The Blue Beret



Airborne

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Serving UNFICYP's civilian, military and police personnel

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The Blue Beret

Published bi-monthly by the: Public Information Office United Nations Force in Cyprus

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Editorial

s 2011 draws to a close, divergent positions and waning support for lengthy negotiations have led the Secretary-General's Special Advisor, Mr. Alexander Downer, to call for greater political will to push for a settlement to end the division of Cyprus. The current Greek Cypriot Leader, Demetris Christofias, and Turkish Cypriot Leader Dervis Eroglu, have also been urged by the Secretary-General to use their best efforts in order to reach a settlement before Cyprus takes up the EU rotating presidency in the second half of 2012. Echoing the Secretary-General's firm belief in a solution, the Security Council stated, in a resolution extending the UNFICYP mandate, that the responsibility for finding a solution lies first and foremost with the Cypriots themselves.

The Security Council also emphasized the importance attached by the international community for all parties to engage fully, flexibly and constructively in the negotiations, echoing the Secretary-General's view that a comprehensive settlement can be achieved. The United Nations is looking forward to decisive progress in the near future, leading up to the Secretary-General's meeting with the leaders in January 2012. The Secretary-General firmly believes that "all internal aspects of a settlement will have been resolved by then so that we can move to a multilateral conference shortly thereafter" with the consent of the two sides.

The Secretary-General has also encouraged the parties to make a decision with regard to future crossings. There is no doubt that the existing seven crossings have greatly facilitated movement of people between the two sides, making a real tangible difference to the everyday lives of many Cypriots across the island. Progress on this front, where gains are achievable quickly, still has the ability to improve the overall confidence between the communities. The United Nations has expressed the hope for 2012, that the parties will adopt a pragmatic and results-oriented approach, leading to a positive cycle of reciprocal measures and enabling further social and economic interaction between the two communities.

The New Year will quickly usher in preparations for the Greentree meeting in New York. It will also bring this latest round of negotiations into its fourth year. With the addition of the Home for Cooperation in 2011 in the Buffer Zone, let's hope 2012 also brings with it the active participation of civil society groups, including women's groups, as essential elements to the political process and as a contribution to making any future settlement sustainable through increased bicommunal contacts and events.





s articulated by the Secretary - General, a comprehensive settlement to re-unite Cyprus on the basis of a bi-communal and bi-zonal federation would help unleash the considerable potential and capacity of the island and make it a stronger and more prosperous home for all its citizens.

In 2011, the Cyprus Peace Talks registered some progress in achieving convergence on outstanding core issues. The Secretary-General met with the Greek Cypriot leader, Demetris Christofias, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Derviş Eroğlu, several times in 2011 and they agreed to move in the second half of the year to an intensified phase and an enhanced United Nations role. Throughout the year, considerable advances were made in the areas of governance and power-sharing, economy, European Union matters and internal aspects of security, while much less progress was made on property, territory and citizenship matters.

During the latest meeting in Greentree, New York, on 30 and 31 October 2011, both sides and the Secretary-General met to assess the results of the negotiations and to determine how close they were to a solution. Some encouraging progress was made, but much remains to be done to reach full convergence on several issues. Nevertheless, both leaders affirmed their belief that a settlement is possible and within reach. Their stated conviction led the Secretary-General to ask the leaders to meet again in a similar format in Greentree in January 2012.

In 2011, UNFICYP has continued to maintain the integrity and stability of the buffer zone. There was a decrease in the total number of military violations committed in the buffer zone while cooperation between UNFICYP and the two opposing forces remains good, reflecting a positive working relationship with the respective chains of command. Civilian activities in the buffer zone, including farming, housing construction and commercial ventures benefiting the two communities, continue steadily. UNFICYP routinely facilitates the provision of basic services and the maintenance of essential infrastructure in the buffer zone, such as roads, waterways and electricity supply.

UNFICYP also continued to address the day-to-day issues related to the Greek Cypriots and Maronites residing in the north and Turkish Cypriots residing in the south. UNFICYP delivers, on a weekly basis, humanitarian assistance to 351 Greek Cypriots and 126 Maronites in the north, and assists in meeting their healthcare needs. The mission has encouraged both communities to develop a long-term care plan for this ageing population, including the provision of Greekspeaking doctors. UNFICYP also facilitated the delivery of school textbooks and the appointment of teachers for Greek Cypriot schools in the Karpas peninsula.

In the south, UNFICYP assisted local authorities and community representatives in their efforts to provide welfare services, including housing, social support and medical care for Turkish Cypriots in need. The mission

Inter-Mission Force Commanders' Conference

It has long been the practice that United Nations missions in close proximity to each other meet periodically to discuss issues which mutually affect them. Lieutenant General Babacar Gaye, who was appointed Military Adviser at UN HQ in 2010, decided to formalise this process when he directed in early 2011, that Inter-Mission Force Commanders Conferences (IMFCCs) be conducted three to four times a year in order to enhance inter-mission cooperation.

It was against this backdrop that UNFICYP found itself hosting its first IMFCC, between 16 -19 November 2011. Visiting Force Commanders from UNIFIL, UNDOF and UNTSO and their supporting

delegations attended. Main elements of the conference included round table discussions and visits to the sectors. Discussion, which focused on regional political affairs, information sharing and the potential for other missions to evacuate to Cyprus, proved extremely useful. The views of those attending were recorded and submitted to UN HQ for further development. Visits to Sectors 1 and 2 afforded conference attendees the opportunity to understand the complex operating environment of UNFICYP and meet soldiers and police from those contingents represented in the mission. Well received by all who attended, the delegations departed well informed and having enjoyed an all too brief stay on the island.



