

The Blue Beret

August 2003



UNFICYP Honours
Baghdad Colleagues



Published monthly by the Public Information Office of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, HQ UNFICYP, PO Box 21642, Nicosia 1590, Cyprus.

Tel: 22-864550/22-864416/22-864408
Fax: 22-864461
E-mail: unficyp-blue-beret@un.org
blueberetcyprus@hotmail.com
Web site: www.unficyp.org

Editorial Team

Brian Kelly
Maj. Ingrid Tomeková
Miriam Taylor

Photography

SSgt. George Cséfalvay
Contingent Photographers

Unit Press Officers

Sector 1 Maj. German Lozano
Sector 2 Capt. James Southall
Sector 4 1/Lt. Ladislav Regenda
1/Lt. Peter Valastyán MD
UNCIVPOL Garda Alice Tierney
UN Flt Lt. Ivan Pettiti
MFR Sgt. Anthony Bennett
FMPU Capt. Fiona Smith

The Blue Beret is the in-house journal of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. The views expressed are those of the authors concerned, and do not necessarily conform with official policy.

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

The copyright of all material in this journal is vested in United Nations Publications. Any article or illustration may be reproduced with the written permission of the Editor.

What a sad moment for the UN, the international community and each and every one of us as we mourn our murdered colleagues in Baghdad and extend our condolences and heartfelt sympathy to the families of the victims of this outrage.

In commemorating the dead, we pray for them and for the recovery of those so brutally maimed and traumatized in this callous and irrational assault. That ill-fated building on the outskirts of Baghdad, since reduced to smouldering rubble, housed dedicated people, our colleagues, all of whom were motivated by a simple aspiration – the recovery and future well being of the people of Iraq.

For this, Sergio Vieira de Mello and those working alongside him were “taken from us” and from the people they were working to assist, by the most deliberate and vicious attack on the UN in its history. As the Secretary-General noted, those who killed our colleagues committed a crime, a crime not only against the UN but also against Iraq.

Every UN family member has been touched to the core by the tragedy. Truly, we have lost some of our most outstanding public servants. Many serving here in Cyprus know victims among the dead and injured. Indeed, all of us watched with dread as the toll continued to mount, adding to our pain and grief and sense of loss.

Less than four months ago, Sergio Vieira de Mello and his team stopped here in Cyprus overnight en route to launching their mission in Iraq. Tellingly, Sergio served on the island with UNHCR from December 1974 until the spring of 1975, when he was in charge of refugee humanitarian relief efforts in the island's north.

We must honour the courage and example of our colleagues by ensuring that their deaths and suffering are not in vain. Let us heed the Secretary-General's admonition that we not be deterred by the brutal act of violence in Baghdad.

Uniting in spirit with the victims – those who died, those who are injured, their families and friends – we grieve and pay tribute to them.

May the memory of our colleagues inspire us in our future endeavours.

May their souls rest in peace.

Zbigniew Wlosowicz, UNFICYP Chief of Mission

Editorial

Contents

Editorial/Contents	2
Baghdad, 19 August 2003 – “Our Darkest Day”	3
The Battenburgs Tie The Knot/Louisday Celebrations	4
Together in the MFR	5
Hobby Chefs Add Flavour to Buffer Fare	6
23 April 2003 And Beyond	7
Cultural Heritage of Cyprus: Part XV –	
The Grand Commandery of Kolossi Castle	8/9
Visitors to UNFICYP	10
Time To Remember/FC's Commendation/	
En La Linea	11
Getting to Know Your Platoon Leader	12
The Pyla Platoon	13
Carlos Palacios Returns/Solo Marathon	14
Life Beyond UNFICYP	15

Front and Back Covers:
UNFICYP Honours Baghdad Colleagues



Baghdad, 19 August 2003 – “Our Darkest Day”

A truck bomb was detonated outside UN headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August, killing 23 people, including 19 of our colleagues, among them SRSg Sergio Vieira de Mello and several members of his senior staff. More than 100 others were injured in this most savage assault on the UN in its history.

It will be remembered as “the darkest day in our lives at the United Nations”, the Secretary-General told a stunned and grieving staff worldwide. However, even as “the ache in our souls is almost too much to bear,” he reminded all that the best way of honouring those who died is to defy the forces of intimidation and “to carry on with our work, determined and undaunted”.

Addressing a memorial gathering at UN HQ, New York, he said: “The service of the UN is not simply a job. It is a calling, and those who have attacked us will not deflect us from it. We shall find a way to continue our work – that is, to continue helping the Iraqi people to rebuild their country and regain their sovereignty, under leaders of their own choosing”.

Praising the victims for their dedication and devotion, the SG said: “Whether clerical worker, lawyer, driver or special representative, Iraqi or international, each of these men and women made a unique and invaluable contribution to our work. Each was committed to the human rights, sovereignty and well being of the Iraqi people. And many had served the needs of other peoples, too. Each braved hardships, set aside longings for home or for a quiet life, and conquered their fears in order to help others overcome an era of terrible suffering. Each showed the world the caring, principled face of the international civil service. Each gave us something to be proud of”.

The SG arrived in Rio de Janeiro, Sergio Vieira de Mello's hometown, on 23 August for a special family vigil service “to mourn a close friend and colleague, a man of peace, a man who had given so much to the world and yet has been taken from us in such a senseless, savage way”. He reminded those present, including Brazil's President Louis Inacio Lula da Silva, of how Vieira de Mello, as he lay beneath the rubble, had told a rescue worker, “Don't

let them pull the mission out”. A free and sovereign Iraq would be a fitting memorial for the man who gave his life in that cause, the SG said. Then, addressing his late colleague directly, the SG said: “Sergio, my friend, you have entered that Pantheon of heroes that the United Nations wishes it did not have – you will shine forever among our brightest stars”. Later, the SG told reporters: “He was a great man, a great international civil servant and a truly great leader....[Brazil and its people] have lost a great son, but you do not mourn him alone. We've also lost a great colleague and for me personally, a very close friend, who was more like a brother”.

At the time of his death, Mr. Vieira de Mello was also the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, a post he left temporarily when requested by the SG to go to Iraq. He previously served as the UN Transitional Administrator in East Timor, SRSg for Kosovo, and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. Mr. Vieira de Mello spent most of his career with UNHCR, which he joined in 1969, becoming Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees in 1996. As noted in the Chief of Mission's tribute (opposite page), Vieira de Mello served briefly in Cyprus (1974-75). His mother, his wife, Annie, and two sons, Adrian and Laurent, survive him.

