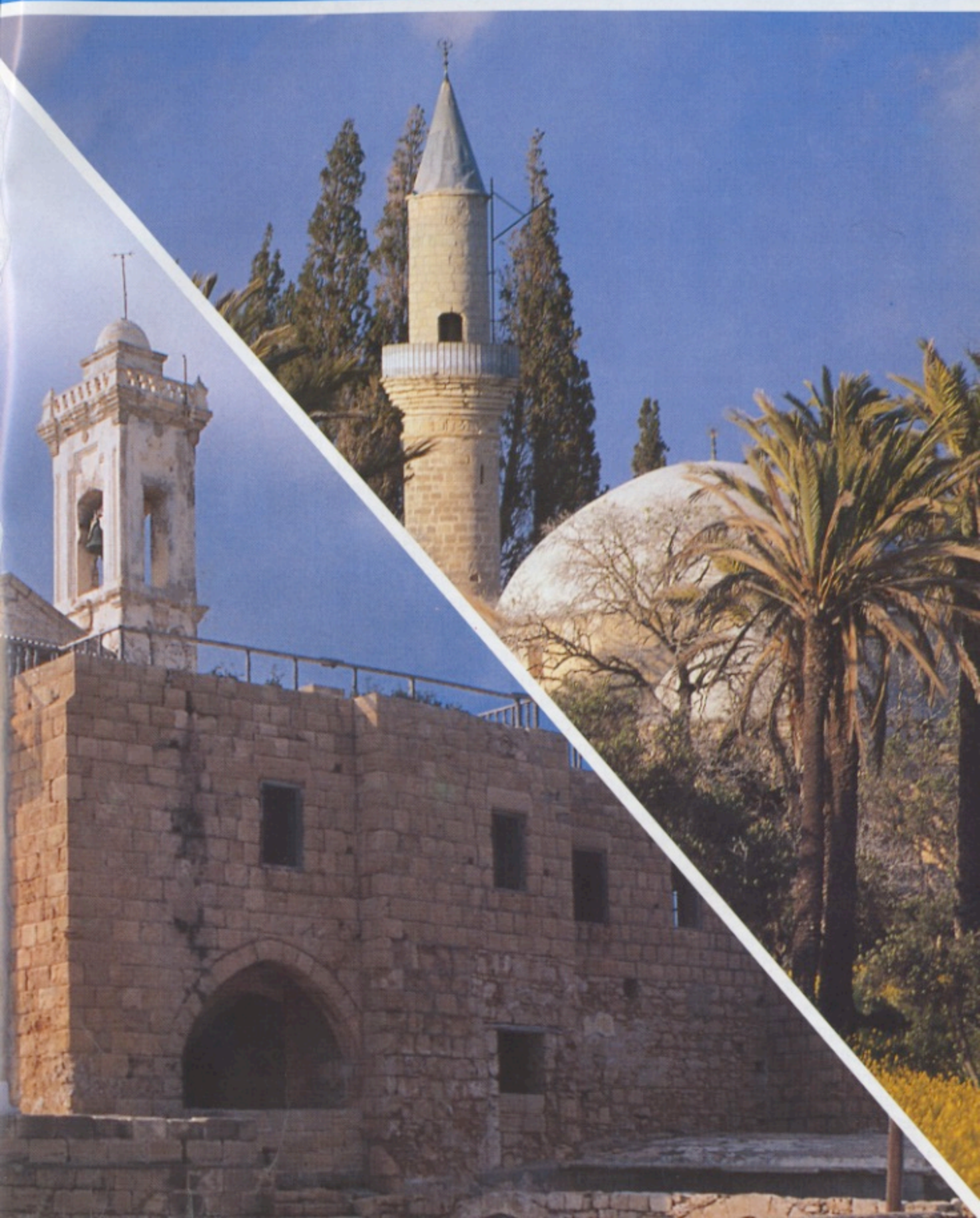


# Blue Beret

February 1998





## UNFICYP'S MOBILE FORCE RESERVE

There is no better example of the true ethos of multi-national peace-keeping than the newly renamed Mobile Force Reserve (MFR). In common with all UN peace-keeping operations, UNFICYP is a colourful mixture of cultures. At the higher levels of the Force, the officers and civilians of the different nations work side by side. However, at the other end of the chain of command, the soldiers in the sectors fulfill their duties in their single nationality companies and platoons.

The MFR is different. It was formed to give the Force Commander a flexible response to situations that may arise in the Buffer Zone. For years, the Permanent Force Reserve, as it was known, was a platoon based in the UNPA, responsible for the security of the area. However in July 1997, it underwent a metamorphosis and became a multi-national company.



Members of the Mobile Force Reserve practising crowd control

The manpower for the MFR company is drawn from the major troop contributors to UNFICYP: Argentina, Austria, Hungary and the United Kingdom. Every aspect of the MFR is multi-national, from the command structure to the new Armoured Personnel Carriers (APCs). Headed up by a British major, with an Argentinian second in command and Austrian, British and Argentinian platoon commanders, the officers of the company enjoy an enviably different job.

The company consists of four platoons: three infantry platoons and an APC platoon. The latter is totally Argentinian, adding a splash of Latin spice for the Europeans. They drive and maintain the company's fleet of nine TACTICA APCs that were brought to UNFICYP in 1997 to replace the ageing fleet of MOWAGs.



The TACTICA Armoured Personnel Carrier

Even the TACTICAs reflect the diverse nature of the MFR. Built in Britain from German components and owned by the Argentine Army, they suit the environment well. The APCs are used to transport the infantry platoons around the island, making it likely for one to find an Argentinian soldier patrolling in the Austrian sector, an Austrian in the British sector and a pair of soldiers from Britain and Hungary in the hills of Sector One.

