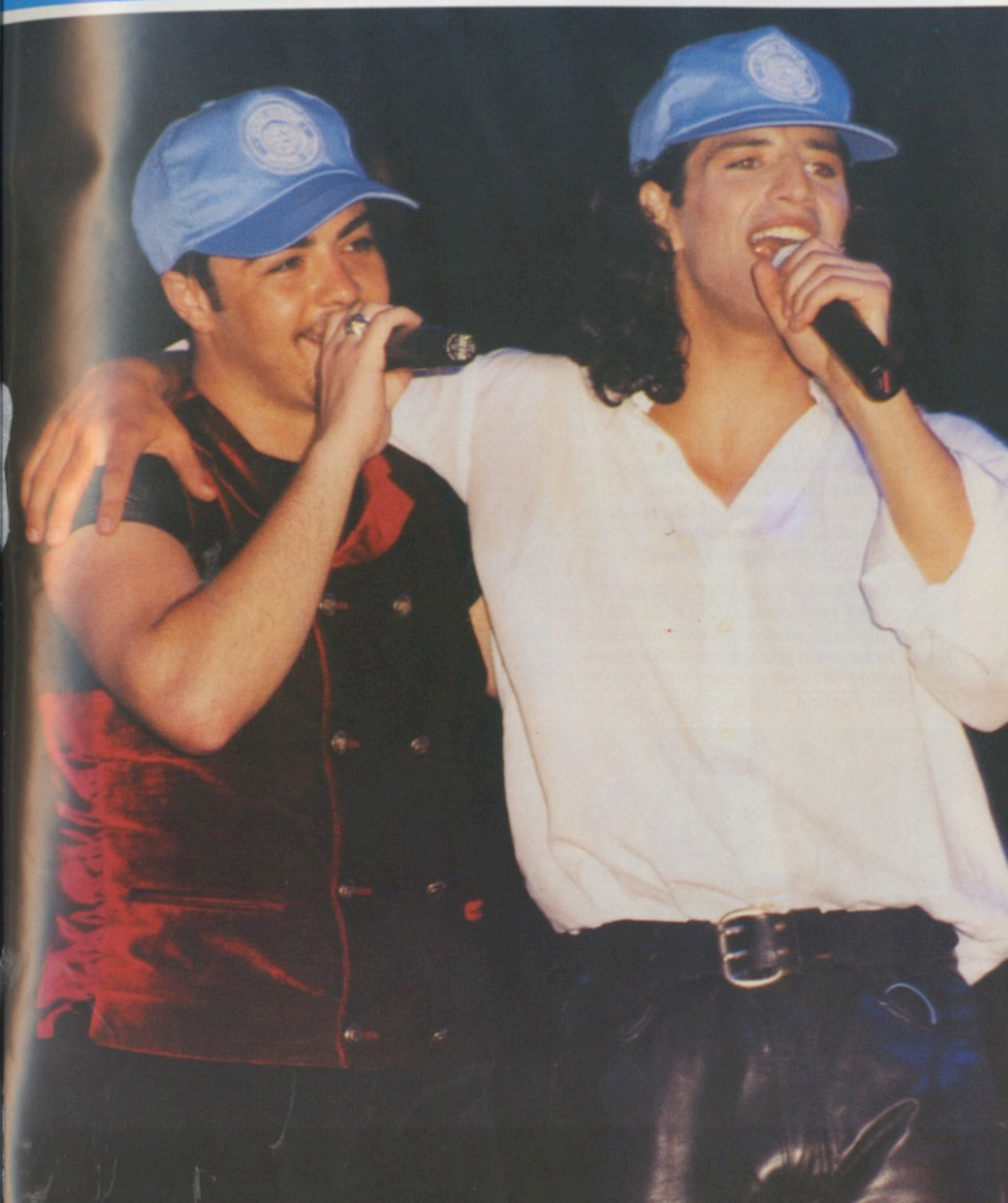


THE Blue Beret

May 1997



THE ANZAC STORY

by Sgt Donna Riordan, AUSTCIVPOL

At 0400 hrs on 25th April in the year 1915,
The ANZACS came ashore at Suvla Bay Turkey,
young, strong and keen.
Upon the beach they landed, surrounded by rugged
mountains,
The machine gun fire which met them left them with
little gains.

Their casualties were extremely heavy as they were
landed on the wrong beach,
Their goal to establish a bridgehead appeared to be
out of reach.
However they were not ready to accept defeat,
They showed extreme bravery and self reliance, they
continued to compete.

Against the odds they advanced a mere kilometre that
first day,
It was as far as they were going to everyone's dismay.
The cost to the ANZACS was heavy, many soldiers
wounded and killed,
However for many of the men, their destiny had been
fulfilled.

In our hearts we thank those courageous few,
To whom we owe so much, all of whom we never
knew.
But their courage and bravery against all odds will
always live on,
We will remember them, for in our hearts, they still
belong.

BINYON'S LINES

They shall grow not old,
As we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them,
Nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun,
And in the morning,
We will remember them.

As the dawn emerged upon the darkness,
the members of AUSTCIVPOL and their
invited UN guests gathered at Wayne's
Keep Cemetery to commemorate the continuing
memory of those thousands of Australian
and New Zealand gallant soldiers who have



The Flag Bearers and Honour Guard by the Cenotaph at the Cemetery

laid down their lives in the service of their
country.

It was a sombre affair, heightened by the
band which provided a soothing background
to the sobriety of the ceremony. Wreaths were
laid at the graves of fallen servicemen in
honour of their memory.

A touching moment to the ceremony was
the presentation of a wreath from the Turkish
Forces which was handed over the fence. It
was a solemn symbol of their respect.

The flags of Australia and New Zealand
were paraded and billowed in the wind.

The last post sounded, followed by a
period of silence to honour those who had
fallen.



