

BLUE BERET

The Magazine of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

September/October 2014



UNFICYP Five Decades of Women in Peacekeeping



Feature:
New Force
Commander
Hits the Ground
Running //////////////



Plus: It's a Balkans
Issue! Montenegro,
Serbia, Croatia,
Slovenia & Bosnia
Herzegovina on our
minds + UN Day /////



BLUE BERET

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Front cover: Women in peacekeeping - it's not just a numbers game. Female personnel across all components have made crucial contributions to the UN's work in Cyprus over the decades. In 2014, UNFICYP became the first peacekeeping mission to have a female force commander and leads the way with a quarter of its police force made up of women officers.

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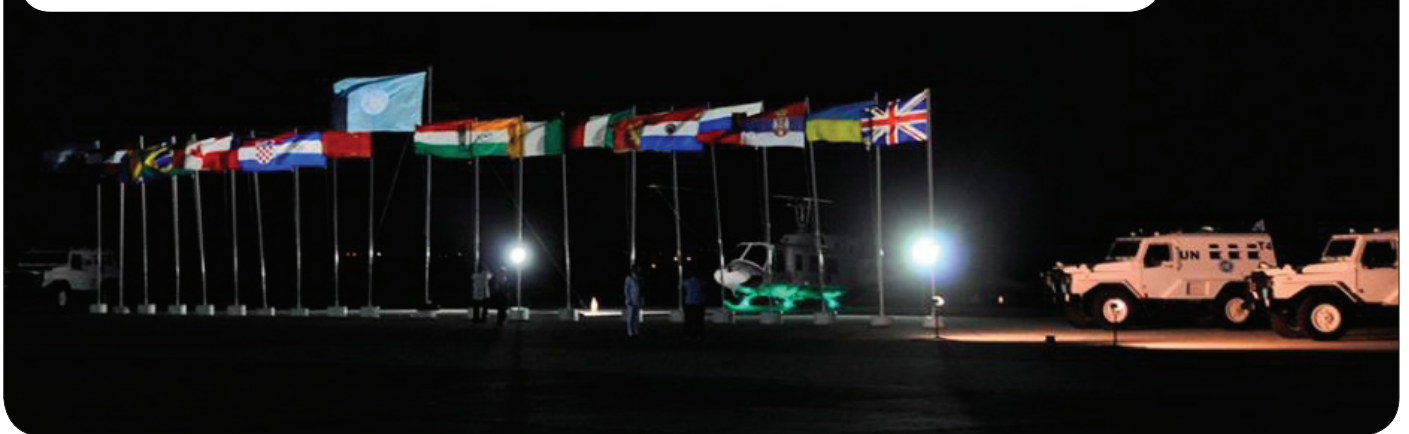
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READER CONTRIBUTIONS



Thank you to 1st Lt Agustin Barbosa, Chief of PB3 in Sector 1 who sent in this great photo of his "second home" for six months. 1st Lt Barbosa sent a special thanks to his soldiers, shown here from left to right Pte Rodriguez, Mcpl Tuama, Mcpl Monzón, Mcpl Sueldo, Sgt Benitez, SSgt Escudero, WOIII Meneses (and 1st Lt Barbosa himself!).

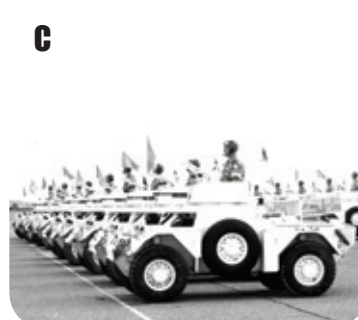
Thank you to Goran Ivanic for this amazing night shot, post medal parade out on the old Nicosia Airport tarmac. Those tacticas look good by night!



KNOW YOUR TACTICA FROM YOUR FERRET SCOUT QUIZ ANSWERS REVEALED

Did you guess right?