Casualty Figures

As of 26 August, the UN listed 23 people as having been killed in the attack, of whom 19 were UN personnel – 11 international and eight local or national staff. Fifteen bodies had been identified as of that date. The 12 UN staff casualties (international and national staff) are: Sergio Vieira de Mello, Reham al-Farra, Alyawi Bassein, Ranillo Buenaventura, Richard Hooper, Reza Hosseini, Jean-Selim Kanaan, Christopher Klein-Beckman, Ihsan Taha Husein, Martha Teas, Fiona Watson and Nadia Younes. Gillian Clark of Christian Children's Fund, Arthur Helton of the US Council on Foreign Relations and Alya Souza, a World Bank consultant, were also killed.

UN Family in Cyprus Pays Tribute

Here in Cyprus, on 22 August, members of the UN family of agencies on the island joined UNFICYP's military, civilian and police personnel at the peacekeeping force's headquarters in Nicosia for a morning memorial service for the victims of the Baghdad bombing. Beneath the UN flag at half mast, UNFICYP Chief of Mission, Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Zbigniew Wlosowicz, paid tribute to the victims and offered condolences and sympathy to their families and relatives. Padres from UNFICYP's Slovak Hungarian, British and Argentinian contingents

offered prayers. A trumpeter from the Argentinian contingent's band sounded The Last Post and a minute's silence was observed.

UNFICYP staff members Hassan Al-Attar and Roland Ramrattan left Nicosia the weekend after the bombing to help Baghdad restore communications services. Roger de Weever and Suji Ashima, UNFICYP staff members who had been on temporary duty in Baghdad for some time, sustained injuries from flying glass but were reported otherwise alright. We wish them all well.

Greater Protection for UN Workers

One week after Baghdad, the Security Council unanimously passed a resolution calling for stepped up protection of all United Nations humanitarian and associated personnel in conflict zones. The resolution also recognizes that attacks on humanitarian workers should constitute a war crime. Earlier, the SG hailed the resolution on the protection of UN personnel and other workers serving in conflict zones as an unambiguous message to those who target the “servants of humanity”.

He had urged the Council to make clear its determination “to protect those whom you send into the field to implement your decisions”. Since much of our work is done “in dangerous places”, the SG said there was all the more obligation “to take every step in our power to protect those working under the blue flag, and to bring to justice those who attack or harm them... Impunity for those who commit such unpardonable crimes cannot stand. There must be action”.

The Battenboughs Tie The Knot

By LBdr. C. Pitman

One of 53 (Louisburg) Battery's members tied the knot on 1 August. Gnr. Stephen Battenbough made that final commitment to the one he loves when he married the beautiful Shelley Lenthal.

The wedding took place in the UNPA's Columbus Church, with Padre Gandiya conducting the ceremony. In England, everyone would have been delighted with the weather being as sunny as it was, but in Cyprus – well, what else would we have expected in mid-summer?

The previous week, Stephen and Shelley had spent their R & R with my lovely wife-to-be and myself. It was the least we could do (with me being the best man!). During the week, the couple started to worry about all preparations going to plan – I spent some time reassuring them that NOTHING would go wrong. Then I remembered a couple of minor details I had overlooked – to book the church and the reception... So I phoned up the company "Hitched in a Snitch". They

promised a wedding in 24 hours or your money back – that sounded a winner to me!

The big day was upon us. Shelley was to be given away by our resident Mr. "Wing Nut" Lewis, who also had the pleasure of making sure that the bride and her bridesmaid were ready on time. He did his job so well that the bride was at the church before half the guests had arrived. Not knowing exactly what to do, everyone stayed in the foyer and had a sing-along until the ceremony started. Well done Barry John, Dal Dallolio and company!

The service was lovely and both bride and groom managed to hold back tears until they were finally Mr. and Mrs. Battenbough. The reception was next and there's no doubt that "Hitched in a Snitch" had done their job well. The venue was the UNPA swimming pool and everything – including the food – was great.

I was not looking forward to making my best man's speech, but a bloke's got to do what a bloke's got to do. Mine was the last of the speeches, and was obviously so funny that people were under the tables laughing (can't think why?). The rest of the night was left to enjoy – and that's exactly what the guests did.

The wedding was a success, and I would like to end by congratulating two of the best people I know and wishing them all the happiness in the world.

To Mr. and Mrs. Battenbough: may all your children be healthy – and WELSH!



Shelley supported by her groom (centre), best man Craig Pitman (left) and family friend Matthew Lewis

Louisburg Day Celebrations

By LBdr. C. Aspery

On 26 July 2003, 53 (Louisburg) Battery RA celebrated Louisburg Day, the anniversary of the battle of Louisburg in 1758.

The day's activities started with the battery members attending a service at St. Columbus Church, UNPA. The padre gave an excellent service with readings by Bdr. Dallolio, Gnr. Davies, Maj. Morgan and Lt. Quinn.

Following that, everyone changed and boarded the bus for a visit to Water World Park in Ayia Napa. This was a chance for the battery members to let their hair down and enjoy themselves on the various activities the park had to offer.

On returning to camp, there was another quick change of clothes and then to the Dolphin Café at the UNPA swimming pool, where all enjoyed an excellent BBQ.

At around 21:30 hours, the venue was the International Bar where the traditional "skits" started at around 22:00 hours. The three platoons produced some excellent performances with none of the officers or



SNCOs getting away lightly. Entertainment then turned to the karaoke.

All in all an excellent day was had by everyone, and credit has to go to the organisers of the event.

Togetherness in the MFR

By Rachel Tenney

They smile at each other, laughing, recalling how they got engaged. "We were in Crete. Our first holiday together," she says. Down on the beach, he proposed on one knee, but he didn't give her the ring just then. "I thought I would lose it in the sand," he says. "Or maybe it would have been washed away", she interjects.

They are Michelle McGettigan and Gareth Slade-Jones, both members of the 53rd Battery in MFR. Luck brought them together here in Cyprus. It seems, in fact, that they tend to be pretty lucky.

