

# The Blue Beret

## December 2003



## THE BLUE BERET

Published monthly by the:  
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 United Nations Peacekeeping Force in  
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Let me extend to each and every one of you my very best wishes for this holiday season and for a peaceful and fulfilling year ahead. As we prepare to celebrate this traditional festive period with family, friends and contingent colleagues, let us also give pause and reflect on the 12 months now drawing to a close.

Looking back, 2003 has been a year perhaps more marked by pain and sorrow than crowned with accomplishment and achievement. True, we saw the island's landscape transformed with the easing of freedom of movement restrictions on 23 April. However, less than two weeks before Christmas, a pall was cast over this mission when the Argentinian contingent lost two soldiers and UNFICYP lost two peacekeepers in a buffer zone accident.

We mourn the tragic deaths of Sergeant Oscar Alfredo Chocobar and Private Juan Manuel Escalante. They paid the ultimate price, giving their lives in the service of peace. Let us remember them in our prayers and let us extend to their families and loved ones and to the contingent our condolences and deepest sympathy. In addition, we wish Corporal Nestor Fabian Ledesma a speedy recovery from his injuries.

In the wider UN family, let us remember too, 19 August. How can we forget that fateful day when the UN lost some of its finest, taken away in the devastation wrought by one calculated act of misguided mayhem in Baghdad?

Even as we recoiled, stunned by the horror of that vicious attack, we could sense that, along with our fallen colleagues, the perpetrators struck a murderous and deliberate blow at the very work of peace itself. Certainly, peacekeeping and peace-making as the UN has known and practised it since the time of the Charter have been changed forever as a result. Terrorism's latest term "soft target" now casts an ominous shadow over all of us and our work.

Here in Cyprus, we began the year in high hopes only to see the effort to bring settlement to the island's division through the Secretary-General's plan falter to a halt in the small hours at The Hague last March. Then came the 23 April easement of freedom of movement restrictions that so far has led to more than 2.5 million crossings north and south.

And just days ago, on 14 December, the people in the north made their views known in an electoral process that, hopefully, will bring us closer to the long-overdue political settlement in Cyprus.

As we prepare to embark into the uncharted waters of 2004, let us hope it will be a year of accomplishments for us all.

*Thank you and best wishes.  
Chief of Mission*

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**Front Cover: Holiday Season  
Back Cover: Safe Driving**



### **Chief of Mission's End of Year Message**



## Farewell to Comrades – Adiós Camarades

UNFICYP mourns the untimely deaths of Sgt. Oscar Alfredo Chocobar and Pte. Juan Manuel Escalante of the Argentinian Contingent. The two peacekeepers were killed when their vehicle crashed while on a delivery run in Sector 1 on 12 December. Cpl. Nestor Fabian Ledesma, who was seriously injured in the accident, was still recovering in hospital as we went to press.

Led by the Chief of Mission and the Force Commander, UNFICYP staff – civilian, military and police – gathered in tribute to the two soldiers at a prayer service in Camp St. Martin, Sector 1 HQ, on 16 December. After the Last Post was sounded and the blessing given, the flag-draped coffins were given an honour escort to the waiting hearse to begin the long journey home for burial in Argentina.

Addressing the service of farewell, Sector 1 CO, Lt. Col. Gustavo Motta acknowledged the help and support of UNFICYP staff at this difficult time. He spoke of the deep sorrow felt by the men and women under his command and of the difficulty they all had in accepting the death of their comrades in such tragic circumstances.

"We feel that a part of ourselves has been taken away from us, from our military unit. However, as Christians and believers, we have to accept God's will for something for which there is no reasonable explanation.

They sacrificed their lives for a noble cause.

They sacrificed their lives serving peace.

They died in the line of duty.

"Sgt. Chocobar and Pte. Escalante, may you rest in peace. I am certain that today, you are in the Kingdom of God, carrying an Argentinian flag along with the flag of peace. We shall always remember you as noble, loyal and self-sacrificing soldiers."

Lt. Col. Motta reminded the contingent that as members of the army, they were all aware of the risks, dangers and everyday challenges and obstacles integral to the military life. Now they must move on "with seriousness, willpower and dedication" in order to accomplish their mission.

