

THE Blue Beret

March 1997



MAJOR GENERAL DE VERGARA APPOINTED FORCE COMMANDER OF UNFICYP

Friday 28 February was yet another day to be remembered in the UNFICYP calendar. After approximately two and a half years, Brigadier General Ahti Toimi Paavali Vartiainen handed over the post of Force Commander to Major General Evergisto Arturo de Vergara.

The ceremony took place at UNFICYP Headquarters in the presence of the Chief of Mission, Mr Gustave Feissel. Following a full guard of honour in which both generals inspected the troops, Brigadier General Vartiainen stated that he was: "honoured and privileged to have been given the opportunity of commanding such a dedicated team of multinational peace-keepers...".



Major General de Vergara inspecting the guard of honour



L to R: Mr T de Vergara (son), Colonel I Talbot, Mrs M de Vergara, Mr P Schmitz, Mr G Feissel, Major General E de Vergara, Ms S Baptiste and Brigadier General A Vartiainen

After praising Brigadier General Vartiainen's efforts towards a solution of the Cyprus problem, Major General de Vergara added: "..... If we don't learn from the mistakes of the past, we will not be able to build a better world. UNFICYP is here to provide an opportunity for achieving peace. Peace cannot be imposed, peace has to be agreed".

UNFICYP welcomes Major General de Vergara to the mission, and wishes him a successful and enjoyable term in office.

MAJOR GENERAL EVERGISTO ARTURO DE VERGARA



Major General Evergisto Arturo de Vergara of Argentina has been appointed Force Commander of the United Nations Peace-Keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) to succeed Brigadier General A Vartiainen of Finland.

Major General de Vergara graduated from the Argentinian Military Academy in 1966 and in 1988, he completed a tour as a parachute regiment commander. In 1979, he attended the Argentinian War College and completed the Argentinian National Defence College in 1991, later attending the National Defence University in the United States of America.

Major General de Vergara has held a wide range of military appointments in the service of his country, including instructing at the Military Academy (1978-1979, and 1987-1988) and most recently at Army Headquarters in Buenos Aires (1996-1997).

He has served twice with the United Nations, in 1983-1985 as a staff officer and military observer with UNTSO in the Middle East, and with UNPROFOR from 1993-1995 as the Deputy Commander of Sector West in Croatia.

Born in 1946, Major General de Vergara is married and has four children.

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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:

HANDOVER OF THE UNFICYP FORCE COMMANDER

Photo by Sgt Bobbie Lipsett

The Blue Beret



EDITORIAL

The value of bi-communal contact goes without saying. It doesn't matter whether water pipes in the Buffer Zone are laid by workers from both sides or professionals from both communities take part in meetings, whether those attending events are young or old, if it's in the Buffer Zone or not - what counts is that people meet, talk, argue, exchange information - that they are willing to do it and enjoy doing it. What it brings about is contact - direct contact between people, or their parents who once lived together; it bridges the unfortunate, existing gap; it cannot be overvalued.

UNFICYP, working within its mandate, puts great emphasis on the importance of bringing people from the two communities together, to build understanding and trust. To this end, rooms at the Ledra Palace Hotel have been set aside specifically for this purpose - they cater for such diverse groups as educators, lawyers, women, conflict resolution and can be booked by anyone for any event - provided it's bi-communal. Thousands of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots have enjoyed get-together events there; thousands attended UN-sponsored functions commemorating different anniversaries. To build on the success of such gatherings, another large event is currently in the planning stages - a spring fête in May - another open house for all to enjoy.

This edition of the Blue Beret brings reportage of yet another heart-touching bi-communal event - a tree planting ceremony in the mixed village of Pyla. It once again originated and was sponsored by UNFICYP. We invite all our Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot readers: come up with other ideas; the United Nations Operation in Cyprus will help and assist. Help us to help you!

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In its February issue, the Blue Beret had an article on peace-keeping. This article will put peace-keeping in the larger context of instruments and approaches the United Nations has at its disposal to pursue the main purpose of the Organization, namely to maintain international peace and security by taking effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace. In 1995, in an "Agenda for Peace", the Secretary-General put together a comprehensive analysis of the instruments provided in the Charter of the United Nations and how they could be best used in the future.

Since its inception in 1945, the United Nations has developed a range of instruments for controlling and resolving conflicts between and within States. The most important of them are preventive diplomacy and peacemaking; peace-keeping; disarmament; sanctions; and peace enforcement. The first three can be employed only with the consent of the parties to the conflict. Sanctions and enforcement, on the other hand, are coercive measures and thus, by definition, do not require the consent of the party concerned. Disarmament can take place on an agreed basis or in the context of coercive action under Chapter VII.