Michelle and Gareth met in the United States, in Texas, at a six-week exercise their regiment carried out with the US Air Defence. At that point they were in different batteries, he as a mechanic and she in the artillery battery. They met on time off. Michelle points out that it was rare that Gareth even had time to go to Texas, as "he's always playing rugby". Some might recognise his name. But for the uninitiated, Gareth Slade-Jones is one of the British army's most skilled rugby players; he plays scrum half on the army team. When Michelle and Gareth came to talk to us, he had only just returned from New Zealand where he'd gone to play with the team. He also plays here in Cyprus, most recently at a weekend tournament in Paphos.

Michelle and Gareth had their first date after a rugby game. Not just any rugby game, but the May 2001 Army vs. Navy match. Army won, again, as Gareth points out and Michelle concedes. They had just been friends in the US. It was when they got back to the UK, about a year after they first met, they made the big jump. Their first date was the party after the big rugby win.

The Blue Beret can now reveal exclusively that Michelle and Gareth have decided to set the record straight right here in these pages with their friend Greg "Cupid" Slocombe. They had been dating for about a month in 2001 when Michelle got called up to Skipton, near Leeds, for Foot and Mouth duty. Gareth, ever faithful, went up to visit her on weekends. Greg, who's also stationed here in Cyprus with MFR, was heavily involved in the Foot and Mouth effort. Having a drink one night with Gareth, Greg decided that it would be a good idea to set Gareth and Michelle up. Greg had completely missed that Gareth was in Skipton solely to see Michelle and not working. Granted, Michelle and Gareth had kept things



quiet, but Greg should have figured something out, being in charge of the operation. Michelle recalls that she'd been in and out of the bar with her girlfriends, giving Gareth a kiss on the way. Greg, after enjoying a few pints, decided that Michelle and Gareth would make a good couple. To this day, Greg thinks that he's the one responsible for the date that has since led to their engagement. But Michelle and Gareth admitted that it was fine to break the news to him after all this time. Hope you took it well, Greg!

Michelle and Gareth, both 23, have similar duties with MFR. On the day that they came by to chat, Michelle had been on the Foxtrot Gate all morning. When asked about working in MFR, she said she liked it, especially meeting people from different countries. She enjoys the multinational atmosphere at Foxtrot Gate and is a great admirer of her Slovak, Hungarian and Argentinian colleagues' persistent efforts to improve their fluency in English.

Both Michelle and Gareth do most of their patrol duty at the pool as lifeguards, having done a course in the UK before coming to Cyprus. They also have other MFR duties, like demonstration and crowd control duty and as part of the fire-fighting team.

The pool may seem like paradise, but Gareth says the heat can get to you in the course of a shift's life-guarding. Their opinions differ on the heat: Michelle says she's adjusted to Cyprus and all its heat, while Gareth doesn't like it much. "It's not good for playing rugby in", Michelle notes. Even when the matches start at 15:30 hours, Gareth says the heat is still bad. Michelle gets off occasionally to see the games, but, unfortunately, doesn't get to go to New Zealand or Dubai, where Gareth will be at the end of December.

After that, he'll head straight back to Kirton-in-Lindsey, where the battery is based, for the disbanding and "re-banding" the following month, when on 10 January, they marry in Michelle's hometown of Grantham.

It won't be an all-English affair, as Gareth is from South Wales. "We're having Welsh gold rings and Welsh hymns at the wedding. Gareth will wear a kilt", says Michelle. One of her bridesmaids, Sam Wilding, is also stationed here at UNFICYP in Sector 2. And, of course, their friend Greg Slocombe will be their "Cupid" attendant of honour!



Hobby Chefs Add Flavour to Buffer Fare

If an Army marches on its stomach, what does a UN Roulement Regiment do? Whilst they may not march, they certainly patrol, man OPs, conduct physical training, deal with the OPFORs and fight fires on a fairly regular basis! They get the energy to conduct all these tasks from the food that is prepared for them in their troop houses. The provision of wholesome and tasty food is vital to the smooth running and morale of any army unit, and 22nd Regiment RA is no exception.

The problem that presented itself to the Quartermaster and the Master Chef of the Welsh Gunners, however, was a big one – there were not enough fully qualified chefs to completely provide for each troop location. While they have been able to provide a Royal Logistics Corps (RLC) chef to each troop house, that chef is not a robot, and, like any other soldier, needs rest and time off from his duties (as well as a break from the extreme heat of the kitchen).

The solution is the “Hobby Chefs” programme. A Hobby Chef is a normal Royal Artillery (RA) or Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (REME) Corps soldier who has volunteered to take on some extra duties. They normally have some interest in being a chef, and receive a little extra pay for each day they cook. The extra pay is rewarded because the Hobby Chefs are deemed to be working in “unpleasant conditions”, due to the heat (RLC chefs are also compensated for this).

The extra pay certainly helped the QM find the required number of volunteers during his Hobby Chef recruitment campaign! Each troop house in Sector 2 East (apart from Ledra Troop, which enjoys the central kitchen facility at LPH) has three nominated Hobby Chefs: in Sector 2 West, each troop house has four.

Whilst a Hobby Chef would not normally be expected to prepare an evening meal for an entire troop of some 30 hungry soldiers, they are trained and able to produce a very decent breakfast or lunch, as well as assist with any special events (for example a troop barbecue night). Their training consisted of a two to

four – day course that was held in the UK. Some additional Hobby Chefs were trained for two days in the Officers’ Mess, Wolseley Barracks, Nicosia. The first day of training in the UK taught the students health and hygiene and the second day involved preparation of a meal followed by actually cooking dinner for their respective Battery Commanders and Battery Sergeant Majors.

The Hobby Chefs are really beginning to show their worth now that the gating policy has been lifted. For example, the RLC Chef at Rorke’s Drift troop house, Pte. Cowan, has recently been away on an Adventure Training package. When the RSM of Sector 2 popped in for lunch Gnr Henley, one of the Rorke’s Drift Hobby Chefs, was beaver away preparing a (very good) lunchtime salad bar!

LCpl. Helen Seath, a REME soldier who is another Hobby Chef at Rorke’s Drift, said, “Normally I hate cooking, and I usually burn everything! My Mum couldn’t believe it when I told her that I was a Hobby Chef. When I was preparing my first meal I had to phone her up and ask her what basil and parsley look like!” LCpl. Seath would like to point out that she didn’t actually volunteer to be a Hobby Chef. Her Troop Sergeant Major, Sgt. Prosser, did that for her! The best comment that LCpl. Seath has received was after she cooked her first meal. It read: “Helen, nice one. That was better than the ‘real chef’!” Pte. Cowan, who has since become the “Real Chef” at Rorke’s Drift, said: “All the Hobby Chefs are doing great. They are interested in cooking and keen to learn. They are a great help!”