- A** APC - Mike 113
- B** Gazelle - French made helicopter
- C** Ferret Scout car
- D** Hughes 500
- E** Tactica



UNFICYP at Fifty

In Pictures



The new millennium brought significant change to UNFICYP's role in Cyprus. Among the new faces on the island were the Slovaks, who took over command in Sector 4 from the Austrian Contingent. On the edges of the buffer zone, crossings began to open in 2003 and the number of police serving with the mission was raised in response to the new operational requirements that this created. At the same time, UNFICYP began to do more with less, as troop numbers were reduced and a new approach to maintaining the status quo in the buffer zone saw more patrolling and the closing down of observation posts. All the while, the political efforts continued to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem, culminating in the 2004 referenda on the 'Annan Plan'

Crossings The 2000s

4 December 2001

Special Adviser Alvaro de Soto hosts the Greek Cypriot leader Glafcos Clerides, and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash at the Chief of Mission's residence in the UN Protected Area. The two leaders agree to resume face-to-face talks on the Cyprus problem.



2002

Secretary-General Kofi Annan presents a comprehensive peace plan for Cyprus.

23 April 2003

After nearly thirty years, the first crossing points are opened. Some 2 million people cross without incident before the end of the year.

2004

The UN begins a significant project to clear mines from the buffer zone. By 2010, over 25,000 mines have been cleared and destroyed.

24 April 2004

Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots vote in separate referenda on 'The Comprehensive Settlement of the Cyprus Problem', referred to as the 'Annan Plan', after then Secretary-General Kofi Annan. 64% of Turkish Cypriots vote in favour of the plan and 75% of Greek Cypriots vote against it, defeating the proposal.

1 January 2005

UNFICYP's new 'Force 860' concept of operations goes into effect, reducing the number of military troops from 1,300 to 860. UN Police serving with UNFICYP go from 45 to 69.





The 2000s Continued....

8 July 2006

Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambari brokers an agreement between the leaders of the two communities.

20 July 2006

UNFICYP peacekeepers assist non-essential UN staff based in Lebanon to evacuate to Cyprus.

3 April 2008

The crossing point at Ledra Street opens.

23 May 2008

In a joint statement, Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat reconfirm "their commitment to a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation with political equality, as defined by the relevant Security Council resolutions".

1 July 2008

In a joint statement, the two leaders announce that they "discussed the issues of single sovereignty and citizenship which they agreed in principle".

17 July 2008

Alexander Downer is appointed Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus.

8 September 2008

Full-fledged negotiations begin between the two leaders.



SERBIA



A Brief History

Since 2002, Serbian military and police personnel have been deployed to eight UN-led operations. Serbian contributions have been relatively modest, though increasingly ambitious over time. The two largest Serbian contingents are a 143-strong contingent in UNIFIL in Lebanon, consisting of several staff officers and an infantry company (with an additional platoon for security purposes to be deployed imminently), and a 48-strong deployment to UNFICYP, including an infantry platoon, observers and a staff officer. Individuals from the Serbian Armed Forces (SAF)

have also participated in EUNAVFOR Somalia and EUTM Somalia since 2012. Since 2008, the Ministry of Interior has also contributed one policeman on a rolling basis to the OSCE mission in Kyrgyzstan (where 5 have served to date). Serbian peacekeepers have not yet been able to deploy in an independent capacity at battalion level, but have been attached to or integrated within other national contingents - such as the Hungarian-Slovak contingent in UNFICYP and the Spanish contingent in UNIFIL.



SERBIA FACTS

DEPLOYMENT DATE: September 2010

LOCATION: Sector 4

CONTRIBUTION: 188 Military, 6 UNPOL

From the Blue Beret Oct/Nov 2010

The military pillar of UNFICYP welcomed the seven-member Serbian contingent to its fold on 21 October. The Republic of Serbia, as independent state, for first time in its history is contributing a professional military unit to peacekeeping mission in Cyprus. The Serbian contingent commander Major Zoran Nestorovic, took up the position of Force Engineer Assistant at UNFICYP HQ in Nicosia. The remaining six Serbian soldiers will be attached to the Hungarian Platoon in Sector 4, located in Saint Istvan camp in Athienou where they will be assigned patrolling duties. Commenting on his assignment to UNFICYP, Major Zoran Nestorović said it is an honour and privilege to have this opportunity to participate in the peacekeeping mission as military unit. To date the Serbian Armed Forces have participated in international missions of the UN only with military observers on an individual basis and medical teams in Africa (MONUSCO, UNMIL, UNOCI, MINURCAT). Overall Serbia contributes to UN missions with 36 military and civilian personnel.