From the left: Comdr B Carpenter, Capt JW Taylor,
HE J Sullivan, Australian High Commissioner,
The V Rev C Handford and The Rt Rev Fr U Barato OFM

The Blue Beret



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The Blue Beret is the journal of the United
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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:

"FRIENDSHIP"
BURAK KUT (LEFT) AND
SAKIS ROUVAS

Photo by Sgt Bobbie Lipsett

EDITORIAL

Editorials always present the official line of a publication and focus on the most important events of the day. In the case of the Blue Beret, these are events or themes of the month. This time, however, we would like others to speak. Obviously, the issue is the bi-communal peace concert which took place in the Buffer Zone on 19 May. The UNFICYP media line on the issue was made known and presented by many local papers on both sides. In this editorial, we would like some spectators and commentators from both sides, who voiced their opinions, to be heard again.

"It was obvious to me throughout the concert that there is a great thirst on both sides for coming together again and for a new beginning, away from the hostility and the mistakes of the past".

"Monday night's riots in protest against the United Nations-sponsored peace concert in the Buffer Zone were profoundly depressing. The significance of one of the biggest intercommunal gatherings since 1974 should not be under-estimated, yet it was opposed from the start".

"The goodwill emanating from these young people was infectious. I understand neither Greek nor Turkish, but I did comprehend fully the message that was being sent: it was one of peace and reconciliation".

"For one brief evening, on a long disused Cyprus football pitch, the universal passion of music wove a common thread between young people from both sides".

"Last Monday's bi-communal reconciliation concert has rightly been hailed as a success, because it did prove one thing - that there is a fervent desire by the people of both sides, particularly the young, to get together and live in peace".

It is only a lack of space which prevents us from printing many more positive remarks published on both sides. We are certain that the peace concert, and all the ensuing comments, will have a most positive impact on the work of all those with the mandate to bring lasting peace to this island.

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Monday 19 May 1997 was an evening which will be remembered by more than the 3,000 young people of Cyprus who gathered at the Chetinkaya sports field just outside the Venetian Walls, facing the Ledra Palace Hotel. The two singers, Burak Kut from Turkey and Sakis Rouvas from Greece, provided a memorable 90-minute show.

The bi-communal peace concert required several weeks of intensive preparations, including the removal of barbed wire, scrap fences, old concrete foundations, undergrowth, etc. Once the clearing was complete, an area of just over 30,000 square metres was levelled with heavy vehicles - bull-dozers, wheel loaders, trucks, JCBs and roller/compactors were used. The bastion walls had to be cleared manually by 35 UNFICYP soldiers from all sectors. Trees were pruned, palm trees trimmed, the VIP stand erected and ramps constructed for the purpose of medical assistance. This mammoth task was completed in record time, thanks to the willingness and determination of all personnel within the Force.

Security during the concert was of paramount importance. Over 400 UNFICYP peace-keepers were assigned to ensure that the event took place peacefully. There was excellent cooperation with the police on both sides.

All this effort was not in vain, and by the evening, everything was in place, ready for the concert. Regardless of the uncertainty and some negative predictions, the two brave young men went ahead with their programme as scheduled. The United Nations extends its thanks to Burak and Sakis, who showed great courage in the face of adverse media reporting and counter demonstrations by groups which opposed the event.

The concert opened with a duet, followed by solo songs by the two artists singing in their respective languages. The audience was truly bi-communal in its response, equally

cheering both singers. At the end of their performance, Burak and Sakis launched into a selection of English songs, including *Imagine* by John Lennon, *Come Together* by the Beatles and Bob Dylan's *Knocking on Heaven's Door*, lyrics with a deep meaning that could easily be applied to the situation on this troubled island.

Language was no barrier - the common meaning was in the songs. The message of peace and togetherness was felt by the whole crowd as, side by side and holding hands, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots swayed together to the rhythm of the music. They mixed readily, sang and danced together, and exchanged flowers and addresses.

This concert could not have taken place without the approval of both community leaders. The "green light" for this event was given, and UNFICYP is most grateful for the support given by the two sides at all levels. It is worth recalling that at a meeting at the Ledra Palace Hotel in March, leaders of the political parties on both sides pledged to co-sponsor concerts and other such bi-communal events.



"Imagine"....., "Come Together".....

They have thus shown their willingness to contribute to an atmosphere which will help bring about a solution to the Cyprus problem.

The concert came to a close around 23:30 hours with the entire audience chanting "we want peace".

At the subsequent press conference held in the Ledra Palace Hotel, the Chief of the United Nations Operation in Cyprus, Mr Gustave Feissel, expressed his great respect for the over 3,000 people who attended the function, and who had sent a message of peace across the island and abroad. He also thanked the soldiers of UNFICYP who worked so hard for this event. Mr Feissel then presented both singers with a plaque from UNFICYP in appreciation of their contribution to making the evening a success.

Burak, visibly moved by the whole event, commented that he was: "very pleased to be in Cyprus tonight, and that he was sure everyone would get the message that what has happened in the past is over, and that what is important now is friendship between Cypriots." "Peace", he said, "is always true".

THE MESSAGE WAS LOUD AND CLEAR

Sakis added: "We should all look to a better future. Burak and I are only singers, but we are doing something we believe in by trying to put our message clearly across to the politicians and to the people in the most effective and genuine manner. We feel we have succeeded in what we set out to do. It is now up to the people to nurture the seed which has been planted and help it grow".



The view is better from up here!

When asked about the message which was directed towards the youth of the island, Mr Feissel commented "the best message we can give to those people who decided not to come is to look at those who came. I am quite confident that what our two friends have done will help the UN very much in moving things forward at a time when we are about to embark on important negotiations. Even though there have been some difficulties, we should not overlook the most important message of friendship, which was very visible tonight."