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also monitored and liaised with local educational authorities in order to meet the needs of Turkish Cypriots residing in the Limassol-Paphos area.

Despite the limited number of personnel, UNFICYP police continued to ensure escort for the regular convoys of Turkish Cypriot civilians and humanitarian supplies through the buffer zone to Kokkina/Erenköy, as part of the agreement reached between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders in October 2010.

In addition to its peacekeeping role, UNFICYP continued to provide substantive and logistical assistance to the negotiations between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders, including the facilitation of meetings of bi-communal Technical Committees, Working Groups and other expert groups which discussed matters of common concern. To this end, UNFICYP

designated political and civil affairs staff to act as facilitators and to extend the assistance of its public information personnel.

Another positive contribution to the peace process in 2011 was the opening of the Home for Cooperation in the UN-patrolled buffer zone in Nicosia in May of this year. This United Nations-supported project was set up as a space where researchers, educators, historians, artists and others, from both communities are able to exchange ideas, share knowledge and discuss issues of common concern. Lisa M. Buttenheim, who serves both as chief of the UN's peacekeeping mission on Cyprus (UNFICYP) and deputy UN negotiator at the Cyprus Peace Talks, said the project "will help Cypriots develop different perspectives, which is an essential element of a lasting peace and stability in Cyprus."













UNITE to end violence

NFICYP personnel held an event on 25 November to mark United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

The event held in the United Nations Protected Area of Nicosia was addressed by Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNFICYP Chief of Mission, Lisa Buttenheim and guest speaker Cypriot parliamentarian Skevi Koukouma.

In her address the SRSG pointed out that as the Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon recently said, "we are all aware that violence against women and girls takes many forms. It includes rape, domestic violence and harassment at work. There is abuse in school, female genital mutilation and sexual violence in armed conflict. This violence spans the globe. And it is predominantly inflicted by men."

The Secretary-General said: "Whether in developing or developed countries, the pervasiveness of this unacceptable violence should shock us all. Violence -- and in many cases the mere threat of stelioit -- is one of the most significant barriers to women's full equality."

Echoing the Secretary-General, Buttenheim said, "All women and girls have the fundamental right to live free of violence. This right is enshrined in international human rights and humanitarian law. And it lies at the heart of the Secretary General's UNITE to End Violence against Women campaign." Since its launch in 2008, the campaign has galvanized governments, civil society, the corporate sector, athletes, artists, women, men and young people around the world. "We want people everywhere to speak up. To say "No" to violence against women and girls. Only then will we have a more just, peaceful and equitable world", she said.

Addressing the event Koukouma, expressed the view that violence against women is one of the many expressions of unequal relations between the two sexes and will only cease to exist when a society that safeguards equality in every aspect is built. "In order to achieve this we need to safeguard social equality of all people and the values of solidarity, human dignity and mutual respect," she said.

Women in peacekeeping

As peacekeeping has evolved to encompass a broader humanitarian approach, women have become increasingly part of the peacekeeping family. They are deployed in all areas – police, military and civilian – and have made a positive impact on peacekeeping environments, both in protecting women's rights and supporting women's role in building peace. In recent years UNFICYP has seen more women deployed in the uniformed services. This edition of the Blue Beret focuses on the first Argentinean female members of the Force Military Police Unit and the first Serbian police officer to serve with UNFICYP, who also happens to be a woman.

UNPOL raises Serbian Flag



eposava Markovic from the Serbian gendarmerie is the first woman in uniform from her country to serve with UNPOL.

At the recent flag raising ceremony attended by the Serbian Ambassador Sava Djurica and the Senior Police Advisor, She said: "I felt like a VIP and was very honoured to be the first police officer representing my country as a peacekeeper in Cyprus."

Leposava notes that in 2009 when she went to Italy to train at the Carabinieri training centre to prepare for deployment to peacekeeping missions, the options open to her were either Liberia or Haiti. It was only later that Serbia decided to contribute to UNFICYP as well and she is the first Serbian

police officer to be deployed to the mission. Although no stranger to the island having visited in the past, she notes that serving as a peacekeeper has shown her a completely different Cyprus. The first few days passed in a whirlwind of confusion for her, but with the help and assistance of her fellow peacekeepers from Ireland, Autralia, Bosnia, Montenegro, Croatia and Ukraine, who serve with her in Sector 4, things have become clearer and she now enjoys her duties as a patrol officer.

The paradox of serving as a peacekeeper side by side with officers from Bosnia and Croatia, when a few years ago this would have seemed impossible, is not lost on her. "We work well together and our communication is excellent," she said.

At home Leposava is a physical education instructor teaching police skills and self-defence at the police academy. As a professional sportswoman she represented her country in the Olympic Games as part of the judo national team from 1998-2002. She won a bronze medal in the junior championships in 1990-1991 and was the Serbian national champion for 14 years (from 1988-2002). Now she serves as a professional referee, is a member of the Serbian Olympic committee and focuses on supporting women in sport. Her future goals include becoming an international judo referee as well as continuing to serve as a peacekeeper in UN missions around the globe, while encouraging other women to do the same.