The MFR is still based in the UNPA and looks after the camp security with one of the platoons. The other platoon provides mobile patrols in the sectors, with a section staying with the sectors for three days at a time. The third platoon conducts training, administration and is on standby for three days. The platoons rotate through the three tasks in a nine-day rotation.

The opportunity for all ranks of the company to work so closely with soldiers from other nations has brought a new understanding and respect for each other's militaries and cultures. The location of the MFR in the UNPA has also allowed some opportunities for cultural exchanges on a social level; Krampus night, Burn's Night, Australia Day, Bandidos (twice so far), and Celtic exchanges in the Hib Club have tested the endurance of all. When the soldiers of the MFR go home at the end of their tour, they will not only have experienced the island of Cyprus with its diverse population, but they will have made friends from places as far apart as Patagonia to Budapest and from Canberra to Dublin.

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The Blue Beret is the journal of the United Nations Force in Cyprus and, as such, is intended to provide a source of information on current events within the Force, on UN matters of general interest and on local tourist advice.

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

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#### FRONT COVER:

TOP RIGHT:  
HALA SULTAN TEKKE  
BOTTOM LEFT:  
APOSTOLOS ANDREAS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
CPL PAT O'MEARA

## The Blue Beret



### EDITORIAL

Whatever one's creed, religion embraces certain traditions which are generally passed from generation to generation. Although not compulsory, it is customary to inherit the religion of our parents; hence the solemn halls within the place of worship, whichever denomination you belong to, were typically once part of life. They often bring back profound feelings of nostalgia and childhood memories, and it is natural for people to travel back to these places, both mentally and physically, for religious or simply for sentimental reasons.

In the case of Cyprus, a divided island of two predominant religions, this conviction is exceptionally strong. Over the years, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots have made numerous efforts to visit the shrines of their respective religions that they have not been able to enter for a long time.

For some time now, UNFICYP has been making every effort to address this genuine wish of many worshippers on both sides of the divide. The year 1997 appeared to mark a breakthrough in these endeavours. Visits to the monastery of Apostolos Andreas in the Karpas and to Hala Sultan Tekke in Larnaca, no doubt the holiest shrines for the Christians and Moslems of Cyprus, have now become a reality.

Thousands of worshippers have made pilgrimages both north and south, and it is gratifying that the substantial efforts made by the authorities on both sides, as well as by members of UNFICYP, in particular Sector Two, the Humanitarian Branch and AUSTCIVPOL, have come to fruition. Endeavours in this direction, as reported on pages 4/5 of this issue, will continue in a concerted effort to realize the aspirations of the people of this divided island.

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# PILGRIMAGE TO THE HALA SULTAN TEKKE MOSQUE

by Major SDC Eaton SO2 Coord (Hum)

One of the most important shrines of the Moslem world, the Hala Sultan Tekke Mosque, sits on the edge of the Salt Lake about 5km south of Larnaca. Thrusting its minaret through a blanket of greenery, the building and its surrounds appear as a veritable oasis against the backdrop of blinding salt flats, especially in the hot, Cyprus summer.

An important place of pilgrimage at any time, it attracts visitors from all over the world as well as from Cyprus, where Turkish Cypriot worshippers seize any opportunity to travel from the north and to enter the hallowed halls. Such an occasion again presented itself on Saturday 31 January when, as part of the Bairam festival which signifies the end of the Ramadan period, 1,285 pilgrims passed through the Ledra checkpoints and were driven south in 24 coaches. Permission for the journey



Picnickers inside the grounds of the Tekke



Moslem men in prayer

was given by the Cyprus Government, as a reciprocal gesture, following the successful visit by some 1,500 Greek Cypriot pilgrims to the Apostolos Andreas Monastery in the north two months before.

The mechanics of channelling so many people through the narrow confines of the Buffer Zone and onto coaches at the Ledra Palace Hotel could not be left to chance. The pilgrims arrived in good time, passing quickly through and pressing eagerly forward as the first buses arrived at Patricia Gate. It was important not to allow the crowd to rush, so a detailed management plan, devised by AUSTCIVPOL and Sector Two, was implemented.

2/Lt Matt Rawlinson-Plant and soldiers from the Ledra Troop encouraged everyone to wait patiently whilst 50 people at a time were allowed to board the buses. This was essentially a safety precaution

but also necessary so that the elderly and infirm could be assisted to their seats. Families were keen to remain together for the journey and controlled access to the buses helped to achieve this. Everyone was extremely cheerful and cooperative, many alluding to the courteous and professional manner in which the soldiers and policemen performed their duties, with many friends being made in the process.

In little over two hours the entire mass had safely embussed and the coaches, in convoys of six, were en route to the holy site with CYPOL vehicle escorts augmented by UNCIVPOL. The only slight difficulty faced CYPOL representatives at the Mosque, where the parking of so many buses and escort vehicles had to be very carefully managed.

The Mosque contains the remains Umm Haram, known as Hala Sultan in Turkish, who was allegedly an aunt of the Prophet Mohammed, though some scholars of Islamic history consider her merely to have been one of his close followers. Moslem legend has it that Umm Haram came to Cyprus with a party of Arab invaders in 649 AD, but met her death when she fell from her mule near the Salt Lake. She was buried on the spot, and the Mosque was built in her honour by the Ottomans in



Women paying homage at Umm Haram's tomb



Moslem women in prayer

1816. (See pages 8/9 of this issue for a separate article on the Hala Sultan Tekke.)

For four hours on that day, the Mosque was the focus of especially fervent prayer whilst the gardens resounded to the sound of excited chatter as the visitors strolled and picnicked at leisure. They all returned safely to nurture and cherish their own particular memory of a special day, the likes of which, judging by the prevailing mood and comment, should be repeated for the benefit of both communities as frequently as possible.

Perhaps, with UNFICYP's assistance, such visits will occur more frequently in the future. On the last two occasions, authorities on both sides have graciously permitted more visitors to travel than was originally requested or planned (1,500 instead of 1,000 on 30 November 1997, and 1,285 instead of 800 on 31 January 1998).