The Hobby Chefs make a valuable contribution to the smooth running of each Troop, and while the food is not expected to be of a cordon bleu standard, it is certainly tasty and filling. They are also becoming more skilled as the tour progresses and each of the troop houses are very thankful for their Hobby Chefs, while the RLC professionals are absolutely delighted to have them alongside!



23 April 2003 And Beyond

By Comdr. Geoff Hazel

On few and rare occasions, individuals get the opportunity to be part of an event that will go down in the history books. April 23, 2003 in Cyprus was such a day, a day to be remembered by all who were there! For all involved it was a very hard day’s work. The weather was hot. Looking back from the extreme heat of July and August, we can only be glad that it did not occur three or four months later.

The announcement by the north that Cypriots from both communities would be allowed to cross the UN buffer zone was only made a few days before. There were many who did not believe that it would happen. But there was a large number of people from both communities who saw it as an opportunity that had not been available for nearly 30 years, and the next day, they turned up at the nominated crossing points in their thousands.

The announcement and the large numbers of people who turned up caught all by surprise. Long delays were the order of the day and, because of the overall numbers of people involved, there was the potential risk of people receiving crush injuries or suffering heat stroke while waiting in line. Indeed, the word “line” does not accurately reflect the pressure that was created by the crowds of people who turned up. As one person said on the day, “this may not last long, so everyone wants to go now”.

At the Ledra crossing point, 23 April and the days immediately following created an ever-changing series of problems to be resolved by the UN military and UNCIVPOL tactical commanders at the scene. These included fitting the large number of vehicles and pedestrians travelling in both directions onto a roadway that was really only suitable for a limited number of vehicles; the problem of protecting pedestrians from being injured in the crush; the problem of appropriate access for emergency vehicles, the diplomatic corps and operational UN vehicles. Sometimes they had to change to planning on an hour-by-hour basis, as new contingencies or problems arose.

By 27 April, there was nothing new that could be thrown at them. The most effective plan possible had been developed and implemented from on-the-spot observation and responses by all those concerned. Meanwhile, steps had been taken by the two sides to improve their processing and management of traffic, both pedestrian and vehicular, in the areas immediately outside the buffer zone.

In Pyla, the issue was different but just as problematic. At this crossing point, pedestrians were almost non-existent, but the number of vehicles involved created traffic congestion back-up through the entire village. That is over four kilometres from the crossing point. As Pyla is a bi-communal village located within the UN buffer zone, this congestion had to be handled by the UNCIVPOL team



based in the area. Again, effective and ongoing planning was undertaken by the tactical commander at the scene. Progressively, orders were changed as new developments occurred and the plans were implemented to allow the passage of vehicles while neither impeding nor restricting the access of Pyla residents to their homes.

As with all planning, it is the implementation that makes the difference. During these early days, it was the soldiers and UNCIVPOL working side-by-side on the ground for long hours in trying conditions who made the plans effective. The friendly approach shown to the people from both communities – the drinking water handed out; the attempt made to ensure that the conditions were as good as possible for all and their obvious fairness to everybody – had a positive impact on those who were waiting to cross.

At the same time, the willingness of both UN military and CIVPOL officers to “get involved” on the ground made a positive impression on all other UN personnel involved. There are times when every available person just has to pitch in and help.

After the initial days of on-the-job adjustment, one police officer commented that his frustration at the time had now been well tempered by his appreciation of the efforts of UN military and CIVPOL. He had gained a new respect for the UN personnel because of the restraint, professionalism and compassion they had demonstrated day after very long day.

During these early days, the Civilian Policing Division (CPD) of DPKO, New York, had approached UNFICYP asking if additional CIVPOL were needed. In fact, if 100 could have been deployed immediately, there would have been more than enough work for them. But that was not possible and it really was a matter of letting the situation settle before assessing the longer-term need. There always will be an initial rush and a level of confusion when sudden impact circumstances such as existed in those first few days are present.

As the crossings “normalised” and the two communities cooperated to create additional crossing points, a realistic evaluation helped identify additional tasks and workload factors and these were submitted to UN HQ in considering the need to increase UNCIVPOL’s strength.

Among the “few” who had had the opportunity to be part of history, there may have been a little grumbling at the time, but if you asked any now, all would say that they would do it all again. To have been in Cyprus on 23 April 2003 was to be part of a special day.

The Cultural Heritage of Cyprus: Part XV

The Grand Commandery of Kolossi

Kolossi Castle

On the southern coast of the island lies a fertile plain, rich in citrus fruit orchards and vineyards – a natural heritage that echoes in the island's sweet dessert wine, Commandaria.

The wine is named for the commandery, or headquarters, of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem (also known as the Knights Hospitaller) here at Kolossi, 11.2 kilometres west of Limassol.

The castle that still stands at Kolossi is our destination for this instalment of The Blue Beret's series on the cultural heritage of Cyprus.

As in so much of the island's history, it's not known when the first castle walls were built at Kolossi. The name is mentioned at the time of Richard the Lionheart's occupation of Cyprus in 1191, as it was here that Isaac Comnenos (the Byzantine ruler of Cyprus who opposed Richard) had his camp, which Richard captured, but Kolossi was not then described as a castle.

In 1210, however, the Lusignan King Hugh I (the Lusignans had gained the island from the Knights Templar, who had bought it from Richard) gave Kolossi to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem (the Knights Hospitaller), compensating the property's owner, one Garinus de Colos. If a castle was not already on the site at that time, it would have been constructed then. (The Hospitallers had previously been established temporarily in the island's castles to assist in maintaining the newly instituted Latin authority, while Aimery, the first Lusignan king, was absent in Palestine.)

Early in the 14th century, it appears that Kolossi belonged briefly not to the Hospitallers, but to the Knights Templar, because the castle and estate of Kolossi are included on the list of properties confiscated from the Templars when the Pope abolished the order in 1308. (The Templar possession of Kolossi may have taken place in 1306 when Amaury, Lord of Tyre, aided by the Grand Master of the Temple, took over the island from his brother Henry II, whom the Hospitallers supported.) On the Templars' abolition, however, Kolossi returned to the Hospitallers.

In 1310, the Hospitallers transferred their headquarters from Cyprus to Rhodes, but they retained a commandery in Cyprus, with its seat at Kolossi. This status of Kolossi as commandery headquarters was confirmed in a ruling of the Chapter of the Hospital dated 1380.