UNFICYP considers this concert an inspiration and great encouragement for its efforts to

promote bi-communal activities. The concert has been an undeniable confirmation that Cypriots from both sides want to live together in a federal Cyprus, and are prepared to make the effort.

This was an unforgettable evening, with everyone leaving just a little more united than they were before - and looking forward to the next bi-communal concert!



Presentation of plaques by Mr Feissel to Sakis (left) and Burak

Message from the Chief of Mission, Mr Gustave Feissel, and the Force Commander, Major General Evergisto de Vergara, to all military and civilian staff

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to all members of the Force who were involved in the planning, organizing and conduct of the bi-communal concert which was held at Chetinkaya sports field in Nicosia on 19 May 1997.

The concert was a large-scale, high profile and most successful event covered by the local and international media where the Force was very much in the spotlight. This operation placed a heavy workload on members of the Force, but was nevertheless carried out in a highly competent manner and with the professionalism expected from UNFICYP. We are very gratified at the way personnel collaborated in harmony as a cohesive team in the true spirit of the United Nations. The skillful handling of this concert has enhanced the reputation of UNFICYP, not only in Cyprus but also abroad, and has been the subject of much favourable comment.

All members of the military, police and civilian staff are to be congratulated for their hard work which was essential for the success of the venture. We are confident that the clear message of reconciliation that emerged from the concert will contribute to the efforts of the Secretary-General to bring about an overall settlement to the Cyprus problem.



COMMEMORATION SERVICE FOR ADMIRAL BROWN

On 3 March 1997, ARGCON commemorated the anniversary of the death of Admiral Guillermo Brown. The parade took place in Admiral Brown Camp, where the Headquarters of the Argentine Navy Marine Corps is based.

It was a simple but emotional ceremony. CO Sector One took the salute, and Commander Charlie Coy gave a short speech on the most important hero of the Argentinian Navy who, even when outnumbered by the enemy, would prefer his ship to sink rather than surrender the flag. At sunset, the national flag was lowered, bringing the ceremony to an end. Commander Sector One, Lt Col Barni, and Senior Irish Officer, Lt Col O'Callaghan, led the guests to a reception in the Officers' Mess, where a picture of this distinguished hero is on display. The reception was enjoyed by all.



Lt Col O'Callaghan (left) with Lt Col Barni

THE ARMY HEAD CHAPLAIN IN CYPRUS



Monseigneur De Leone in Sector One

Between 27 March and 2 April, the Argentinian Army Head Chaplain, Monseigneur Mario De Leone, visited Cyprus to spend some time, including Easter, with the Argentinian soldiers.

Monseigneur De Leone was met at Larnaca Airport by the CO Sector One, Lt Col Barni, and the Military Priest of ARGCON, Father Juan Kechichian.

In Sector One, he was given a short brief on Cyprus and UNFICYP, and attended a number of line tours, during which he visited OPs in the Sector and talked with the Argentinian soldiers on the line.

On Friday evening (Good

Friday), mass was celebrated at San Martin Camp with many parishioners in attendance. On Easter Sunday at 1130 hrs, a service was co-celebrated by both Roman Catholics and Greek Orthodox at the church of Panagia Skouriotissa in San Martin Camp, with many people coming from as far away as Nicosia.

This was Monseigneur De Leone's third visit to Cyprus. He arrived from Argentina where he carries out his normal duties at the Army General Staff in Buenos Aires city. He brought with him a message from the Armed Forces Bishop NE Martina, who sent his blessing to all those far away from home, working for peace on this island.

AUSTRIAN AND HUNGARIAN CONTINGENTS ROTATE

On 18 and 25 March, a 50% rotation of the Austrian and Hungarian Contingents took place. All personnel had previously undergone mission-orientated basic training in Austria and Hungary. However, with only a one-week handover period, there was very little time to acquire the knowledge needed for the job on the ground. Nevertheless, the new soldiers have blended in perfectly and have settled down well in their new routine.

UNFICYP welcomes the newcomers and wishes them a successful tour.



The new arrivals at Larnaca International Airport

THE HUMANITARIANS OF SECTOR FOUR

The Humanitarian Branch of Sector Four consists of one officer and two NCOs stationed at Camp Duke Leopold V in Famagusta and two soldiers of HQ Coy at LP Karpas in Leonariso. Their activities are based on the UNFICYP mandate, the Vienna III Agreement and the UNFICYP Humanitarian Review (1995). They are involved in a broad range of tasks, ranging from routine office work and patrolling to a multitude of humanitarian duties which can vary from day to day.

In general, the Humanitarian Branch of Sector Four deals with the problems of the Greek Cypriots in the northern part and the Turkish Cypriots in the southern part of the island.

The Greek Cypriots are interspersed among the villages of the Karpas area where their population in 1974 was approximately 9,000 persons. Since then, there has been a steady decline in the population to 1,370 in 1980, and it now stands at below 500. The residents are quite elderly and the average age is estimated at 66; consequently, many of the problems are of a social and medical nature.



The humanitarian personnel presenting gifts in a Famagusta orphanage

During the winter period, their difficulties are compounded by the inclement weather and some are transported to the south by MEDEVAC.

The Branch co-ordinates a comprehensive resupply and Northwind patrol programme during which supplies of food, medicines and clothing are delivered to the Karpas on a weekly basis. Additionally, in conjunction with IRCIVPOL, personnel maintain close contact with the residents through home visits. Pensions, social insurance and welfare entitlements are delivered by IRCIVPOL during their monthly Money Run.

Liaison and close contact is maintained with the community leaders and local authorities in each village.

Sector Four also has a responsibility for the Turkish Cypriots in the south who are located in Larnaca, Pyla, Potamia and Dhali. Their requirements are not as demanding, as they are well integrated into

their respective environments. They are visited each month by Sector Four personnel on the Southwind patrol and a representative from the Red Cross. Their circumstances are assessed continuously and, in general, apart from a few bedridden and ailing persons, they are content in their everyday lives.