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

A Brief History

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) started contributing to UN peacekeeping missions in April 2000 with 12 military experts. Since then, BiH has gradually increased its contribution to 52 military experts and police officers (May 2014). Currently Bosnia and Herzegovina contributes to three UN missions in Africa and Europe (UNFICYP, UNMIL and UNMISS)



BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

DEPLOYMENT DATE: 31 August 2005
LOCATION: HQ Nicosia / UNFICYP AOR
CONTRIBUTION: 53 UNPOL

From the Blue Beret September 2005

On the morning of 31 August, the Bosnian and Italian flags were raised at Headquarters UNFICYP, representing the latest contingents to join UNFICYP's civilian police element. UNPOL. Chief of Mission Zbigniew Wlosowicz and Senior Police Adviser Carla van Maris first greeted the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina, H.E. Nedeljko Maslesa, who is resident in Tel Aviv, but who flew over to UNFICYP especially for the occasion. The Italian Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Pierluigi Trombetta, was also welcomed to the Headquarters, as was Father Umberto Barato, the Papal representative of the Roman Catholic Church based in Nicosia. The event began with the two diplomats inspecting a multi-national honour guard. The two flags were then raised to stand proudly alongside the other contingent flags at HQ UNFICYP. A small reception was held in the PIO Conference Room, where, addressing the gathering, SPA van Maris welcomed the Bosnian and Italian police to the UNFICYP family. The number of contingents in UNPOL now stands at eight.

CROATIA

A Brief History



Croatian Military

In September 2004, 2 Croatian staff officers incorporated in the Slovak-Hungarian contingent were deployed to the UNFICYP.

Croatian Police

The number of police contingents serving in the mission grew to five with the arrival of two Croatian police officers on 14 April 2005. Ch. Insp. Mladen Vrtaric joined HQ UNFICYP as UN Liaison Officer, Police (UNLOP) based in Operations Branch at UNFICYP HQ. His colleague, Sen. Insp. Nenad Tuskanac, joined UNCIVPOL's Dherynia team. A flag-raising ceremony, arranged to inaugurate their arrival, was attended by Chief of Mission Zbigniew Wlosowicz, Senior Police Adviser Carla Van Maris, and Deputy Commander UNCIVPOL Cmdr. Trevor Clarke.

CROATIA FACTS

DEPLOYMENT DATE:

September 2005

LOCATION: HQ Nicosia

/ UNFICYP AOR / Sector 4

CONTRIBUTION: 28 Military,
32 UNPOL

Farewell to the Croatian Contingent

UNFICYP has just farewelled its Croatian contingent - the Military representatives departed the Mission in September, and the last police officer completed her deployment on 7 November 2014. Lidija Masic-Stimac, pictured centre holding the folded Croatian flag, was joined by Mladen Vrtaric, standing to her right, who had the honour of raising his national flag in 2005 to mark the beginning of the Croatian police deployment. UNFICYP Senior Police Adviser Andrii Sachavo, left, was on hand to wish the Croatian contingent farewell.



SLOVENIA

A Brief History



Slovenia has consistently provided a small number of uniformed peacekeepers, beginning in November 1997, when it deployed troops to UNFICYP in Cyprus. In practice, the vast majority of troops deployed are engaged in NATO-led operations (mainly with KFOR in Kosovo and, until 2014, also in ISAF in Afghanistan). Only a small percentage has been deployed in EU- and UN-led operations. Slovenian participation in civilian (police) missions is mostly carried out through EU-led operations. Slovenia follows a policy of prioritizing contributions to missions in southeast Europe and the Balkans, with the largest contingents so far deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and in Kosovo. Since 1997, Slovenia has contributed uniformed personnel to the following UN missions: UNMIK in Kosovo (2), UNSMIS in Syria (1), UNFICYP in Cyprus (194), UNTSO in the West Bank (51), and UNIFIL in Lebanon (220).³ The last two, UNTSO and UNIFIL, are currently the only operations with Slovenian troops. Slovenian police, meanwhile, have participated in UN peace operations since 2000 (UNMISSET, UNMIK).



SLOVENIA FACTS

DEPLOYMENT DATE:

1997 - 2001

LOCATION:

HQ Nicosia

/ UNFICYP AOR/ Sector 4

CONTRIBUTION:

Almost 200 Military

MONTENEGRO

A Brief History



Montenegro participates in peace operations under the NATO and UN auspices as military troops and observers. Montenegro sent 31 troops and medical personnel to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan and also participates in UN peacekeeping missions in Liberia, UNMIL, Cyprus, UNFICYP as military observers and Somalia, EU-NAVFOR.