"From this day and until the end of our mission, we must continue carrying out our daily duties with efficiency, loyalty and wisdom. Let us be patient and firm during adversity, strong in the face of challenges and persistent, in order to accomplish our mission successfully. May God protect us and accept the souls of our comrades. May they rest in peace in the Kingdom of God."



Estamos reunidos hoy aquí para dar el último adiós al Sargento de Comunicaciones Oscar Alfredo CHOCOBAR y al Soldado de Infantería Juan Manuel ESCALANTE. El dolor en nuestro corazón es profundo. Nosotros, las mujeres y hombres del Sector 1, tenemos un profundo dolor por este desafortunado incidente.

Perder dos hombres en estas circunstancias, trágicas es una realidad muy difícil de aceptar, sentimos que una parte nuestra se ha tomado fuera de nosotros, de nuestra Unidad Militar. Sin embargo como Cristianos y creyentes debemos aceptar los designios de Dios aunque no hallemos ninguna explicación posible.

Los sacrificios de sus vidas fueron por una causa noble.

Ellos sacrificaron sus vidas sirviendo a la paz.

Ellos se murieron en cumplimiento del deber.

Quienes los hemos conocido sabemos, muy bien de sus calidades, su generosidad, su valentía y honestidad.

Sargento Chocobar y Soldado Escalante; Descansen en paz.

Estoy seguro que hoy ellos están en el Reino de Dios llevando una bandera Argentina junto con la bandera de paz. Siempre los recordaremos como soldados nobles, fieles y dedicados.

Para las mujeres y hombres de la Fuerza de la Tarea argentina:

Como hombres de ejército conocemos bien que la profesión de un soldado no es fácil, involucra riesgos, peligros, desafíos y obstáculos diarios que debemos superar.

Tenemos que mirar al frente seriamente, con fuerza, y dedicación. Debemos seguir con misión asignada. Desde hoy y hasta el fin de nuestra misión debemos continuar con nuestros deberes diarios con la eficacia, lealtad y sabiduría.

Deseo agradecer a todos los miembros de UNFICYP que nos han ayudado a soportar este momento difícil.

Permítannos ser pacientes y firmes durante las adversidades, fuertes delante de los desafíos y persistentes para lograr nuestra misión con éxito. Que Dios nos proteja y acepte las almas de nuestros Camaradas. Que ellos puedan descansar en paz en el Reino de Dios. Gracias.

*Tcnl.G. Motta, CO Sector 1*

# Season of Celebration

December is, as we all know, a time of holidays. Throughout the world, people have traditionally celebrated this month of long nights and cold days (at least in the northern hemisphere) in a wide variety of ways. Perhaps the best known is Christmas.

When the weather outside is frightful, people like to stay inside and stay cheerful. When the world is dark, people try to make it a little lighter. Whether it's Hanukkah, Christmas, the Solstice, the relatively recent holiday of Kwanzaa or the old nature-worshipping rites and sacrifices designed to bring on the return of the sun, the underlying theme of the festive spirit remains one of hope restored.

Many of these traditions can be found in Cyprus, which is after all the meeting point of three continents. Within the island, the UN encapsulates a global village of nationalities, most a long way from home. Mediterranean December may have as many gentle, sunny days as cold and rainy ones, but nobody is going to let "unseasonable" weather interfere with seasonal festivities!

It is no accident that the western world decreed that the new year begins shortly after midwinter. Winter, the time when the sun died, followed by the new year with its promise of springtime, of the sun's rebirth, when life returns to the soil and the crops start growing again. Winter was a time to stay indoors, to shelter from the weather. Many of the traditions of the winter holiday are rooted in this time of enforced idleness, when the land lies fallow.

By midwinter, early in December, those who subsisted from the land generally knew whether food supplies would sustain them until the bloom of spring's promise. Hence time for the feasts, whether in thanks or in celebration of another year with enough to eat. Back then, what was eaten at the feasts depended on what was available. In this modern world, various religions have invested the meal with ritual significance, subject to the vagaries of regional supply. In much of the western world, including Argentina, Australia, Britain, Canada and Ireland, roast turkey, usually stuffed, has become the favoured meal, although older alternatives such as pork, duck and goose retain an enduring popularity. The

trimmings tend to take on a local flavour – brutally boiled vegetables in England and salmon in parts of British Columbia, for example. In Australia, famously, there's always a good few people ready to celebrate with a "barbie" on the beach. In Holland, they opt for goose and hare, in Finland, codfish and pork.

