SEASON'S GREETINGS BY THE CHIEF OF MISSION

The year 1997 is coming to a close, and we approach
the very special period of Christmas and the advent of
a New Year. This is a time for traditional celebrations
and personal reflection.

Many of you will spend this special period away
from home and your families, your loved ones and
close friends. You will be busy; on observation posts,
checkpoints, patrols, manning your duty stations.

Your decision to serve in Cyprus in the cause of
peace deserves the highest respect and appreciation of
the international community. Your daily effort and
hard work at every post, be it military, administrative
or political, makes me and our superiors proud of you.

So often you were confronted with difficult situa-
tions this year. Yourfriendliness, fairness and firm-
ness presented vis-à-vis those you dealt with, your
continued display of professionalism and commitment
have enabled you to perform our mission to a high
standard. You are to be complimented for passing
difficult peace-keeping test in such a fine manner.

Efforts towards peace consist of various steps and
activities. Building trust and confidence is one of the
most important aspects of our daily activity on this
divided island. Various organizations, agencies and
individuals from both communities are actively
engaged in sponsoring, supporting and organizing
hundreds of bi-
communal events
whether in the Buffer
Zone or on both sides.
Such functions are
crucial in creating a
positive atmosphere,
and bring out the desire
of most Cypriot and Turkish
Cypriots to live together
under a bi-communal and bi-zonal federal roofing.

Above all, these activities prepare the ground and
facilitate peace-making efforts. Despite the fact
that this is not a traditional military activity, you
were successfully involved, whether directly or indirectly,
in all of them. Without your hard work and dedicated
effort, these goals would have been much more diffi-
cult to achieve. Thank you for all you have done
throughout the year.

May I wish every member of the United Nations
Operation in Cyprus, their families andbeloved, a very
merry Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New
Year.

This issue of the Blue Beret includes activities during
the months of November and December 1997. This
was unavoidable due to technical difficulties in the preparation of the November issue.
Normal monthly publications will be resumed from January 1998.

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

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

This is an official publication prepared under the direction of the Chief of Mission.
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EDITORSIAL

The start of a new year is traditionally a time for a new beginning. It is the time when we evaluate what we have done during the past twelve months, the time when we set new goals and directions for ourselves.

Christmas is a magical time of the year for people of all ages, and in many countries around the world, it has developed into an explosion of colour, decorations, fairy tales and festivities. Although the commercialism of this holiday is frustrating to many, the celebrations give a warm glow. More importantly, Christmas is a time for family and friends.

On behalf of the editorial staff, I would like to wish all readers a very Merry Christmas. I hope that the holidays and New Year will be filled with joy, happiness and success.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS and A HAPPY NEW YEAR

FELIZ NAVIDAD Y PROSPERO AÑO NUEVO

FELIZ NATAL E BON ANO NOVO

EIN FRIEDVOLLES WEihnachtsfest
UND EIN GLÜCKLICHES NESUES JAHR

KELLEMES KARácSONYI ÜNNEPEt ÉS BOLgOD ÜJÉvet VIVAK

VESSELE RÓZSCÉNé PRázNICKÉ V ŠROČNO NOVINO

NOLLASZI DONNA AGUS BŁAIJN Ó FAOI MIASA DÍÁBOR GO LEIR

HYVÄJ JUOLELLA JA ONNELLIsta Uutta Vuotta

PHOTO BY
Cpl Pat O'Meara

At this festive time of year, make sure you don't fall into the trap of excessive drinking, which may drive you to the casualty department! Remember DRINKING AND DRIVING DON'T MIX.
SPECIAL ADVISOR OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL VISITS CYPRUS

Mr Diego Cordovez, Special Advisor of the Secretary-General on Cyprus, visited the island from 18 to 21 November. He arrived late in the evening of Tuesday, 18 November, met the leaders of the two communities the following day, and met the leaders of the political parties from both sides at a lunch hosted by the Chief of Mission at his residence. Mr Cordovez was briefed on the overall situation by the Chief of Mission and also gained a firsthand impression of UNFICYP from the Force Commander and Senior Officers, followed by a line tour of the Buffer Zone in the Old City of Nicosia. Before departing for Athens and Ankara on Friday, he gave a bi-communal press conference at the Ledra Palace Hotel. On his way back to New York where he briefed the Security-Council, Mr Cordovez met in Paris with the special Cyprus representatives and envoys appointed by a number of European Union countries.

