CHINESE MILITARY IN CYPRUS



Major General Chao Liu



Captain Dongyang Yang



WO3 JingJing Chen



COUNTRY PROFILE

Full country name: People's Republic of China

Area: 9.6 million sq km

Population: 1.35 billion

Capital city: Beijing

Life expectancy: Women, 76 years; men, 72 years

People: Han Chinese 91.5%, Zhuang, Manchu, Hui, Miao, Uighur, Tujia, Yi, Mongol, Tibetan, Buyi, Dong, Yao, Korean, and other nationalities 8.5%

Major language: Mandarin

Major religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism

Currency: 1 Renminbi (yuan) (Y) = 10 jiao = 100 fen

Interview

Force Commander

Major General Chao Liu

Major General Chao Liu has served with UNFICYP since January 2011. He is the second Chinese Force Commander in the history of peacekeeping, and the first to head a multinational force. The Blue Beret speaks to the MajGen about the road he took to get here.

You started your career as a regular soldier and have made your way up the ranks to become a Major General. How does a young boy in China achieve that? I joined the army as a young soldier and I served four years then I managed to pass a test to get to the military academy-another four years. So it took me eight years to make lieutenant. In my day, the normal way to become an officer was to join as a private soldier, and after two years of service, hope that you had some good reports and enlist in military school. But since then, a new system was introduced and if you want to be an officer, you must pass a national test.

What was your life like as a young soldier in 1975? My father was a military officer so he encouraged me to join the army. If you didn't join the army, at this time, there was a danger that you would be sent to the countryside as this was during the last years of the Cultural Revolution. So I joined quite young, at the age of 16. My father was so happy that he spent one month's salary to buy me a watch. At that time, a watch was a real luxury and when the commanding officer of my company saw that I was wearing a watch, he was not happy. He told me once that: "in this company, there is only one watch, and it is worn by the commanding officer." So I wasn't allowed to wear it.

Most of the soldiers in my company were from poor families so they couldn't afford any watches. I remember that every month, we were paid one dollar. And following Chinese tradition I had to save half my salary, 50c, for my family.

You are only the second Chinese Force Commander in the world of peacekeeping. How significant is this? I am very grateful for this opportunity. The first Chinese general to be force commander was in Western Sahara, but I am the first commander of a multinational force. When I was a young officer, we were told that we would not participate in UN peacekeeping operations, but now China is one of the biggest contributors to peacekeeping. This was an overall policy change in the 90s- the 'open door' policy. I remember at this time an internal debate in China about the country in the world and other global issues. There were people who argued that peacekeeping operations were a good opportunity for the Chinese army to go abroad and see the outside world as well as a way to actively contribute to global peacekeeping efforts. So in 1990, the first Chinese observers were sent abroad. I was a beneficiary of this evolution in policy.

You did your MA at the London School of Economics. How did you end up in the UK? When I was in the military academy, we were told to study a foreign language, and we could choose between Russian, English and Japanese. At the beginning, I wanted to learn Japanese but on the day that I had to start learning Japanese, I walked into the wrong room and started to learn English. It was the wrong room, but ultimately the right choice. So, because I spoke English, I was selected to serve in Western Sahara. After this, I got the opportunity to apply for a scholarship and was successful and so ended up in London.

What was it like for you living and studying in London? I had a very enjoyable year in London. It was a very different experience.

Not just the life but the way of teaching. In China, everything was prescribed for you and taken care for you. But in the LSE, I had to choose my own courses and generally left to my own device, so it was a lot less structured.

I stayed in the school's residence, on Roseberry Avenue in central London. I still remember this well. I shared a kitchen with a Croatian girl, a Greek girl, a Japanese young man and a girl from Hong Kong. We all shared the cooking, and I was a particular favourite in the kitchen. While I was not the best cook, they all liked my simple Chinese food (laughing)!

We had a pub down the residence where they served cheap drinks. Outside, the drinks were £2 a pint, but at this pub, they always found a reason to celebrate and have a happy hour, so the drinks were 80 pence. I also enjoyed the regular 'pub walks' where you paid £3 and the guide would show us the various pubs and tell us the history of the pubs. As a cadet in the military academy, we were not allowed to go for a drink outside, so this was a very different experience for me.

I also liked very much to go to the theatre during the weekends. We would always go to Leicester square and try to get a cheap ticket. Once, I got a ticket £3 for the theatre, but my seat was right behind a big column so I really got what I paid for!