New Faces in Maple Leaf Camp

wo young women serving in Sector 1 are the first Argentinean female members of the Force Military Police Unit (FMPU) in Cyprus. Although, they are not part of the military police in their country, they are very proud to be members of the FMPU in UNFICYP, collaborating and sharing their tasks with members of the Hungarian, Slovak and British Contingents.

Sergeant Mariana Rivadeneira arrived in UNFICYP on 9 September and joined the A shift Military Police Duty. She joined the Argentinean Army in 1995 as a Private then she became an Artillery Non Commanding Officer who served in the 1st Artillery Regiment "Brig Grl Iriarte" in Campo De Mayo, Buenos Aires and in the Military Academy "Grl Paz" in Cordoba. Mariana has been stationed in Sector 1 before as Operations Branch staff between November 2000 and May 2001. She is married to Mariano Osvaldo Ramirez and has an 18-month-old son called Maximo.

Master Corporal Maria Eugenia Cantero arrived on 11 September and took up the C shift Military Police Duty. She joined the Army Non-Commissioned Officer School "Grl Lemos" in 2002 and although she originally wanted to be a nurse she became a driver instead. She has been serving in the 1st Armored Engineer Squadron since 2005. Despite her height - Eugenia is 1.56 metres tall - she drives all sorts of combat vehicles even the largest ones with great skill. She is in a



happy relationship with her partner Sebastian Molinari, and loves football stressing that she is a Boca Juniors fan.

Both young ladies are extremely enthusiastic to be part of this mission and consider this opportunity to be a great experience and challenge at the same time. Not only they will be able to develop significantly professionally but will also improve their English skills considerably. An added advantage of course is making acquaintances and forming lasting friendships with colleagues from so many other nations.



World AIDS Day marked

orld AIDS Day was celebrated in UNFICYP on 1
December with activities highlighting the
World AIDS Campaign theme of "Zero new
HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS-related
deaths."

A group of dedicated volunteers distributed T-shirts, caps, condoms, AIDS ribbon pins and information leaflets specially prepared in three languages (English, Greek and Turkish) to all staff as they arrived for work. Staff showed their support by donating generously with their loose change and cash in the donation boxes and wearing their T-shirts, caps and pins throughout the day.

In UNFICYP headquarters an event was held where the Secretary-General's message was read out by the Chief of Staff Colonel Gerard Hughes, who then placed a candle on the World AIDS Day poster in memory of those that have died over the last 30 years since the start of the epidemic as well as to show solidarity for those affected by and living with HIV and AIDS.

The Chief of Staff reading the Secretary-General's message noted that although we are finally in a position to end the epidemic and the progress made so far is proof that we can realize our vision of zero new HIV

infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS related deaths, even greater results need to be delivered.

As the Secretary-General pointed out: "The United Nations General Assembly's High-Level Meeting on AIDS adopted bold targets for 2015:reduce the sexual transmission of HIV by half, eliminate new infections in children, provide treatment for 15 million people living with HIV, end stigma and discrimination and close the AIDS funding gap."

The Secretary-General stressed that with strong political will, reasonable financial resources and a firm human right-based approach we can achieve all of these targets.

Staff then took part in a quiz to test their awareness on HIV and AIDS over a cup of coffee and cake. Two staff members managed to answer all the questions correctly and received symbolic prizes.

Donations of over €700 were made and will be given to local charities supporting people living with HIV and AIDS in Cyprus.

Special thanks go to local artist Ioanna Philippou who once again designed the poster and T-shirts especially for UNFICYP's World AIDS day event.

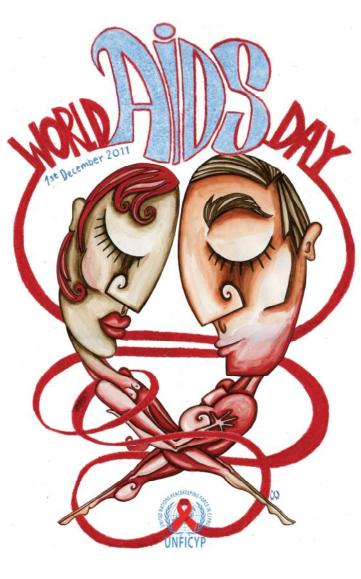






Getting to Zero Φθάνοντας στο μηδέν Sıfıra Ulaşmak









Culturally Significant Monuments in the Buffer Zone

yprus has long been a crossing point between Europe, Asia and Africa and has inherited many monumental traces of historical value from successive civilizations: the Greeks, the Phoenicians, the Assyrians, the Romans, the Byzantium, the Crusaders, the Franks (Lusignans), the Venetians, the Ottomans, and the English.

This rich cultural heritage is evident all over the island, in monuments and cemeteries; churches, chapels and mosques; monasteries and market-places; fortresses and palaces. The buffer zone is no exception. A treasure of cultural and religious significance sits waiting to be discovered and appreciated.

Although untouched by urban development evident elsewhere in Cyprus, the antiquities in the buffer zone are victims of the rough hands of nature and time. Ancient stones and bastions crumble under the eager onslaught of tree roots and shrubbery, while frescoes and carvings feel the sting of rain and sandstorm. As the responsible authority in the buffer zone, UNFICYP decided to do something about the situation of these cultural treasures that would be lost to humanity if no action was taken.

