MINISTERIAL VISITS TO UNFICYP

On Tuesday 6 October 1998, the Ministers of Defence of Argentina and Britain jointly visited UNFICYP. Prior to their arrival at HQ UNFICYP, His Excellency Mr Jorge Dominguez, the Argentine Minister of Defence, the Right Honourable George Robertson MP, the United Kingdom’s Secretary of State for Defence, attended a meeting at the residence of the British High Commissioner, His Excellency Mr David Madden.

They continued on to Headquarters UNFICYP where they were received by the Force Commander, Maj Gen EA de Vergara, and the Chief of Staff, Col C Coats. Following a joint inspection of the multinational peacekeeping forces, the Ministers were escorted into the Headquarters and provided with a short briefing by the Chief of Staff.

The two Ministers then attended a training exercise involving Argentinian and British troops from the multinational Mobile Force Reserve. This exercise included assistance from UN Flight’s Bell 212 helicopter and a TACTICA Armoured Personnel Carrier, which was transformed for the exercise into an armoured vehicle ready for emergency casualty evacuation.

His Excellency Mr Jorge Dominguez, accompanied by the Argentine Chief of Joint Staff, Lt Gen Carlos Maria Zabala, then continued on to Sector One, where he inspected the Argentinian troops and visited UN Observation Post 22 in the Buffer Zone.

His brief visit to Sector One ended with a reception at the Headquarters of the Argentinian Task Force, where he took the salute and thanked the contingent on behalf of the Argentinian President, Dr Carlos Saul Menem, and himself, for their loyalty and devotion to duty.

Meanwhile, the Right Honourable George Robertson, accompanied by Mr DBJ Tanner, Secretary of the Minister, Lt Col CM Deverell MBE, the Press Secretary, and Mr McGovern, the Assistant to the Secretary of State, continued on to 19th Regiment Royal Artillery, a unique opportunity for the Secretary of State to observe at first hand one of his Regiments on an operational tour. The visit party now included journalists from the British Forces Broadcasting Services and British Sky News.

The visitors walked the Green Line within Nicosia’s city walls, where they met soldiers, both British and Dutch, whose job it is to maintain peace in this area.

At the end of his visit, the Secretary of State said how heartened he was by all he had seen, and that he now had a clear picture of the problems faced by the young soldiers in their day-to-day peace-keeping efforts.
UNFICYP CELEBRATES
THE MULTINATIONAL FACE
OF THE UN

For the fourth consecutive year, UNFICYP celebrated 24 October, United Nations Day. This year, the event recognized 50 years of peace-keeping activities and was held at the Ledra Palace Hotel, the base of the British Contingent.

It took the form of an outdoor festival at which the multinational face of the UN was displayed through contributions by all Sectors and Units of the Force and in which all nationalities were represented. There was certainly plenty for the 5,000 visitors to choose from, the activities being centred in three main areas. Argentinian dancing, Irish music and a Hungarian/Austrian Tai Kwan Do display were the highlights on stage, whilst superb music and marching displays by the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas and the Argentinian Military Band, interspersed by a hilarious and strenuous games programme in the main arena, kept spectators amused and enthralled alongside breathtaking displays of abseiling by Dutch soldiers, determined to throw themselves from the roof of the hotel.

This was very much a day for the children and an array of ‘fairground’ attractions, with a variety of stalls including face painting, a bouncy castle and swimming pool games, were complimented by exhibitions of a multinational culture and heritage. Culinary delicacies offered at the four national food tents included empanadas from Argentina, goulash and apple strudel from the Austrian/Hungarian Contingents, Irish stew and cakes and drinks from the British Contingent, all of which proved very popular. These and many more activities occurred within the wider backdrop of providing information about the UN, its role throughout the world and its successes.

It was abundantly clear from the general atmosphere and the mood of all visitors and participants that the day achieved its aims and was a great success.