The Secretary-General appointed Mr Cordovez effective 28 April 1997, following Mr Han Sung-Joo’s decision not to continue in his position of Special Representative. In July and August, Mr Cordovez conducted the direct talks* between Mr Clerides and Mr Denktash in Troubouck (USA) and Glion-sur-Montreux (Switzerland).

Mr Cordovez was the Foreign Minister of Ecuador from 1988 to 1992. A staff member of the United Nations Secretariat for 25 years, from 1981 to 1988, he served as Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs. In that capacity, he conducted the negotiations which culminated in the 1988 Geneva accords leading to the Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan.

At his press conference, Mr Cordovez emphasized that the Secretary-General personally attached great importance to bringing about a solution to the Cyprus problem, and had called on the two leaders to start a sustained process of negotiations immediately after the elections in February 1998. Mr Cordovez noted that the international community was currently concerned about Cyprus to a degree which had no precedent.

Mr Cordovez said that he would return in early March 1998 to discuss ways of undertaking a continuing, sustained process of negotiations.

PEACE FESTIVAL AT THE LEDRA PALACE HOTEL
29 NOVEMBER 1997

Under the title “Festival for Peace”, 19 Greek Cypriot and 13 Turkish Cypriot organizations held their first bi-communal event on Saturday 29 November between 2.00 and 6.00 pm at the Ledra Palace Hotel. Various organizations on both sides took part including youth groups, political parties, trade unions and a number of peace movements.

Entertainment was provided by groups from the two communities, and the atmosphere was very congenial. Approximately 1,900 people of all ages mingled easily, enjoying each other’s company and the refreshments offered by the organizers.

Previously, on 26 November, the coordinating committee held a press conference where a joint declaration for peace was read to the press. Following the Peace Festival, the organizers declared their intention to create a permanent coordinating committee to promote common goals through a series of joint meetings.

Appeals in the Peace Declaration include the following: “We, the representatives of the undersigned Greek and Turkish Cypriot organizations, are aware of the need for peace in Cyprus more than ever. We are also aware that peace cannot be achieved by waiting... That is why we have decided on our own initiative to join our forces for a common struggle... We call upon our people to leave aside all prejudices and join the struggle for peace... By the common events we are organizing, we once more want to underline the necessity for peace, the capability of Cypriots to solve their own problems and the need to build a common homeland... We appeal to all those who are willing to help, support us in our efforts to get rid of all obstacles affecting our right to meet freely as Greek and Turkish Cypriots.”

A BRIDGE TO SOLVE HUMANITARIAN MATTERS

Recently, the Humanitarian Branch of Sector One hosted approximately 20 guests at a meeting in San Martín Camp. Present were the Greek Cypriot mukhtars, police authorities and translators from a number of villages in the south of the island which border on Sector One’s area of responsibility.

Matters relating to the Buffer Zone such as constructions, farming permits, fire control, obstacles, use of the patrol track, night activities, garbage, hunting, demonstrations and cemeteries were on the agenda for discussion.

Sector One was represented by the Commanding Officer, 2IC, Ops Officer, Ops Info Officer and the three members of the Humanitarian Branch. The Sector was delighted to be able to host a function which enabled different aspects of the same problem to be surfaced and resolved. Credit must go to the Humanitarian Branch, who were entirely responsible for the success of the event.

The bridge is now so strong that it can be crossed by anyone.
NEW CO COMMANDING OFFICER SECTOR TWO
LIEUTENANT COLONEL D C ECCLES, CO 1 RTR

Lieutenant Colonel David Eccles was born in October 1957 and educated at Abingdon School and Reading University where he read International Politics. He was commissioned from the Royal Military Sandhurst in 1979 and posted to the Fourth Royal Tank Regiment (1 RTR).

As a junior officer, he spent the next 10 years at Regimental Duty in Munster, Tidworth and Osnabruck, culminating in his appointment as Adjutant, followed by a year as a Sabre Squadron Leader. In 1988, he attended Division II of the Army Staff course before going to Camberley the following year. After Staff College, he served as Chief of Staff 11 Armoured Brigade in Minden and then returned to his Regiment as a Squadron leader and subsequently Second in Command.