In Cyprus, many have adopted the turkey as the centrepiece of the Christmas feast, replacing the more traditional pork. Otherwise, many Greek traditions are retained. For the Orthodox Church, the festival traditionally lasts from St Nicholas' Day to the Feast of the Epiphany (6 December-6 January).

More emphasis is placed on the religious solemnity of the occasion. Traditionally, some even observed a 40-day fast in preparation for the feast. Similarly, the Muslim celebration of Eid Al Fitr takes place on the first day of Shawwal to mark the end of the Ramadan fasting period.

The Cypriot Christmas has come under many influences over the years. For instance, as one Canadian recently observed, at a time when Christmas trees would be on sale in supermarket parking lots back home, he had seen the same thing here in Cyprus, the only difference being that the trees for sale were artificial. Artificial or real, in Cyprus as elsewhere, the old tradition of the German tree-gods seems to have made itself a niche.

Another popular tradition associated with Christmas and this time of year that perhaps dates back to pagan times is the holiday custom of gift-giving. In Northern Europe, this also began as a consequence of the long winters. During the rest of the year, there is work to be done all day, but in the winter, confined indoors, there is time to make and play with toys. The custom of giving of toys to children has expanded to the exchange of gifts between people of all ages and, in much of the world, this has become linked to the Christmas tree. The Victorians were quick to draw comparisons with the biblical tale

of the Adoration of the Magi, the three kings who brought gifts to the infant Jesus. However, the giving of gifts in winter is a recurrent theme regardless of religion or culture. In many areas, these presents are piled around the Christmas tree, and the distribution and opening of the packages is a major ritual, usually taking place on Christmas Day.

In Greek tradition, gifts are seldom given to individuals; instead, small gifts are given to hospitals and orphanages. Within the family, presents are exchanged on new year's day. Hannukah, similarly, is a time for both gift-giving within families, and for making charitable donations.

In addition to gifts, children receive money, and the traditional dreidel (a four-sided top with the words "Nun", "Gimel", "Hay" and "Shin") to remind them of the reason for celebrating the Festival of Lights. Charitable giving is also an important aspect of the Muslim Eid, when all Muslims are expected to look after the less fortunate. Earlier, this took the form of gifts in kind but now cash is given. British gift-giving is supposed to be followed by the opening of the (hopefully well-filled) poor boxes on Boxing Day, though this tradition has rather died out. The Day of the Wren is an Irish tradition celebrated 26 December (St. Stephen's Day to some) and involves the "Wren Boys" who dress up and visit house-to-house, singing.

Another widespread tradition, often with regional variations, is that of the mystical gift-giver. Santa Claus, first promoted by the Americans in Victorian times as the red-robed image of Christmas, is now widely seen as the personification of the Yule-tide spirit – a jolly, white-bearded old man who distributes gifts on 24 December. Also called Father Christmas, this character is based on St Nicholas, and is popularly depicted riding in a sleigh drawn by reindeer. In Australia, he prefers to dress in shorts, T-

shirt and beach sandals, and his sleigh is pulled by half-a-dozen large kangaroos – unless that is, he's catching "the perfect tube" on his surfboard! Whatever his transport, he arrives the night of 24 December to place presents beneath the tree or in specially hung bags or stockings. In Finland, he is known to make personal daylight visits! In Greece, Agios Vasilis visits on New Year's Eve. In Holland, Sinterklaas arrives early – 5 December – while Mikulas visits Hungarian children the following day, and they also have presents left for them on Christmas Eve by the "Baby Jesus".

Finally, winter is a time for conviviality. The New Year is traditionally the biggest party of the season, both ending and beginning each year with good cheer and good company. The Scots, especially, make a particular tradition of this, all but ignoring Christmas in favour of "Hogmanay". Meanwhile, the holiday season has become a time for family gatherings, and also for office parties. In many parts of the world, the word "family" is expanded to include any friends who, for whatever reason, can't be with their own family. Most people would agree that a large family gathering is hardly a recipe for peace, joy and harmony; despite this, it remains popular.

At root, the winter – even the gentle, Cypriot winter – is a time for people to relax a little and enjoy themselves. Beneath the tradition, the religion and the cultural complexities, really it's just an excuse to have a big meal in the company of people you like, to be joyful and give thanks.