Humanitarian personnel also monitor the economic situation in their area of operations and are particularly concerned with the supplies of water and electricity. At times, there are water and electricity shortages in the north, and Sector Four negotiates with the appropriate authorities for the provision of additional supplies when necessary.

Although it is UNFICYP's policy to encourage a return to normal conditions, it is necessary to ensure that the integrity of the Buffer Zone is maintained. Consequently, the Humanitarian Branch controls movement throughout the Buffer Zone by issuing job passes, farming permits and construction permits to local residents in accordance with the criteria laid down by UNFICYP. Sector Four is strongly committed to its humanitarian mandate, and pursues an all-embracing campaign on behalf of both communities.

Progress on certain issues can be slow and this can at times be frustrating, but this does not deter the Humanitarian Branch of Sector Four in pursuit of its goals.



The humanitarian personnel on standby

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

The spectacular and breath-taking 14th century Abbey of Bellapais, built on the edge of a cliff, lies approximately 4 km south-east of Kyrenia. The Abbey is considered to be the finest Gothic monument in the Levant, and the village derives its name from the Abbey.

In its early days, the Abbey was commonly known as *Episcopia* or *Piscopia* (from the Greek "*Episkopi*" meaning *Bishopric*). This name suggests that the monastery may have been erected on the site of the residence of the Greek Bishop of Kyrenia. During the Frankish occupation of the island in the 16th century, the monastery took the name of "*Abbaie de la Paix*" (old French spelling for *Abbaye de la Paix*, meaning *Abbey of Peace*), corrupted by the Venetians into *Bella Païse*, from which it acquired its modern name.

The white habit of the Norbertines gave the Abbey still another name, that of "*White Abbey*", by which it is referred to in documents of the 15th/16th centuries. Ever since the church was taken over by the Orthodox community, it has been called "*Panayia Asprophoroussa*" - Blessed Virgin Mary of the White Robes.

HISTORY

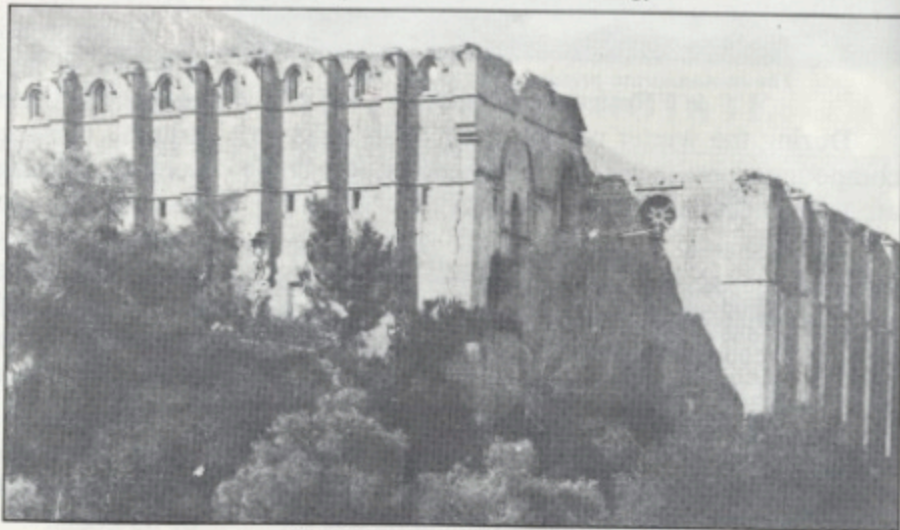
Bellapais Abbey was first heard of as a house of Augustinian canons, a foundation of the king of Jerusalem, evidently Aimery de Lusignan, who held that title from 1198 to 1205. The Augustinians came from Palestine, where their order had custody of the church of the Holy Sepulchre. There followed the arrival of the monks of St Norbert who had also lost two monasteries in Palestine. The Abbey adopted the canons of the Norbertines (or *Prémonstratensians*) at the time of Thierry (1206-1211), the second Latin Archbishop of Nicosia.

Hugh de Flagiano, once dean of the cathedral of Rouen who came to Cyprus with St Louis in 1248, attached himself to the fraternity of "*Episcopia*" and in 1251, he was also elected Archbishop of Nicosia. He quarrelled with the king, Henry I, over the jurisdiction of the Greek Archbishop, Germanos,

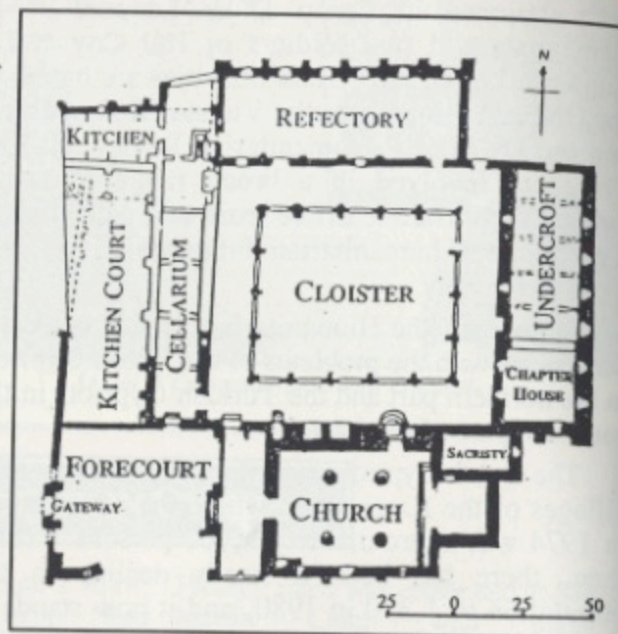
and left the island in the same year. Returning after the death of the king, he finally left the island in 1260 and settled at Rezzano, in Tuscany. There he founded an abbey named "*Episcopia*", out of affection for his former abode in Cyprus.