A further concept is that of post-conflict peace-building. It includes measures such as demilitarization, the control of small arms, institutional reform, improved police and judicial systems, the monitoring of human rights, electoral reform and social and economic development which can be as valuable in preventing conflict as in healing the wounds after conflict has occurred.

The terms preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping are integrally related and can be defined as follows:

- Preventive diplomacy is action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur.
- Peacemaking is action to bring hostile parties to

agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those foreseen in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.

- Peace-keeping is the deployment of a United Nations presence in the field, hitherto with the consent of all the parties concerned, normally involving United Nations military and/or police personnel and frequently civilians as well. Peace-keeping is a technique that expands the possibilities for both the prevention of conflict and the making of peace.

Preventive diplomacy and peacemaking require the support of Member States and the cooperation of the parties to a conflict. Collectively Member



Meeting of the Security Council

States encourage the Secretary-General to play an active role in this field; individually they are often reluctant that he should do so when they themselves are a party to the conflict. The United Nations cannot impose its preventive and peacemaking services on Member States who do not want them. Legally and politically their request for, or at least acquiescence in, United Nations action is a *sine qua non*. Peace-keeping and peacemaking are complementary instruments. The deployment of a peace-keeping force in and by itself cannot solve the roots of a conflict. However, it is an essential instrument to reduce tension in the immediate aftermath of a conflict and to create a climate free of hostilities which is essential for finding a peaceful political solution to a conflict. This inter-relationship is exemplified in Cyprus by the deployment of



UNITED NATIONS PEACEMAKING EFFORTS

UNFICYP as a peace-keeping force, and the good offices mission of the Secretary-General which assists the two communities in finding a solution to the Cyprus problem.



"Let Us Beat Our Swords Into Ploughshares"

close contact with the parties, negotiates with them on behalf of the Secretary-General, and reports on his efforts to the Secretary-General and/or the Security Council. Another instrument is for the Secretary-General to invite a group of Member States to assist him in his efforts as "friends of the Secretary-General". Yet another, largely under-utilized, instrument provided for in the Charter of the United Nations is the International

Court of Justice, or World Court. Parties to a conflict can submit a dispute to the Court for binding arbitration or other dispute-settlement mechanisms. The Court can be particularly useful in settling territorial disputes by applying the principles which have evolved over time in international law.

There is no hard and fast rule for the instruments of peacemaking. Peacemaking efforts can take many shapes or forms and the good offices of the Secretary-General are but one. An often used approach is the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The SRSR keeps

As in peace-keeping, absolute impartiality is an essential ingredient of peacemaking efforts of the Secretary-General. Representing the collective will of 185 Member States, the Secretary-General and his representatives and staff stand above national interests. However, this impartiality is often challenged by the parties to a conflict who, by definition, would like to have the Secretary-General act in their favour.

In 1992, the then Secretary-General reorganized the Secretariat and created the Department for Political Affairs (DPA). This department now handles the relevant political functions relating to peacemaking, which had previously been performed in various parts of the Secretariat. The department follows political developments worldwide, so that it can provide early warning of impending conflicts and analyze possibilities for preventive action by the United Nations, as well as for action to help resolve existing conflicts.

Since the end of the cold war, there has been a dramatic increase in the United Nations activities related to the maintenance of peace and security. Many of today's conflicts are within States, rather than between States. The end of the cold war removed constraints that had inhibited conflict in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere. As a result, there has been a rash of wars within newly independent States, often of a religious or ethnic character and often involving unusual violence and cruelty. The end of the cold war seems also have contributed to an outbreak of such wars in Africa,



United Nations Headquarters in New York

while inter-state wars, by contrast, have become infrequent.

Until the scourge of war has vanished from this planet, United Nations peacemakers and peace-keepers will have to continue their efforts in many parts of the world under often dangerous and hardship conditions.

TREES OF PEACE

On Wednesday 4 March, an unusual event took place in the village of Pyla. Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot children gathered together for a bi-communal tree planting ceremony in this unique village, the only mixed village in the Buffer Zone.

The event was organised by IRCIVPOL with the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot primary schools located in the village. At 9:05 am, the Chief of Mission, Mr G Feissel, accompanied by the newly arrived Force Commander, Major General E de Vergara, and the Senior Adviser, Mr P Schmitz, arrived by helicopter and landed on the sports field just beside the Greek Cypriot primary school where children from both communities were waiting.

The Headmistress from the Greek Cypriot school welcomed Mr Feissel, children and guests from both communities, expressing her gratitude to UNFICYP for taking the time and effort to organise this event. After receiving bouquets of flowers from the children of both communities, Mr Feissel spoke to the crowd and stated, among other things, that the village of Pyla "symbolises what we are trying to achieve for the whole island".

The tree planting ceremony followed, and Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot elementary school students planted saplings in both school grounds. Throughout these activities, Sgt Johnny Burke of IRCIVPOL, dressed in traditional attire, played the bagpipes. Sgt Burke is a member of a civilian pipe band in Ireland, and delighted the people with his presentation of Irish folklore music.