WA

*This year, the church of St. Columba was the venue for UNFICYP's traditional Christmas Carol service. Padre Lee Gandhi, BRITCON chaplain, presided with the assistance of the ARGCON and SLOVCON Chaplains, Frs. Daniel Giménez and Jozef Paluba.*

*Choirs from the Argentinian, British, Hungarian and Slovak Contingents sang traditional carols from home.*

*Maj. Jozef Ragan M.D. took the photos below.*

*The Hungarians*



*The Argentinians*



*The British*



*The Slovaks*



# Psychologically Speaking...

Slovakia has more than 800 peacekeepers and observers serving with UN missions around the world. It is Slovakian Armed Forces policy to send military psychologists to three of these missions – UNFICYP, UNMEE and KFOR.

The reasons for doing this are many. Most units are posted overseas as a whole. However, in Cyprus, as with UNMEE and KFOR, soldiers are specifically chosen for their professions and/or skills and are selected from units all over Slovakia. They do not know each other, yet they have to learn quickly to work together as a team. Missions without psychologists have personnel who have already been prepared in Slovakia as a unit, and so are familiar with each other and trained to work together as a team.

Slovakia remains a relatively new participant in UN peacekeeping operations. Soldiers therefore receive four weeks of extra training prior to their departure for UNFICYP. They are also required to take tests on their physical and psychological health, and on their qualifications for specific jobs. The psychological testing takes four hours, and must be passed by all personnel before they can be posted to the mission.

Test criteria include the soldier's adaptability to new environments (on the basis of written tests and an interview), general mental stability, and the psychological capacity for reacting and coping in stressful situations. This applies not only to the stress arising from being posted to a danger zone, but also to stress between unit members (i.e. between leaders and soldiers and vice-versa). Commanding Officers have additional specific tests for leadership quality and management skills.

Maj. Jan Delincák, Ph.D. (psychology), qualified as a clinical psychologist in 1981. He began his career by spending two years in practice as a consultant psychologist, advising families about their children's education from the ages of four to 18. After that, he worked in Slovak prisons as a psychologist for behavioural treatment of prisoners. In 1983 he served as a sports psychologist to the Military Sports Centre. His practice as a military psychologist in the Slovak armed forces began in 1989. Now with his posting to UNFICYP, he is in a position to see the results of his work.

Maj. Delincák arrived in Cyprus in September this year to serve as military psychologist for the Slovak and Hungarian soldiers of Sector 4. He operates from Camp General Stefanik in Famagusta, visiting all locations within Sector 4 – OPs, patrol bases, camps, etc. During these visits he observes the lifestyle of the soldiers, talks with them and, on occasions, interviews them, asking questions about any problems they may face. From this he can discover what troubles they have, whether problems with their families back home or coping with their lifestyle in UNFICYP. The doctor tries to guide, counsel and motivate the afflicted soldiers who might be experiencing difficulties and help them work through their time of stress. This can include an interview with the commander of the OP or troop to ensure that the method of command does not impose stress on the soldiers. In such cases, the psychologist proposes alternative methods of command.

He also has two rooms to work from within Camp General Štefanik in Sector 4 where soldiers can undergo such treatments as music therapy, relaxation therapy, concentration methods, regulation of emotion and hypnosis.



In the first room he has three beds for these treatments, while in the second room there are simply chairs set out in a circle (never with a table – this would be an obstacle) where he can spend time analyzing problems with patients. He discusses problem situations with both commanders and personnel.

Whether the problem is emotional or work-related, he tries to see if the situation can be resolved as quickly as possible. He proposes the resolutions and talks through problems in one or more sessions until the problems are resolved. Each person speaks his or her piece on the subject and between them, they all try to improve the situation.

In Cyprus, soldiers work in limited areas and conditions and in different surroundings to those back in Slovakia. Even if a soldier has a simple traffic accident, Dr. Delincák will follow up on psychological recuperation. In some cases, he may also cooperate closely with the physician and the padre.

"Human relations, in my opinion, are the most stimulating and important factor because it is important in a mission such as this for peacekeepers to work as a team and produce what the UN expects of them. Those human relations are basically established during off duty hours so that's the time for me to go and take psychological care. That's when people speak freely and open their hearts and tell me more easily their problems."