The Abbey grew rapidly in importance. Pious benefactions increased the Abbey's wealth and included a piece of the "True Cross", bequeathed in 1246 by a knight from Pafos. Royal patronage was on a generous scale on the part of Hugh III (1267-1284). This led to his being regarded as the leading benefactor of the Abbey, and it was he who granted the abbots the privileges of wearing the pontifical mitre during the services, and of bearing a sword and gilt spurs when riding.

At the time of the Venetian occupation, the abbacy of Bellapais remained a rich prize, judging by the fact that at one time there were three claimants: one supported by the Republic of Venice, one by the Pope and a third actually installed in the Abbey.



The Abbey from the north east



Plan of Bellapais Abbey

But with the decline of the Latin occupation of Cyprus, the decline of the Catholic Church itself was inevitable. The Order of Premontre was no exception. Besides, the morals of the monks had lapsed towards the end of the Venetian occupation, for they were known to be leading a worldly and licentious life within the premises of the Monastery.

In 1570, the Abbey was destroyed to a great extent, and what was left of it was handed over by the Turks to the Orthodox clergy.

BELLAPAIS ABBEY

DESCRIPTION

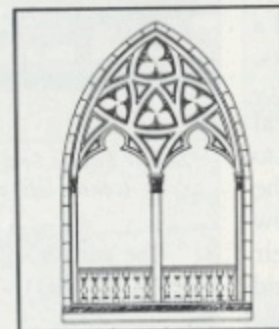
The Abbey, a surviving monument of monastic architecture in the Gothic style, is built on a natural rock escarpment, the edge of which drops vertically for over 30m on the north side, providing excellent protection. On the south side, towards the hill and on the west, an artificial ditch seems to have been cut outside a defensive wall which enclosed the Abbey precinct.

The *gateway* was originally a simple archway, carried on elaborate corbels, and was flanked by small wicket gates which remain in their original form. A massive tower was later raised over the doorway, probably in the 14th century, housing the mechanism of a drawbridge, and joined to the enclosure wall. The square *forecourt*, east of the gateway, was an original feature of the Abbey.

The *church*, preceded by a simple porch and surmounted by a substantial belfry, is the earliest surviving part of the Abbey, and dates from the 13th century. Except for the modern iconostasis, it remains in its original form. The manner in which the arches opening into the aisles are corbelled onto the pillars carrying the nave vaulting is unusual and ingenious. The pillar capitals are of 13th century French style. The *clerestory* rises directly above the main arcades, since the aisles have flat terrace roofs, giving a somewhat squatter proportion to the interior than is usual in Gothic buildings in Europe. On the south wall of the chancel are the remains of a square

painted medallion, showing the bust of James the Apostle. Like the paints in the porch, it is Italian in style and dates from the 14th century.

The full magnificence of the Abbey is not clear until one enters the *cloister*, which survives in its entirety, apart from the west wing. Built in the 14th century, the carvings vary from foliage to human and animal heads. The decorative mouldings are circular and carved, usually with rosettes, with those in the two angle bays of the west wing carrying the Lusignan coat of arms.



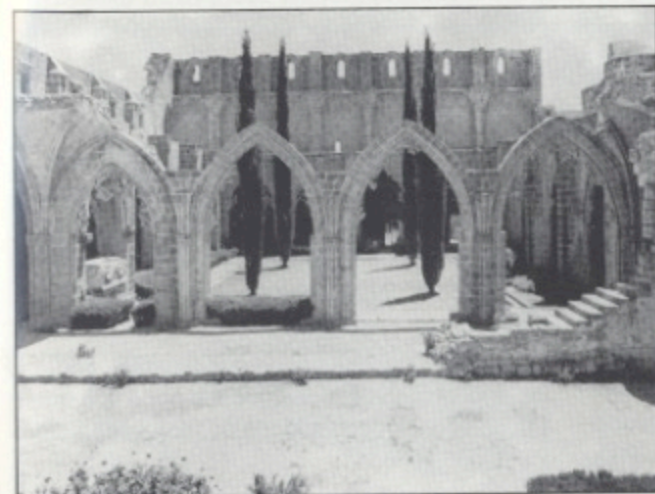
An arch of the cloister

In the arches, some fragments of tracery in the flamboyant style have survived. At the north-west corner stands the marble lavabo in which a carved marble sarcophagus of the 2nd century AD has been incorporated.

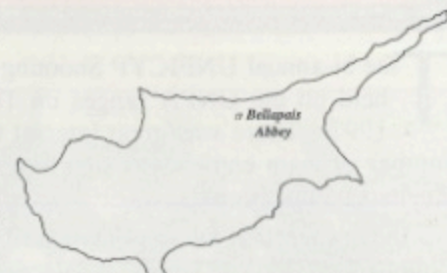
On the marble lintel of the *refectory* are carved the arms of Lusignan (right), Jerusalem (centre) and the royal quarterings of Cyprus (left). The refectory itself is a magnificent vaulted chamber of six bays, in almost perfect condition, probably the work of Hugh IV (1324-1359).

Returning to the cloister, the first building adjoining it on the east side is

the *undercroft* of the dormitory, probably the work-room of the community. Adjoining the undercroft to the south is the square *chapter house*, where the canons took their places every morning on the stone benches against the walls. The central marble column and capital were probably taken from the ruins of some early Byzantine church.



General view of the church



On the south side of the cloister, the visitor may ascend the *night stair* and, continuing straight on through a vaulted loggia, is what survives of the *dormitory*. Only the west wall remains, showing what a spacious and lofty chamber it once was.

Passing onto the roof of the cloister, the visitor may note, on the north side, traces of a staircase leading to the refectory, where another staircase, of which a good part survives, led to the roof of the dormitory. Below this, a traceried window commands a fine view of the coastal plain below.