One of the reasons I applied for the scholarship was because I wanted to experience and enjoy a 'student life'. I applied for the scholarship at the age of 38, so I was not so young- in fact I was even older than some of my lecturers, but it was really worth it. And I really tried to live the student life. I made my own sandwiches- tuna was my favourite- and took tap water to class.

One of the things I remember was being shocked on my first day when I walked into class and saw the teacher enjoying a cup of coffee with his students. I could not imagine this happening in China. Then I realised this was going to be a very different way of living. So I tried to do the same.

How did your experience change you when you returned to China? There is certainly a difference between life in China and life in England, but the differences are no longer as big as they once were. Since the 80s there have been so many changes in China. I was in London in 1998 and back to China in 1999 and that was a big year for change in my country.

Will this be your last mission? Yes, this will probably be my last UN mission. I would like to retire after nearly 40 years of military service. I want to travel and enjoy my life. I am very happy to stay another year in Cyprus and also be a representative of the Chinese contribution to global peacekeeping.



Austria



THE AUSTRIAN CONTINGENT

An Austrian field hospital in Cyprus

Austria's first foray into international peacekeeping was in the UN mission in Congo from 1960-1963 where they deployed a much-needed medical contingent. The UN once more approached Austria in 1964 with a request to contribute to the new operation just underway in Cyprus. Drawing on their medical expertise, Austria responded by sending a field hospital with a staff of 54 to cater to the expanding UN forces. An advance party landed in Nicosia on 14 April and the Austrian field hospital was set up in Kokkinotrimithia, a former internment camp for political prisoners just west of the Nicosia airport. The remaining personnel and equipment arrived in Cyprus on 16 May. In 1973, the Austrian field hospital was reorganized as a smaller medical centre in the mission headquarters with a staff of 14. The centre continued to operate until 1976. For almost a decade, from 1964 to 1973, the hospital provided medical care for 65,000 patients.

The Austrian Police Contingent

Not long after the field hospital was up and running, Austria sent 31 police officers to support the mission. Deployed in and around the capital, the police officers worked with the local population and the Cypriot police, patrolling and monitoring checkpoints and escorting vehicle convoys through dangerous areas. Their duties also included looking for missing persons and assisting displaced persons. Between 1964 and 1977, Austrian police carried out a total of 10,000 investigations. To promote international exchange, Austrian police officers occasionally served with the Swedish and Australian contingents and vice versa. The size of the Austrian police contingent was increased to 45, with two or three officers assigned to mission headquarters in Nicosia. By the time the Austrian police contingent wrapped up its mission on 27 July 1977, a total of 276 Austrian police officers had served in Cyprus.

The Austrian Battalion

The Austrian Battalion had existed as a reserve unit since 1966 but had never been deployed. It was only in 1972, after Ireland reduced the size of its contingent from 400 to 100 troops, that an Austrian battalion was called for. The advance party reached Cyprus on 24 March and on 3 May 1972, the 238-man Austrian battalion assumed full responsibility for the Paphos district. At that time, one third of the population of Paphos was Turkish-speaking and the district was particularly vulnerable to crises.

After a reassignment of operational areas in Cyprus, the district of Paphos was handed over to the British contingent, while the Austrian battalion took over the district of Larnaca. Critical incidents in 1974 directly drew UN forces into the conflict. Austrian police officers and medical staff witnessed the fighting around Nicosia airport, while the battalion's camp in Larnaca came under fire in the fighting between Greek and Turkish Cypriots militias. Three Austrian peacekeepers were killed near Koshi on 14 August when a Turkish fighter jet, mistaking them for Greek Cypriots, attacked and destroyed their Land Rover with napalm bombs.

Later in 1977, in an exchange with the Swedish contingent, the Austrian battalion took over the district of Famagusta. In 1995, Hungarian peacekeepers joined the Austrians in Sector 4. Two years later, the Slovenian contingent was sent to form the United Nations Austrian Hungarian Slovenian Battalion (UNAHSB), where at least 245 Austrians, 114 Hungarians and 29 Slovenians served together. On 18 June 2001, the Austrian battalion was replaced by a Slovak one.

During the Austrian military's 37-year presence in Cyprus, 15,255 Austrian soldiers served with the mission, including 15 soldiers who lost their lives. Today, Austria continues to support UNFICYP with staff officers based in mission headquarters. There are currently four Austrian military personnel in Cyprus- two officers and two non-commissioned officers.