The commandery of Kolossi was renowned as the richest possession of the Knights. It derived its wealth from the many vineyards in the 40-odd villages it held, from the

Commandaria wine produced from the vineyards, and from wheat, cotton and sugar cane plantations, watered from the neighbouring river Kouris. In fact, the Knights' sugar factory at Kolossi still stands, with the millstone that would have crushed the sugar canes visible on the grounds.

The Genoese expeditions of 1373 (when the castle was successfully defended) and 1402, and the Mameluke raids of 1425 and 1426 likely caused serious setbacks to this prosperity. Although it is claimed that the castle was never taken, the commandery's buildings cannot have remained untouched. Indeed, the damage caused in these years may have necessitated a general rebuilding, for in its present form, the castle of Kolossi dates only from the mid-15th century.

The present keep, which is the main structure still standing, is attributed to the Grand Commander Louis de Magnac, who held the fief (land held by feudal tenure) from about 1450. The coat of arms on the castle's east wall, set below the royal quarters of Jerusalem, Lusignan, Cyprus and Armenia, are believed to be his. Flanking these are the arms of two Grand Masters of Rhodes associated with the work: Jean de Lastic (from 1427) and Jacques de Milli (1454-1461).

Louis de Magnac was succeeded at Kolossi by an Englishman, John Langstrother, in 1468. On his appointment, the revenue payable by the Grand Commandery of Cyprus to the Treasury in Rhodes was fixed at 4,000 ducats. Twenty years later, when Giorgio Cornaro, brother of Queen Catherine, persuaded her to abdicate in favour of the Venetian Republic, he was rewarded by the grant of the 14 villages that then formed the Commandery of Cyprus and yielded an annual income of 8,000 ducats. The Kolossi estates were confiscated on the Turkish conquest of the island in 1570, but the titular rank of Grand Commander of Cyprus remained in the Cornaro family until its extinction in 1799. By this time, the Kolossi sugar factory had been put out of business by the rise of the West Indies sugar industry.

The association of the Order of St. John with the island's history was renewed in 1926, when a branch of St. John's Ambulance Brigade began its activities in first aid, home nursing and child care.

What You'll See Today

The Keep: Two buildings are immediately recognisable within the walls of Kolossi: the square tower that forms the keep, and the nearby barrel-vaulted sugar factory. An outer wall that seems to have been only partly constructed encloses the keep. An entrance through its eastern section can still be seen, once closed off by a drawbridge. On the main wall of this side is the marble panel bearing the coats of arms mentioned above.

South of the entrance, the outer wall once encircled a massive wellhead with a semicircular tower, of which only the foundation survives. This wellhead is one of the few remaining features of the pre-15th-century castle. It was flanked by steps that ran up to an entrance of the former castle. The entrance to the present keep is by a similar staircase (reconstructed in 1933), starting with an inner gate in the wall that encloses a yard on the south side. The yard is now roofless, but formerly accommodated cells, stables or stores, and beyond it a postern gate. Beside the gate are the remains of a circular tower on the angle of the building.

Louis de Magnac's keep is a three-storey, square building with walls three metres thick, made of hewn limestone, and topped by a crenellated terrace or battlements. The ground level features three storage vaults, originally reached only by a trap door from the floor above. Beneath two of them are cisterns cut into the rock.

The keep's original entrance is on the south side on the first floor level, protected by a draw-bridge and covered by a machicolation (an opening between supporting corbels, designed for dropping stones, molten lead or hot oil, etc. on assailants) high above it, at the level of the battlements. (A spiral staircase leads to the terrace roof, surrounded by the battlements, largely restored in 1933.)

Two chambers with pointed vaults occupy the first floor, one of which has a large fireplace and so would have been the kitchen. On the wall between the entrance and the doorway leading to the staircase is a painting of the Crucifixion, with the Virgin Mary on one side of Jesus, and St. John on the other. Below it is the coat of arms believed to belong to the castle's builder, Louis de Magnac.

The upper storey likewise comprises two lofty vaulted chambers, set east-

west, at right angles to the axis of those below: the apartment of the Grand Commander, and a spacious ante-chamber. Both rooms have large fireplaces: the one in the Grand Commander's apartment is ornamented in the fashion adopted in the buildings of the Knights in Rhodes. Four windows light each chamber, all of them furnished with side seats set into the thickness of the massive walls. The Grand Commander's apartment also features a privy in the north wall.

It seems probable that all four main chambers of the castle were subdivided by a wooden floor carried on beams at the springing of the vaults. The garrets this provided were lit by the windows set high in the end walls.

The Sugar Factory and Aqueduct: The sugar factory stands east of the keep, a large, vaulted building that is supported by buttresses. As old as, if not older than, the present keep, it was repaired in Ottoman times under Murad Pasha in 1591, possibly to repair the damage done in the earthquakes of 1567 and 1568, in which Limassol suffered very severely.

North of this building, the massive mediaeval aqueduct, which still carries water from the bed of the Kouris to irrigate the lands around the castle, ends in a steep mill race. Below it stand the ruins of the mill, by which the giant nether-stone has lain disused for many years.



Visitors to UNFICYP

During August, UNFICYP had the pleasure of welcoming the following visitors:



Military Vicar to the Argentine armed forces Padre Pedro Candia accompanied by CO Sector 1, Lt. Col. Giro Martín, on his recent visit to HQ UNFICYP, where he met with the CM



Slovak delegation meeting the CM on a fact-finding trip to UNFICYP. From the left: Col. Daniel Jackuliak, Lt. Col. Peter Slovak, the CM and CO Sector 4, Lt. Col. Ivan Hirka



Col. Ala -Sankila (FINCENT) meets the CM and FC on a visit to UNFICYP. On the right is CO FINCON, Lt. Col. John Laukka



Lt. Gen. Sir Cedric Delves, KBE, DSO, Commander Field Army, paid a flying visit to 22 Regt RA. He met with the CM in the Officers' Mess, Wolseley Barracks

Finnish Visit



Col. Ala-Sankila, Commanding Officer of the Finnish Forces International Centre (FINCENT), paid a week-long official visit to HQ UNFICYP from 4 to 11 August.

The purpose of the visit was to acquaint himself and his inspection team, Maj. Hannu Vienola and Capt. Jussi Nurminen, with the operational side of UNFICYP and how it pertains to the Finnish Contingent here in UNFICYP. In addition, they were briefed on the current situation on the island.