Passing to the south side of the cloister roof, we can enter the *treasury* over the north side of the church through a modern opening in its west wall. Taking either of the staircases which descend near the treasury, we pass to the area west of the cloister where excavation has determined the layout of the buildings which have disappeared. These included a long *cellarium*, a two-storey building dedicated to the domestic economy of the Abbey. Beyond it, to the west, was a kitchen-court, reached by a separate entrance from the forecourt, while the *kitchen* buildings themselves were at the extreme north end.

Below the kitchen door into the refectory, a stone staircase leads down to the *crypt* from the north end of the cellarium. The crypt is a vaulted undercroft below the refectory, divided into two spacious rooms, each of two aisles, where the oil and other produce of the Abbey's lands were stored.

The Tree of Idleness, so named since its shadow incapacitates anyone from exertion, stands majestically in the courtyard. The tree is renowned island-wide for its welcoming shade which makes a cup of coffee, a game of cards or backgammon, or even a short sleep so appealing in this magical part of the world.

THE UNFICYP SHOOTING COMPETITION

The bi-annual UNFICYP Shooting Competition was held on the UNPA ranges on Thursday 24 April 1997. There was great interest this year, and the number of team entries was significantly higher than in previous competitions.

In his speech at the presentation of prizes, the Force Commander, Major General de Vergara, remarked that he was very happy to see such a turnout of competitors and spectators alike from all sections of UNFICYP. He said that events like the Shooting Competition provided a welcome relief from guard duty and administrative tasks. Skill-at-arms was a fundamental requirement of professional soldiering, and competition raised the general standard. It also afforded contingents the opportunity to test their skills against international opponents. The competition was always eagerly contested by each new contingent, striving to emulate or improve upon their predecessors' performance. The Force Commander paid tribute to the professionalism of all ranks who had competed on that day, and warmly congratulated all teams on the fine scores achieved.



Sector Four's best overall team with the Force Commander (centre left) and the DCO Sector Four (2nd left)

The winner of the Individual Pistol was WO II Mark (UNFICYP HQ). The team event also went to UNFICYP HQ.

In the Rifle Competition, M/Sgt Czekus (HUNCON) was the overall winner. Sector Four's A team won the team event.

The Falling Plates was the last event staged, and was without doubt the spectators' favourite. As an innovation this year, the contestants had to carry 30 lb backpacks. Being a knockout competition, it generated an exciting atmosphere. The final contest was between Camp Command (IRCON) and Sector Four's B team. When the finalists lined up 25 metres to the rear of the 200 metre firing point, all spectators were on their feet cheering. At the signal, both teams raced to the firing point and proceeded to engage the plates. They were neck and neck until the very last plate, with Camp Command just emerging as winner for the second year in a row.

All in all, Sector Four won the best overall team trophy with the highest aggregate score in all events.



The Camp Command team, winners of the Falling Plates Competition, with their CO (3rd right), DCO (left) and RSM (centre)

HONOUR FOR UNFICYP SOLDIER

Major Paul Griffiths RA (left) was awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours List for his outstanding tour as Quartermaster with his previous unit, 19 Regiment Royal Artillery.

Whilst his Regiment were undergoing a no notice emergency tour in Bosnia, Major Griffiths performed the duties of Officer Commanding Rear Party, balancing his normal responsibilities exceptionally well with the demands of the Rear

Party.

Major Griffiths said: "It is, of course, a great honour to receive such an award, which is due in no small way to the outstanding contribution and the quality of SNCOs with whom I have had the pleasure of working."

Major Griffiths is pictured (left) having recently received his award from HM The Queen outside Buckingham Palace.



THE UNFICYP MILITARY SKILLS COMPETITION

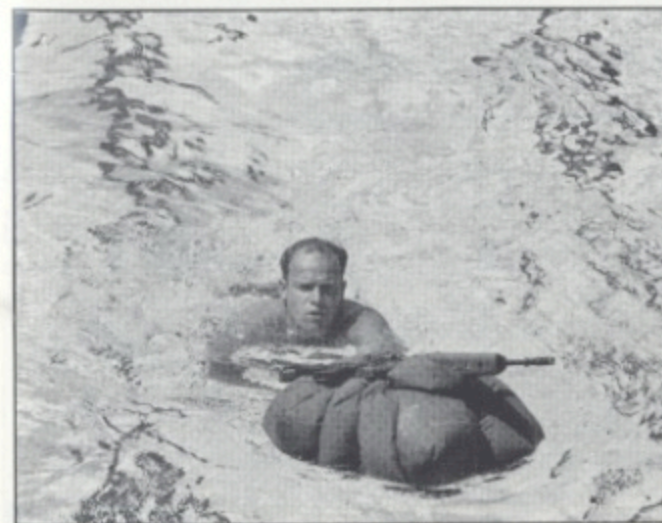
The bi-annual UNFICYP Military Skills Competition was held in the UNPA on Thursday 8 May 1997.

This was a new look competition, written and run by the SO2 Operations/Training, Major Andrew Gladen. Teams were selected from the Sectors at short notice (and at random) by the Operations Branch to ensure that it "reached the parts other competitions do not reach"!



The Falling Plates Competition

With a total of seven teams from the Argentinian, Austrian and British Sectors, and the multi-national Permanent Force Reserve (PFR), the competition was run on a seven stand 'round robin' basis. The stands were all designed around a UN patrol scenario, run by Sectors and Units, and consisted of MEDEVAC with fire fighting, observation, communications and orders, driving and maintenance, navigation, river crossing, rangework and a physical test (the UK 'Beep Test').