CHARITY RUN IN CYPRUS

by L.Bdr Thompson, 5 Regt RA

Running up to the main square, it became apparent that the whole affair was on a much grander scale than we originally thought. Brass bands, television cameras, the President's wife and the British High Commissioner were all there to greet us.

We finished in 8 hours, 14 minutes, and the Regiment is proud to have contributed to a total of over £26,000.00. The money was donated to one particular local charity called "ELPIDA", the English translation being "HOPE", which was set up to help children suffering from leukaemia and cancer.
LIEUTENANT AMELIA BAKER, 5TH REGIMENT ROYAL ARTILLERY

An Army officer from Yorkshire has become the first woman to command a troop of soldiers on patrol in Cyprus as part of the United Nations peace-keeping force. She is Lieutenant Amelia Baker, who in December 1997 ends her six-month tour serving with the 5th Regiment Royal Artillery.

The 24-year-old has an immense amount of responsibility. First and foremost, she commands the 25 soldiers in her troop, and this is not a matter of simple routine. Her deployment with the UN means that she has an operational command in a country divided by bitter conflict - one that might flare up with little warning.

The Troop is based in Liri Camp on the outskirts of Nicosia and accommodation is spartan, but like many of their predecessors, they have tried to make themselves comfortable. An old fish pond has been drained, repainted UN blue and now serves as a swimming pool. Although very small, it's easily covered by a lilo and only waist deep, it does provide some relief from the energy sapping summer heat and temperatures that can exceed 38 degrees centigrade.

Air conditioning is a luxury that will probably never find its way onto the line, and so sport is best left until after sunset or before sunrise. Amelia prefers to run the Troop's physical training in the evening: "I find early starts pretty hard work, the alarm goes off at half six and I struggle out of bed at seven. By evening we're all a little more lively, and then we either go for a run or workout in the multi-gym."

Although Amelia seems well suited to being the first woman to do this particular job, what do the soldiers think? Gunner Nick Claydon (23) from Barnsley says: "Miss Baker makes a good boss, and certainly we have no problem with her being a woman." Asked whether she had a nickname, he replied: "Ma'am," but then with a smile continued, "She's also known as angry or scary spice - you should see the way she deals with anyone breaking the rules!"

Along the Buffer Zone's "Green Line", east of the divided city of Nicosia, is the area patrolled by Lt Baker and her troop. She was asked how she found being the first woman on patrol? "My own soldiers have no problem with it, they're used to women officers. However, the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots had quite a shock at first. When they found out that I worked in the same way as the other Troop Commanders, they seemed to accept it and we have no problems."

Each day, information is passed down the chain of command. These briefings, nicknamed "morning prayers", are where Lt Baker learns of developments in the political and military status quo. After briefing her troop, she sets about the day's patrolling or attends meetings which deal with disputes that may have arisen between the opposing forces.

Patrols can either be on foot or in the familiar white Landrover with UN markings. As she moves down the line, the tension is apparent. Driving past manfields that have been there since 1974, troops can be clearly seen on either side of the cease-fire line. Positioned behind sandbags or in bunkers, they watch over the Buffer Zone, wary of any incursion.

GENERAL HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES

Under the direction of the Chief of Mission, Mr Gustave Feissel, the UNFICYP Humanitarian Branch cooperates with high level authorities on each side of the dividing line in the coordination of 'exchange' visits, south to north and vice-versa. Two such exchanges have occurred since August on a scale not seen since 1974, enabling Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to visit places which, hitherto, have been inaccessible to them on a daily basis.

On 8 August 1997, 386 Turkish Cypriots were permitted to visit the War Memorial in Kokkina Village in order to remember and pay respects to those who fell during the 1964 troubles. Exactly one week later, 674 Greek Cypriots travelled by bus to the tip of the Karpas peninsula to pay homage in the monastery of Apostolos Andreas. Family members of UN civilian employees were included in the group.

Following these successful initiatives, two further visits were organised, the first taking place on 8 November 1997 when 273 Turkish Cypriot students went to Kokkina. The reciprocal event, on 30 November, saw 1,225 Greek Cypriots, again including UN civilian family members, make another journey to their monastery.