All now agree that such vast numbers create difficulties, especially with transport, so a tentative proposal whereby several trips per year might take place, with less visitors on each occasion, is now being discussed. Judging by the way in which the representatives from both authorities cooperated, especially 'on the ground' during the January visit to the Tekke, then such an objective should not be difficult to achieve for the good of all Cypriots.

Photographs by courtesy of  
Ediz Özünlü of Yenidüzen and  
Harun Uçar of Kibris



## POLICE OPERATIONS (HUMANITARIAN) - POLOPS

One of the lesser known appointment titles in the Force is that of *Police Operations (Humanitarian)*, thankfully and conveniently abbreviated to POLOPS (Hum). It does not, you will be relieved to learn, describe some evil-smelling biological growth but is, in fact, a person - *Inspector Joe Behan* of IRCIVPOL.



Inspector Joe Behan

He replaced Inspector Frank O'Brien in December, the latter returning to Ireland after full-blooded commitment during an invigorating 12-month tour. Congratulations on your recent promotion, Frank.

The POLOPS (Hum) Officer is permanently assigned to the Humanitarian Branch to deal with humanitarian-related police matters, inside and outside the Buffer Zone. This comprises all sorts of activities and investigations; straying stock, property disputes, unauthorised farming and compensation issues are all part of the POLOPS' lot.

Since his arrival, Joe has been operating at full steam and busting all records. Amidst a busy daily round of routine investigations and police work, he has organised no less than 45 visits to persons, from the north or south of Cyprus, who are in prison or custody in the other area of authority. The importance of this is to monitor the situation and ensure that such persons are treated fairly when detained in the other community. When permission is granted by the appropriate authority, third nationals, such as Greeks and Turks, are also visited when held in the north or south respectively.

Such visits often include a medical inspection by a UN Medical Officer and the requirement to accompany the sometimes agitated family members. Most detentions occur as a result of accidental straying through the UN controlled area to the other side, though some recent cases include alleged gun-running across the Buffer Zone and the handling of stolen goods.

UNCIVPOL also carry out humanitarian tasks, with POLOPS (Hum) their main contact in the Branch. Under the aegis of Sector Four, IRCIVPOL undertakes the monthly delivery of welfare and benefit payments to Greek Cypriots on the Karpas Peninsula. IRCIVPOL also becomes heavily involved in humanitarian issues concerning Pyla, which crop up almost daily. Sgt Alan Taylor has just replaced Sgt Ron Presswell as the AUSTCIVPOL representative attached to the Branch; the latter's unique, cheery style and raw wit brought untold fun to the Branch. Alan is not a Branch member (unlike Joe who is, remember, the *actual* POLOPS (Hum)), but he will nonetheless attend Sector One and Sector Two humanitarian patrols and also immerse himself in a hectic daily schedule of family liaison with the Ledra checkpoints, visa runs to various embassies and with pharmacy deliveries to the north Ledra Checkpoint. He will also be a key link in the MEDEVAC chain.

Humanitarian Branch and the Sector Teams are as the "Moulin Rouge"; they never close down and are always ready to act at a moment's notice in answer to the cry of the needy. POLOPS (Hum) plays a vital part in all this, and neither his, nor the general UNCIVPOL contribution, should be underestimated.



Sergeant Alan Taylor



A humanitarian visit to the Karpas peninsula

## VISIT BY MR SEAMUS BRENNAN, TD IRISH MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE

On Wednesday 14 January 1998, Mr Seamus Brennan, together with his Private Secretary, Mr Gerry Dwyer, Assistant Secretary, Mr Michael O'Donoghue, and the Quartermaster General (QMG) of the Irish Defence Forces, Maj Gen Patrick Nowlan, paid a visit to UNFICYP. The visiting party had spent a few days in South Lebanon with the Irish Contingent, and took the opportunity to stop off in Cyprus on their way home to Ireland.

Upon Minister Brennan's arrival at HQ UNFICYP, he inspected a Guard of Honour drawn from the MFR and Camp Command, after which he was greeted by the Force Commander, Maj Gen EA de Vergara. The FC and the QMG then renewed old acquaintances, as they had previously served together with Observer Group Beirut (OGB) in South Lebanon in 1984 when they were both majors and reported to Jerusalem on the same day. The ministerial party were then received by the Chief of Mission, Mr G Feissel.



Minister Brennan inspecting the Guard of Honour at HQ UNFICYP

After spending some time with the CM and the FC, Minister Brennan and his party were shown to the HQ Briefing Room where the Chief of Staff, Col CMB Coats, presented a brief on the important roles and functions of the military element of UNFICYP.

The first day of the visit closed with the visiting party being hosted at a dinner attended by all IRCON Officers. Minister Brennan was then introduced to the remaining members of IRCON and also some of the Mobile Force Reserve personnel at an informal gathering in the Hibernia Club.



Minister Brennan (left) with the Chief of Mission, Mr Gustave Feissel

Day two of the Minister's visit commenced with an IRCON brief in Camp Command conducted by Comdt M Delaney. The ministerial party then departed for Sector Two where they received a short briefing from the Operations Officer, following which they were conducted on a City Line Tour within the walls of Nicosia.

Minister Brennan had intended to spend three days in Cyprus, but unfortunately, his visit had to be cut short due to commitments back in Ireland. However, the remainder of the visiting party stayed on the island as planned until 17 February. All in all, Mr Brennan's visit was well received by UNFICYP, especially IRCON. The Minister has conveyed his appreciation to all those involved for the time and effort they put in to make his trip to Cyprus informative and enjoyable.