Once the saplings had been planted, the piper then led the procession to the IRCIVPOL

Station located in the village square for a reception. Guests served themselves and enjoyed watching the happy children fill their plates with goodies and then laugh and play in the sunshine, as they often do, quite oblivious to their ethnic differences. Meanwhile, the CM, FC, SA, CO Sector Four, Comd IRCIVPOL and the two village mukhtars met for an informal meeting at IRCIVPOL's Headquarters before the departure of Mr Feissel and his party at 10:40 am.



We give you water - you give us shade

The village of Pyla has a community of about 1,200, approximately 800 of whom are Greek Cypriot and 400 Turkish Cypriot. Although the communities are not thoroughly integrated, there are occasions when they



The Chief of Mission (left) with the Greek Cypriot Mukhtar, Mr Antoniou (second left) and the Turkish Cypriot Mukhtar, Mr Kuleli (right)

mingle, for instance at a neighbour's wedding or a football match. Although as yet no football matches have taken place with a team from each side, Greek Cypriots do occasionally turn up as supporters to watch a Turkish Cypriot football match and vice versa. It is also not unheard of for villagers to have a coffee in each other's coffee shop, which are located on opposite sides of the street in the village square.

The children of the village of Pyla have made the first step in 22 years to bridge a very wide gap. As Mr Feissel said: "The children of Pyla can see each other every day. They know about the other community through regular contacts and they have thus the opportunity to widen their horizons and to be enriched by the culture and customs of the other community. The people have demonstrated that problems can be solved when they are addressed with common sense, mutual respect and a willingness to compromise. It is this spirit of give-and-take which is required to bring about a solution to the Cyprus problem."

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

by Ms Mary Dellar

March 8th marks International Women's Day when women throughout the world honour the universal struggle made through the decades to achieve equality and to end gender discrimination. It is a time to remember the extraordinary and the ordinary women whose courage and determination have changed the course of history and have immensely improved the lives of women today. International Women's Day originated at the turn of the century, when industrialization and political and economic turbulence gave rise to women's suffrage and the demand for equal rights. The United Nations Charter signed in 1945 was the first international agreement to recognize gender equality as a fundamental human right. From the signing of the Charter in 1945, to the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, the United Nations has been a beacon to the world in promoting and protecting the rights of women for over half a century.

International Women's Day is also a time to take stock of the present and to consider the work still to be done to achieve women's equality. In its own house, the United Nations, as most other institutions, has not been immune from the difficulties of turning the right to equality into a reality. Women and men of the Organization are assured, under Article 8 of the United Nations' Charter, of the right to participate in any category and under conditions of equality in the work of the Organization. Yet despite this assurance, it has been the women of the UN who have had to take the lead role in advocating for the equal treatment and employment of women in the United Nations. As a result of years of their efforts, a number of important milestones have been reached

which have improved the status of women, culminating in the commitment made by the Secretary-General to achieve complete gender parity and to create a gender-sensitive work environment. The Secretary-General has set a goal of placing 25 percent of women in posts at the D-1 and above levels by June 1997, and complete gender equality (50-50 parity) between men and women overall in professional posts and for positions at the D-1 level and above by the year 2000.

Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Commission on the Status of Women on the occasion of International Women's Day, the Secretary-General stressed the importance of the full participation of women in peace negotiations, in peace processes and in peace missions. While women are slowly becoming more prominent in the administration of peace-keeping missions, their presence is noticeably absent from the political and decision-making areas. Clearly, there is still a long way to go before women are fully represented at all levels and in all facets of peace-keeping and peace-making. At a time when gender-based violence is becoming a common aspect of armed conflicts, women's perspectives are crucial in peace negotiations and conflict resolution. By excluding women from the substantive activities of peacemaking and peace-keeping, the United Nations, and the world at large, are missing out on talents and contributions of half the world's population. Considerable efforts must be made to ensure that women are actively involved in peacemaking and peace-keeping, not only for the sake of equality, but for the advancement of the cause of peace.



Some of the women in UNFICYP

A BRIEF ENCOUNTER WITH THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF CYPRUS - Part VII

In the January 1997 edition, the Blue Beret gave a descriptive account of the beautiful castles of Buffavento and Kantara. In this edition, we are very pleased to be able to cover the two picturesque and fairy-tale castles of Kyrenia and St Hilarion.

KYRENIA CASTLE

To the east of the charming little horse-shoe harbour of Kyrenia lies Kyrenia Castle, built in the Byzantine style of fortification before the 11th century. This castle is one of the island's oldest buildings and has a very interesting history. Like the other castles, it has had its past glory and tragic days, but was relatively unscathed by direct attack.