Each of these events occurred with minimum fuss and without interference as people moved through checkpoints, boarded buses, crossed terrain and tred ground which most had not seen for 23 years. Though in themselves large undertakings, the response of the people to these events makes the organisation thoroughly worthwhile. Their enormous success and popularity, in the midst of so much pessimism over the situation in Cyprus, illustrate the paramount importance of the UNFICYP humanitarian effort to the people of this island, whose voice is so often unheard but whose will could yet win the day.

Money runs (IRCIPVOL): 24
MEDEVACs: 17
Temporary transfers: 642
Transport of deceased: 3
Prison visits: 20
Pilgrimages: 5 (2 = N, 3 = S)
Bi-communal events: 265
A BRIEF ENCOUNTER WITH THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF CYPRUS - Part XV

The ancient city-kingdom of Soli is situated deep in the bay of Morphou on the north-west coast of Cyprus. It covers the northern escarp of a hillock of some 70 metres in height and extends downwards just a few metres from the seashore. East of Soli is the Xerou river whereas on the west is the Kambos river at the delta of which were found the port installations of Soli.

There are many legends which relate to the foundation of Soli. One, recorded by the Greek writer Strabo, attributes the city's establishment to the Athenians Phalerus and Akamas. The latter was the son of King Theseus (Cape Akamas was named after him). Another legend, which is recorded by Plutarch, claims that Soli was named after the Athenian lawmaker and philosopher Solon. In 560 BC, Solon visited King Philykypros of Aegina (as he was yet unidentified city near Soli) and advised his host to remove his city to another site. The Cypriot king was persuaded and named the new city after his guest. We know now that the city of Soli cannot have been named after Solon.

The administration of Soli extended over the foothills of Troodos that provided the kingdom with timber and copper from the Foukassa (Skouriotissa) mines.

DESCRIPTION
Theatre
The theatre was constructed at the end of the 2nd century AD and destroyed by earthquake in the mid 4th century. With a diameter of 52 m, it is smaller than the theatres of Salamin and Kourion (Curium). The seats were cut into the rock of the hillside and reveted with hewn limestones. The semi-circular orchestra had a diameter of 17 m, and was entered through a parados (sidewall) on either side. The scaena (stage) of the theatre was a rectangle of 36.15 m by 13.20 m of which only the substructure remains. The Department of Antiquities restored it to its present form in 1961-1964.

The Agora and the Porticoed Street
Remains of the Roman Agora and a Porticoed Street with shops were found in the lower part of Soli. This is indeed a remarkable street by its sheer size as it measures 4.75 m wide with pavements of about 4.5 m in the north and 3.6 m in the south. Archaeologists considered it one of the largest streets of the Roman Orient.

The Nymphaeum
The Nymphaeum, a building dedicated to the nymphs, dates to the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century AD. Although only one third of it has been excavated, the richly decorated substructure remains found scattered around it have enabled archaeologists to form an idea of the whole monument on the basis of a symmetrical design. It was supported by a wall in the south of the Agora and was a U-shaped building. Inside the U was a central cistern whereas on either side of the U there was a smaller lateral cistern. Only one of these has been identified so far. The cisterns were sided with columns bearing capitals with floral motives. Heads of lions served as fountains.

Basilicas 'A' and 'B'
The excavations have shown that there were two superimposed basilicas 'A' and 'B' on a terrace 20 m above sea level. The side had been used earlier during the Hellenistic and Roman times.

Plan of Soli

Aerial view of Soli Amphitheatre

TEMPLES

Basilica A
Basilica A was built in the 4th/5th centuries in the style prevalent at the time of Constantine the Great. It measured 45.5 m x 22.5 m. It is the oldest basilica in Cyprus and shows the importance of Soli Bishopric at the time.

It has a central nave 6.75 m wide with two inner and two outer aisles of 4 m and 4.5 m respectively. The floor was covered with panel mosaics, a study of which shows that they were executed in three stages. Their designs are mostly geometrical with some animal decorations. This basilica was probably destroyed by the earthquake of 526.