Building on excellent work already done by past military contingents in the sectors, the Civil Affairs Section decided in 2009 to locate and identify existing structures of antiquity in the buffer zone in the hope of being able to help develop plans for their preservation with the appropriate stakeholders.

Old British maps from the early 20th century provided a starting point for the identification of cultural sites. The Antiquities Department of the Republic of Cyprus also made available its own list. Finally, the organization "World Forum for Religions and Cultures of the Kykkos Monastery", headed by Prof. Dr. Charalampos Chotzakoglou, a professor of Byzantine art and architecture at the Hellenic Open University in Athens, also provided his own list of cultural heritage sites which he believes exist in the buffer zone. Over the course of four visits to the suspected locations of these monuments, Civil Affairs was able to find the ruins of nine of reportedly 13 monuments of antiquity, mainly churches, chapels and cemeteries.

In central Nicosia, there are the well-known churches of Agios Georgios (St. George) and Agios Iakovos (St. Jacob), in the area of Ayios Kassianos. Unfortunately, both of them are in bad shape and need urgent renovation. Agios Georgios is said to have extant frescos dating back to the Lusignan period and the church itself dates back possibly to the Byzantine period.

Civil Affairs visited the "ghost villages" of Varisha in the area of Tylliria and Agios Georgios of Solea both of which have churches dedicated to Agios Georgios (St. George) and village cemeteries. The former residents, as well as people from all over the



world, come to participate in the annual pilgrimages facilitated by UNFICYP in these villages . For one day each spring, the villages are full of the sound of their people amidst the colours of the mimosa and lazarus flowers.

At the outskirts of Galini village in the Morphou area, Civil Affairs located an old cemetery, an antique watermill and a chapel of what is believed to be Agia Mavra, Following the trail from the cemetery to the village of Galini, the team inadvertently stepped into an area controlled by the Turkish Forces (TF) and were met by a polite but firm patrol that asked them to leave and to kindly hand over any pictures that may have been taken of the village. Apparently, the village falls into the military zone controlled by the TF, but the cemetery and watermill are in the buffer zone.

In Skouriotissa, the Argentine contingent has done a marvelous job of maintaining the church of Panagia Skouriotissa, inside Camp St. Martin. The soldiers use the church as do the local residents, which ensures its loving preservation. The aura of the prayers of countless generations is tangible under its ancient arches and carved beams.

Sector 4 has the other ancient church preserved by successive deployments of UNFICYP soldiers: the Agia Marina of Dherynia, which has been restored by the Department of Antiquities of the Republic of Cyprus. The Austrian contingent was the first to try their hand at preserving this small, possibly 12th century, medieval church, and even used it as a wedding chapel. A footprint shaped indentation in a rock outside the chapel, folklore has it, is the footprint of Agia Marina herself. It is considered good luck to place your foot in the indentation and say a prayer. The church sits on an underground spring, also rumored to have special healing powers.

UNFICYP facilitates an annual pilgrimage to this famous chapel every July and people come from far and wide to participate. The service has grown from



one on 17 July to two services: an additional one on the eve of the Saint's name day. UNFICYP is facilitating both services at the request of and gratification from the local community by transporting the elderly pilgrims and providing support for a smooth conduct of the event.

Another church dedicated to Ayia Marina which has been the focus of some attention for UNFICYP in the past few months is a beautiful structure located near historic caves between Louroujina and Athienou. The Turkish Cypriot community of Louroujina along with the Greek Cypriot community of Athienou together requested UNFICYP support to restore and preserve this historic church of great value to all Cypriots. As a matter of bi-communal interest and cultural significance, UNFICYP has given the go-ahead to the restoration work for this beautiful church that is slowly losing the battle against the elements. Large gaping holes have appeared in the walls and part of the roof of the apse has collapsed. Some medieval frescoes inside remain, but are already damaged, perhaps not beyond

repair, just yet. Given a few more years, these will surely be lost to succeeding generations.

Finally, in the village of Troulli, sits the church of Agios Neophytos dedicated to the Saint, who was born near Lefkara in 1134. It suffered many years of neglect, before UNDP, in partnership with the Department of Antiquities, restored it to its former glory in 2006.

UNFICYP continues its efforts to contribute to the protection and preservation of the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Cyprus, in partnership with the Cypriot communities and authorities. While this is just a small effort in addition to the larger picture of what the two communities are doing through the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, it is a crucial effort, as the buffer zone is unique in its circumstance. Civil Affairs teams are constantly looking for new and innovative ways to achieve this objective and encourage participation from the sector military and UNPOL contingents in this endeavor.





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Service of Remembrance



ceremony of remembrance was held on the 11th hour of the morning around the war memorial in Wayne's Keep Military Cemetery in Nicosia on Sunday 13 November attended by members of UNFICYP and guests. The Chief Of Staff, Col GA Hughes, welcomed the congregation and the Force Commander, Maj Gen C Liu, led the act of commitment and Padre Deiniol Morgan, Chaplain Sector 2 gave the address. Padres Ivan Bojcuk (Sector 4) and Celso Rafael Melida (Sector 1) also took part in the service.