COUNTRY PROFILE



Full country name: Republic of Austria

Area: 83,871 sq km (32,383 sq miles)

Population: 8.4 million

Capital city: Vienna

Life expectancy: Women, 84 years;
men, 78 years

People: Austrians 91.1%, former Yugoslavs 4% (includes Croats, Slovenes, Serbs, and Bosniaks), Turks 1.6%, German 0.9%, other or unspecified 2.4% (2001 census)

Major language: German

Major religion: Christianity

Currency: Euro



Spotlight on LtCol Walter Absmann

LtCol Walter Absmann has been coming to Cyprus as part of the Austrian contingent for the past twenty years and has seen first hand the many changes this island has gone through. The Blue Beret speaks to him about his time in Cyprus and what it has meant for him.

You first came to Cyprus in 1994. What were your first impressions? The country was much more quiet, especially in the north, as the crossings had not opened yet. In 1994, I was based in Pyla and then in 1995 I was transferred to Louroujina, which was quite rural back then. The big change came in 2003 when they opened the crossings. It really boomed then. And then of course Cyprus was welcomed into the EU, and then development really started to take off.

What changes have you seen in the buffer zone since those early years? Back then, the buffer zone was not nearly as busy as it is now. We had the same problems with hunters and some farmers, but on a really small scale. This was one of the biggest changes I saw when I returned 10 years later. Especially the increase in civilian activities and the amount of people living and working in the buffer zone.

Why do you keep coming back to Cyprus? I like this island very much and it's close to Austria. In fact there is a long history of Austrian troops deployed in Cyprus. Also, during my third deployment, I met my wife, Bojana, at the monthly bandidos party organised by the Argentinians in UN flight. She was working for the UN mission and we got married here and our son was born here. So, Cyprus also became personally important for me. It was my first international mission, and will be my last.

This is LtCol Walter Absmann's fourth tour with UNFICYP. He was first deployed as a platoon leader in Pyla and Louroujina between 1994-1995, then as a motor transport officer in Famagusta in 1998 and a civil affairs military liaison officer (CAMLO) at mission headquarters from 2001-2004. He returned in March 2012 to his former CAMLO position. LtCol Absmann has also served in Western Sahara, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Nepal. He is married to Bojana and has a nine-year-old son, Alexander who was born in Nicosia. LtCol Absmann also has a 20-year old daughter, Julia, from a previous relationship.

WO I Gerhard Lintner works as a data base manager at the operations branch in mission headquarters, arranging bookings, preparing weekly reports, maintaining archives, reserving the Ops briefing and conference rooms and providing support to the COO, SO2 and SO P&P. WO I Lintner has been in the army for 33 years and has served in the Golan Heights and Cyprus. He is married to Gitti and has two children, Marco and Lisa.

WO I Friedrich Paulitsch is the assistant of the SO2 Personnel in mission headquarters. He is responsible for reports and returns, leave records, monthly returns, medal parades and other events, in addition to other duties. During his 30-year career, WO I Paulitsch has served in the Golan Heights, Bosnia, Kosovo and Cyprus. He is married to Christine and has two sons, Marco and Marcel.

LtCol Hannes Zarfl is the UN liaison officer for the National Guard. As the first point of contact between the mission headquarters and the National Guard headquarters, he has the responsibility to negotiate on any issue as tasked by the UN mission. LtCol Zarfl previously served in Bosnia Herzegovina before his tour of duty in Cyprus. He and his partner Manuela have one daughter, Lisa, and one son, Luka.



Meet the Austrians in Cyprus



Canada

CANADIAN PEACEKEEPERS IN CYPRUS

The bilateral-political relations between Canada and Cyprus stemmed initially from the Cypriot-Commonwealth membership at independence in 1960. These relations expanded on 15 March 1964, when Canada became part of the first peacekeeping contingent to the newly established United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. Twenty-nine young soldiers arrived in the capital of Nicosia to make arrangement for more than 1,000 troops that would soon be deployed in the capital. Over the next 29 years, Canada would become a major troop contributor to the mission,

with over 50,000 Canadian soldiers serving, including 28 soldiers who lost their lives serving UNFICYP. At midnight of 15 June 1993, Canadians soldiers conducted their last patrol. The next day, troops passed on their duties to British and Austrian peacekeepers and Canada formally withdrew its peacekeeping contingent. Since then, Canada has maintained a presence in the mission through staff officers.