During his three months with UNFICYP, Dr. Delincák has concluded that the prior training of the Slovak soldiers back home for UN missions has paid off. Commanders and soldiers appear to be well qualified for their specific jobs and have had relatively few problems so far. To date, in fact, he hasn't met any problems beyond homesickness and family difficulties.

With the advent of World AIDS Day on 1 December 2003, most UNFICYP personnel have received some information in one form or another on HIV and AIDS. Some of us have probably ignored it completely or only given it a cursory glance before moving on to "more important" matters. After all, HIV and AIDS can seem to be some distant problem, unrelated to UNFICYP and Cyprus.

HIV and AIDS, however, are a matter of concern to us all, regardless of where we are in the world. While Cyprus has a relatively low reported incidence of AIDS (377 HIV cases have been reported – 220 Cypriots and 157 non-Cypriots – since 1986.), this should not allow us to be complacent. As members of the UN and as part of international community, we should not only be aware of the ravages that this terrible disease has caused both to

individuals and at the global level, but we should also be aware and make a point of being fully informed of the facts surrounding HIV and AIDS.

We are fortunate to have at our disposal an excellent booklet prepared by UNAIDS: "AIDS and HIV Infection, Information for United Nations Employees and their Families". With chapters on the facts and myths of HIV/AIDS, prevention, testing, living with, global overview, UN response, glossary, and sources of additional information, it truly is a comprehensive document on the subject.

The booklet is available on the K drive/Force Medical Officer/HIV/hivaids.pdf. A limited supply of hard copies is also available from the Civilian Personnel Office.

Charles Mix  
Chief Civilian Personnel Officer

## Silence Can Mean Death

By Maj Antal Zsolt Kiss, M.D.

### 1. Is the HIV test trustworthy?

The HIV test can detect the presence of the AIDS virus up to three months before the test was taken. HIV presence cannot be positively detected during the first 13 weeks after infection. Therefore an HIV patient could prove to be HIV negative if the test was taken during this window period. Even if a true HIV negative state was diagnosed, you can get infected and become infectious within a few days. Voluntary confidential counselling and testing is available for all UNFICYP personnel at no cost to the individual.

### 2. What is PEP?

PEP (Post Exposure Prophylaxis) is an antiviral therapy for blocking the infection during the earliest phase. It is almost 40% effective if the medication is taken, ideally, within two hours after the exposure, but not later than 72 hours. PEP is available to all UNFICYP personnel.

### 3. What are the ways of protection?

You can protect yourself against HIV and Sexually Transmitted Diseases by: having safer and protected sex with the use of condoms, being cautious when drinking alcohol, and by refusing prohibited drugs because these impair judgement. Mutual fidelity in personal relationships is recommended. Condoms are available free of charge through UNFICYP's medical service.

### 4. Is there any plan to prepare UNFICYP personnel against HIV?

Yes, UNFICYP does have an HIV policy. The purpose is to maintain force strength over against HIV infection. The Force Medical Staff is fully trained for the education and care of HIV infected persons

### 5. Where can you find more information on HIV?

Find your buddies who are appointed to inform you on HIV by the Peer education programme, ask the medical personnel or visit the Force Medical Officer folder on the (K) drive.