The Castle was surrendered to Guy de Lusignan in 1191, and two of the prisoners taken were the wife and daughter of Isaac Comnenos. It was rebuilt and strengthened by the Lusignans in 1208, and in the 1290s, it was remodelled and used as a prison.

At the beginning of the 16th century, the Venetians rebuilt Kyrenia Castle. They reconstructed the west wall and added massive towers with gun emplacements. In 1570, it surrendered without any resistance or aggression on the part of the Turks.

During the British administration, the castle became a prison again. In 1950, it was handed over to the Department of Antiquities but during the EOKA turmoil in the 1950s, it reverted to a prison.

DESCRIPTION

The Byzantine forerunner of the present castle was a much smaller structure consisting of four towers arranged in a square, joined by curtain walls encompassing a yard and ancillary buildings erected against the walls. The castle was protected by a moat and provided with an inner harbour accessed from the main harbour through a large arch. A sea gate was available in the north wall, enabling the castle to be resupplied by ship when under siege.

The original drawbridge has been replaced by a stone bridge of more recent vintage crossing the dry moat to the Venetian entrance. To the right of the entrance passage, which leads to the Frankish gate, steps descend to the water gate. To the left, a passage leads back to a Byzantine church dating from the 12th century. The remnants of opus sectile flooring and marble columns with early Byzantine capitals suggest that an early Christian basilica once occupied this site. The church, given the name St George of the Castle by the Crusader Knights who used it as the castle chapel, stood outside the walls of the Byzantine castle. It was integrated into the castle during the Venetian reconstruction.

Returning to the entrance passage, a ramp can be seen, up which artillery was hauled to the north west tower. This tower, added by the Venetians, protected the harbour and the north western part of the castle, and also afforded a good view over both the harbour and the town. Next to the artillery ramp is the old Frankish north west tower. Looking down from above, it can be seen from the stonework that the original Byzantine tower was round: the square shape is a Frankish modification.



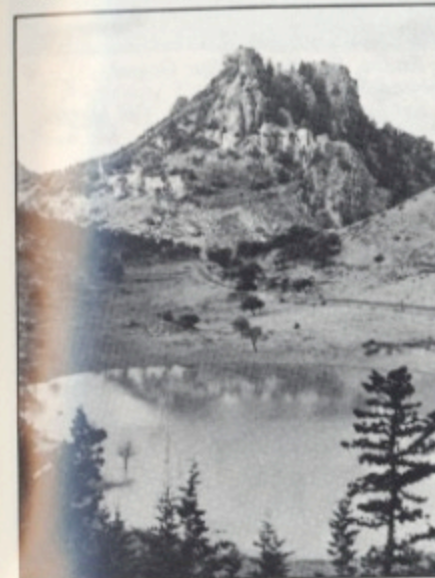
The 14th century Frankish gatehouse is also a replacement of an earlier Byzantine model. Above the gate are the Lusignan coats of arms, these emblems being placed there in more recent times. The tomb of the Ottoman Sadik Pasha, the Turkish admiral to whom the Venetians surrendered the castle, stands in front of the Frankish guard rooms.

Two large halls on the east wall of Kyrenia Castle now contain the Kyrenia Ship Museum, dedicated to an ancient ship that sunk off the coast of Kyrenia around 300 BC. The ship was first located by a Kyrenia sponge diver in 1965. A great deal of information about the ship and its crew has been pieced together with the aid of underwater excavations carried out by a team from the University of Pennsylvania, beginning in 1969 and completed in 1974. The museum is spacious with clear explanations in English, and a replica of the ship, photos of diving and salvaging operations, part of the cargo and other objects are on display.

THE CASTLES OF KYRENIA AND SAINT HILARION

ST HILARION CASTLE

This castle is built on a peak on the Pentadaktylos mountain range, just over 700m above sea level. The origin of its name is disputed. Some attribute it to St Hilarion the Great, a 6th century Syrian hermit and friend of St Jerome, and others maintain the name comes from one of the 300 refugees from the Holy Land when it was overrun by Arabs.



St Hilarion Castle

The original castle formed part of the Byzantine defences of the island, which included the castles of Kyrenia, Buffavento and Kantara. The main role of its garrison was to guard and defend the strategic pass between the capital, Nicosia, and the port of Kyrenia. The date of its construction is not recorded, but was probably in the late 11th century. At this time, Cyprus, which had been recovered from the Arabs in 965, was exposed to attack by the Seljuk Turks who had overrun the Byzantine provinces in Asia Minor.