The hours flew past, and when 5 o'clock arrived, it was with great reluctance and some sadness that people began to leave for home. The Ledra Palace Hotel exit was blocked by people excitedly chatting and asking for the date of the next event.

As many of you will have learned, a tragic accident marred this day. 3 1/2-year-old Vergina Nicolaides, from Lakatamia, died in a riding accident involving a pony. Despite prompt action from the UNFICYP medics present and her swift transport to the Nicosia General Hospital, doctors were unable to save her life.

IN MEMORIAM

UNFICYP expresses its great sorrow at this tragedy and the loss of this dear little girl. We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere condolences to Vergina’s parents, family and friends.
A
s with the majority of modern armies of the world, the 
Argentine Army now has a considerable number of women 
who have joined the armed forces. 
Female participation began in 1981. At first, only certain spe-
cializations were accepted, such as professional nurses and infirmary 
assistants. Now, however, women form not only an active part of the 
permanent force of voluntary sold-
iers, but began approximately two 
years ago to participate in the 
national military academy. Female 
cadets are currently training in 
many fields including artillery, engineering and 
communications.

At present there are 11 women taking part in 
the Argentine Task Force at Sector One. Four hold 
oficer ranks, three are NCOs and the remainder 
are privates. All of them fulfil functions of logistic 
support, but the day isn’t far off when the cadets 
now training in artillery, engineering and communi-
cations will be integrated into all branches of Sector 
One. One may even hold the rank of Commanding 
Officer. 

And why not?

SLOVENIAN CONTINGENT IN CYPRUS

Situat ed in central Europe, the Republic of Slovenia 
is one of the smallest countries in the region. It 
 borders Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia, and 
measures 20,256 sq km with a population of almost 
two million.

Slovenia has proven to be a very dynamic, young 
member of the UN family. It is therefore justified in 
being proud of the fact that its contribution to 
UNIFCYP has already reached the third rotation. A 
decision was taken this year to increase the Slovenian 
strength from 10 personnel to platoon level (26 per-
sonnel). On 23 September 1998, SICON III - the first 
Slovenian platoon arrived in Cyprus. A day to 
remember, and an event to celebrate.

Well organized and efficient preparations for 
deployment took place well in advance with briefings on 
peace-keeping doctrines and techniques, exchange of 
experiences and information from the previous 
contingent which were of enormous value.

On September 13 1998, the contingent left for 
Austria where it continued the final preparations at the 
Austrian Training Centre in Vienna. Members of the 
two incoming contingents - Austrian and Slovenian - worked hand in hand to familiarize themselves with 
topics such as crowd control, OP duties, demonstra-
tions, negotiations, etc. Then on 23 September 1998, 
the first Slovenian platoon was deployed to Cyprus.

Two Slovenian officers are now conducting their 
duties at HQ Sector Four in Famagusta: Captain 
Videti, the Contingent Commander/Supply Officer, 
and Captain Pisarevi, Duty Officer in Ops Branch.

SICON III contingent members share the common 
feeling of pride and responsibility, and are all deter-
mind to accomplish their duties, in accordance with 
UNFICYP's mandate, to the best of their abilities.

VISIT OF THE AUSTRIAN MINISTER OF DEFENCE

From 9 to 11 October 1998, the 
Austrian Minister of Defence, 
Dr Werner Fasslabend, and a 
high ranking delegation paid a 
visit to Cyprus.

In a tightly-packed schedule, 
a wreath-laying ceremony took 
place in Goshi on 9 October, 
after which the Minister visited 
the Chief of Mission, Dame Ann 
Hercus, and the Force Comman-
der, Maj Gen Everiglasto de 
Vergara, at HQ UNFICYP. 
In the afternoon, following a visit to 
President Glafkos Clerides, the 
Minister attended the Austrian 
Medal Parade with the Chief of 
Mission and Force Commander.