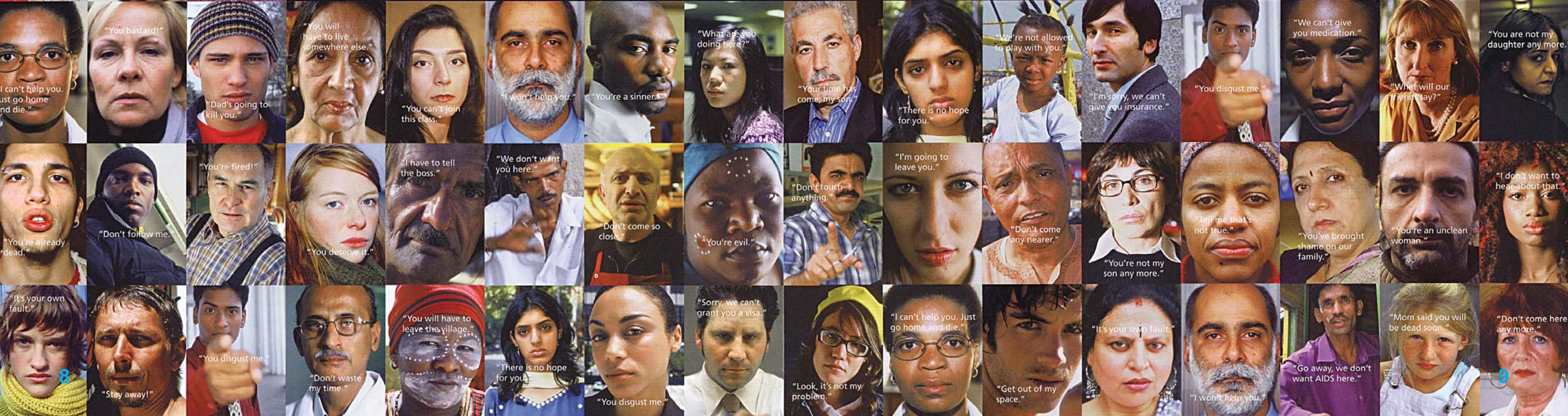
December 1st is just one day.  
Protect yourself all days of the year.  
Stay healthy!

On the Web, check out:  
[www.who.org](http://www.who.org);  
[www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org);  
[www.avert.org](http://www.avert.org);  
[www.worldaidsday.org](http://www.worldaidsday.org)



**These are some of the most painful symptoms of HIV and AIDS.**

# Live and let live.



# The Cultural Heritage of Cyprus – Part XIX

## Splendour and Sanctuary: The Kykkos Monastery and Museum

*As the Blue Beret continues its series on the island's cultural heritage, we look at the Monastery of the Virgin Mary at Kykkos. Located high in the Troodos mountains at an elevation of 1,200 metres, Kykkos Monastery was founded in the early years of the 12th century by the Byzantine emperor Alexios I Comnenos (1088-1181) to house an icon of the Mother of God that is attributed to Saint Luke.*

*Although not the oldest, Kykkos is one of the richest and most renowned monastic establishments in Cyprus, despite having experienced periods of destitution and several devastating fires. Its workshops have produced exquisite icons, religious ornaments and illuminated manuscripts over the centuries, and its modern museum houses objects of significant historic and religious value.*

*View inside the courtyard*

**T**here are a number of stories relating to the foundation of the Holy Royal Monastery of Panagia (which means the “all-holy one” or the Mother of God) at Kykkos. It is generally said that in the late 11th century, the Duke-Governor of Cyprus, Manuel Butumites, while on a hunting trip near Kykkos met – and mistreated – a hermit named Isaiah. The duke then fell into a coma and dreamt that he was asked to return to Kykkos and redeem himself to Isaiah. In the meantime, Isaiah had received a visitation by the Virgin Mary, who told him to ask for her famous icon, painted by Saint Luke, to be sent from Constantinople to the island. Butumites unfortunately considered that this request would be impossible to satisfy.

However, on Butumites' return to Constantinople, he learned that the Emperor's daughter was stricken with the same illness from which he had suffered. He informed the Emperor of his experience, whereupon the Emperor sent for Isaiah, who cured the daughter by laying his hand on her. Isaiah was then able to return to Cyprus (with the icon), and to start building the monastery with funds from the Emperor and with the help of architects and artists from Constantinople.

The monastery, originally built of wood, was accidentally burned down in 1365 by a farmer, and was reconstructed, again with timber, on the orders of the Lusignan king Peter I. His wife, Queen Eleonora, provided the funds, as the Kykkos Virgin was also worshipped by the Latin Church. The monastery burned down again in 1541 during the Venetian period (1489 to 1570/1). The third building was constructed of local stone, so two subsequent fires (in 1751 and 1813) were not as disastrous.

Under the Ottomans, the monastery attracted many foreign visitors who, in their references to Kykkos, mentioned the existence of up to 400 monks. A property list compiled in 1879 by the British administration in Cyprus shows that the monastery owned 13 dependencies, 10 churches, 11 water mills, 11 olive mills, five wine presses, 70 shops in Nicosia and Larnaca, and thousands of hectares of land and orchards. Within the monastery resided 74 monks, 198 workers and seven orphaned children.