Coat of Arms

The design of the arms of Canada reflects the royal symbols of Great Britain and France (the three royal lions of England, the royal lion of Scotland, the royal fleurs-de-lis of France and the royal harp of Tara).

On the bottom portion of the shield is a sprig of three Canadian maple leaves representative of Canadians of all origins. Throughout the 19th century, the maple leaf had gradually become closely identified with Canada and was worn as a symbol of Canada during the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1860.

During World War I, the maple leaf was incorporated into the badge of many Canadian regiments. It was most appropriate that three maple leaves were given a commanding position within the shield, which made it unmistakably "Canadian".



COUNTRY PROFILE

Full name: Canada
Area: 9.9 million sq km
Population: 34.3 million
Capital city: Ottawa
Life expectancy: Women, 83 years; men, 79 years
People: Roman Catholic 42.6%, Protestant 23.3%, other Christian 4.4%, Muslim 1.9%, other and unspecified 11.8%, none 16%
Major languages: English, French
Major religion: Christianity
Currency: Canadian dollar



Spotlight on Capt Mario Gendron

Captain Mario Gendron, born in Montreal, Quebec in 1963, joined the Canadian Armed forces in August 1981, has been with the ranks for 20 years before being commissioned to his present rank. He joined the OPS branch in the mission's headquarters in July 2011 and will remain in this position for a one-year deployment.

The OPS Information Section is responsible for monitoring the opposing forces in the north and south, and reports to SO2 Ops Info. Principally, Cpt Gendron focuses mostly on monitoring military activities in the north that could have an impact on the status quo, or present a threat to UNFICYP personnel. They also monitor terrorist and/or subversive organisations, whose activities could present a threat to, or affect UNFICYP operations, and are able to provide threat assessments. The ops info cell collate, analyze and disseminate information on a daily basis from significant events, current politics, media sources, and actual conduct. The Ops Info team is also able to assist with the training of sectors, including military skills competitions.

Did you know...

Canada's name comes from a misunderstanding between Jacques Cartier and some Iroquois youth who were pointing out a village (for which they used the word "Kanata"). They were actually trying to identify the small area which is present day Quebec City, but Cartier used the similar-sounding word "Canada" to refer to the whole area. Oops!

What ever happened to Sector 3?

The military presence in the buffer zone was originally spread over four sectors. However, Sector 3 ceased to exist when Canada withdrew from UNFICYP in 1993 and Sectors 2 and 4 took over the territory. But the names of the remaining sectors didn't change to reflect the change in territory. So today, the buffer zone is divided into Sectors 1, 2 and 4.

"Peacekeeping: a Canadian Trademark"

Excerpt from "The Canadian Contribution to United Nations Peacekeeping", by the UN in Canada

On the morning of November 4, 1956, at the United Nations General Assembly, a unique resolution was put forward calling for the setting up of an Emergency Force to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities in the Suez Canal area. It passed 57 to 0 with 19 abstentions. This was the first UN force to be established for peacekeeping purposes. Previous UN missions in the Middle East and Kashmir had consisted of military observers. Though not yet fully developed, the idea of sending UN peacekeepers was destined to earn the respect and admiration of all the peace-loving peoples of the world. If the United Nations can be said to have given birth to peacekeeping, then Canadians should take special pride in the knowledge that the resolution was the brainchild of the then Canadian Minister for External Affairs, Lester B. Pearson. War had broken out between Egypt and Israel in late October 1956. Britain and France sent forces to the region, feeling their interests were threatened by Egyptian president Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal. The international community suddenly found itself ensnared in a complex and intractable situation. The deadlock threatened to expand and involve neighboring states, and the specter of nuclear escalation had become a possibility. The war was becoming intense, and Cairo and other parts of Egypt were under bombardment. As casualties mounted steadily, all sides

desperately sought some face-saving means of ending the killing. In the early morning hours after an emergency meeting of the UN General Assembly, Mr. Pearson proposed his idea of a UN peacekeeping force. He envisioned a multi-national force to separate the combatants, lower tensions, and ultimately mediate negotiations in order to bring lasting peace to the area. "Peace," he said in his address to the General Assembly of the UN, "is far more than ceasing to fire, although it certainly must include that essential factor..." After outlining his vision for a UN peacekeeping force, he added, "My own Government would be glad to recommend Canadian participation in such a United Nations force, a truly international peace and police force..." Within hours of the adoption of Pearson's resolution, the nucleus of the first UN emergency force was formed with a Canadian, Major General Burns, as commander. For the first time ever, a military force was dispatched — not to impose a settlement — but rather to facilitate it. On November 6, then UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld was able to announce to the world that a cease-fire had been achieved. The following day, Egypt formally agreed to let the UN force enter, and on Thursday, November 15, 1956, at 9:35 A.M. local time, the first-ever UN peacekeeping troops arrived in Egypt.