Col. Ala-Sankila, a former Commander of Special

Forces for training in Finland, was on his first visit to UNFICYP. "It is the first time I have been able to fully familiarise myself with the current situation and the significance of the UN's role in Cyprus."

At one point, five Finns were standing out in the 40-degree midday heat. Offered access to the cool confines of the conference room, they declined. "No thanks, we are enjoying the sunshine in this heat – it's nice to get warm", they said.

It was also an ideal opportunity to test the Finns' latest camouflage uniform with its lighter, more comfortable material and "better outer appearance". As Maj. Vienola said: "We are checking the design's practical accessories – for instance, we found that we don't need so many pockets here".

The FINCENT training centre was established in cooperation with other Scandinavian countries to train and prepare soldiers for peacekeeping missions throughout the world. The centre has excellent training and accommodation facilities that includes a language laboratory, an auditorium and, of course, a sauna. Since its inception, FINCENT has trained over 43,000 Finnish peacekeepers for duty overseas. Together with instructors from other countries, they train military observers from Partner For Peace members, like Slovakia and Hungary.

Prior to his departure, Col. Ala-Sankila and his team expressed their appreciation of the Finnish Contingent's UNFICYP members, and praised their very positive contribution to the mission.

Time To Remember

On a sad day in August 1974, three Austrian peacekeepers, 1/Lt. Johann Izay, MSgt. Paul Decombe and Cpl. August Isaak lost their lives in an air attack in the vicinity of the small village of Goshi. Traditionally on 14 August every year, the Austrian Contingent pays tribute to these three fallen comrades.

The A/FC, Chief of Staff Col. Ian Sinclair, the Austrian Contingent Commander, Lt. Col. Hans Tomaschitz, national Contingent Commanders, Sector Commanders, Commander and Deputy Commander UNCIVPOL, Defence Attachés of the United States and Bulgaria, a CYPOL representative, the National Guard Liaison Officer and a Greek Cypriot family who lost their father in the same air attack, all assembled to hold a commemoration service at the Goshi Memorial.

Following the moving ceremony, guests enjoyed the hospitality of Sector 4 in Camp St. Istvan in Athienou.

We will always remember our fallen comrades – those who did not return from their service with the United Nations. The Goshi ceremony, in the presence of so many soldiers and distinguished guests, is witness to that.



Force Commander's Commendation

The Force Commander decorated four soldiers from Sector 4 with his commendation on 1 August for services over and above the call of duty.

Shown from left to right, the recipients are as follows:

1/Lt. Laco Regenda, Slovakia
1/Lt. Rasto Bodik, Slovakia
WO3 Laszlo Hangya, Hungary
MSgt. Daniel Spanik, Slovakia

In a short ceremony, the Force Commander thanked all recipients for their hard work and dedication, which are an excellent example to all.

En La Linea

Who said that language was a problem for Sector 1? For the last two years, the Sector has found a way to help solve the difficulties faced by some soldiers struggling with the English language. How did they do it, you may ask? Answer: by having a magazine of their own called *En La Linea*.

The magazine is published every 15 days and is the responsibility of the press branch of the Argentinian Contingent. When the personnel in charge of the task were consulted, they commented that: "The goal of the publication is to keep the personnel of Sector 1 informed about the activities in the sector, and complement it with various news items such as national news, local activities, humour, and tourist information. Our aim is to help all personnel who don't speak fluent English understand the information in *The Blue Beret* magazine and to keep people permanently updated", added the magazine's officer-editor, Maj. German Lozano.



Every 15 days, all personnel in the sector (especially the ones in the OPs and PBs) wait anxiously for the arrival of *En La Linea* to find out what has happened "on the island as well as in Argentina".

Getting to Know Your Platoon Leader

By 1/Lt. Laco Regenda

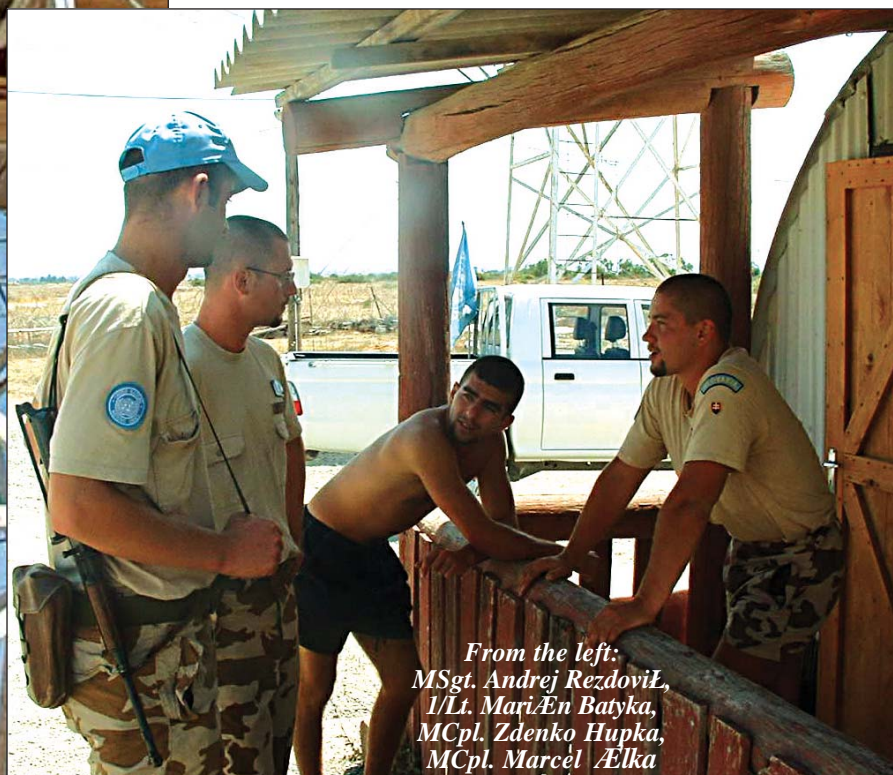
1/Lt. Marián Batyka comes from Nové Zámky in the Slovak Republic. He arrived for his first peacekeeping mission in UNFICYP on 18 March, and was put in charge of the Pyla Platoon located in Pyla Village, Sector 4.

He knew he needed to learn about the area and his responsibilities quickly. How should he achieve this? He decided that the best way to get to know the 33 men under his command was to serve alongside them.