Dr Werner Fasslabend with 
Dame Ann Hercus

The following day, Saturday 
10 October, the programme 
cluded a general tour of Camp 
Duke Leopold V. The Minister 
and delegation also inspected 
Observation Posts in Dherinia, 
Camp Marie Therese, Pyla and 
Athienou and met with soldiers of 
all ranks from the three 
contingents of Austria, Hungary 
and Slovenia.

In his final address, the 
Minister expressed his great 
appreciation at the opportunity to 
visit Sector Four, and said how 
impressed he was with the experi-
ence and motivation of the 
soldiers he had met.

HUNGARIAN SOLDIERS IN UNFICYP

The Hungarian contingent successfully 
completed the autumn 1998 rotation on 22 and 
29 September, when 55 men and women were 
repartitioned to Hungary and 57 newcomers 
arrived in UNFICYP.

Hungarian participation dates back to August 
1993, when the first four Hungarian Military 
Observers arrived in UNFICYP. Then in 1995, 
the Hungarian government signed an agreement 
with the United Nations and Austria, authorizing 
the deployment of a Hungarian platoon under 
Austrian operational command.

In accordance with the Hungarian Constitution, 
no conscripts are permitted to carry out their 
service abroad, so all Hungarian soldiers serving 
with UNFICYP were selected from professional 
or contracted volunteers in the rank of Corporal 
up to Lieutenant Colonel. Application is open to 
all military personnel who fulfill the criteria of the 
selection board.

As "Szikloos", the 88th Rapid Reaction Battal-
ion, is specialized not only in quick deployment 
but also in peace-keeping techniques, the majority 
of personnel are selected from that unit. The 
majority, but not everybody, so you can also meet 
aircraft and infantry personnel as well as female 
computer operators and many more.

After gaining experience, HUNCON's 
platoon strength was increased to company level, 
and since 23 September 1997, 107 Hungarians 
serve in various locations within Sector Four. 
The main base and "home" is Camp Iazy, and all 
members of UNFICYP, military, police or 
civilian, are welcome to visit the Camp on any 
occasion.

Hungarian soldiers at Camp Iazy in Sector Four
The Monastery of Apostolos Andreas (St Andrew) is an important Christian shrine situated on the very spot where the voyaging Martyr allegedly set foot on the Island in search of water. Situated some 22km beyond Rizokarpaso at the virtual tip of the Karpass Peninsula, it is revered and respected throughout Greek Orthodoxy.

A 1997 agreement between the leaders of the two communities resulted that three annual Greek Cypriot pilgrimages could be made to the Monastery during Easter, on 15 August and on 30 November, in return for similar reciprocal trips by the Turkish Cypriots to the Hala Sultan Tekke mosque near Larnaca.

The Humanitarian Branch of UNFICYP planned and coordinated many aspects of the arrangements for the trip, which eventually took place on 13 September 1998, a little later than originally planned.

At 6:45am, the 1,276 pilgrims began walking through the Buffer Zone at the Ledra Palace Hotel in organised groups. They boarded buses at the checkpoint, under the supervision of UNFICYP soldiers and police officials with the cooperation of both sides. Having got on buses an hour quicker than is usual for such events, the pilgrims travelled the 102 miles to the Monastery. The more senior citizens had the opportunity to gaze over half-forgotten ground, to snatch a nostalgic glimpse or to rekindle memories of a house once lived in, of a road once travelled or of a tree once climbed, as the villages swept past.

By midday, everyone had arrived, some seeing the Monastery for the very first time. Others met old friends from the Karpass villages. People roamed the peripheral grounds, down to the water’s edge, where many picnicked whilst waiting their turn to enter the Monastery and participate in the ongoing service. It was also an occasion for quiet meditation as those in the slow moving queue lit candles of all sizes (some quite enormous) and waited for entry into the hallowed halls. A moving sight indeed.

One cannot and must not underestimate the importance of this event to the Greek Cypriot community, in terms of both religion and sentiment.