The first ever Montenegrin officer, Senior Commissioner Valentin Danaj from Rozhaje in the north of Montenegro joined the ranks of UNPOL in August 2009.



MONTENEGRO FACTS

DEPLOYMENT DATE:

2009 - present

LOCATION:

HQ Nicosia

/ UNFICYP AOR

CONTRIBUTION: 18 UNPOL



NEW FORCE COMMANDER HITS THE GROUND RUNNING

We sit down with UNFICYP Force Commander Major General Kristin Lund to take in her first impressions and thoughts on her posting here in Cyprus.

First impressions of the Mission?

UNFICYP is an excellent example of a multinational peacekeeping effort. I have been so impressed by the troops, really pleased with their professionalism, their commitment and their team spirit. We have twelve different nationalities in the Military Component, working across 3 distinct sectors. The cooperation and collaboration is great to see. In particular, I find it very revealing that we have British and Argentinean soldiers working side by side, that we have representatives from all across the Balkans. It shows that past conflicts can and do heal. It says a lot that those from countries that welcomed peacekeepers in the past, are now exporting peacekeeping support to other places.



Comparisons between UNFICYP and your previous postings?

I have been lucky to have a varied career, from working back home in Norway to overseas service in the Middle East, the Balkans, and Afghanistan. No two postings are the same, but I know that the experiences I have had will be very applicable here in Cyprus. The situation militarily is calm and stable, as the Secretary-General notes regularly in his reports on Cyprus to the Security Council. Yet the work we do to observe and record military violations and incidents, and to liaise with the opposing forces, is crucial to maintaining this stability. And maintaining this stability is the core of our military mandate to create a conducive environment for a political solution. To answer the question, Cyprus is a unique environment, and of course like any military commander, I will draw on my previous experiences to guide the approach we take here.





Goals and priorities for this Cyprus tour

I see many opportunities for building confidence at the military level. In particular, I would like to see UNFICYP continue to build its relations with the opposing forces, and this is something I am personally working towards. Inside the mission, I have a passion for training, and I see many opportunities for UNFICYP to evolve its excellent peacekeeping standards to a new level. I am very keen on integration and on inter-mission cooperation and look forward to expanding UNFICYP's networks with other UN peacekeeping colleagues in the region.

On being the first woman to command a UN peacekeeping force

I am pleased and proud to be the first female force commander. I am also aware that this appointment makes me very visible, and gives me a responsibility as a role model for other women and girls who aspire to take up leadership positions, as uniformed personnel or in any other field. It is a real honour to be considered a role model and I have already had some opportunities to speak to different audiences about gender and peacekeeping. UNFICYP is best practice on this front. We now have 50/50 gender parity at the Senior Management level, and a quarter of our UN Police are female. There is a real impact here on the ground of having women personnel across all our components - we can reach all of the population, and change the public perception of the peacekeeping force. It's an exciting time to be a woman in UN peacekeeping - more than anything else, I look forward to getting down to business on the job I have here in Cyprus as Force Commander.



First impressions of Cyprus?

What a beautiful island! Delicious food, lovely people. I have always enjoyed the outdoors. Cyprus presents so many great opportunities and options under amazing blue skies. I have already started regular tennis sessions, and been as much as possible to the seaside of course. The icing on the cake will be to explore the very enticing roadways and mountains by motorbike - if I can ever find the leisure time, that is. I have been working non-stop since I arrived on the island, which is perfect, as I also like to work and there are so many things I want to achieve here.



UN FUN DAY

The pictures tell the whole story for UNFICYP's big day out for team-building and mission morale on the football pitch. It was a great day for shows of strength and skill, fabulous fundraising efforts for breast cancer, and the rich cultural traditions of UNFICYP's multinational force. Well done to the organizers for putting on a truly fun UN Fun Day.





UNITED NATIONS DAY

UNFICYP Head of Mission Lisa Buttenheim and Force Commander Major General Kristin Lund hosted friends, colleagues and partners for UN Day 2014 at Ledra Palace Hotel, marking 69 years since the entry into force of the UN Charter on 24 October 1945.