The earliest references to the castle are found in the contemporary accounts of Richard the Lionheart's campaign in the island in 1191. After Richard's victory at Tremethousa, where Isaac Comnenos was captured,

St Hilarion and the other castles in the north of the island remained to be reduced. When Richard fell ill at Nicosia, he assigned this task to Guy de Lusignan. Kyrenia Castle, after a brief attack, was surrendered, together with Isaac's family and treasures. St Hilarion was next invested, but resisted vigorously until Isaac ordered its surrender, whereupon Isaac's daughter was placed in the castle to prevent her being recaptured by his supporters. At this time, the castle was known as Didymus (the Twins), from the twin crests which crown the mountain peak on which it is built, a name which the Franks corrupted to Dieudamour (Dieu d'Amour).

The castle was adapted as a Catholic establishment by the Lusignans, and went through a number of sieges until it was finally abandoned by the Venetians in 1489, who dismantled this and other castles to save the cost of their garrisons. It never regained its military importance.

DESCRIPTION

In its main outline and arrangement, the castle remains as the Byzantines built it, but many sections in their present form are Frankish, the work of those who rebuilt and improved the castle under the Lusignan kings. There are three divisions: the lower ward, occupying the southward slope below the rocky summit; the middle ward, the main section on the eastward shoulder; and the upper ward, between the twin crests of the summit.

The lower ward is the largest section, where the men-at-arms and animals were quartered. It has seven semi-circular towers spaced along its outer wall.

The middle ward is reached through a massive gatehouse, a Byzantine shell within which the Lusignan masons devised a vaulted passage in cut stone, originally closed by a drawbridge. Passing through the passage and up the steps to the right, the Church is reached, a Byzantine



structure formerly covered by a large dome. The church and its annexes, which far exceed the needs of a castle chapel, support the assumption that the first substantial structure on the site was a monastery. The same passage leads into the belvedere, a vaulted loggia commanding fine views through its open archways.

At the exit from the middle ward was a gate, outside which stand a postern and an enormous, open, rectangular reservoir, both of Frankish construction. The reservoir is situated at the bottom of the gully up which a zig-zag path climbs to the upper ward. The entrance is through a Frankish arch set in a rough, Byzantine wall and protected by a tower similar to those of the lower ward. The courtyard within is flanked by the twin crests of rock forming the summit. On the west, the courtyard is closed by the royal apartments, a fine but damaged Lusignan building of the 14th century. A passage, which leads below it to a postern, and a cistern occupy the basement level.

From the courtyard, a short climb leads to the top-most rampart on the southern crest and the summit from which a splendid panorama is obtained. This rampart, with its square towers once covered with flat roofs on rafters, is early Frankish in origin.

After leaving the upper ward, the adventurous may visit Prince John's Tower. A difficult route leads to this strong and isolated tower, which stands in the centre of the castle with sheer precipices on three sides. Its vaulted Frankish construction suggests a 14th century date.

SECTOR TWO ENGINEERS

69 GURKHA FIELD SQUADRON, THE QUEEN'S GURKHA ENGINEERS

Gesticulating an arcing motion with his hand near his neck, an Argentinian UN soldier remarked: "You like doing 'swisstt' with your Khukuri than use rifle, no?" "What? You are part of British Army, and not Gurkha Army?" queried another. "Ah ha, I've heard you have mountains nearly as big as ours!" said an Austrian.

Having been on the island as part of UNFICYP for about four months, it is perhaps appropriate that various matters should be explained about the Gurkhas to all those who harbour such questions as those above.

The Gurkhas you have seen around and about in the BZ recently are Sector Two Engineers under 32nd Regiment Royal Artillery. They are all sappers from 69 Gurkha Field Squadron, The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, and are very much part of the British Army. In the UK, they belong to 36 Engineer Regiment The Royal Engineers, providing general support combat engineering to 3rd (UK) Division. Here in Cyprus, their mission is "to provide Engineer support for Sector Two in order to create and maintain safe working conditions for UN OPs".

To outline the history briefly, albeit a 'hill' version and not necessarily the official version, the Gurkhas have a long history of liaison with the British Army, dating back to 1815 when the first Gurkhas were recruited by the British. The first British and Gurkha contact was made when the 'then reported marauding British' after having swept the plains of India (still in their Mess Kit) thought "let's sweep the hills in the north as well". They then proceeded to do so, little realizing that our forefathers, armed with Khukuris, would be a foe of the most unusual kind who would 'rather die than surrender and be branded a coward' and that the hills where they dwelt were over 7,000 feet high. After numerous battles, so impressed were the British by the bravery of the Gurkhas that a truce was called and an offer of service with the British was made, which the Gurkhas, 'to see the world', gladly accepted. Since then, a special bond and loyalty have developed between the two as they



Standing, left to right: Spr Manjū, Spr Rudra, Spr Budha, Spr Goipal, Spr Bhes, LCpl Chabi and Spr Yam
Sitting, left to right: LCpl Kamal, LCpl Hari, Sgt Suresh, Capt T Lama, Cpl Mohan and LCpl Ramesh

fought side by side in every major war and campaign to date.