UN POLICE REACH OUT TO STUDENTS



UNPOL Officer Sinéad O'Hara and Dhenia Team Leader Vito Agliano handing out prizes to students of the Mammari Elementary School.



Stopping illegal hunting, high-speed car chases, uncovering smuggling rings: the work of a UN police officer in the buffer zone can sometimes resemble an action movie. More often than not though, the day-to-day work of an UNPOL officer involves meeting and establishing relationships with local businesses, schools, law enforcement and other community organisations. Outreach forms an important part of the community policing work of UN police officers.

In December 2012, UN Police undertook a new outreach initiative in the buffer zone focusing on local schools. This initiative gave a chance for the officers to meet the students as well as explain the work of the UN police. Sector One UNPOL Officer Sinéad O'Hara, together with Dhenia Team Leader Vito Agliano and Deputy Commander Ger Quinn, attended the Mammari Elementary School to give a special premiere of the *Policing the Buffer Zone* video showcasing the work of UN police.

The school was selected as it is in the civil use area of Mammari where part of the video was filmed. With the assistance of School Principal Elena Prikious and teachers Angelos Tsapalas, Elena Phouou and Spiroulla Chrisostomou, the officers showed the video and engaged in some light-hearted but informative games for the kids.

Fifty, bright and eagle-eyed students were challenged to identify the various flags on the officer's uniforms and quizzed as to the length of the buffer zone and other such questions. Seven students were able to correctly answer the buffer zone length (180km).

"The promise of a prize for the correct answer prompted great excitement and much chatter in the class," said UNPOL Officer O'Hara. "After the quiz, the students got to ask us questions, such as who pays our UN wages and how is the Secretary-General elected. I was pleasantly surprised by the questions and how informed they seemed to be."

This initiative will eventually roll out to schools throughout the buffer zone. In the immediate future, four more school visits are planned within the Dhenia station area. "Our visit was very positively received by both the children and teaching staff," said Deputy Commander Ger Quinn. "They have even asked us to return and discuss other topics with the children."

A draw was made for the prizes and as the bell rang the children spilled out of the classroom, back to their own lives and into the buffer zone.

The "*Policing the Buffer Zone*" video is available to watch on the UNFICYP website.



JOINT EFFORT CLEANS UP ILLEGAL DUMPS

Locals from the village of Katokopia joined forces with UN police and engineers to clean up illegal dumping sites in the buffer zone on 10 January. After seven hours of hard work, three dumping sites had been cleared and the rubbish transported by UN trucks to the official dumping site near Kotsiatis village. “We know through our regular contact with community members that illegal dumping is a sensitive problem in the buffer zone,” said UN police officer Viktor Drobotenko. “We are really glad that we could work with the local community to resolve this issue.”

This event was initiated and organized by UN police in Sector 1 of the buffer zone as a result of the continuous effort to identify and resolve problems related to illegal activities and build an atmosphere of trust and cooperation with local community members and authorities.



JOINT OPERATIONS CENTRE

The 180km stretch of often rugged terrain running across the island of Cyprus is a formidable area to monitor. It requires a sophisticated and centralized centre to filter information and coordinate activities. For the UN mission in Cyprus, this important role is played by the Joint Operations Centre, commonly known as the JOC.

Located at mission headquarters in the UN protected area, the JOC is manned 24-hour a day with staff responsible for gathering, analysing and reporting on the constant flow of information coming in from the three sectors of the buffer zone. It is responsible for ensuring full situational awareness through timely, reliable, and accurate monitoring and reporting.

In the event of a crisis, it is the JOC that will start and coordinate the process to manage the crisis. It supports the

mission crisis management team in decision-making through effective and uninterrupted crisis communications and information management, and as a centralized location for crisis decision-making and reporting, keeping UN HQ updated as directed.