Sgt Paul Bennett on the river crossing stand



The winning team and their trophy
Left to right, standing: Sgt Paul Bennett, the Force Commander, Capt John Greenwood and MCpl Oscar Bermudez
Kneeling: MCpl Charlie Lena and Gnr Alex Ovenden



Running hard as a team, Sector One on the navigation stand

The overall winners were the PFR Platoon, drawn from the Argentinian, Austrian and British Contingents and commanded by Capt John Greenwood from 32 Regiment RA (Sector Two). Runners up were a team from Sector Two (32 Regiment RA) and in third place, a team from Sector Four (Austrian).



Bdr John Hughes tackles the fire at the MEDEVAC stand

NEW CO FINCON

On 28 March, the handover/take-over parade of CO FINCON took place, when Maj Jarmo Jaakkola handed over to Maj Jouko Seitakari. Maj Seitakari also took over the posts of Liaison Officer to the Turkish Forces and Force Signals Officer.

Maj Seitakari attended the Finnish Military Academy from 1981 to 1984, and has held the position of OIC TeleCoy, Deputy Chief of OIC Tele



Coy, Deputy Chief of Reserve NCO School (1988-1989), Comms Instructor Military Academy (1989-1996) and CCO Infantry Regt (1996).

Maj Seitakari is married to Riitta Liisa, and is waiting for good ideas on what to take up as a hobby...

♦ Major Jaakkola (left) handing over to Major Seitakari

NEW MILITARY ASSISTANT TO THE FORCE COMMANDER

On 14 Feb 97, Commandant George Kerton took over duty as Military Assistant to the Force Commander from Comdt Ray King.

Comdt Kerton joined the Irish Defence Forces as an army cadet in Apr 72 and was commissioned as 2/Lt in Sep 73. He was assigned to the Cavalry Corps and served as Reconnaissance Troop Commander, Support Troop Commander, Signals/Intelligence Officer and 2IC with 1 Armoured Car Sqn during his early years of service.

He was posted as an instructor at the Infantry School and as a Staff Officer at Curragh Command HQ, Eastern Command HQ and at Defence Forces HQ. He held the position of Sqn Commander of 2 Cavalry Sqn, and later, he commanded 1 Tank Sqn.

Comdt Kerton's previous UN service was in UNIFIL in 1979-1980, 1985-86 and 1995. His posting with UNFICYP is for one year, and he is accompanied by his wife Mary, their son Eoghan and their daughter Annmarie.



WOI JUAN CRISTOBAL MARIN - SUPERINTENDING CLERK

WOI Juan Marin is the first Argentinian to hold the post of Superintending Clerk at HQ UNFICYP.

WOI Juan Marin joined the Argentinian Army in 1965. In 1973, he attended the Military Institute of Geography and in 1974, he received his certificate as a topographer.

WOI Marin joined UNFICYP in Sep 95 as a general clerk in Ops Branch, and at the



end of this tour in Sep 96, he was appointed Supt Clerk. The Supt Clerk has the principal responsibility of providing clerical and logistical support to the whole HQ, and also heads the Central Services office.

WOI Marin was born in 1949 in a small village called Cafayate. He is married to Alicia, and they have three children: Fernando, Chiara and Lautaro.

UNFICYP'S FORCE ENGINEER



On 17 March 1997, Maj Hannes Stippel (left), who held the post of Force Engineer, handed over to Maj Hans Springer. Maj Stippel has returned to his post as a government lawyer in Vienna.

The present Force Engineer, Maj Springer, was born in 1962 in Vienna. He joined the Austrian Army in 1982 and completed a one-year training course as an infantry officer. His first tour with the UN was in 1984-1985 in UNDOF as a Military Policeman. His second tour with

the UN was from Jan 95 to Jun 96 as Press Information Officer, again with UNDOF. From Sep 96 to Mar 97, he was posted to UNFICYP in Sector Four as PIO, and was then transferred to HQ UNFICYP as the Force Engineer.

Maj Springer (right) is married to Lana, and they have a 10-month old daughter, Lena. On behalf of the Headquarters, the Blue Beret would like to congratulate these two officers on their dedication and dependability at all times.



THE BRITISH MEDAL PARADE

On a balmy spring evening in April on the anniversary of St George, the Patron Saint of England, 120 of the finest men and women of the British Contingent formed up and proudly marched onto the car park outside the Ledra Palace Hotel. The reason? The first BRITCON Medal Parade of 1997.



The British Contingent on parade



Medal trays for the three Batteries of 32 Regiment RA based at Sector Two

Once in position, they were inspected by the Force Commander, Major General Evergisto de Vergara, and then, together with the British High Commissioner, Mr David Madden, the Regimental Honorary Colonel, Major General Brian Davis, and the Commander of British Forces in Cyprus, Air Vice Marshal Peter Millar, he presented the soldiers with United Nations medals.

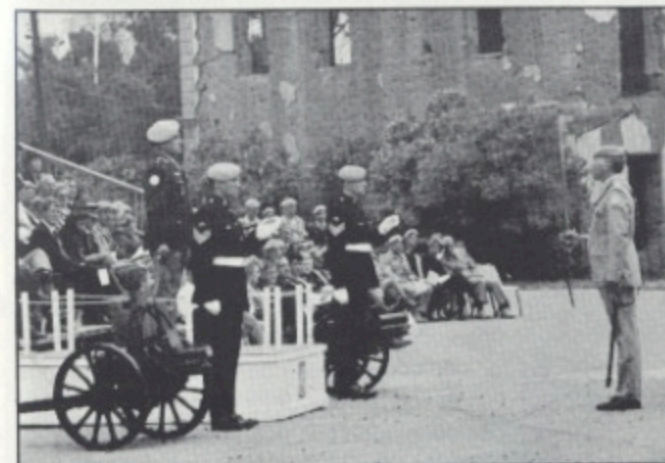
The parade was watched by more than 300 spectators, in the presence of the Chief of Mission, Mr Gustave Feissel, the British Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff, Air Marshal Peter Squire, and the

Deputy Inspector of the Austrian Army, Lieutenant General Josef Marolz. Once the medals had been presented, the Normandy Band of the Queen's Division struck up with 'British Grenadiers' and the Regiment marched past the dais before advancing in review order.