Seat vacancies are as gold dust; the desire for them far exceeds capacity, with over 6,000 applications for this latest trip. A tried and tested vetting procedure had been developed to ensure absolute fairness and impartiality during selection, whilst giving appropriate priority to special groups such as the elderly, the disabled and persons travelling from overseas for the occasion.

After about three hours at the Monastery, it was back to the buses for the slow drive back to Nicosia, under excellent convoy arrangements, stopping again at the half way point for refreshments. It was almost dark as the first groups got off the buses at the Ledra Checkpoint and by 8.15pm, the last ‘stragglers’ had made their way past the Ledra Hotel to their waiting vehicles, footsore but in good spirits after the 14-hour day.

It was a long day for UNFICYP too, especially for those on duty in the Buffer Zone and those who accompanied the travellers throughout. From the UN perspective, the trip was an overwhelming success, and the people showed their appreciation as they returned through the checkpoint. Such a pilgrimage, involving so many people, is an enormous undertaking in terms of coordination and control, and Lt Col Coudros, the Chief Humanitarian Officer, his staff and all other UNFICYP personnel who assisted should be warmly congratulated.

Everyone agrees that this latest event was a most satisfying day and a sign, perhaps, of a resurrection of the pilgrimages to Apostolos Andreas, the next of which is scheduled for St Andrew’s Day, 30 November.

MEMORIAL SERVICE AT GOSHI

On 14 August 1974, 1/Lt Johann Izy, Sgts Paul Deconbe, Cpl August Isak and L/Cpl Sattlecker from the Australian Contingent were travelling from Goshi towards Larnaca with orders to observe the opposing forces from a safe distance. In accordance with UN rules, the vehicle they were in was painted white with the UN crest on both doors. A UN flag was flying from the vehicle, and all four soldiers wore blue helmets, clearly identifying them as members of UNFICYP.

Whilst in open ground approximately 1km from Goshi, they were attacked by Turkish forces fighter planes using 20mm board cannons and napalm bombs. 1/Lt Izy, Sgts Deconbe and Cpl Isak lost their lives in the attack.

Every year, the Australian Contingent commemorates this tragic event at the Goshi memorial, located only a few metres from the original site, by a guard of honour and a wreath-laying ceremony. The Headquarters 1 Coy Athienou was named after 1/Lt Izy, and the UN Medical Centre in Athienou was named after Cpl Isak.

From the left: Lt Col J Trumner, Maj Gen EA de Vergara, Dame Ann Hercus and Lt Col H Hufner.
SECTOR TWO
19th REGIMENT ROYAL ARTILLERY
(The Highland Gunners)

In the first of a series of articles that will familiarize us with the Sub Units of Sector Two to UNPICYP, we are introduced here to Sector Two East. The unit concerned is 25/170 (Imjin) Battery, Royal Artillery.

The following articles give a taste of life on the line in an area that runs from the Ledra Palace Hotel/Wolseley Barracks, where Battery Headquarters is located, through the old walled city of Nicosia. We continue onwards through Ortosa Troop on the Omorphita Plain, to Liri Troop, manned by men from the A/Kingscote 11th Airmobile Brigade to the east of the Sector, located next to the western troop of Sector Four, AUSCON.

LEDRA TROOP

LEDRA TROOP is blessed with the smallest Area of Responsibility (AOR) within the Sector, only 800m by 400m. However, it is possibly one of the most important, due to the fact that it contains the only official civilian crossing point between both sides in Cyprus.

Due to our unique geographic position, being co-located with both Regimental and Battery Headquarters means that we have a varied and demanding set of responsibilities. In keeping with all other UN line troops, we have to monitor both the opposing forces' cease fire lines (OPFOR CFLs). This is made significantly easier in the Ledra area due to our small size, and the fact that large parts of the area were unmanned under an agreement that was reached in 1989. As we cannot see a number of the National Guard and Turkish Forces Observation Posts (OPs) from our own positions, we regularly deploy foot patrols to dominate the ground and to liaise with the OPFORs up to Company level.