Remarks by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Cyprus and UNFICYP Head of Mission Ms. Lisa Bittenheim

United Nations Day Reception
Ledra Palace Hotel
Friday, 24 October 2014

Excellencies, friends, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening and a warm welcome on the occasion of the 69th United Nations Day. In his message for the observance this year, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon speaks of the UN's achievements on development, human rights, the environment and humanitarian assistance, successes won through the hard work and commitment of tens of thousands of UN staff around the world, from peacekeepers to humanitarian workers.

While recognizing the progress on many fronts, UN Day is also a time to take stock, and so the Secretary-General speaks of some of the challenges that the United Nations is facing. This Organization of ours has spent almost seven decades striving to bring about sustainable peace and prosperity for our human family, in the spirit of the UN Charter. Of the conflicts that the UN has sought to quell and to mediate over the years, many are behind us, while others sadly continue to claim innocent lives. In the past 12 months alone, we have witnessed more suffering affecting new populations. As we know, the loss of life and livelihoods, in countries just a short distance from this island, is reaching catastrophic proportions.

It has become a tradition for the UN family in Cyprus to welcome our friends and partners from across the island to share this special anniversary at the Ledra Palace Hotel. It is wonderful to see so many of you here tonight, and I take this opportunity to welcome our new Force Commander, Major General Lund, who has made her own special mark by being the first woman Force Commander in the history of the United Nations.

This is UNFICYP's 50th year on the island. On 4 March 1964 the first UN personnel were deployed to Cyprus by a resolution of the Security Council. In the succeeding decades, great efforts have gone into patrolling the buffer zone, keeping the peace, bridging differences, building confidence, and fostering understanding. Many of you in this room will have toiled on such efforts, and experienced moments of deep satisfaction when they have borne fruit. I see many of our troop and police contributing countries that have supported our Mission here in Cyprus. More than 100,000 uniformed personnel from 34 countries have served with UNFICYP since 1964, and we pay tribute to the 184 of them who paid the ultimate sacrifice, losing their lives in the service of peace on this island.

In my four years in this position, I have come to know many Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in diverse walks of life. I know how many of the people gathered here tonight, as well as many of your colleagues, family members and friends, have spent years, even decades, striving for a comprehensive settlement, to bring an end to the division of this beautiful island. I have been here long enough to sense the disappointment and apprehension that accompanies a setback, and to feel the tremendous spark of hope that inspires Cypriots in both communities when there is positive momentum. We have all experienced these sentiments during 2014.

Friends, the commitment of the United Nations to Cyprus has shown itself over and over again. Today, we place our determination and our efforts behind the leaders of the two communities, to

support them as they spearhead this Cypriot-owned and Cypriot-led process for a mutually agreed comprehensive settlement. We urge them not to lose sight of the momentum generated by the historic Joint Declaration they adopted on 11 February this year. The Secretary-General met yesterday in New York with Special Adviser on Cyprus, Espen Barth Eide and he "recalled the commitment made by the two leaders in September to accelerate the negotiating process." He underscored the need to recommence the negotiations without delay.

We in the United Nations reaffirm our commitment and repeat our hope that the presence of a peacekeeping mission – dedicated though we are – will soon be unnecessary. For as time goes on, as it surely must, and as the region shows us the horrors that conflict and division can wreak, the strength that comes from unity cannot be denied. The Secretary-General ends his UN Day message with a call on all governments and individuals to work in common cause for the common good. May his words guide us as we move ahead together in the coming year.

Thank you.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

The candlelight ceremony at Ledra Palace Crossing Point to mark the International Day of Peace has become a yearly tradition at UNFICYP. Head of Mission Lisa Battenheim led the event again this year, welcoming guests of honour from the Cyprus Veterans' Association who fought in World War II. Participants paused to remember the many peoples around the world suffering in war as they lit their candles in the gloaming.



News from the UN Refugee Agency in Cyprus

RESCUE AT SEA: CYPRUS GOES TO AID OF REFUGEES

On 25 September 2014, 339 refugees fleeing the war in Syria were rescued off the southern coast of the island by the search and rescue authorities of the Republic of Cyprus. The survivors, children, women and men, all Palestinian and Syrian refugees, were rescued when the fishing boat on which they were crammed was caught in the rough seas. Most of those rescued are staying in tents at a refugee camp near Nicosia, set up to host them temporarily.

The group set out in a small, unseaworthy fishing boat from Syria with a promise to reach Italy but was abandoned by the smugglers off the coast of Cyprus. Many of the group were aiming to reach family members already based in other European countries.