Minister Brennan on a Green Line tour in Sector Two



## A BRIEF ENCOUNTER WITH THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF CYPRUS - Part XVII

As one leaves Larnaca Airport towards the roundabout, one can see, slightly to the left, a protrusion of a minaret by a domed building which appears in the midst of a small copse of palm trees and cypresses. They belong to the Mosque of Hala Sultan Tekke (Tekke = Moslem monastery), otherwise known as the Tomb of Umm Haram, the "Holy Woman" and miracle-worker. She was a follower of the Prophet Mohammed, and was buried on the very spot where she met her death after a fall from her mule during the first Arab invasion of Cyprus in 649.

From September till April, the Tekke offers an idyllic sight with its silhouette reflected in the blue

waters of the Salt Lake where seagulls and migrating flamingoes and swans search for their livelihood. In the summer months, the Mosque gives quite a different impression. It resembles an oasis as the trees and gardens of the shrine are in complete contrast with the surrounding scrubland and dried-up salt lake.

Irrespective of the seasons, the monument overwhelms one with a sense of peace and tranquillity, as is befitting to the most holy Moslem shrine of Cyprus. It rivals Jerusalem for the third place in the entire Islamic world after the Kaaba of Mecca and the shrine of Mohammed at Medina.

### HISTORY

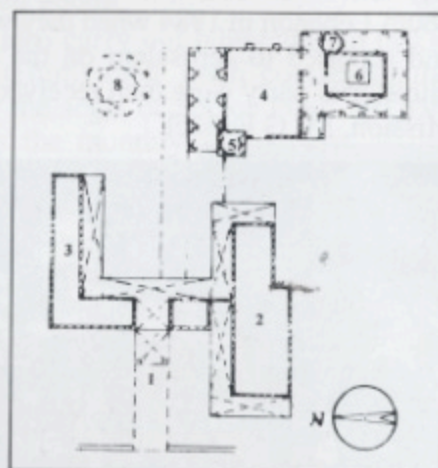
According to the Mohammedan tradition, Moslems have to visit these four shrines in order to be able to enter paradise. The importance of the Tekke can be demonstrated by the fact that during the Ottoman occupation of Cyprus (1570/1 to 1878), all Ottoman ships that were passing by Larnaca had to pay tribute by lowering their flags and firing their guns.

Tradition had it that Umm Haram was an aunt of the Prophet Mohammed. However, scholars of Islamic history, who have made extensive researches on the subject, think that she was no relation to the Prophet but a very close follower who was esteemed by him. She had helped him, with others, to travel from Mecca to Medina. The reason for Umm Haram being mistakenly considered as Mohammed's aunt is due to the historic fact that she was an aunt of Anas ibn Malik, who was his private secretary and faithful servant. Her entire name is Umm Haram bint Milhan, Khalid, Zaid, Haram, Genoub.

Umm Haram's presence with the Arab invasion forces of Moawiya against Cyprus is explained by Baladhuri, a renowned scholar, as follows. The Governor of Syria, Moawiya, was the first Arab leader

to have realised that the newly formed Islamic world needed a strong navy in order to compete for supremacy with the mighty Byzantine empire. So, he sought the permission of the Khalifa of Mecca, Omar, to make a naval expedition against the nearby Byzantine Cyprus. The Khalifa turned him down. Moawiya tried his luck with the next Khalifa, Othman, who also refused him. Permission was finally granted by Othman on Moawiya's second attempt, provided, among other things, that the wives of the officers on the expedition would have accompanied them.

So, Umm Haram followed her second husband - the first had died in battle - when the Arabs set sail against Cyprus with 1,700 ships in 649 AD, or in the year 28 of the Hegira. [Hegira derives from the Arabic word *hidjra*, from the verb *hadjara* (= I quit), and marks the Moslem chronology, which is based on the lunar year.] The expedition resulted in Cyprus becoming a condominium of the Byzantines and the Arabs and having to pay taxes to both, as well as keeping neutral in their conflict. Umm Haram's shrine is visited by many pilgrims who pray for her help in times of need. There are many legends about her miracles



Plan of Hala Sultan Tekke

which go beyond the shores of Cyprus.

One legend of particular interest relates to the three monoliths which rest above Umm Haram's tomb. On her journey from Jerusalem to Ramla, she was hosted by a Christian monk. She had asked him to sell her three monoliths situated nearby and the monk, believing that it would have been impossible for the stones to be carried, offered them to her without charge. She left the big stones with him, saying that she would send for them in due time. The legend continues that the three stones rolled over the sea water and came to hang on her tomb at the time of her burial.

## HALA SULTAN TEKKE

### DESCRIPTION

The edifice of the Hala Sultan Tekke, as it now stands, was completed by Seyyid Emin Efendi, the Ottoman Governor of Cyprus, in 1816. In recent times, it underwent repairs by the Department of Antiquities.

There is no knowledge of the first construction of the Tekke, other than that Umm Haram was buried here by the Arabs in 649. Again, much later, the Danish traveller, Cornelis van Bruyn, who visited the monument in 1683, mentions only the existence of the Tomb. Other sources speak of a wooden barrier enclosing the burial site which was erected in 1760 by Meghed Agha, the Muhassil (Commissioner, representative in Cyprus of the Grand Vizier or the Sublime Porte). In the 18th century, he held supreme political and military power on the island. The following year, the wooden barrier was replaced by a stone wall with two bronze gates and, a few years later, the Mosque was built along with living quarters and an ablution fountain.

The main entrance to the Tekke is in the west where an outer gate leads through a set of steps and an open-air corridor (1) to two patios from where one enters the inner court of the monument. On the right of the second patio is the women's guest-house (2) while on the left is the men's (3), both of which are fronted by covered verandahs. The women's

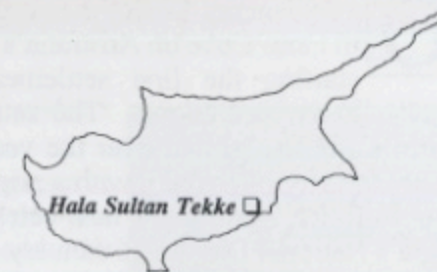
verandah is enclosed by a lattice screen.