During the service the congregation paused to give thanks for and remember the enormous sacrifice made by both civilians and military personnel during times of conflict and war, and especially for the 184 UN personnel who have died while serving in UNFICYP since 1964. Staff Sgt Katherine May of the Band of the Army Air

Corps (UK) sounded The Last Post and Reveille which framed the two minutes' silence at 1100am, the time of day at which the Armistice of 1918 started, which in turn has become the focal point for acts of remembrance in many countries worldwide.

Wayne's Keep Military Cemetery has 582 graves of which 167 are civilian and 6 are unidentified, (4 Luftwaffe, 1 Army Officer, and 1 RAF). The first burial took place in 1939 and the last internment was in 1960. If any members of UNFICYP wish to visit the cemetery they should contact the visits protocol WO2 Keith Simpson. Non UN personnel who would like to visit relatives buried at the cemetery should contact the British High Commission, Alexander Pallis Street, PO Box 21987, Nicosia, Cyprus.

Peace Concert

NFICYP observed Remembrance Day in style by hosting a classical concert at Sector 2 headquarters in the Ledra Palace Hotel of Nicosia on 13 November. The ballroom received a complete makeover for the occasion in an effort to display the iconic hotel's former central role in Cypriot life. The concert was the result of close cooperation between UNFICYP, the Cyprus Academy of Music and the Paphos Chorale. Guests were treated to a rendition of Gabriel Fauré's Requiem which aptly helped the audience reflect and remember those who gave their lives in the cause of peace. It was at the end of the Second World War that the United Nations was founded in order to maintain world peace.

The concert follows in the footsteps of the first very successful Popular Classics concert held on the 16 September 2010 at The Old Nicosia Airport and tribute was paid to the co-founders of the event, Lt Col Gerard Hughes and Yiannis Hadjiloizou.

At the close of the concert guests were invited for



refreshments by the UK contingent in the officer's mess located in the former premises of a Ledra Palace restaurant.

Honouring UNFICYP's Fallen

NFICYP personnel and guests are in and out of the headquarters building daily, barely pausing at times to look at the photographs displayed in the foyer. It is not an unusual scene to see visitors being briefed in front of these photographs that record various historical moments of the mission. However very few people are aware that just three to four metres away, on the wall of another corridor, there is a white board full of names --- The UNFICYP Roll of Honour.

For most of us military personnel, after a six-month peaceful tour of duty, we pack up our bags in a buoyant mood and look forward to the cheerful moment of reunion with our families, friends and colleagues. But for those peacekeepers on the board - 184 peacekeepers from 14 countries - they stay here with the mission forever. They gave their lives to the cause of peace in Cyprus. The stable and calm situation today in the Buffer Zone and across the island should by no means become an excuse for their names to fade out of our memory. During his unannounced inspection of the Sectors on a scorching day in August, the Force Commander, Major General Chao Liu noted that along the patrol track in the Buffer Zone there are memorial stones dedicated to those who gave their lives in service to the mission over the years. In his ensuing feed-



back to Sectors and contingents, the Force Commander directed that, the Sectors and contingents compile statistical data of memorial stones and other commemoratory facilities within their area of responsibility so that these peacekeepers can be honoured on a special day as an annual event of the mission. To that end and into the future, on the 24 Oct all UNFICYP memorials will be cleaned and checked in an effort to remember the fallen. "We will remember them."



13



UN Staff Day

Ithough we were unlucky with the weather this year it did not deter UNFICYP personnel from celebrating and making UN Day a great success.

The cold weather did not dampen the spirit of the brave who tackled this year's potted games organised by SSgt Oz Osbourne who came up with some great new competitions and provided entertainment for the crowd. The winners, MFR A Team deservedly won the go-cart vouchers.

The bingo tent was busy with several games played and quite a few lucky winners were seen walking away with their cash prizes.

Three players battled it out for first place in the Speed Chess Tournament with Neo Evdokiou defeating both his rivals Santiago Rospide (Sector 1) and national staff member Christos Kouyountas in third place. Throughout the day several people passed by the chess tent to play friendly games or to join the "pilotta" card game taking place nearby.

In another tent, Major Xiaojiang Chai introduced the table tennis competition. It was a long, hard-fought contest between many competitors but congratulations go to eventual victor PFC Pavol Stratko (Sector 4).

By this time the delicious aroma of the BBQ prepared by Michael and his staff from the International Cafeteria wafted over the crowd and we were eventually allowed to savour probably their best BBQ in the history of all our UN Day

celebrations. The boys from Transport Section brought along "The Big Toy" and a new challenge using the crane truck remote control to move traffic cones from one marked area to another. Using a points system the prize finally went to Antonis Xenophontos from Engineering.

With the day drawing to a close the last events were ready to go; the Tug-of-War drew a noisy crowd of supporters who watched several military and civilian teams flex their muscles but the winners were Sector 2-A impressively beating Sector 2-B in the final.

Another lucky winner was Theodoros Georghiou from Engineering who was €150 better off after his ticket was drawn in the 50/50 Raffle.

At last the whistle blew to announce the kick-off for the final of the UN Day Football league between ARGCON-A and MFR-A. A blistering game between the two rival Argentinean teams ended in a 2:2 draw. The prestigious UN Day Football Trophy 2011 was presented to ARGCON-A by the Force Commander Major General Chao Liu, after they won following a mega penalty shoot-out.