Those without family members in Europe were also determined to make their way to other European countries, in the hope of a better education and future for their children.

UNHCR and partners have been advising the survivors to apply for asylum in Cyprus, as their only viable safe alternative. Attempting to travel in other countries of Europe through irregular channels will only endanger their lives further, as numbers indicate. According to UNHCR estimates, more than 3,000 people have perished in the Mediterranean just in 2014.

For more information you can visit www.unhcr.org.cy
http://www.unhcr.org.cy/fileadmin/user_upload/Story2_boat_october2014.pdf

Photos: © UNHCR Cyprus



A group of refugees after their rescue and disembarkation are anxious to continue their journey to meet their family in other EU countries.



"We are young. We have dreams. We want to change the world."



Daily routine at the camp



A kid's club, at the temporary refugee camp, near Nicosia.



GREENING THE BLUE AT UNFICYP

In December 2013, UNFICYP's Chief of Mission Lisa Bittenheim signed off on the first UNFICYP Environmental Action Plan. The Mission is already seeing results, not least with an amazing display of recycled art created by UNFICYP's Engineering Section. Encouraging a culture of recycling is just one of the many initiatives undertaken to Green the Blue in Cyprus!

"The United Nations has played a key role in elevating the profile of climate change on the international agenda, and continues to support Member States in their efforts to reduce emissions, strengthen adaptation and respond to this immense global challenge. Such work has a natural complement in our in-house drive to reduce the UN's own carbon footprint. What we demand of others, we must do ourselves."

-- United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

CLEANUP CAMPAIGN

An UNFICYP Cleanup campaign took place last year to restore UN standards, remove hazardous objects and deal with security, health, and safety issues. The team collected surplus and damaged assets and maintained UN property in the process, reducing operational costs.

DO-IT-YOURSELF

There are big savings to be made and reduced resource waste when maintenance projects can be carried out in-house. This year, UNFICYP introduced the concept of self-help for all Military and Police components, providing them with the material and/or expertise to perform these kinds of tasks themselves. Training packages were brought in to help TCCs and PCCs to conduct basic maintenance tasks within UN standards and with sustainability in mind.

REACTIVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

With the Committee back on track, it went about establishing a waste management contract for hazardous waste, and a disposal yard.

RECYCLING

Proof that the contents of our scrap heaps and recycling bins can be reimagined and used again! UNFICYP staff from Engineering have led the way with a wonderful campaign to develop and incorporate the new concept in their day to day activities

CAR POOLING

Regulating the use of UNFICYP's fleet and encouraging car pooling have reflected in big savings on fuel and maintenance costs.



From left: Ali Say and Demetris Gounnaris



SOLAR PANELS

The installation of solar panels in eleven different locations has reduced UNFICYP's power consumption by 20% and saved more than 246,000 euros.

WATER HEATING

It gets surprisingly cold in Cyprus in winter. Regularizing the operating hours for main boilers and heaters has made a big difference to fuel and electricity costs, and saved energy too!

SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT = SAVING COSTS

Caring about our assets protects them from premature deterioration and prolongs their life spans. Conserving resources also has financial benefits for the Organization. The overall savings from these and other sustainable initiatives are estimated at 1 million USD, money that has been put back into renewing UNFICYP properties, enhancing the level of support, and funding emergency projects.

I would like to thank all ISS staff for the time and efforts they have invested in these projects, working tirelessly to make things happen within the very limited resources available on the ground. I am also grateful to other UNFICYP components for their understanding, patience, and cooperation. I would like to thank the UNFICYP Senior Management and Leaders for their time, empowerment, and trust.

Khalid Younis

Chief Integrated Support Services, UNFICYP

Are you interested in sustainability? Want to know more about what the UN is doing to embed sustainability across its operations? www.greeningtheblue.org



Creative and resourceful colleagues from the Engineering Section with UNFICYP Chief of Mission Lisa Bittenheim. From left to right Khalid Younis, who departed UNFICYP for the UN Mission in Mali, Panos Antoniou, Pavlos Hadjiloizou, Andreas Christou, Charis Christodoulou, Theodoros Georgiou, Demetris Gounnaris, Mehmet Erbay and Themis Anthrakopoulos