Basilica B
Basilica B was constructed on the ruins of Basilica A and was dated by its excavators to the 6th century on the basis of its architectural plan, the style of the flagstones and the decoration. It measures 47.70 m by 31.40 m and has a nave of 10.60 m (probably the widest in Cyprus) and two lateral aisles of 8.50 m, ending in the east in three protruding apses. In the west is a quadrangular atrium. The aisles were separated by two arcaded colonnades of 14 columns each. The spacing between the columns was irregular. The date of the abandonment of the basilica was estimated to be in about the 7th/8th centuries.

The five temples date from 250 BC to the beginning of the 4th century AD. They were dedicated to Aphrodite, Cybele, Isis (2) and Serapis.

Despite the fact that excavations have not been completed, it has been possible for archaeologists to gain an insight into the great wealth and culture of Soli. Some of the limestone and bronze statues found at the site compare well with the best of Greek and Roman masterpieces.

It is apparent that, despite the preponderant Greek orientation of Soli, there have been also influences, not only from the eastern overlords who dominated the island from time to time, but also from foreign commercial activities.
NEW ARRIVALS IN HQ UNIFCYP

NEW UNIFCYP CHIEF OF STAFF: COLONEL CMB COATS, LATE RA

Colonel Christopher Coats was commissioned into the Royal Artillery from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, in December 1969.

He has served in the British Army of the Rhine, Southern Germany and the United Kingdom, exercised in Cyprus and trained extensively on the northern and southern flanks of NATO with 3 Commando Brigade and the Allied Command Europe Force (Land), specializing in Winter Warfare and Amphibious Operations.

He has completed operational tours in Northern Ireland, Belize, Bosnia and the Republic of Georgia.

Following tours in Field Artillery and the Royal Artillery’s Training Regiment, he joined 29 Commando Regiment in 1976. His regimental appointments have included Gun Position Officer, Forward Observation Officer and Adjutant. He was appointed to command 79 (Kirkee) Commando Battery in 1985 and 94 Regiment in 1991, where he held the appointment of Commander Force Artillery, Allied Command Europe Mobile Force (Land).

He was promoted to Colonel in February 1995 and was the Deputy Chief Staff Officer and Chief of Staff of the UN Observer Mission in Georgia from Feb to April 1996.

Before assuming his appointment as the UNIFCYP Chief of Staff on 19 November 1997, he was Colonel Recruiting Policy in Headquarters Adjutant General (Personnel and Training Command).

Coats is married to Susan and they have a daughter. He and his family participate in a wide range of sports, and his own interests include offshore sailing, windsurfing, tennis, riding, mountain walking and ski touring.

NEW LIAISON OFFICER TO THE NATIONAL GUARD: COMDT RAY QUINN

Comdt Ray Quinn recently took over the appointment of Liaison Officer to the National Guard. Born in Ireland in 1949, he was educated by the Irish Christian Brothers and later studied Arabic at University College Dublin. He is currently taking a degree course at the National College of Industrial Relations, Dublin.

Comdt Quinn was commissioned into the Artillery Corps in 1969. As a Lt and Capt, he served in the 4th and 6th Field Artillery Regts and as an instructor in the Artillery School. He qualified as an instructor in gunnery at the Royal School of Artillery, Larkhill, UK in 1976-77. Graduating from the Command Staff College in 1981, he later served there as an instructor.

His recent appointments were SO, Directorate of Operations, responsible for coordination of military and police joint operations, and acting CO 1st Air Defence Regiment.

Comdt Quinn served previously in UNIFCYP (1971) as a Gun Position Officer, Heavy Mortar Troop. Other overseas appointments were SD, Ham in UNIFIL HQ (1980) and Ops Officer Irish Batt (1992-93). In 1988-90 he was a member of UNTSO where he served on both sides of the Golan Heights, and was also LO (CUNMO) to the Austrian Battalion. He was SO Ops at UNTSO HQ with responsibility for Beirut (1989-90).

Comdt Quinn’s main hobby is scuba-diving. He is also a reluctant gardener. He is widowed, and is accompanied by his two youngest children, David and Lisa. His eldest daughter, Nicole, will join the family later.

NEW FORCE PHOTOGRAPHER: CPL PAT O’MEARA

On 15 October 1997, Cpl Pat O’Meara took over the position of the UNIFCYP Force Photographer. Born in Tipperary, his home town is now Trim in County Meath.

Pat has served nine years in the Irish Army Air Corps. Normally stationed at Baldonnel in Dublin, he carries out photography on maritime fishery protection. Pat has been on one other UN posting with 78 Irish Batt, UNIFIL (Oct 95-Apr 96).