The Force Commander then addressed the parade, thanking them, on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in recognition of their contribution to peace on the island of Cyprus.



Major General Brian Davis presenting Sgt Ian Satchell with the UN medal



Lt Col Bob Eggar asks the Force Commander for permission to march off the square

The Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Bob Eggar, marched the parade off the square and, as the sun set over Nicosia, the band Beat Retreat. The finale was a firework display depicting a map of the island and the release of 16 white doves. After the Parade, BRITCON hosted a reception in the grounds of the Hotel.

32nd Regiment Royal Artillery will shortly be returning home to England in June, and wish their successors, 5th Regiment Royal Artillery, a peaceful and satisfying tour.

IT'S A DOG'S LIFE!

Earlier this year, British soldiers with Sector Two, on duty with Mojave Troop, serving with 9 Battery West on the western outskirts of Nicosia, noticed a bundle of fur in the middle of the minefield in front of them. As they watched, the bundle of fur struggled to its feet and continued on its hazardous journey through the minefield. Eventually, the puppy reached the soldiers and safety.

After a visit to a vet, a bath and some food, acting Gunner Hooch the Pooch D.O.G. was officially adopted by Mojave Troop. Since then, Gnr Hooch, named after her first home (an empty drinks crate, or "hooch" box) has become a media celebrity. She has appeared in numerous magazines, newspapers and regional television programmes in the United Kingdom, as well as a slot on Sky News.

Gnr Hooch is looking forward to an illustrious career serving with the British Contingent in Cyprus, and she will be transferred to 5th Regiment Royal Artillery when they replace 32 Regiment Royal Artillery in June 1997.

Gnr Russell Walker with 281296 Gnr Hooch the Pooch



A FOOTBALL MATCH WITH A DIFFERENCE



The two teams pose after the match

On Sunday 6 April 1997, a football match with a difference took place on the UNPA sports pitch. The UNFICYP Support Services Football Team challenged a Turkish Cypriot football team to a match. There's nothing odd about that, you might say. However the unusual thing about the UN team was that it was made up not only of international staff, but also by locally employed Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot players.

It was a rainy day, but the decision was made to go ahead with the match regardless. Perhaps it was the enthusiasm of the two teams which helped, because the clouds left the skies and eventually the sun shone through. The Turkish Cypriot team played a good match, but they were not strong enough to beat the Support Services Section. Supporters included the CAO and other members of UNFICYP. The CAO enjoyed herself so much that she offered to promote any future matches.

The UNFICYP team were sponsored by the LINA petrol station, which provided the team colours. The Support Services Section cooperates with the LINA company, which supplies the fuel for UN vehicles in the south.

John Fantis was the organiser of the UNFICYP team, and Birol Bingollu organised the Turkish Cypriot team, with Ahmet Niazi as the coordinator. Following the match, a small party took place with the UNFICYP team offering refreshments. The match was played in a very friendly atmosphere, and it is already planned that many more will take place in the not too distant future.

AUSTRIAN PADRE FEARS NEITHER DEATH NOR DEVIL

On 22 March 97, Sector Four's padre, Emmanuel Longin, decided to put his words into action. He has often proclaimed that courage is an essential part of a soldier's life. He also believes that it is not only through going to church that we can overcome our innermost fears - we must also look for challenges beyond what we think is achievable and endurable.



Padre Emmanuel - receiving flying instructions

With this in mind, our chaplain put on his angelic jump suit and then put his life into the hands of a 'red devil', trusting in his special connections with cloud 9! The Red Devils, the elite parachute outlet of the British Forces, were at that time conducting training in Dhekelia, taking advantage of the favourable weather

conditions in Cyprus at this time of the year. This is necessary to keep up their high level of parachute skills which has earned them so many victories, including world championships, European championships, international competitions, etc.

Having reached a height of 11,000 feet above sea level, Father Emmanuel set out to prove to himself and his fellow soldiers exactly what he preaches, including a prayer-filled 40 seconds of free fall at a speed of 120 mph - and no devil could stop him!

So, as the Lord ensured that Father Emmanuel returned safely to earth, we applaud him - not only for showing a great deal of courage, but for all the unending support and strength he gives to the personnel of Sector Four.



He glides through the air with the greatest of ease...

UNFICYP ABOUT TO ENTER AUSTRIAN CLASSROOMS

On 23 March 1997, AUSCON was visited by members of various boards of education and international institutions, including the principal of the Austrian Military Academy Boarding School. The party was led by Mr Peter Gruber, who has himself completed a number of tours on the island, including the Austrian Field Hospital in Nicosia, the very first engagement undertaken by the Austrians in UNFICYP.

A party of 34 was taken from Larnaca Airport to the village of Pyla, where they were given a short briefing. For a number of the visitors, this was their first impression of UNFICYP in Cyprus.

They were then taken to Camp Duke Leopold V in Famagusta, and were thoroughly briefed on UNFICYP's mandate and mission, as well as the tasks of Sector Four.

A tour of the Camp, particularly Ops Branch, where some of the visitors had served in the past, provided them with good insight into the daily routine of an Austrian Battalion deployed abroad. It also demonstrated how every soldier had the training, support and facilities to enable him to perform his duties properly.

In the evening, a social function enabled the visitors to meet a number of Sector Four personnel, where a lively exchange of personal experiences gave a more accurate picture of life from the Austrian soldier's angle of this operation.

The visitors left the island with a realistic idea of the Cyprus problem, and how Austria is trying to assist in establishing a peace accord on this island.



The visitors outside the Officers' Mess in Camp Duke Leopold V

ANZAC DAY