Marian has since spent at least one night at each of the four OPs under his control. Manned by six men at a time, they are isolated from each other. Unlike the OPs in and around Nicosia, there is little chance to see anything but the endless scenery of the mountains.

At first the soldiers were wary of being “super-vised too closely” all the time by their commanding officer, but they soon took a liking to the new face. They welcomed the change from the routine. And Marián welcomed the first-hand knowledge he received. He learned many things from his soldiers, including well-kept secrets like where hunters trained their dogs for the “big game” hunting season.

It was with these visits that Marián swiftly came into his own in Sector 4. Asked why he decided to serve with UNFICYP, he replied: “To improve my English, to further my military career and to travel the world”.



From the left:
MSgt. Andrej Rezdovič,
1/Lt. Marián Batyka,
MCpl. Zdenko Hupka,
MCpl. Marcel Aľka

From the left: Cpl. Andrej Zilák
and 1/Lt. Marián Batyka

Pyla Platoon

By 1/Lt. Marián Batyka

As evening falls, the local villagers sit on their verandas, chatting and sipping coffee. The sounds of the birds singing on the rooftops, the trees swaying gently in the breeze and children playing drift across the narrow streets. All seems calm and serene. At first sight, the visitor notices that this small village has two leaders – two diverse symbols, a Greek Cypriot flag and a Turkish Cypriot flag, two schools, two coffee shops, a church and a mosque. For this is the village of Pyla, the only bi-communal village in Cyprus, and a key area of responsibility for the Slovak Contingent of Sector 4.

Dawn breaks. It is 5:00 am and the 33 members of 1st Platoon of the 2nd Company are already prepared for the daily patrolling of the buffer zone. OPs are relieved, supplies are delivered and the routine of preparing the meal begins. After the early morning briefing, the platoon leader gives the operational orders for the day.

8.30 am: The COMCEN receives a message from OP 123. “I can see five soldiers who have just arrived in a white pick-up truck close to the shelter.” “Are they carrying weapons?” asks the duty officer. “No”, comes the reply, “but they are unloading the pick-up and it’s difficult to make out what it is they are unloading”, replies the sentry, keeping the group under constant observation.

The platoon leader thinks: “Oh well, another day and what a start! Maybe they are there to clean or carry out some station reconstruction”. A quick analysis by the platoon leader finally leads him to believe that it is a case of over-manning. OK, so nothing left to chance, he contacts the COMCEN in Pyla to put him in touch with the Liaison Officer.

“Good morning, platoon leader speaking, how are you?” After pleasantries are exchanged, it is down to the issue at hand. “Shelter cleaning the whole day”, came the reply. The COMCEN calls CP-10 for the report number to be registered. The report is then checked for errors and, when cleared, is sent to UNFICYP HQ JOC.

Within 30 minutes, another OP observes two civilians together with 10 dogs in the buffer zone. “Hold on, I’m sending a patrol to investigate, kindly repeat the exact position.” The mobile patrol is on the scene in a few minutes. They are close to Banana Road. The patrol leader is aware that no permission or permits have been issued to the dog handlers and their dogs to be in the buffer zone.



From the left (standing): SSgt. Robert Tóth, SSgt. Adrián Pavlo, WO3 Robert Mihalovič, MSgt. Maroš Horník
Sitting: MSgt. Martin Koniar, Čapt. Pavol Blahovský,
1/Lt. Marián Batyka, SSgt. Adrián Tóth



OP Crazy Hill

The leader dismounts from his vehicle and greets them. “Good morning gentlemen, you have really nice dogs. But there is no one allowed in the buffer zone, so please be so kind and follow me this way”. They reply: “OK, OK”, but do not move and become very uncooperative. “This way gentlemen please.” Still no move from the intruders. The driver suggests we phone the camp, as this is clearly a job for UNCIVPOL. The Camp Commander phones the UNCIVPOL station, giving them the position and up-to-date info on the situation. Another report is filed and it is still only mid-morning.

The first indication that lunch is coming is the arrival of the patrol vehicle. The meal is distributed in the hot containers, not only to 1st Company but also to the neighbouring 3rd Platoon “Triglav”.

While lunch is still ongoing, a call is received from the OP in Pyla’s main square announcing the arrival of a tourist bus. There are approximately 20 elderly people in the tour party. They proceed to take photographs and are told: “Sir, excuse me but you are not allowed to photograph in this particular place”. The grandads just reply: “No problem”, and keep taking the pictures. We are just about to ring the Camp when Sgt. Claire Eade, UNCIVPOL member, arrives from the Pyla UNCIVPOL station and, on a signal from the peacekeepers, takes over and handles the situation.

At 3.35 pm, a UN vehicle with the distinctive blue lights on the roof approaches Pyla camp. UNCIVPOL member Sgt. Mark Yarrow arrives to liaise with the peacekeepers and discuss the distribution of permits of entry and other documents to the buffer zone. “What would you like, Mark, coffee or tea, mate?” Most of the time he requests a milky tea. Everyone knows that Mark will not leave until he has finished his tea. We Slovaks think of it as an opportunity to get a free lesson in the English language!

Sunset brings calm and quiet to the buffer zone in Pyla, and to the opposing factions as well. The routine must go on – Pyla Platoon is on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week, continually monitoring our area of responsibility.

Daily life in Pyla is not purely work. Leisure time is spent “recharging batteries”, like cultural and sporting activities. We have billiards, a fitness room, table tennis and a TV room. We meet up in the mess, spending time together to help build lasting friendships.

The beauty of the island we can see while on trips. But we don’t need to travel far because Pyla village is a place where anyone can relax and enjoy life, and we are proud to wear the emblem on our chest: “Pyla Platoon”. Despite the limited conditions under which we work, we ask the best of ourselves and give much more.

Carlos Palacios Returns

When SSgt. Carlos Palacios came to UNFICYP for the first time nine years ago, he was single. Now he has people to answer to, like his seven-year-old daughter. "My daughter told me: 'If you go there one more time, I will go with you for six months'." I tell her laughing: 'I will speak with you later'. "She wants a scarf because she likes to dance to Arabic music. My son asked me for too much, but maybe I can take back something for him."

SSgt. Palacios, a native of Buenos Aires, first came to Cyprus in 1994, only a year after Argentina took command of UN Flight. Since then he has served in five missions to UNFICYP, working on the Hughes 500 helicopters.