Perhaps our most important responsibility is the provision of the Sector reserve that is at a constant state of readiness at two hours' notice to move. This more than makes up for the routine of living and working within the Ledra Palace/Wolseley Barracks area. When we are in role as the Sector reserve, our responsibilities within the AOR fall to others within the Ledra Palace.

There are inevitably other tasks that are the penalty of living and operating close to the focus of command for both Regiment and Battery, but this is more than compensated for by the higher living standards that we have in comparison to the line troops.

CITY TROOP

CITY TROOP occupies approximately half of the old shopping precinct known as Maple House, while the other half is deserted and in a dilapidated state. As soon as 1 Royal Tank Regiment (1RTR) had handed over command to 19th Regiment, the Unit immediately established a refurbishment scheme, aimed at improving the general standard of the Troop house and the Buffer Zone in order to enhance the Troop's operational capability.

As Maple House is a much visited location, the façade was generally in a good state of repair and, apart from a good lick of paint, only minimal work was required. However, the living accommodation needed a fair amount of attention: the troop eagerly swung into action erecting mosquito screens, eradicating the past Unit's presence and stamping their own identity onto the building.

City Troop's Area of Responsibility (AOR) runs from Paphos Gate in the west, bisects the old city of Nicosia and ends at the far eastern edge of the Flatro Bastion. It is 1.6 km in length and boasts the narrowest part of the Buffer Zone, which is a mere 3.3 metres in width.

The reason why the Regiment initiated a refurbishment policy for the Buffer Zone is that in parts, the vegetation had grown so much that it actually impeded our operational capability. City Troop had one such area, the Flatro Bastion. The vegetation in this location had initially been trimmed by 1RTR, but had since grown back to such an extent that it now obscured visibility from the Observation Post on the Flatro Bastion; so, it was decided to trim it once more. A JCB and chain saw team from the Royal Engineer Detachment were tasked and, with manpower from City Troop, proceeded to clear the area of every piece of foliage. The Battery Commander of Sector Two East was somewhat shocked when he came down to inspect the Troop's progress and saw that the area had literally been flattened. It's now unofficially known as the "Flatt" bastion.

Operationally we have been busy, as the opposing forces are at their closest within our AOR. We have had to deal with the usual incidents of over milling, stone throwing and general accusations off ill doing from both sides.

As well as the operational responsibilities which the Troop undertakes, it also hosts the majority of VIP visits to the Regiment and is very much a 'show' Troop as its AOR has so many fascinating and varied points of interest.

The Rest and Recreation cycle swung into full effect with no delay, and the Adventurous Training Centre in Dhekelia has had a steady flow of satisfied customers. The Troop members settled quickly into the job at hand, and are enjoying the delights which an operational tour in Cyprus can provide.
ORTONA TROOP

SECTOR TWO as a whole is sub divided into two smaller areas of responsibility, Sector Two East and Sector Two West. Ortona Troop is the third troop in Sector Two East. It is bordered in the west by Nicosia City Troop, and in the east by Liri Troop, which extends out into the rural Omorphita Plain.

Thus, Ortona Troop’s portion of the Buffer Zone lies in a busy, suburban landscape. The Troop’s area of responsibility is 1.5 km in length, and the Buffer Zone between the Turkish Forces and National Guard varies from 10 m to 50 m in width. The ground is mixed scrubland and trees, interspersed with old derelict residential and commercial properties.

The first impressions of our Troop area were amazement and disbelief. The opposing forces were so close that they could almost offer each other a cigarette, if they were inclined to.

It is also hard to believe that some of the decrepit sentry towers they continue to man have been there for 24 years, when they do not look as if they could withstand a good downpour. The whole area has literally been caught in a time warp since the events in 1974. Old houses still contain newspapers over 24 years old. Children’s school books for written work and mathematics can be found in some of the old houses, abandoned during the troubles.