The Gurkhas are Nepalese nationals who are born and raised in the mountains of Nepal. (By the way, for the information of our Austrian friends, Mount Everest - the highest mountain in the world - is in Nepal.) They join and serve for 15 years, at which point, if they are not promoted to Sergeant, they return to Nepal on a pension. After 15 years, each new rank permits an extension of one and a half years of service, hence those who have reached a WO1 rank will have served 21 years.

Commission from the ranks as a Queen's Gurkha Officer can be attained at the 16 years' point for a maximum of eight years commission service, reaching a peak rank of Major. In the past, young Gurkhas with about four to six years of service were selected for Sandhurst commission: two such commissioned officers have reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel (one is currently the Commanding Officer of a Gurkha battalion). Sandhurst commissioning for Gurkhas has now ceased, due to the draw-down and reduction in strength of the Brigade of Gurkhas.

The Gurkhas in the British Army number approximately 2,500. They are dispersed into two infantry battalions (one in the UK and the other in Brunei), three infantry companies, one each with The Royal Scots, The Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment and Parachute Regiment, and a squadron each of Engineers, Signals and Transport with their respective Corps.

Each member of the Sector Two Gurkha Engineers is a combination of infanteer, combat engineer and artisan tradesman (alas not a gunner). They do nine months of basic and infantry training at the Depot Brigade of Gurkhas, followed by five months of combat engineering training at the Battle Engineering Wing (BEW) of the Royal School of Military Engineering (RSME) at Minley. Then at their three-year point of service, they learn an artisan trade (plumber and pipefitter, electrician or carpenter and joiner, to name a few) at the Civil Engineering Wing of the RSME at Chatham.

To qualify for promotion to a LCpl, a Gurkha sapper will have to achieve an excellent result on a four-week Junior Leader Cadre course run by the

Regiment. For Cpl, he will have to pass a three-week Junior Commander's Course (JCC) and a four-week Field Section Commander's course at the BEW RSME. Those selected for Sgt will do a two-week RE SNCO Cadre at RSME and, after successfully completing it and promotion to Sgt, will then do a four and a half week Field Sgt's course.

We hope we have given you enough information here. We shall be writing about our work and play next time. Lastly, to answer to the first remark at the beginning: "Yes! We do like doing 'swisstt' with our Khukuri, but only in war. In peace time, we much prefer doing 'swisstt' on a goat for a sumptuous curry".

SECTOR ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

Sectors Two and Four have recently witnessed the introduction of civilian Administrative Officers (AOs). The civilian AOs, drawn from the ranks of the Field Service Category, were deployed in the Sectors from 1 January 1997 with the aim of improving accountability for UN material and human resources, increasing communication and liaison between HQ civilian administration and the Sector personnel, and assisting the Sector in a variety of other administrative matters.

Some of the areas in which the AOs would assist the Sectors include buildings management, OP development, supervision of local staff, and rations and property inventory and control. The AOs, while under the direction and control of the Chief Administrative Officer, are attached to the Office of the Sector Commanders. The civilian AOs would generally come from a military



Lars Wielandt in Sector Four

experience and a knowledge of UN administrative rules and procedures.

As the number of civilian staff at UNFICYP (40 international and 296 locally recruited) is considerably less than other peace-keeping missions of this size, it was necessary to redeploy existing staff within the mission to the Sectors to take up the role of AO. Mr Herbert Simon, who was previously assigned to the Movement Control Unit, is the Administrative Officer of Sector Two. Herbie has been with UNFICYP since 24 October 1993, and had served with the Austrian Army prior to his employment with the United Nations. Sector Four's Administrative Officer, Mr Lars Wielandt, is probably most familiar to us in his previous role as the Registry Officer. He has several years of experience, having joined the UN in July 1982. Lars is now serving in CDL Famagusta. As for Sector One, efforts continue to be made for the assignment of a bilingual Administrative Officer for ARGCON headquarters in Skouriotissa.



Herbie Simon in Sector Two

background and have a number of years of experience in UN peace-keeping missions, thereby possessing a valuable combination of military

HUNGARIAN NATIONAL DAY

by Capt Andre Szenasi

Hungary's National Day is celebrated annually on 15 March, as it is on this date that the Hungarian revolution and struggle for independence from Austria began. A further aim of the revolution was to liberalise the economy as a transition from feudalism to a market economy.

The war lasted for two years, and even though the Austrian troops were superior in numbers, training and equipment, they were unable to quell the revolution. Therefore, they asked the Russian Czar to assist them, and the two nations collaborated into forcing the Hungarians to lay down their weapons.

Traditionally, speeches on 15 March detail the historical events of the revolution and the fight for independence, listing names, dates, locations, etc. It is the conclusions of the revolution, however, that are more significant and meaningful to us today.