Hot Shots

UNPOL Induction



Women Ambassadors visit UNFICYP



Special Adviser Espen Barth Eide visits



Group photo Civil Affairs Section



Rotations and Mobile Force Reserve Medal Parade



Force Commander's Commendations



Engineering water drilling



Force Commander's Inspections and MOLO Training



IN COMMAND

THE NEWEST MILITARY ROTATION BRINGS US 3 NEW COMMANDING OFFICERS IN THE SECTORS

Lt Col Claudio Ceferino Cervigni Commanding Officer Sector 1



Lt Col Cervigni was born in Monte Buey, Argentina. He graduated from the Military Academy in 1989 as a 2nd Lt of the Engineer Branch. As a young Officer he was assigned to the 101st Engineer Battalion; EOD Platoon Leader at the 5th Arg Eng Coy in Kuwait (1995); Instructor at the Military Academy; Duty Officer in UNFICYP (2000 – 2001); 1st Armored Engineer Company. After graduating as a Staff Officer he was assigned to the 11th Mechanized Engineer Battalion as Operations Officer. He took command of the 11th Joint Engineer Company deployed in Kosovo (2006 – 2007); after a two year tour as 2nd in Command of the 11th Eng Batt and another two year tour as a 2nd in Command of the 601st Eng Batt in Buenos Aires, he joined the HQ of the 11th Mechanized Brigade in Rio Gallegos (South of Argentina). In 2012 he graduated with a Master in International Relations from the Universidad del Salvador (Buenos Aires). In March 2014 he became Deputy Commanding Officer of Sector 1 in UNFICYP and took over the post of Commanding Officer on 5 September 2014. Lt Col Cervigni is married to Marisa Gabriela Coronel and they have two children: Maria Victoria (14) and Juan Facundo (10). He enjoys most ball sports, including football, volleyball and tennis and is a big fan of River Plate Football Club.

Lt Col Paul (Shove) Gilby Commanding Officer Sector 2



After 2 years in the ranks, Lt Col Gilby was commissioned in 1991 into the 1st Battalion the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment. He is the complete Mercian Officer having served with all 4 Mercian Battalions. Col Gilby has completed 14 operational tours between Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan and received 4 operational honours and awards for service. He has served two tours as a Company Commander, initially in the Armoured Infantry role with 1 Staffords deploying on Op PALENTINE in Bosnia where he established and ran the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Task Force. His subsequent Company Commander tour was post Joint Services Command and Staff College within 1 WFR/ 2 Mercian in London and Belfast. During this subsequent command tour he deployed as a ground holding Company in on Op HERRICK 6 in Afghanistan, where he was awarded the QCVS. Within the wider Regiment he has served as BG COS/Battalion Second in Command with 1 Mercian on Op HERRICK 12 and Catterick with 4 Armd Bde. His external staff appointments have included SO2 O&D Commitments HQ LAND and SO2 J2 Plans & CT at PJHQ where he deployed extensively across Africa, the Balkans, Kuwait and Afghanistan. Lt Col Gilby was selected for promotion while at PJHQ. His initial SO1 appointment was SO1 G7 Trg at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst prior to taking command of 2 Mercian in Belfast. Lt Col Gilby is interested in country sports, boxing, rugby union, hill walking, surfing, canoeing and skiing. He also has a keen interest in Patterdale terriers and agriculture. Married to Kaye, an equine dentist, they have two boys: George, 14, and Henry, 11 who are both boarders at Repton.

Lt Col Jaroslav Bitala Commanding Officer Sector 4



Lt Col Bitala was born on the 28th of November in Revúca, Slovakia. He joined the Czechoslovakian Army in 1989 and began his studies at the military grammar school in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia. In 1993 he graduated with a Bachelor of Meteorology as a second lieutenant. He then attended the Air Force Military University in Košice from 1993 to 1996. He started his career as a weather forecaster in the Military Air Base Sliač in Slovakia. In 1998 he continued his studies externally and attended the Air force Academy in Košice for two years, graduating as an Air Staff Officer. He was then appointed as Chief of the Military Weather Station in the Air Base in Sliač. In 2005 Lt Col Bitala was appointed Deputy Commandant of the Slovak Military Weather Service in AF HQ Zvolen. In 2009 he was promoted and appointed as Chief of the Service. In 2007, he attended the UN Military Observer Course in Szolnok, Hungary, and in 2013, the UN Military Contingent Officer Course in Delhi, India. Lt Col Bitala has served in two overseas missions, in 2008-2009 as Deputy HQ Commandant in EUFOR Althea Mission in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Hercegovina, and 2001-2012 as SOO in Sector 4 of UNFICYP. Lt Col Bitala was appointed Commanding Officer of Sector 4 on 22 September 2014. Lt Col BITALA is married and has a daughter Emma. His hobbies are sports and reading.