Apart from photography, Pat’s hobbies include all kinds of sport, and he has run in four marathons. He also likes music, and is currently a member of the Trim Choral Group.

UNIFCYP wishes Ibrahim, Michael, Eilli and Kyriakos every happiness in their retirement.
The morning was warm, the sun was bright and the atmosphere was tense. It was Tuesday 11 November, another day in the history of UNFICYP's Shooting Competition. The teams assembled on the pistol and 200m ranges for 0730 hrs, and the first shot was fired at 0800 hrs.

On the pistol range, nine teams were competing for the honours. Midway through the competition, Sector Four's 'A' team notched up an impressive score, followed immediately by their 'B' team. However, the HQ UNFICYP team were to shoot last, and as the officials went forward to check the HQ UNFICYP targets, it was apparent that the scores were extremely close.

The challenge was mounted by Sector Four, whose 'A' team came in second with 210 points, followed by their 'B' team with 200 points. The individual prize was won by Coy Sg t Tony Clare of Camp Command, with a remarkable score of 28 points. Cpl Sas of Sector Four 'B' was second with 71 points, and Grn Parkes of Sector Two 'A' took third place with 65 points.

The penultimate competition was the Support Weapons Shoot which was contested by five teams. This generated some pace and excitement, compared to the pistol and rifle which are mainly static competitions. Opening the shot were the PFR Light Support Weapons (LSW) team against the Sector Four 'A' General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG) team. The PFR finally emerged as winners with 142 points. Sector Four 'A' came second with 124 points, followed by Sector Four 'B' with 101 points.

Last, but not least, came the Falling Plates competition, an event which always injects speed and an abundance of adrenaline, both of which were required as the competition rules were amended once again. This time, the teams had to carry 35lb backpacks, had to be in the 'prone' position and, on the whistle blast, had to run 50m 'up to the firing point.

Having witnessed Camp Command's impressive rifle shoot, it would have taken a brave person to bet against them. The starting official's whistle sounded and the two finalists (Camp Command and Sector Four 'A') put everything they had into the last run. Camp Command won in an excellent time of 25 seconds, which could not have been achieved without the infectious enthusiasm of RSM Peter Ruane.

With the shooting over, OC Camp Command, Comdt Michael Delaney, formed a parade and handed over to the Chief of Staff, Col Ian Talbot. Before presenting the prizes, Col Talbot expressed his thanks to Camp Command who put a lot of effort into organizing the competition, along with the other contingents who supplied the officials and other back-up services which are essential to the success of such an event. Col Talbot also commented on the professionalism and enthusiasm shown by all competitors alike, in particular Sector Four who, once again, won the combined weapons trophy and Camp Command, who, for such a small unit (17 all ranks), achieved a remarkable feat by taking the rifle team, rifle individual and falling plates trophies.

Now that the dust has settled and the weapons are cleaned, it is time to reflect on the prizes that 'got away' and to think ahead to the next shooting competition.
November 19 1997 was the date set for the Medal Parade of the ninth Argentine Contingent in Cyprus. Located in San Martin Camp, the Headquarters of the Argentinian Task Force was bedecked with flowers and the flags of all UNFICYP troop-contributing nations. However on the day, the skies opened and the rain came down, but that did not prevent many friends, both military and civilian, from attending this very important ceremony where the soldiers of Sector One were presented with their United Nations medal, granted to all those who complete a minimum of 90 days' service with UNFICYP.

The Force Commander being presented with his UN medal by Commander Sector One

One of Sector One's doctors, Lt Maria Gabriela Gigena, receiving her medal from the Chief of Staff

The Force Commander inspecting the parade on the rain-drenched parade square in San Martin Camp

The Force Commander being presented with his UN medal by Commander Sector One

their loved ones in Argentina. He also thanked all guests who attended this impressive Medal Parade, and who did not allow the rain to dampen the enthusiasm of those for whom this ceremony was a significant moment in their lives.

One notable moment during the Parade was when the Force Commander himself received his UN medal, presented to him by Commander Sector One.

Following the parade, a reception took place where everyone was invited to typical Argentinian delicacies of "locro" and "empanadas".