HUNCON CELEBRATES

On 15 March 1997, the Hungarian Contingent in UNFICYP celebrated Hungary's National Day at the Commercial Section of the Hungarian Embassy in Nicosia. The event was attended by the Force Commander, Major General E de Vergara, the Senior Adviser, Mr P Schmitz, the Chief of Staff, Colonel I Talbot, as well as several members of UNFICYP and friends of the Hungarian Contingent.

Following the reception, a small party was held (see right).

The fact that the revolution and the fight for independence was suppressed after two years does not mean that the ideas failed. Economic changes and development were pushed through during the next few decades, and these were paramount in paving the way when Hungary finally achieved its independence.

The consequences of the Austrian (and Russian) suppression of the Hungarian revolution might seem to suggest future hostility between Austria and Hungary. On the contrary, the relationship between Hungary and Austria today is excellent, and compares favourably with Hungary's other bordering nations.

Furthermore, Hungarians and Austrians now serve together in Cyprus as peace-keepers in a joint Austro-Hungarian Battalion with UNFICYP - a perfect example of how the wounds of history can be healed. This should be the main message of Hungary's National Day to Cyprus.



Chief of the Hungarian Commercial Section, Mr Keresztes (right) with members of HUNCON, following the reception

HALF OF HUNCON BIDS FAREWELL

After 16 months of hard work, 24 members of the first Hungarian Contingent, who arrived in November 1995, depart from the island at the end of March. All of us leave with a feeling of contentment that we have completed our first UN mission. For most of us, it was the first opportunity we had to serve together with soldiers of other nationalities, and our contingent from Hungary is one of the first to take part in a UN mission. During this period, the Hungarian Army has been re-organised, and on our return, many of us will find ourselves in new jobs.

We are looking forward to going home to our loved ones, but we shall never forget the comrades and friends we made in Cyprus.



Departing members of the first Hungarian Contingent

ST PATRICK

The patron saint of Ireland, as most of you know, is St Patrick (385-461 AD). The events of his life are shrouded in legend and all dates are subject to disagreement, but it is known that he was born in a village near the river Severn in western Britain. His father, Calpornius, was a high-ranking soldier of a Celto-Roman family and had been converted to Christianity.

At about the age of 16, Patrick was captured by pirates and taken to Antrim in Ireland, where he was sold into slavery. Six years later, he escaped on a friendly boat, but was taken to France. There he remained for 14 years, training for the priesthood at the monastery of Lerins and at Auxerre, under the direction of St Germanus. In 432, he returned to Ireland on a mission of conversion.

At first, he met open hostility from the Druids by whom he was imprisoned and condemned; but, following his meeting at Tara with Laoghaire, the high king of Ireland, and the conversion of the royal family, he was afforded protection. Legend has it that on Easter Sunday in 433, Patrick explained the mystery of the Trinity to the king by plucking a three-leaved shamrock. Within a few years he had organised the Church in northern and western Ireland, and founded churches and consecrated bishops in the south. Following a visit to Rome in 442, he founded the cathedral church at Armagh in 444 which became the centre of Irish Christianity.

The main source for Patrick's life is his *Confession*, written in crude Latin in 450. He also wrote the so-called *Letter to Coroticus*. St Patrick died at Saul on 17 March, his feast day, which is also celebrated as a national holiday in the Republic of Ireland. His emblems are the shamrock and the snake.

ST PATRICK'S DAY IRCON MEDAL PARADE



Irish Contingents in Cyprus have been celebrating St Patrick's Day since 1964. This year, to coincide with the visit of the Irish Minister of Defence and Chief of Staff, Irish Defence Forces, the celebrations were brought forward three days. The Irish National Day celebration and the Contingent Medal Parade both took place on 14 March.

The Irish Minister for Defence, Mr Sean Barrett TD, and the Chief of Staff of the Irish Defence Forces, Lt Gen Gerry McMahon, visited UNFICYP from 13 to 16 March.



From the top of the hill of Croagh Patrick in Co Mayo, St Patrick is said to have expelled all noisome reptiles from Ireland. On one side is a precipice. Every time the Saint rang his service bell, he flung it over the precipice; every time there went with it an avalanche of snakes and toads; every time, the bell was miraculously returned to him to him.

The tradition of distributing the shamrock to personnel was observed after a blessing by Fr Finbarr and military chaplains, Revds Hayter and Longin and Fr Kechichian. Also in attendance were representatives of the Cyprus Irish Community and family members of Irish troops receiving their medals, a number of whom had travelled from Ireland for the occasion.

A reception was held in the International Mess where guests were invited to a wonderful spread of Irish food and drinks. Traditional entertainment was provided by harpist Irene Cotter, and a local folk dance group added an authentic Cypriot touch to the proceedings. Outside, a piper from IRCIVPOL played the bagpipes and the Argentinian band also entertained an enthusiastic audience.