Within the courtyard, a west-to-east open-air corridor leads to the Mosque (4), fronted by a covered verandah with four limestone arches. Inside the oblong Mosque and just above the doorway of the entrance, a wooden gallery supported on two marble columns runs along the north side of the building. On its western side, it has a wooden latticed enclosure which is reserved for women - they should not be seen.

A niche (Mirhap) facing Mecca in front of which the faithful pray, a stepped dais which corresponds to the Christian pulpit and two small bookcases containing old books and documents as well as carpets constitute the austere decoration of this Moslem edifice. A small door on the ground below the gallery opens to the staircase of the minaret (5).

South of the Mosque is the Tomb of Umm Haram (6), which is protected from the eyes of man by a railing and green cloth curtains, the colour of Paradise and sacred to the Moslem world. We do have, however, an approximate description of the tomb by Cornelis van Bruyn. According to him, suspended above the tomb of Umm Haram were three huge stones (monoliths) of 4.5m in height, one standing by the head, one by the feet, and the third one suspended over the body above the other two.

In the adjoining arcade, the easternmost part of the monument, lie a number of other tombs including that of Hadidje (7) who died in Cyprus in 1929. She was the Turkish wife of King Hussein of the kingdom of Hedjaz, and



the grandmother of King Hussein of Jordan. On the north side of the Mosque is a covered octagonal peristyled fountain (8) with eight taps and a wooden latticed upper part. It is used by the devout for ablution. In



The fountain for ablutions

the courtyard enclosed by the living quarters is a cistern for watering the citrus trees and flower beds.

Arab calligraphic inscriptions from history and the Koran are found in many places of the building.

As a place of pilgrimage, the Tekke is visited during the periods of Bairam (= holiday). There are two Bairams: the lesser, or "Şeker" (sweet) and the "Kurban" (sacrificial). The first one, which is also the most important Turkish holiday, is celebrated with an exchange of goodwill wishes and candies on the first day of the Arabic solar month of Seval following the month of Ramazan or Ramadan (ninth month of the Mohammedan year, in which fasting is observed during all daylight hours). The "Kurban" Bairam is characterised by a slaughtering of rams in reminiscence of Abraham's sacrifice. The surplus meat is distributed among the poor.



The tomb of Hala Sultan



## AUSTRALIA DAY IN UNFICYP

On 26 January 1788, the first fleet landed in Farm Cove on Australia's east coast, starting the first settlement on the newly discovered island. The settlement in Farm Cove has grown over the years, and is today the city of Sydney with a population of four million. Australians now celebrate Australia's National Day on 26 January each year. For the many Australians living overseas, this day takes on a special meaning. It reminds them of their home, friends and family, and it gives them the opportunity to celebrate their national identity with new friends.



Members of the current AUSTCIVPOL Contingent

This was the case for the 20 members of AUSTCIVPOL on 26 January 1998. In many ways, it was just another routine day. However, along with their many duties, AUSTCIVPOL members celebrated Australia Day with great enthusiasm.

It started with a reception at the Australian High Commission, hosted by the High Commissioner, Mr Howard Brown. All members of AUSTCIVPOL attended, along with their friends, to celebrate the

occasion and to reminisce about their Australian experiences. More notable among the guests were the UNFICYP Chief of Mission, Mr G Feissel, and the Force Commander, Major General E de Vergara. The President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr G Clerides, was also present. Their attendance and best wishes were much appreciated by all those Australians present.

In the afternoon, the Australia Day festivities moved on to the Kangaroo Club. Guests were treated to a traditional lamb spit roast, along with many other tasty morsels and a good supply of fine Australian wine. Many Australians currently in Cyprus and a liberal sprinkling of new UN friends came to celebrate the occasion.

The nature of UN operations brings the representatives of many nations together in the one place for a common goal. By celebrating their national days together, each element of the UN mission learns more about the others. They become closer as a result, and are better prepared to achieve that goal. This year's Australia Day was no exception.



The President of the Republic, Mr G Clerides (centre), enjoying the 28 January celebrations at the Australian High Commission

## FAREWELL AND WELCOME

On Friday 30 January 1998, the UN MP Element bid farewell to Capt Mark Brown, RMP, who held the post of Force Provost Marshal since December 1995.

The Unit wishes both him and his wife Edith the best for the future.

**MAJOR J E S LONDON, FORCE PROVOST MARSHAL**

Maj James London joined the army in 1973 and was commissioned into The King's Own Royal Border Regiment in 1974. During his first 11 years of commissioned service, he served in West Germany, the UK, Northern Ireland and Berlin.

In late 1984, his transfer to the Royal Military Police took place. There then followed service in

various posts, both overseas (Germany) and in the UK.

Major London is married to Val and they have two sons, Peter (22) and Nicholas (15). He enjoys walking, cricket, squash, gardening and a variety of other pursuits.



## WILDLIFE IN THE BUFFER ZONE - AN INDIRECT IMPACT OF THE UN'S PRESENCE IN CYPRUS

by Major IC Laver, RTR

Since arriving in Cyprus on a six-month United Nations tour of duty, among the various fascinating aspects of this unique island, many of us in Sector Two West have been struck by the amount and variety of the wildlife in the Buffer Zone. By "wildlife" I do not mean the feral cats and dogs which occasionally can be a nuisance to peacekeepers on the Line, but rather the migratory and indigenous wildlife - and particularly game - that flourishes indirectly due to the UN's presence. Cyprian chukar, quail, black francolin, wild duck, snipe, woodcock, foxes, hares and hedgehogs all reside in Sector Two in some confidence of freedom from their principal threat: man.