The JOC is manned by a multinational team from all the sectors. These include two permanent staff positions, a duty officer and a duty radio operator, using a rotating shift system. There are currently four duty officers (two Argentines, one Hungarian and one Slovak) as well as five duty radio operators (four British and one Hungarian) from the Mobile Force Reserve. It is often said that the JOC is awake when everybody is asleep, for it represents the mission especially during silent hours and holidays.



Maj Hernán Paolantonio Duty Officer

My name is Hernán Paolantonio and I am a Major in the Argentine Marine Corps. I came to UNFICYP in April 2012 to serve as a duty officer in the Joint Operations Centre (JOC) headquarters. Our function is to man the JOC twenty-four hours a day in order to analyze every report sent in by sectors and all other information that comes to us.

From this analysis we provide the SO2 Ops and the COO the means and instruments for producing their own information for the Force Commander and mission senior management. We have to maintain situational awareness through our monitoring and reporting, ensuring that all the information is checked, corroborated, collated and reported to the people who have to deal with it.

It's a very challenging job, which requires the utmost from us. We also have to brief the Force Commander and his staff on a daily basis as well as prepare the daily reports for the UN headquarters in New York. We work in a diverse team, with different nationalities and different skills set, yet we successfully work together to achieve our common goal. I am very fortunate that my wife Stella and daughter Victoria joined me in Cyprus for my one-year tour of duty.

M^y name is

Pamela Luney and I have been in the British army for over two and half years.

I arrived in Cyprus September last year and was deployed on Op Tosca with 101 Bt REME for six months to work in HQ JOC as a radio operator. Our primary purpose is to initiate and control the response to serious incidents occurring in the buffer zone. This could be anything from vehicle accidents, casualty evacuations and any exercises that may be carried out. To do this we use radio and landline communications for a quick response to any situation. Working with the UN has given me the opportunity to work with other regiments and different nationalities and this has been by far the most rewarding experience for me.

Pte Pamela Luney
Duty Radio Operator



SSgt Aniko Petro
Duty Radio Operator



M^y name is

SSgt Aniko Petro. I am a signaller and I come from Pápa Airbase, Hungary. I have been in the army for over eight years and this is my second deployment to UNFICYP. I started this mission in March 2012 as a duty radio operator. We have specific operational duties including controlling and monitoring the HQ JOC NET and maintaining a current activity map of what is happening in all sectors of the buffer zone. Our task is to maintain radio communications across the buffer zone, maintain the highest standard of voice procedure and net discipline and monitor the emergency telephone for the reporting of fires. The duty radio operator position is manned using a shift system with one person on duty at any given time on 12-hour shifts. The British Contingent provides four personnel to the JOC Signals Detachment, which are on a six-month rotational cycle. The Hungarian Contingent provides one staff as a duty radio operator on a 12-month rotational cycle.

M^y name is Sgt Laitia

Wara and I am a member of the British Armed Forces, based in Bielefeld, Germany. I have served with the army for 13 years and am a communication specialist by trade. This is my first deployment to UNFICYP and I started here as the senior duty radio operator in September last year. Four duty radio officers are under my command and my main role is to oversee and manage the running of the Joint Operation Centre. I am the linkman to the SO2 Ops for any circumstances in regards to communication. I have conducted communications training with other radio operators from the different sectors and liaised with the force signal officer on behalf of the sectors. I have also arranged courses for the British contingent on the island to support them in their military careers. My time with the JOC has been very challenging. For the most part, it is a relaxed environment, but it can become tense very quickly when there is an incident.

Sgt Laitia Wara
Senior Duty Radio Operator



MILITARY CHEFS CATER FOR ALL TASTES

By Captain Adam Harrison



British brandy oatmeal biscuit with a brandy sauce

Chefs from all three sectors recently gathered in the UNPA to take part in an improvised cooking competition, *Exercise Unified Caterer*. Each team was provided firewood, a metal bin, a sheet of metal, a box of rations and a selection of

Cypriot-themed fresh food. The challenge was to create a three-course meal for 10 people in under four hours using the selected items.

Each sector put a national slant on the food that they prepared, whether it was a sweetcorn empanada, a spicy Slovakian stew or a brandy oatmeal biscuit with a brandy sauce. The meals were plated and brought to the judging tent for Force Commander Major General Chao Liu to taste. To ensure the judging was fair, the Force Commander was not told who had made each dish, although some were easy to guess.