Our first month was spent working extremely hard in three main areas. First, we had to learn the intricate detail of the Buffer Zone and cease fire lines in our Troop area very quickly so that we could begin to patrol and monitor the area, thus maintaining its integrity. It was also important to build a good relationship with the opposing forces at both soldier and officer level. This helps in both resolving minor problems at the lowest level, and in gathering operational information.

Finally, we put a tremendous amount of effort into renovating the Troop living and social accommodation, transforming a run-of-the-mill Troop house into one of the best on the Green Line. After all, an area is only as good as you make it!

LIRI TROOP

NEEDED TO SAY, we of the Dutch Contingent are delighted to be here as part of the UNIFCYP family and, in particular, with the British Gunners of 19 Regt RA.

We have been split into three troop locations across the Sector, one of which is based at Liri Troop on the east of the line abutting the western Troop of AUSCON. There is a secret suspicion that we were given Liri Troop area as the landscape resembles that of the Netherlands in all but the quantity of water around. Well, that and the lack of windmills!

We first heard of this deployment after returning from a winter training exercise in Norway. It turned out that our training was less than perfect for the climate that we experienced on disembarkation from the plane - and what we endured on the plain at Liri. There are 30 Dutchmen from the A/Kingscroy 11th Armoured Brigade, based here in total, with the responsibility of patrolling the Buffer Zone that is 9 km in length and up to 1.5 km in width. Within this area we man three Observation Posts, one permanently and two during the day only. This variety allows our soldiers to obtain the maximum benefit of working the line, as there is always something happening to observe and report on. The area that we cover is most varied, from the suburban decline to the north of the Ortona Troop area, down through the rural Omorphita plains to the south towards the Austrian Sector.

It is hard to believe that we are already half way through the tour - which goes to prove that time flies when you are enjoying yourself!

MULTINATIONAL MEDAL PARADE OF SECTOR FOUR

O n 9 October 1998, the Medal Parade of the multinational battalion of Sector Four was held in the ancient amphitheatre of Salamis near Famagusta. Yet again, this location provided a worthy and beautiful setting for such an event.

After sunset and in the presence of guests of honour, families and friends, 81 members of Sector Four’s UNAHSB (Australians, Hungarians and Slovenians) lined up and proudly marched on parade to receive their UN medal "in the service of peace". The medal recipients were inspected by the Chief of Mission, Dame Ann Hercus, the Force Commander, Maj Gen Evergisto de Vergara, and the Austrian Minister of Defence, Dr W Fasslabed.

After the medals had been awarded, the Chief of Mission thanked Lt Col H Huffler, Commander Sector Four, for the good work of the three contingents. She then presented Lt Col J Trumm, the Austrian Contingent Commander, with the Chief of Mission’s special commendation. 300 spectators immensely enjoyed the Austrian marches played by the Styrian band of the "Grazer Verkehrsbetriebe", who had come from Austria especially for this function.

The event ended with a firework display in Salamis, and a reception was then held in the equally attractive Ohello Tower situated within the Venetian Walls of the old city of Famagusta. The Austrian Minister of Defence expressed his gratitude to all soldiers in the Battalion, especially the Australians who have been serving with UNIFCYP for the past 34 years in the service of peace.

A wonderful buffet/barbeque was served by the Austrian chefs, and international music by the Styrian band contributed greatly to making this an unforgettable evening.

Reception at the Ohello Tower in the old city of Famagusta

Cpl Frank and Sgt Edelenhut at Liri Troop

Gnr Coggewe and Gnr Muckell from Ortona Troop
LOGISTICS BRANCH, SECTOR ONE

Every day during their tour of duty, the personnel of Logistics Branch in Sector One’s San Martin Camp work hard for the members of their Contingent. Their tasks are often forgotten, and invariably they are taken for granted - at least until necessity arises.