Snipe in the Klimos River

At the beginning of our tour, soldiers from A Squadron 1st Royal Tank Regiment were made quickly aware of the Cypriot love of hunting as soon as they encountered hunters who had illegally entered the Buffer Zone in search of quarry. The problem with hunters is common to all Sectors, but it would appear to be eclipsed in Sector One. The reason they are tempted into the Buffer Zone is because it is a haven for game species. Here they are able to expand their populations to a level which the land would ordinarily support but for over-hunting.

Elsewhere on the island, certain wildlife species are less fortunate, and this gives a special scientific and conservationist significance to the land between the opposing cease fire lines. I believe, once a political solution to the Cyprus problem is reached, it is possible that the Buffer Zone could provide the source for a breeding stock reserve which, through studied management, could repopulate those parts of the island where species have dwindled.

The best known game bird in Cyprus is the *Alectoris chukar subsp. cypriotes* of the *Phasianidae* family - the chukar - one of the four species found in the Mediterranean. The Cyprian chukar, so called because of its distinctive "chuck-kor" call, is remarkably similar to the red-legged or French partridge; nonetheless, it is unique. As the island's national bird, it is entirely in line with the UN's mission here in that it thrives so well in the Buffer Zone, under the

watchful eye of soldiers in blue berets.

Despite progressive normalization of the Buffer Zone and the promotion of farming and modern drainage schemes, wild duck and waders abound in the streams and marshes across the Green Line. Indeed, in certain areas, there are significant numbers of mallard and teal which are made up of both resident and migratory stock. Despite the arid nature of the Cypriot climate and successive years of drought, woodcock - surely the most shy and retiring of European gamebirds - can sometimes be seen flitting through the headlights of patrol vehicles as the UN maintains its vigilance and dominance of the Buffer Zone at night.

Foxes live happily enough within the Buffer Zone. Principally nocturnal, foxes are frequently seen in the early hours skulking around the shadows cast by the OP lights. The adaptability of "Monsieur Reynard" is such that he is equally at home in the urban environment of the Nicosian suburbs as the open farmland beyond, and fox road kills can even be seen in central Nicosia. The fox is the main predator of gamebirds and probably their greatest threat, closely followed by the feral dogs ranging through the Buffer Zone that also hunt hares with mixed success.

Views on wildlife and hunting are influenced by a number of factors, not least regional and cultural imperatives. It would be wrong to castigate a people's approach to wildlife simply because it differs to others. However, indigenous wildlife contributes to both natural and national heritage, as shown by the symbolism of the chukar, which prospers in the Buffer Zone.

In Cyprus, the UN is perhaps an inadvertent promoter of conservation. However, it is a contribution of major significance to the people of the island, of which the UN can be justifiably proud.



A migratory Little Egret



Chukar



## MEDICAL SUPPORT IN THE FIELD "MEDEVAC"

by Lt Cdr (Navy) H Montivero

Medical support in the field will only be successful if MEDEVAC procedures are correctly carried out. This may require a change in some medical techniques and in the ethics of Medical Officers. Examples through history illustrate how the procedures have evolved.

Virgil's 'Aenid' cites Lapis as the first Roman military MO and in the ruins of old Rome, several 'valetudaria' (hospitals) were discovered which had been used for evacuation purposes. The Iliad supports this, and records a mortality rate of 70% in such evacuations.

It was during the Hundred Years War that soldiers were first wounded by firearms, and their evacuation was made more difficult by the effects of artillery fire, guns being used for the first time. In the 16th century, Henry II's surgeon, Ambrosio Pare, first used the tourniquet, rather than a hot iron, to arrest bleeding. Queen Elizabeth I's surgeon, William Globes, wrote the first book on war wounds in 1660, at about the same time that a German, Leonardo Franspreyer, published his book on 'The Military Medicine Organisation'.

Baron Larrey, Napoleon's surgeon, first stated in 1800 the three principles of medicine in the field:

1. Speedy evacuation of the wounded.
2. Centralization of the wounded for treatment.
3. Progressive medical attention.

During the American Civil War, 'snail pace' evacuation procedures were largely to blame for the 90% mortality rate due to abdomen wounds alone. By the time of the North Africa Campaign in the Second World War, these procedures were much quicker and, coupled with the compulsory exteriorisation of colon wounds, the mortality rate fell dramatically to 4.5%. A further reduction to 2.4% was achieved during the Korean War (1950-53), largely on account of the appearance of M.A.S.H. (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital) and evacuations within six hours. Vietnam saw even greater improvements with evacuations inside 40 minutes: one particularly extensive MEDEVAC, the 'Dustoff

Operation', saw the use of over 50 UH-1D helicopters.

At the start of the Gulf War, Medical Team Y of the Marine Expeditionary Force was deployed (2 Aug 90). It was formed by the 1st Medical Battalion in Camp Pendleton, comprising two surgical support companies with a further three tasked to collect and transport casualties. A second battalion in Camp Lejeune provided five companies for similar duties. The evacuation chain was completed by two hospital ships in support.



A MEDEVAC exercise taking place in Sector One

As a general concept, it may be said that medicine in the field is MEDEVAC; MEDEVAC is progressive medical assistance commencing in the unit sphere of operations, and terminating in the most sophisticated hospital available, wherever that may be.

The aim of any professional Force is to preserve its Mission by the retention of soldiers' fighting skills through the best possible medical treatment and care. UNFICYP is no exception. Each Sector has its own Medical Centre, including a Medical Officer and a trained team with an ambulance, ready to deploy at a moment's notice. Force MEDEVAC procedures are under constant review, with a view to upgrading medical services in the not too distant future.

## CHANGE OF COMMAND IN SECTOR FOUR

In a ceremony on Saturday 24 January, the Commanding Officer of the Austrian Battalion, Lt Col Robert Prader, handed over command of Sector Four to Lt Col Heinz Hufler. The reinforcement of the MFR, the shelter construction programme, the introduction of the protection shield and new personal protection equipment are just some of the changes which have taken place in Sector Four during Lt Col Prader's 12-month tour.