After refreshments and Gaelic coffees in the International Mess, the celebrations continued in the Hibernia Club. The inclement weather did not dampen the enthusiasm of the guests, and a most enjoyable time was had by all.



The Minister (left) on a Green Line tour

During the course of the visit, they paid official calls on the Force Commander and Senior Adviser, and were briefed by the Chief of Staff, the Senior Irish Officer and the OC Camp Command.

On the day, St Patrick answered the prayers of the people of Cyprus by bringing typical Irish weather, ie heavy rain, which meant that the ceremony had to be held indoors in the International Mess. Despite the large attendance in a confined area, an intimate and friendly atmosphere prevailed.

On his first medal presentation ceremony since taking over command of UNFICYP, Maj Gen de Vergara presented 18 Irish Contingent personnel with the UN medal.



Irish recipients of the UN medal

THE "MOLES" OF SECTOR ONE

Here in Sector One, we constantly talk about incidents, patrols and men on the line. However, little is said about those soldiers whose only task is to support other members of the Argentinian Contingent. One such group is the Engineer Platoon, fondly known in Sector One as "the moles". They are invariably assigned a great number of tasks, some of them vital. One such duty is to repair, maintain and sometimes rebuild roads within the Sector. As the saying goes, prevention is better than cure, so the Engineer Platoon carries out any necessary road improvements as soon as they can in the hope of avoiding an accident.



The "moles", repairing the road in Alpha Coy, Sector One

For the last month, they have been working hard to improve conditions along Track 200 from UN 19 to UN 22. Supported by a JCB bulldozer and two heavy trucks, they have been levelling the surface of the road and digging trenches in order to drain away excess rain water. On the hilly terrain in Sector One's area of control, such precautions are vital in order to avoid serious mishaps when out on patrol.

Even though the work is tiring and the men face many problems, in particular the weather, they never lose their enthusiasm and are always willing to face any task put before them. Well done, moles!



The Engineer Platoon in Sector One

A LITTLE HELP FROM HEAVEN

7 February 1997 was a windy day in Sector One. Everyone wore heavy uniforms to keep out the cold, but in Patrol Base UN 25, there was a warm atmosphere that morning. Father Kechichian, Sector One's Roman Catholic priest, held a short service in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is traditional amongst UN peace-keepers in Argentina to honour the mother of Jesus and also Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of soldiers, particularly when they are far away from their homes and families.

Father Kechichian, Capt Quinteros (Commander Bravo Coy) and the crew of PB 25 were present for the ceremony. Being near to Easter, the time when all Christians remember the resurrection of Christ, it was a particularly poignant and happy occasion. Following the service, a small party was held to end a very happy event.



Father Kechichian (left) with members of PB 25

ROTATION OF THE PFR

Personnel from Sector One's contribution to the Permanent Force Reserve were replaced at the beginning of the year with the rotation of the Argentinian Contingent.

The newly arrived SNCOs and NCOs are very grateful for the opportunity to work in this multinational force, and they have been fully briefed on the obstacles they may often have to cross during their tour with UNFICYP.

Although they all have a basic knowledge of English, the official language of the Force, the Argentinian personnel within the Permanent Force Reserve work side by side with Austrian and

British soldiers and they therefore decided to employ an English teacher to help them improve their knowledge of the language. The teacher Marina, pictured right, comes to the UNPA three times a week and conducts very enjoyable lessons which last 90 minutes each session. The fact that she also speaks Italian and Spanish is a considerable advantage.



The Argentinian members of the Permanent Force Reserve are extremely grateful to their fellow soldiers in the PFR, the British in particular, for the effort they have made in helping them with their English. Now that they are both working and studying, time goes even more quickly, but the main thought the Argentinians in the PFR always have in mind is how well UNFICYP's Mission can be accomplished.



Some Argentinian and British members of the Permanent Force Reserve

ALPHA COY ON THE AIR AGAIN

On 10 February, Argentina's Task Force 8 took over the radio programme transmitted on 96.8 FM. The station is based in the village of Kato Pyrgos, run by WOII Juan Domingo Muñoz, SSgt Héctor Mamani and Capt Marcelo Camacho, the director.

The programme broadcasts in Spanish for the benefit of Sector One personnel, mainly those serving on the line. It operates on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2000 to 2100 hours, providing one hour of music from Argentina as well as the news, greetings from home and much more - to keep morale high. Anyone can ring and take an active role in the programme - so please do so on (06) 522325. We await to hear from you.



From the left: Capt Peilessi, Capt Camacho, WOII Muñoz and Sgt Mamani

THE TREES OF PEACE



Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Paola Mitidi (left) and Ayshe Devecioglu from Pyla, planting trees in the school grounds

Photo by courtesy of the Larnaca Press News Agency