In such cases, priorities have to be established. Contingent personnel have to have the means to perform their duties, including basic needs such as food, water and equipment. All these items have to be acquired as laid down in Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs); bureaucracy at its peak, with forms to be filled and materials, once they have been received, delivered to the right place at the right time. All this procedure is better known as the Logistics cycle. New requests are regularly submitted and the cycle starts again in an effort to minimize time loss and avoid crisis situations.

Once the solution to a problem is solved, the personnel of this Branch are then often forgotten, only to be remembered again in case of need. Nevertheless, this does not detract from the conscientious and efficient way in which the unit operates. The Chief of the Branch is Maj Guillermo Vogt. His auxiliary officer is Lt (Navy) Aldo Aguirre, and the Assistants are WOI Juan Chavez, WOI Juan Yañez, WOI (Navy) Carlos Quirorga and WOI Jorge Paccioietti.

This group of men are always busy in a constant effort to process requests effectively in the belief that it’s better to be proactive than to be reactive. Thanks for a job well done!

EQUIPMENT OF SECTOR FOUR’S RESERVE PLATOON

Sector Four’s Force Reserve Platoon is stationed at UN 139 and UN 135 with the main task of monitoring the “Corridor Road” between Dhekelia and Ayios Nikolaos, as well as conducting Long Range patrols in Sector Four’s area of responsibility.

During the events in Dherinia in August 1996, 12 members of the Austrian Contingent were injured. To prevent similar incidents nowadays, UN soldiers in Sector Four are equipped with helmets and shields, teeth protectors, flack jackets, arm and leg protectors and body protection shields. To enable all soldiers to properly use the above mentioned equipment, many hours of instruction are necessary.

This training is carried out in Austria’s peace-keeping centre in Vienna before deployment to Cyprus. Of course, with the variation in temperatures on the island as well as the humidity count, a high standard of readiness and skills can only be achieved by carrying out regular exercises.

THE AUSTCIVPOL MEDAL PARADE

Approximately 320 guests witnessed the presentation of the United Nations medals to the 55th and 56th Contingents of AUSTCIVPOL on 19 August 1998. The Chief of Mission, Dame Ann Hercus, made the presentation to the 20 members of the contingents. The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas, under the direction of Captain Ed Keeley and led by Drum Major Charra Bahadur Singh, were selected for the occasion in recognition of the close relationship the Gurkhas had with the Australians during World War II.

In a speech following the presentation, Dame Ann, who hails from New Zealand, said that she was honoured to have had the opportunity to present the medals to members of AUSTCIVPOL, as New Zealanders had always stood, fought and died together with Australians in times of conflict.

Dame Ann then asked HE Mr Howard Brown, the Australian High Commissioner, to pass on her thanks to the Australian Government for its continued support of UNFICYP.

The members of the 55th Contingent completed their tour on 24 August 1998, having been replaced by the 57th Contingent who arrived on 17th August.

LAST AUSTCIVPOL MEDAL PARADE FOR COMMANDER BARRY CARPENTER

This was the last AUSTCIVPOL Medal Parade for the Commanding Officer, Commander Barry Carpenter APM, who is due to complete his tour in January 1999 following three years’ service with UNFICYP.

Commander Carpenter concedes that each United Nations posting has its special memories, however it is his tour with UNFICYP which is the most memorable, and adds that his greatest reward would be the knowledge that he had contributed in some way to the development of all police officers who have passed under his command.
THE BUFFER ZONE

It all starts
with barbed wire
rusted
under the sun
hot
like a dried heart
like dust
it is too hard now
to tell
the pain of
your hatred
the frontier
like a dusty line
of sorrow
there
plants
as your only friend
mute bougainville
fig
and pomegranate
sacred fruit of the orient
was this the
price
of your arrogance
in other lands
of constructed hatred
a river
as your only friend
Miljaka
Neretva
the frontier
like salty tears
of sorrow
you forgot
how
to build bridges
and abdicated
your soul
to politicians
and thus
it all ends
under the steps of strangers
over the dust of shared
memories
and regrets.