Things have changed from when he first served in UN Flight. Palacios talks about times when both of the helicopters were Hughes 500s and maintenance would continue late into the night. Other changes he notes are the increase in people with UN Flight (17 to 27) and better organisation of work. There are more flying hours now, but with the extra people, work is more evenly spread out.

There have also been some changes back home. When Palacios first came to Cyprus he was given three months notice and had to find out for himself where Cyprus was. Now all Argentinians setting off for peace-keeping missions go to special training, where they learn about the United Nations system, the country they will be working in, and, at least for Cyprus, they also get driving instruction. Pre-UNFICYP training also includes special briefings on land mines, MEDEVAC procedures and the delicate political situation on the island.

Palacios talked with great pride about working for the United Nations. The sense of duty is part of what keeps him coming back to Cyprus. That and the warm weather. Unlike some Argentinians who prefer the cold, Palacios favours the hotter weather. He remembers the hottest summer he's had here; in 2000, temperatures soared in July to a sweltering 44°C!



He is not envious of his wife, who recently reported to him that the temperature in Buenos Aires was 4°C, where it is currently winter. When he returns to Argentina in the spring, it is likely he will set off for the mountains, to contribute to forest fire fighting efforts there. Palacios likes the mountains of Cyprus, wishing that he could fly over them instead of just the buffer zone. Though not a pilot, Palacios (as well as the rest of UN Flight) enjoys flying very much and relishes the opportunity to go out in one of the helicopters.

When asked if he would be back for a sixth mission, Palacios said it depends on his family. "I would prefer a mission of a year, but with a family, six months is good." So maybe his daughter will get to come along next time.

Solo Marathon

An unusual feat was accomplished recently when Lt. Hugo Javier Arce took it upon himself to run from the Kokkina enclave to the village of Mammari in Sector 1's area of responsibility. Starting on 2 August and ending on 4 August, Lt. Arce covered a distance of 70 km, stopping at Observation Posts and Patrol Bases along the track to meet with his fellow peacekeepers and spend a little time, learning about what they do.

Given the heat at this time of year, the marathon was a considerable achievement. But as Lt. Arce says: "I've been thinking of undertaking this project for some time now. I wanted to boost the morale

of my fellow peacekeepers and, at the same, time learn something about their duties and responsibilities. Having managed to run and walk the line, I hope my efforts have been appreciated!"

Born in Bella Vista in the province of Corrientes in 1977, Lt. Arce started his military training at the Argentinian Army Military College in February 1996 and graduated as a Second Lieutenant in 1999. Nowadays, he works at Roca Camp as the Logistics Supply Officer of the Supply Coy at Roca Camp located in Xeros.

All in Sector 1 are proud of the determined effort made by Lt. Arce and congratulate him on this remarkable feat.



Life Beyond UNFICYP

UNFICYP veteran Maj. Siegfried – "Siegi" – Perr compares service in Cyprus with his latest assignment with UNDOF in the Golan Heights.

Dear Readers,

I am pleased to get this opportunity to write a few lines to you.

I am Maj. Siegfried Perr from Austria, currently serving with UNDOF on the Golan Heights (in relative close distance to Cyprus) in the position of the Military Public Information Officer (MPIO).

Having served three times with UNFICYP for nearly five years in total as Duty Officer, Ops Info Officer and, in my most recent appointment, as Civil Affairs Military Liaison Officer in Nicosia, you may well understand that I have a certain affection for this beautiful island and interest in the Cyprus problem. I carefully observed the latest efforts early this year for a solution of the matter, which, unfortunately, resulted in deadlock.

One aspect I would like to refer to is Civil Affairs, since I worked in that field in HQ UNFICYP. The Area of Separation (AOS) on the Golan, which in Cyprus you would refer to as the buffer zone, would be a "wonderland" for Civil Affairs. I say, "would", because, there is no Civil Affairs branch in UNDOF (such issues are indirectly covered by the Liaison Branch). The whole AOS is a designated Civil Use Area and under Syrian Civilian Administration. I call it, ironically, a "wonderland", because I remember well the many, sometimes emotional and hard negotiations with the two sides, or even with our own people, in particular with HQ Operations Branch, when we wanted to designate land in the buffer zone for civil use and contribute to the return to normal conditions.



On that note much, has happened on the Golan. The population in the AOS has grown from 5,000 to about 50,000 since the deployment of UNDOF in 1974. This is a remarkable development, which also includes essential infrastructure renewal. I think some credit must also go to UNDOF, because that development clearly shows how confident people have been in our capacity to keep the situation calm.

Let me now tell you something about my current job as MPIO. Compared to Cyprus, this mission is a much less political one. That is why we have not been in the focus of local or international media in the same way UNFICYP has. The Public Information Office is much smaller than the Spokesperson's Office in UNFICYP. Here we are three – Navy Lt. Keizo Kitagawa from Japan, my deputy, and WOII Korak from Austria, the Force Photographer, and myself.

Our task is to promote UNDOF internally and externally and try to maintain its good reputation.

There are different means of spreading the positive message. Visitor information is definitely very important. Last year we welcomed 162 delegations with more than 1,300 visitors. All these visits have to be well planned, coordinated and executed either by the contingent press officers or the MPIO. We have had State Presidents, Foreign and Defence Ministers, Assistant SGs from UN HQ in New York, members of parliaments, diplomats and many more conventional visitors. Each and every one of them is an important potential opinion leader for us. Furthermore we prepare and deliver general information briefings on UNDOF and organise other information events. I would like to mention in this context UNDOF's contribution to the annual UN Day exhibition in Damascus and the recently celebrated UNDOF anniversary event here in Camp Faour.

I also serve as the designated spokesperson of the Force Commander.

Golan is our UNDOF journal of which I am the editor. We issue it every three months, with 1,700 copies, 24 pages each. Sometimes, when there is something wrong with the computer or the articles come in too late, this can be a tricky task, but generally I really like it. I am interested in photography, and luckily I can combine the hobby with work on the **Golan**.

Sometimes the job has its privileges, as when I was able to visit to my Austrian comrades in mid-May, at the highest permanently manned UN position in the world on top of Mount Hermon (2,814m).

Skiing in Syria, in particular at that time of the year, is definitely not a common thing. I had the unique opportunity to join the position commander for a superb duty ski tour down to the valley of Arneh – a perk of being UNDOF MPIO not shared by my MPIO colleagues in UNFICYP!

Sounding the Last Post