UN Day does not happen without the people who plan and prepare months ahead, then turn up on the day to set up the area and stay until the clear-up operation is complete. Thanks go to civilian and military sections for their assistance and to the many volunteers who helped make the day a great success.

















Service for peace recognised

s the Mediterranean seasons change and Cyprus succumbs to the cold wet weather, the threat of storm clouds rolling over the mountains surrounding Nicosia sends the United Nations (UN) Police medal parade preparations into chaos. The final venue is a vacant aircraft hanger located in the disused Nicosia International Airport in which commercial activity ceased in 1974 when it became part of the Buffer Zone. The acoustics made you feel like you were in a football stadium full of people; however we stood before a few hundred dignitaries, guests, family and friends. We trusted the drills learnt in rehearsals the day before.

In total 23 UNPOL officers from five countries – Australia, Croatia, India, Ireland and Italy - were presented the United Nations medal, which is awarded by the United Nations Secretary-General, in recognition of their efforts "In the Service of Peace".

It was a particularly special moment for the Australians, as we were receiving UN medals of service as the 100th Australian contingent to serve continually as part of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) since 1964.

Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Lisa Buttenheim presented each officer with their medal in the presence of the High Commissioners, Ambassadors and Consuls of the contributing countries and the Senior Police Adviser John Farrelly.

The Cyprus Police band conducted by Inspector George Adamou performed during the ceremony.



At the completion of the official ceremony, all dignitaries and guests retired to the UN Police club for a meal and some well deserved ales. Many thanks to the incoming 101st Contingent who stood with us to represent Australia in ceremonial uniform and who also helped with the administrative tasks of making the ceremony run smoothly. Even the bitter cold wind could not dampen the spirits of what was a fantastic day, as peacekeepers of five nations were recognised for their efforts in facilitating enduring peace and prosperity for all the people of Cyprus.



New Bell for UN Flight

n 14 December, UNFICYP's new Bell 212 H-84 helicopter, with Force Commander Major General Chao Liu on board, made its inaugural routine flight from Camp General Stefanik in Sector 1 to OP 22 in Sector 4. In addition to the three crew, others on board included the FC Military Assistant Major Simon Thomson and FC Personal Staff Officer Major Xiaojiang Chai. "The Force Commander's aim was to let it be known across the force in general and the UN flight in particular that he had confidence in the Bell's entry into service tests and so considered the aircraft safe enough for use by UNFICYP," Major Thomson told Blue Beret. The Bell 212 H-84 arrived on the island from Argentina on 23 November. It replaces the Bell 212 H-87 that was shipped back home after completing 100,000 hours of flight. Both helicopters were airlifted on board a WFP Ilyushin 76. The cost of the whole operation was nearly half a million dollars. The Bell 212 is a two-bladed, twin-engined, medium-size utility helicopter with a 15-seat configuration. As a cargo carrier it has an internal capacity of 6.23 m3 while externally it can carry a load of up to 2,268 kg. In Cyprus, UNFICYP uses this helicopter for multiple tasks



including night and day patrols, passenger and cargo transfers, and rescue and medical evacuation operations. In addition to the Bell 212, the mission also has two Hughes light observation helicopters (LOHs). These are single-engined and can carry four passengers. Unlike the more versatile Bell 212, they can be flown only during daylight hours.

On duty in the 'Magic Mansion'

efore coming to Cyprus, Corporal Sophie Smith, who previously served in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kosovo, had had her share of sleeping rough. However, the member of 23 Pioneer Group of the Royal Logistic Corps readily admits she never thought that one day she would be spending her nights in a place called 'the Magic Mansion'. Once a busy shopping precinct in the centre of old Nicosia, 'Magic Mansion' is now a derelict, two-storey building with just a few traces of its previous splendour and none of the luxuries. Nevertheless, its location on the Green Line, close to the Ledra Street Crossing, offers an excellent position for observing both south and north Nicosia. This is why Section 2 of Sector 2's Eastern Part operates its patrols from there. Not quite the Magical Mystery Tour of Beatles fame, perhaps, but a demanding 24/7 regimen for all concerned. At any given time, day or night, out of a total of 34 soldiers serving in the area, eight are based in the building. They work a 12-hour shift. They are divided in four sections: day, guard (at Ledra Palace Hotel), night and off-duty. When the soldiers moved into 'Magic Mansion', they 'restored' four rooms. These now serve as the Ops Room, a bedroom, sitting room and a gym. Such essentials as a toilet and a sink were repaired on the first floor and a big water tank was installed downstairs. Other amenities include an electric kettle for that essential cup of tea, a fridge, and a TV set. To help fend off that Cyprus evening winter chill, there's the comfort of some electric heaters."Obviously, Iraq was much much more difficult," says Corporal Smith, who has served 12 years in the army and is the Section Commander. "But nights in 'the Magic Mansion' can be very cold as well, and if there is anything we dream of when being here it is hot water and a shower..."





UNFICYP MILITARY SKILLS COMPETITION

I t was a chilly morning on 23 November 2011 when the "winter" Military Skills Competition or Exercise Unifying Challenge took place in Blue Beret Camp. The early morning hum of vehicles moving and soldiers trudging towards the start line coupled with the sounds of the marching Argentinian drum bands and flag waving supporters attracted everyone's attention. The loud shouts of support for the competitors and the strong presence of flags from all the participating nations served to electrify the atmosphere and one could feel adrenaline in the air.