Then on 21 November, a second Argentinian Medal Parade took place at Soti, where the remaining members of Sector One received their medals. It is traditional for ARGCON to hold two Medal Parades at the end of each rotation, as in this way, the Sector finds the opportunity to invite members of the National Guard and Turkish Forces to join in the celebrations and share with both sides this very profound and meaningful occasion.

One of Sector One's doctors, Lt Maria Gabriela Gigena, receiving her medal from the Chief of Staff

The Force Commander, Maj Gen Evergisto Arturo de Vergara, the Chief of Staff, Col Christopher Coats, and Commander Sector One, Lt Col Rafael Barni, presented the medals. The Force Commander congratulated all recipients for their hard work and devotion to duty, and wished them a safe journey back to their loved ones in Argentina. He also thanked all guests who attended this impressive Medal Parade, and who did not allow the rain to dampen the enthusiasm of those for whom this ceremony was a significant moment in their lives.

On 5 November 1997, 93 members of AUSCON (Austrians, Hungarians and Slovenians) gathered together in the ancient amphitheatre of Salamis to receive their UN medal "in the service of peace". This was the first medal parade attended by the Slovenians since they joined AUSCON in October 1997, and so made the occasion even more special.

The national flags of Hungary, Slovenia and Austria and the United Nations flag on parade

The blessing of the UN medals

This was really a very worthy and beautiful place to celebrate such an event, which took place just after sunset. Torchlights illuminated the glorious amphitheatre, and in this way, one could easily envisage how grand Salamis must have been in its day.

The trumpet of the Syrian Military Band

The ceremony was also very impressive with the outgoing Chief of Staff, Col Ian Talbot, and the Contingent Commander of Sector Four, Lt Col Robert Prader, presenting the medals. On this occasion, the Austrian organizers were able to engage the Band of the Royal Lancers, currently stationed in Episkopi, ESBA.

The British Band of the Royal Lancers
HUNGARY INCREASES PEACE-KEEPING CONTINGENT IN CYPRUS

In the past, a number of Hungarian officers and police have been posted as military observers to United Nations missions in Far East Asia (Vietnam and Cambodia) and in the Middle East (Iraq). Then, following the break of the Warsaw Pact, the Hungarian Government took the opportunity to outline an independent conception of the country's policy. This policy dictates that the Hungarian nation wishes to live in harmony with its neighbouring countries and to contribute to world peace. In practice, this contribution started with the posting of military observers to Africa (Mozambique and Angola), and to the Middle East (Kuwait).

The first Hungarian soldiers (a platoon strength) joined the Austrian Battalion in November 1995, when they took over responsibility of 1 Platoon, 1 Coy. They have, of course, gained a lot of experience since their arrival, and this year, the decision was taken to increase the Hungarian strength from 39 personnel to company level (105).

The selection of personnel started in June 1997 on a voluntary basis with a number of officers taking part in an international peace-keeping course.

URUGUAY JOINS SECTOR ONE

The Army of Uruguay has long participated in peace-keeping missions, demonstrating a profound belief in human rights and a peaceful solution to controversies. Since 1935, it has been participating in a group called the Military Neutral Commission, created in an attempt to end the armed conflict between Bolivia and Paraguay.

With the creation of the United Nations, Uruguay contributes by sending members of its force to more remote parts of the earth, with units currently in Cambodia, Mozambique and Angola.

At the invitation of Argentina, three Uruguayans (two officers and one staff sergeant) joined ARCON and have been with the Sector since July 1997. Of the three, only Capt Fernando Gonzalez has previous experience in peace-keeping missions, having served in ONUMOV in 1994.

Uruguay is proud to participate in UNFICYP, and sincerely believes that not only will this action secure and solidify the fraternity which exists between Argentina and Uruguay, but will serve to help UNFICYP's aim of creating a lasting peace on the island.
During Task Force 9's tour of duty with UNFICYP, an inter-sector photographic competition was held, whereby personnel were invited to enter a photograph in relation to their operational activities. The picture had to be taken some time between the beginning and end of their tour.

This photograph, by Lt Fernando Llensa from Bravo Coy, Sector One, was the outright winner. It was taken in the village of Agios Georgios, situated just on the border of the United Nations Buffer Zone in Sector One’s area of responsibility.