In a special Medal Parade which took place on the same day, the Force Commander, Maj Gen de Vergara, and Lt Col Prader presented UN medals to those soldiers who have completed 90 days' service with UNFICYP.

In his inaugural speech, the new Commander, Lt Col Hufler, focussed on the objective of his mission. He emphasized the respect, trust, discipline, comradeship, mutual support and team spirit which currently exist in Sector Four will further strengthen in order to contribute to the daily life and duty of the

Force in the best possible way. Lt Col Hufler pointed out that the multi-national battalion increases the challenge for all soldiers in AUSCON, and reminded them that serving abroad calls for the obligation to respect the laws and culture on the island.



Sector Four's multi-national battalion of Austrians, Hungarians and Slovenians

## SLOVENIANS AT UN 140

Ten Slovenian soldiers are currently serving in Sector Four. They joined UNFICYP only ten months ago, but are now fully familiar with their duties and their new way of life in Cyprus.

Six soldiers man the patrol base UN 140, which lies within the 2nd Platoon/2 Coy (AUSCON). They are now well acquainted with their Austrian counterparts, and also with the Argentinians, Hungarians and British in the Mobile Force Reserve.

The base conducts patrols, mostly in their vehicle, and carries out observation within their area of responsibility. Their biggest challenge is the housework involved in keeping the OP up to scratch, especially washing up and cleaning

floors. Housework was something they were definitely not used to!

The remaining four Slovenians are posted as follows: two are in 2 Coy, holding the positions of Deputy Company Commander and Deputy Platoon Commander, and two are at HQ AUSCON in Camp Duke Leopold V, one as a Duty Officer and the other as a Logistics Officer.

Last December, the Slovenian Minister of Defence inspected his soldiers serving with UNFICYP, and was highly impressed and satisfied with their contribution to the Force.

By now, the Slovenians have a very good impression of life in UNFICYP and the situation on the island, and are in an excellent posi-



Slovenian soldiers on duty at UN 140

tion to hand over to the new Contingent when they arrive at the beginning of April.



## THE CYPRUS GOVERNMENT RAILWAY (CGR) (1905-1951)

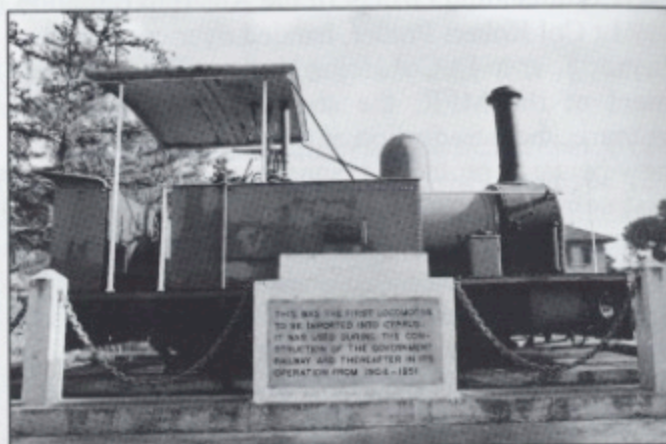
It is unlikely that many serving UNFICYP personnel are aware that between the years of 1905 to 1951, a railway existed on the island which extended from the harbour in Famagusta, running through Nicosia and Morphou with its terminus in the village of Evrykhou in the Soleas Valley. It covered a total distance of 76 miles with approximately 30 stations or halts along the route, a good number of which were also post offices. The single-track line, with a gauge of 2 feet, 6 inches, was regulated by the electric train staff. All stations were connected by telephone and telegraph, and for while, the railway also operated a telegraph service.

On 21 October 1905, the train made its maiden voyage from Famagusta to Nicosia. By 1920, the total cost of the railway was £199,367 and included 12 steam engines, 17 carriages (for 1st, 2nd and 3rd class travel) and 104 goods wagons. As from 1922, the CGR transported minerals of the Cyprus Mines Corporation from Evrykhou to Famagusta port. In 1933, the engines were run by petrol and reached a speed of 30 miles per hour. More luxurious carriages (also known as rail cars) were then added. There were four journeys daily, two from Nicosia to Famagusta and two from Famagusta to Nicosia. As from 1935, special Sunday trips were run in the summer from Nicosia to Famagusta for bathers. Also, during the winter season, snow was transported from the mountains to the Nicosia hospital.

Gradually the railway became unprofitable. In 1948, the Nicosia-Morphou leg of the journey was suspended. Finally, at 2.57 pm on Monday 31 December 1951, the last three-carriage train left Nicosia and pulled into Famagusta station at 4.38 pm. Thus, the Cyprus Government Railway is now part of the island's history.



The Cyprus Government Railway's passenger carriages



Cyprus Government Railway engine, constructed in 1904

The railway was of notable service during the two World Wars. During its 46 years of operation, the CGR carried 7,348,643 passengers and 3,199,934 tons of goods. It was dismantled in 1952 when most of the equipment was sold for £65,626 to the firm of Meyer Newman, and was scheduled to be shipped to Italy as scrap. However, Engine No 1 was rescued at the last moment and eventually preserved in 1953 in Famagusta as a memorial.

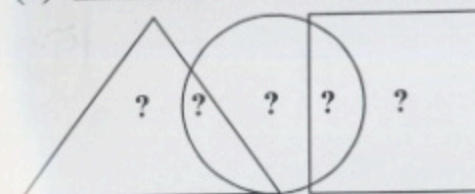
The old railway station and headquarters building in its original state still stands at the back of the compound in which the small, six-wheeled locomotive is preserved. It remained there until 1972 when it was taken to 48 Command Workshop, Dhekelia - the then Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers - where it was restored privately by Major B S Turner, the Workshop Commander, and Mr A E Fletcher, after which it was returned in its original livery to Famagusta. It can still be seen today, sadly, once again, in need of restoration.