Competitors from all sectors and departments of UNFICYP were ready to challenge the champions of the previous winter and summer military skills competitions, Sector 4. Soldiers from all sectors trained hard – running throughout the United Nations Protected Area and old Nicosia Airport daily in the weeks before the actual competition. In their preparations nothing was left to chance and as the day of the competition approached their training became even harder. On the day there were nine competing teams in total, each sector put on two teams and there was one team each from head-quarters (HQ), the Mobile Force Reserve (MFR) and UNPOL.

At 0600 hrs the Force Commander blew the horn signaling the start of the competition and all teams went into action with the "Endurance Stand". Following the first test of their physical strength, supported throughout by cheering crowds, the teams then moved on to the individual stands that examined not only their physical readiness but also their military knowledge, skills and team spirit. They underwent driving skills, command tasks, incident reaction, map reading, shooting, patrolling and observation tasks and tried to score as many points as possible to get ahead of the competition. After almost 10 hours of testing the teams' skills,

the points gained were counted and the winners were announced. The results were: Sector 4 (team A) in first place for golden hat trick, Sector 2 (team A) in the second place and in third place Sector 2 (team B). For the winners the victory itself and feelings of joy and triumph made every single moment of training worth it.

Great respect goes to hardworking WO II Dora Adamecz from the FMPU – she was the only woman running in the Endurance Stand for the HQ team. A special mention also goes to Sgt Gerry Maher from UNPOL who participated in his second Military Skills Competition – his positive attitude and spirit was evident throughout the day. Finally the kilometers run by Force Photographer Rasti have to be highlighted as he followed all the teams throughout the day to ensure he secured action pictures of all the stands from all the teams.

Overall I would have to acknowledge the personal contribution and devotion of every single competitor as well as those who ran the competition itself including referees, organizers and supporters – the atmosphere you created was excellent – vamos vamos commando! – Hajra Gyerunk!

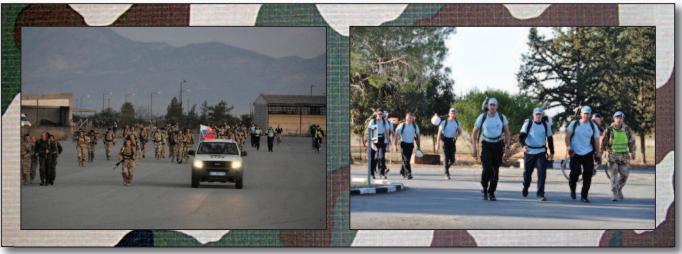
The hat trick of Sector 4 is a challenge for all other sectors and HQ teams. Chief Operations Officer LtCol Augusto Velarde appointed as chief umpire ran with all the teams keeping an eye on the "fair play rules". Watching him I couldn't help wondering if he would captain the HQ team in next summers military skills competition.

The Military Skills Competition is great challenge and we look forward to the next one under the burning Cyprus sun, which is a challenge in itself. In Slovakia we say "once, twice, three times maybe" - Sector 4 did it – you are great". My sme tu doma.









November/December - Blue Beret



here are many legends of Saint Nicholas and as with all legends these differ from place to place. In the Slovak tradition Saint Nicholas who was known for his generosity and financial aid to those who were in desperate situations is accompanied by a shaggy furred devil with horns, tail, and a long red tongue. He has a staff to threaten punishment. However, he is usually chained and an angel is there to protect the children. The "devil" and "angel" accompany Saint Nicholas on his gift-giving rounds. His reputation

Slovak Santa

for secret gift giving, putting coins in the shoes of those that leave them out for him as well as leaving sweets for children was not missed on the Slovak peacekeepers serving in UNFICYP. Despite being hundreds of kilometers away from their homes and families, the Slovak peacekeepers were visited by Saint Nicholas and his "dirty devils" and "heavenly angels" on 6 December when his feast day is celebrated.

Coming in secret, Saint Nicholas and his helpers visited all the positions in Cyprus where Slovak soldiers serve handing out gifts and sweets. Some of the soldiers anticipating a visit from Saint Nicholas kept the tradition of leaving out their clean boots in the hope they will be rewarded. True to his reputation Saint Nicholas left them gifts and honey bread in heart shapes symbolizing the warmth of home. His "dirty devil" helpers gave out charcoal symbolizing humbleness. The activities ended with traditional poems and storytelling making an unforgettable celebration for all present.





he annual UNFICYP Christmas Carol service was held on 15 December at St Columbas Church in the United Nations Protected Area. As is customary all military contingents, Argentinian, British, Hungarian and Slovakian as well as UNPOL participated in the event with traditional carols in their own languages. Excellent musicians playing the piano, piccolo and guitar complemented the singers. The service ended with a rendition of Silent Night.

Children visit Dhekelia SBA

T was just over a week before Christmas - 13 December actually - when Pyla's UNPOL team using two Sector 4-supplied minibuses, facilitated a visit by 27 pupils from Pyla's Turkish Cypriot Primary School to the Dhekelia Sovereign Base Area. The children (aged between 4 and 11) and their teachers attended a dress rehearsal of Margaret Carpenter's "Stable Manners", this year's Christmas show performed by 70 pupils of Dhekelia Primary School. Before the show, the children were offered biscuits and sweets, and invited to play with

their young hosts in the schoolyard. "We were delighted to help and hope we can do it more often in future", UN Police Sector 4 Commander Miodrag Stijovic said. Gary Margerison, a teacher at Dhekelia Primary, was equally enthusiastic. "The idea was for children from both schools to meet and get to understand a bit more about each other's traditions and customs. It would be wonderful if next time we could invite Greek Cypriot children from Pyla as well."