In the end it was a closely fought battle with Sector 1 beating Sector 4 to the post by a single point with Sector 2 only a single point behind Sector 4. The rest of the food was gratefully eaten by the individuals taking part in the pistol shooting competition and not a single course went to waste!



Argentine sweetcorn empanadas.



Slovak pancake topped with chocolate and a fruit brandy side



SHOOTING COMPETITION

The military and police men and women of UNFICYP competed in late January in a shooting competition.

Held over two days, the first competition featured teams from the three sectors, UN police and mission headquarters. The sharp-eyed officers from the UN police held out to win the competition. The second competition was amongst the senior officers with Force Signal Commander LtCol Lucas Quiroga taking the top spot.

RUGBY WIN FOR SECTOR 2



The military training cell organised a seven-a-side rugby tournament on the BRS Rugby Pitch at the end of January. Soldiers from UN Flight, Mobile Fore Reserve, mission headquarters, Sector 1 and Sector 2 played in four teams. After a round robin group stage a third/fourth place play off was contested between the Sector 2 B team and HQ BRITCON; Sector 2 B won after a close match. The final was played between the Mobile Force Reserve and the Sector 2 A team. Sector 2 A put in a very strong performance to lift the UNFICYP 7's trophy which was presented by the Chief of Staff, Colonel Angus Loudon. Anyone interested in playing rugby should contact unficyp.unicorns@gmail.com.

Note: A round robin is a tournament in which each contestant is matched in turn against every other contestant.



NEW FACES

CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

LtCol Eduardo Federico Wendeburg



LtCol Eduardo Federico Wendeburg was appointed Chief Operations Officer to UNFICYP on 6 February 2013 following his appointment as Adviser of the Army's Personnel Director in Buenos Aires, Argentina since Jan 2012. Immediately preceding this appointment, he was 2OIC of the Engineers Battalion in Santa Fe, Argentina between 2009 and 2011. LtCol Wendeburg joined the army in 1987 and was commissioned as Engineer 2nd Lieutenant in 1990. He was posted to the 121st Engineers Amphibious Battalion in Santa Fe as Platoon commander. Since then, he has served in the NCO School, Engineers School and Engineers Company CO in the NCO School again. This is his second tour of duty in Cyprus; in 2008 he was stationed in Sector 1 as Operations Officer. He has also served in UNIKOM Iran-Kuwait (2000) as Operations Officer.

Throughout his military career he has pursued a number of courses: Junior Command/Staff College (Captain Level) in the Argentinean Army Engineers School, Command/Staff College (Major Level) in the Army War College and Joint Staff Officer. He holds a degree in Strategy and Organization, Staff Officer of Joint Staff of Argentine Military Forces. He also graduated from the Catholic University of Buenos Aires in International Rights in Humanitarian Assistance. Lieutenant Col Wendeburg is married to Claudia and has two children, Francisco and Guillermo.

OPERATIONS INFORMATION OFFICER

Maj Mark Hughes

Major Mark Hughes joined the Royal Marines in 1990 and spent the next 10 years in the 3rd Commando Brigade which involved extensive time in the jungles, deserts, seas and mountains of the world. He left the Royal Marines in 2008 and joined the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, a light infantry battalion. He has served on operations in Northern Ireland, Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan and this is his first UN mission but his second time in Cyprus having previously been based in Dhekelia. He joins UNFICYP from a tour in Afghanistan training the Afghan National Army's infantry. He is accompanied to Cyprus by Rachel his wife and his daughter Angharad and son Geraint.



OFFICER IN COMMAND, UN FLIGHT

LtCol Alejandro Jose Tumino



LtCol Alejandro José Tumino arrived in UNFICYP on 28 December 2012 and took over the post of OIC/CO UNFLIGHT. LtCol Tumino graduated from the Argentinean Air Force Academy in 1990 and received his "Military (Fix) Wins" in 1992. He was appointed to the VII Air Brigade in 1993 and became a helicopter pilot in 1995. In 1999, he graduated with a BA in Human Resources from the University of Salvador. During his career he has served in a number of appointments: VII Air Brigade as a helicopter's inflight instructor/HUGHES 500D Squadron Leader, Air War High School (Argentinean Air Force) as a student, Air War High School as a teacher, Marambio Antarctic Air Base (Antarctica) as a Bell 212's Squadron Leader, Presidential Air Group as a Argentinean head of state pilot and AAF representative in the Combined Force (Argentina-Chile) "Cruz del Sur" (Southern Cross). He has flown helicopters such as the Hughes 500, Bell UH-1H, Bell 212 IFR, Bell UH-1 N IAF reaching 2,800 flown hours in Argentina, Antarctica, Cyprus and Haiti. He has had several "six months" tours of duty in UNFICYP: the first AAF tour of duty in Cyprus in 1996 as Lieutenant, plus that in 2001, 2003, 2004. Also, he served in MINUSTAH in the Argentinean Aviation Unit as a 2IC/Bell 212's Squadron Leader (2007/2008). He has been married for twenty years with Andrea and they have one boy, Luciano (14).