There are many amusing stories about this railway. One was the case of the failed attempt by a "cowboy" to hold the train up at gunpoint and steal the employees' wages. It is said that his punishment was to polish the carriages for the rest of his life!

The remnants of a small bridge used by the railway can still be seen in a shallow valley just north of the main Foxtrot Gate to Nicosia Airport Road. The railway line used to run parallel to the road before turning north toward the Nicosia Race-course, where there was a small station used on race days. Today, a good part of the new road between Nicosia and Famagusta runs between the trees which once bordered the railway.

## PIT YOUR WITS

### (1) NUMBERS



Five consecutive numbers are hidden in the shapes. What are they?

The numbers in the triangle total 27.

The numbers in the circle total 39

The numbers in the square total 24

All five numbers total 65

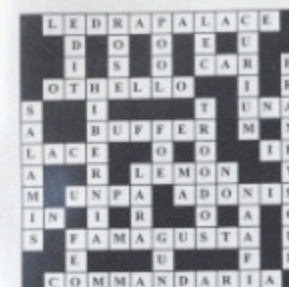
### (2) OLIVES

There are 100 black olives in a black dish and 100 green olives in a green dish. A guest takes 20 green olives from the green dish and places them in the black dish.

Another guest then mixes up the olives in the black dish and takes out 20 olives and puts them in the green dish.

Are there now more green olives in the black dish or more black olives in the green dish?

### (3) HOMES. If Erica lives in Washington and Mark lives in Copenhagen, where does Tina live?



If you find the answers to all three teasers, send them to the Editor by Monday 23 March. The first five correct entries out of the hat will have the pleasure of lunching with the UNFICYP Force Commander!

The winner of last month's crossword competition was John O'Connor from Hum Branch whose entry was first out of the Editor's hat. Congratulations John! Kindly collect your prize from the Spokesman's Office as soon as possible.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR - MORE IMPRESSIONS

Not a bad month. I've been getting around a lot in the DZ and doing my bit to maintain a peaceful atmosphere. The guys I see in the OPs on either side are quite friendly, always waving and calling encouragement to each other and to me, but I wish they wouldn't wave their weapons as well, someone might get the wrong idea. I was working on a scheme to get them together for a few beers, but the boss advised me to wait until bi communal activities are permitted again. Guess I'll put my plans on ice for a while.

I've been able to get around the island a fair bit, thanks to the Pajero (boy, does it move fast!). I got a few funny looks in Episcopo NAFFI, but how was I to know that you need a ration card to buy a few cans? It's not as if there's a war on! The road to Pafos is a bit dodgy, they really ought to do something about it. Next time I'll go via Limassol and not direct from Troodos; me map was useless and I nearly run out of diesel. They ought to put more UN filling stations out West - by the time I got back, the motor was running on memory. I watched the sun go down over Afroditey's birthplace - what a real stunner! I gotta take Sharon to see it, she likes a bit of culture and istry. Lamaca and Limassol aren't too bad, but a few too many Ruskies for my liking. Why those Russian girls dye the roots of their hair black, I'll never know! And the traffic's terrible. These Greeks in the south turn into lunatics behind the steering wheel; it'll be a real shocker when they join the EU, - they'll have to start taking driving tests. I didn't notice any UNMP patrols on my travels; the boss says they're too busy trying to catch the Force Commander in speed traps. They even try to catch the HQ civilians who break the limit on their way to work. Trouble is, they won't succeed because they always lift the traps

by 10 o'clock. Typical monkeys, they're the same the world over.

They won't catch Rocky though, the boss says that he's always in the office at a sparrow's fart. He's a good one for acceptin me letters, and not a bad guy for a Rod Steiger lookalike. I noticed him the other day on his walk through the DZ with Mr Felsal and he wasn't looking too happy at all. He must have had a heavy night cos he looked like death warmed up and he didn't return my wave. Still, I mustn't be too harsh; he probly has a tough time with all those editors bossing him around.

The pay's good here, I've sent Sha a whole heap of lira I had left from me first trip to Turkeytown. I couldn't believe how much geld, I had so I sent her a couple of zillion lira to spend during her trip Rimini. Well, that's where she wants to go, but I'm trying to persuade her to go to Brindisi where all the UN special stores are. She should be able to get some real bargains there, specially with the visitor's ID I fixed for her. I managed to pick up a few choice items myself, in north Nic, like a few Polo shirts (thought Polo only made mints) and a watch for everyone back home, all guaranteed too. Dad always wanted a real Tagg Heuer and Mum will go crazy over her chunky Rolex. Next time I'm going to see Mr Osmond for a blazer and flannels, even though £70 is a bit steep. Wonder if he's any relation to Donny and Marie?

I'm trying to get into our skiing team for the UNFISEP competition, who knows, I might meet the Chief there (Mr Felsal, I should say). That'd be a good tale to tell Sharon - skiing and on the piste with the Chief Of Mission; she'd never believe me! I wonder what he drinks, probly something escuisit like brandy sower or stella artois. Not a bad month, but I hope more snow comes soon.



## PIPE MAJOR HUNTER OF THE PIPES AND DRUMS OF THE 1ST ROYAL TANK REGIMENT



Pipe Major Hunter is the Band Leader and principal piper in the 1st Royal Tank Regiment's Pipe Band. The Pipes and Drums came from the old 4th Royal Tank Regiment where they were founded in 1972. They wear traditional military piper's clothing and their tartan is the hunting tartan of the roses of Kilravock, an honour bestowed upon the band by Lady Rose. Soldiers of the Pipes and Drums serve as both tank crewmen and in the infantry role whilst with UNFICYP. The Pipes and Drums have played at many prestigious events in places as far apart as Canada and the Far East. They have played at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo, and are due to play at the Millennium celebrations in the year 2000.