Cyprus wedding for Liaison Officer

hen Lieutenant Colonel Sebastian Hitz from Austria learnt he was to be posted to Cyprus, he immediately knew that the right moment had arrived to realize the most important dream of his life.

The current UNFICYP HQ Liaison Officer to the National Guard promptly asked his partner Florentina Uneg to marry him. To his delight she agreed.

The couple, originally from Carinthia, chose the beautiful village of Dherynia, situated in the east of the island between Paralimni and Famagusta, as the ideal place to exchange their vows. "I had been posted in Sector 4 twice before so I have very close personal ties both to the place as well as the people," Lt. Col. Hitz explained.

The ceremony took place on 29 October and Lieutenant Colonel Lubomir Chrenko, with whom the bridegroom shares an office at HQ UNFICYP, was the best man. The couple's 21-month-old son Valentin as well as their friends and colleagues were present.

The new Mrs Hitz is a mezzo soprano. She met her future husband in Cologne, at his aunt's birthday party, where she was asked to perform some



Spanish songs. "It was love at first sight," confessed Lt. Col. Hitz.

The Blue Beret can't help wondering what Spanish arias were sung and congratulates the happy couple wishing them all the best in their future life together.

New Faces

UNFICYP Deputy Commanding Officer Sector-4 /Commanding Officer of HUNCON



ieutenant-Colonel Lukács assumed the post of UNFICYP Deputy Commanding Officer Sector-4/Commanding Officer of HUNCON in September 2011. Lieutenant-Colonel Lukács was born in Balassagyarmat on 7 May 1966. After finishing the "Slovak National Uprising" Military Air Academy as a Transport pilot in Kosice, (former Czechoslovakia), he was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant and was commissioned to the Hungarian Armed Forces as a pilot in Szolnok Airbase in 1989. He served as a pilot for ten years before being transferred to the Hungarian Defence Force, Joint Operations Centre in 2000 where he was employed as an "Open Skies" Expert. In 2008 he was promoted to senior officer and started to work with the Ministry of Defence Development and Logistics Agency. In 2006 he finished the Miklós Zrínyi National Defence University in Budapest and graduated as a military leader. He was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel in 2007. His last post in Hungary was as senior officer at the Ministry of Defence Armament and Quartermaster Office. He was decorated five times and the highest honour was the Signal Service Medal Silver Grade in 2009. LtCol Lukács is fluent in Slovakian, Czech and English. When he has free time he is interested in military history and enjoys basketball. He is married and has a 17 year old daughter and a 20 year old son.

UNFICYP SO2 Personnel



ajor Peter Kristaly assumed the post of UNFICYP SO2 Personnel in November 2011. He was born on 18 November 1976, in Szolnok, Hungary and graduated from the Aviation Officers College as an airborne weapons systems engineer in 2000. His first assignment was as a team leader at 87th Combat Helicopter Regiment. In 2002 he received a new position at the Operations Centre JOC and served as an operations officer and deputy shift leader for 5 years. He deployed to Cyprus with UNFICYP in 2006 as a Military Observer and Liaison Officer. On completion of his tour in Cyprus he took up a new appointment as a desk officer at the Operations Centre Peace Support Operations Department where he had to deal with Hungarian military personnel deployed to MFO mission and UN, EU and OSCE led operations. His last post in Hungary was as senior desk officer at the Ministry of Defence International Cooperation Department, 2nd Regional and Attaché Liaison Section. His interests include any ball games, especially football and hiking. He is married to Eszter; they have one son, Peter aged 3 and they are expecting their second child (hopefully a girl) in June 2012.

FMPU Second in Command



aptain Miloš Petrov, arrived in UNFICYP on 23 September to take up the position of second in command of the Force Military Police Unit.Captain Petrov graduated from the Military Academy in Liptovsky Mikulas, Slovakia in 1999, specializing in Economic Support. His previous appointments include Head of Section in the Military Financial Support Office for 3 years, Senior Officer of the Police Support Department in the Military Police Unit for 3 years, Senior Officer in Command in the Military Police Directorate. In 2006 he completed the Military Police Basic Course and in 2007 he also completed the UN Military Observer Course at the Finnish Defence Forces International Centre. He is happily married to Marcela and they have two children.

Visits



The British General Officer Commanding Theatre Troops, Major General SA Burley MBE visited UNFICYP on 5 December where he met with the Force Commander, Major General Chao Liu and Senior Advisor Wlodek Cibor.



Ambassador of Denmark Ms. Kirsten Geelan visited UNFICYP on 9 December and met with Force Commander, Major General Chao Liu.



Force Commander, Major General Chao Liu met with British Brigadier DF Capps, Commander 104 Logistic Support Brigade on 15 December.



Hungarian Deputy Chief of the Ministry of Defence, Staff Lieutenant General Zoltán Orosz visited UNFICYP on 18 December where he met with members of senior mission leadersship.

Peace Concert