CIVIL AFFAIRS OFFICER

Harada Munehiko (原田宗彦)

Munehiko joined UNFICYP in February following his assignments as Political Affairs Officer in both Sudan and South Sudan. He started his UN career in 1999 in Geneva as a junior professional officer contributed by the Government of Japan, and has since worked mainly in the field of political affairs in Timor-Leste, Kosovo and New York. Since he has been away from Japan for so many years, including his time as a post-graduate student in France, Britain and Switzerland, he was recently told by his old friend in Tokyo that he was now a "floater". Coincidentally, an old gentleman there reminded him about the Japanese concept of transience, 一期一会 (ichi-go ichi-e) which literally means 'one time, one meeting'. Meeting a person is one chance in a lifetime. This is the spirit of the Japanese tea ceremony in which a host serves one's guest with the utmost sincerity, honesty and respect because there will never again be a chance like this again. Munehiko was made to realise the depth of this much-heard Japanese proverb and that this applies to our daily lives. At the United Nations, we may have a chance to meet again, but he, with this spirit in mind, looks forward to working with UNFICYP staff as well as various interlocutors in Cyprus.

FORCE SIGNAL OFFICER

Lt Cdr Sebastián Andrés Marcó

Lt Cdr SEBASTIÁN ANDRÉS MARCÓ took over the post of Force Signal Officer on February 11th 2013, this being his first UN assignment. Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1970, he graduated from the Naval Academy as a Midshipman in 1993. He received his specialty in Communications in 1996 and in 1997 conducted the training course in submarines. As a submariner he was assigned in different units as "Navigation Officer, "Communications Officer" and "Operations Officer, taking part in many national and international exercises. He spent a year with his family in Peru, during an exchange between submariners officers. He served also for two years as Chief of the "Naval Communications Center" in Mar del Plata, and also two years in the Naval Academy as "Admittance Officer". In 2009 he graduated from the Naval War College as "Command and Staff Officer" and throughout 2010 he was the Command Officer of an auxiliary ship. When arriving in Cyprus, he had been two years as deputy commander (XO's) of a submarine unit. Lieutenant Commander Marcó has a degree in "Naval Systems" and is currently finishing his studies in physics at the University. He plays soccer and tennis and his hobby is to watch the Argentine football team win. Living in Cyprus during his tour with his wife, Maria de Luján and his two children, Baltazar (8) and Julieta (7) he says he has intentions to know every corner of this beautiful island.



DEPUTY SENIOR POLICE ADVISER

Col of police Andrii G. Sachavo



Col Sachavo is the new Deputy Senior Police Adviser to the UN mission in Cyprus. This is the second deployment to Cyprus for Colonel Sachavo, having first served between 2009-2012 with the UN police. During this earlier deployment, Col Sachavo was working with Civil Affairs as a CAPLO and was promoted to the position of Acting Chief Civil Affairs Officer. Col Sachavo has been with the national police in the Ukraine for 20 years, starting his career as a police officer and later promoted to a police trainer, a chief of department and the chief of special peacekeeping centre for the Ministry of Internal Affairs. After finishing his first tour in Cyprus, Col Sachavo returned to the Ukraine where he worked with the International Relations Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine as a senior liaison officer working closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, foreign embassies, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, INTERPOL and other international law enforcement agencies. He also liaised with representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs at overseas Ukrainian diplomatic missions to establish protocols allowing for the efficient interaction and exchange of information on law enforcement matters. He is fluent in Russian and English in addition to his native Ukrainian. Col Sachavo holds a PhD and MA in Law and a MA in Pedagogy.



Coming in the next issue of the Blue Beret
**Focus on blue helmets from Chile, Paraguay and
Brazil and UN police from Ukraine**

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