WELCOME ROMANIA!

UNFICYP welcomed its 34th troop/policing contributing country in September when the flag of Romania was raised for the first time above Blue Beret Camp. Welcome to new Police Officers Chief Superintendents Ionut Iordache and George-Razvan Oatu!



Lt Col Sonya Summersgill MBE Chief Personnel and Logistics



“I joined the Army in 1990 and graduated from the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst in 1991. My first assignment was with the Royal Corps of Transport in Germany. I then attended the Ammunition Technical Officers' course and shortly after deployed to Bosnia and then Iraq, the latter as the Logistic Officer for the monitoring of the safe haven for the Kurds. Tours to Northern Ireland, the Falkland Islands and Iraq followed; all in role as an Ammunition Technical Officer. I was lucky to command an Explosive Ordnance Squadron and deployed to Iraq with them. This was followed by tours to Northern Ireland and UK Mainland. In 2012 I was awarded an MBE in recognition of work I completed in establishing casualty tracking information for Afghanistan. I have arrived here from Glasgow, where my role was to manage the career development for all Royal Logistic Corps Officers. I am single and have an old cocker spaniel, Spike. I love poetry, and am a published poet. I enjoy all forms of sport and fitness. My home is in Northern Ireland, where it is quite wet so I am looking forward to some sunshine on this beautiful island. I am very much looking forward to working with all of the staff in UNFICYP over the next two years.”

Maj Neil Foot-Tapping Military Assistant to the Force Commander



Maj Foot-Tapping commissioned from Sandhurst into the 9th/12th Royal Lancers in December 2005 after completing a degree in Engineering and working in the Alps. He deployed straight to Iraq on Op TELIC 7. On return, he completed a foundation training year and ran in the Grand Military Gold Cup at Sandown, finishing 5th on 'Lord Kilpatrick'. He returned to Regimental Duty in 2008. He planned and delivered a cultural awareness battle exercise in Kuwait, and subsequently deployed as a dismounted reconnaissance troop leader with the UK 'Strike' Battlegroup in Basrah, conducting observation posts to find and neutralise insurgent IDF teams. Following that deployment, he helped run 'operational decompression' in Cyprus before taking over as a squadron second-in-command. In 2010 he moved to Regimental Headquarters as the Signals Officer, including a deployment to Suffield in Canada. Whilst there, he took part in the training season as both exercising troops in a Reconnaissance Battlegroup HQ, directing staff and as an assistant to the commander. On completion of mission specific training, Neil deployed in 2011 as an 'Adviser' on Op HERRICK in Afghanistan. He was based in Nahr-e-Saraj (South) and was one of two principle tactical advisers on Op OMID HAFT, the operation that cleared 'Malgir' and the 'Loy Mandeh' wadi, resulting in the opening of a second route between Lashkar Gha and Gereshk. Following the tour he would have described himself as conversational in Dari and well versed in making Naan bread - useful skills for his next post as Adjutant. Maj Foot-Tapping was subsequently selected as a visiting fellow on the 'Changing Character of War' programme at Oxford University. He researched 'Military Capacity Building' in support of 'Building Stability Overseas'. In January 2014 he moved to Shrivenham for the Intermediate Command and Staff Course at the UK Defence Academy. On completion, he flew to Cyprus to take over as the Military Assistant to the Force Commander of UNFICYP. Maj Foot-Tapping is a keen but amateur triathlete; he completed his first Ironman in Zurich in 2013 and continues to train when he has the time. He has repeatedly dabbled in equine sports, but his main passions are water sports and mountaineering. Mastering the carve-gybe and topping-out on a noteworthy summit remain on the 'to-do' list. Neil is married to Joanna and has four children: Raphael (7); Solomon (5), Romilly (4) and Cecilia (1).



Next Issue: The final
in our BB series for
the 50th anniversary,
we focus on: Brazil,
Italy, Chile, Paraguay,
Lithuania, Ukraine, &
El Salvador //////////////

Plus: An End of Year
Wrap-Up //////////////

BLUE BERET



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