During the Ottoman and British periods in Cyprus, Kykkos played an important educational role by operating a school within its walls. Following Cyprus's independence in 1960, the monastery founded two secondary schools in Nicosia, and still continues to provide funds for cultural and welfare institutions, including the Kykkos Research Centre in Nicosia, and a winery on the monastery premises.

The monastery is now visited by approximately 60,000 people annually. On the four occasions when the Orthodox Church celebrates the feast of the Virgin Mary, and especially on 15 August and 8 September (her birthday), Kykkos is a place of special pilgrimage. Within the monastery walls, built primarily after the last fire in 1813, facilities include a church and a museum that provide unique glimpses of the monastery's long history and importance.

### What You'll See Today

#### The Church

The Church is a domed basilica with three aisles. The nave was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, with the right aisle dedicated to All Souls and the left to the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. The screen that separates the sanctuary from the aisles dates back to the 18th century, and bears icons from the 17th and 18th centuries and, of course, Saint Luke's icon of the Virgin. The entire church has recently been decorated with mosaics and frescoes.

#### The Museum

The Museum is a state-of-the-art building constructed and decorated with luxury materials such as granite and walnut. These were chosen because Kykkos's abbot, Nikephoros, and the fathers wished to offer pilgrims and other visitors a small example of the prestige and brilliance of Byzantium (when the monastery was founded).

The granite floor of the entrance hall has an octagonal decoration in the centre featuring a bee – the emblem of the Kykkos abbots from the 18th century – which symbolizes toil and order. Around the bee are the consonants in the Abbot's name in Greek, and the date of the museum's construction in 1995.

The Museum has four exhibition rooms containing archaeological, historical and religious items from the Bronze Age to the mid-20th century, along with a small shop.

**Room 1** contains antiquities mainly from the Cypriot Bronze Age to the end of the Roman period (2300 BC to 330 AD), as well as pottery from Greece and Italy (Magna Graecia). The Attic Black Figure vase, for example, depicts the slaying of the Minotaur by Theseus in the presence of the goddesses Athena and Ariadne.

**Room 2** displays various Byzantine and later works of art from the 4th century to the mid-20th century. The early Christian collection consists primarily of bronze items such as lamps, crosses, censers, chandeliers and lamp stands. It also includes a series of silver religious items; hanging lamps from the Middle East showing the influence of Greek Orthodox, western Baroque and Islamic traditions; and silver and wooden reliquaries, mostly in the form of books whose covers hold interior cases that contain bones of saints and a cross.

One interesting object is a 1576 silver gilt repoussé cover of the Holy Icon of the Virgin Mary with the Baby Jesus. Another is an 1807 church-shaped hexagonal gilt ciborium (a vessel that holds bread for the Eucharist), richly decorated with corals and pearls. On its sides are Christ at the table of the Last Supper, the Virgin Mary and the Apostles. Among the crosses is an intricately carved wooden cross with scenes from the Old and New Testaments.

Two showcases display a large collection of post-Byzantine embroidered church textiles, such as altar cloths, icon covers and habits of the entire echelon of the clergy. A third showcase holds items that demonstrate the special esteem held by sailors for the Virgin Mary.

In the apse of this large room is an early Christian marble Holy Table. On the wall hangs a 13th-century icon of the Virgin Mary, along with eight 17th-century icons of the Apostles on either side. Below these are eight marble reliefs.

**Room 3** is an octagonal room that features a dome bearing a fresco of Christ Pantocrator (Almighty). The granite floor is inlaid with a peacock, the symbol of paradise.

Frescoes rescued from a church at Kellia Village in the Larnaca district are housed in this room, along with a number of icons and pieces of church furniture. Some of the icons are the work of a famous Cretan painter, Ioannis Cornaros, who lived in the monastery as the 18th century turned into the 19th century.

**Room 4** offers showcases containing parchments and other manuscripts, books and documents of religious interest.



*Entrance to the monastery*



## UNFICYP's Dutch Treat

Hello, I am Ingrid Steuer, Inspector of the National Dutch Police Force, from the region of Flevoland. I arrived as part of the first Dutch element of UNCIVPOL with Gert Jan Hoolwerf on 7 November. Two other police officers, Gert Zondervan and Jan Krouwel, arrived on 1 December.

I am on a six-month tour with an option to stay for another six months. Let's see if the UN wants us to stay that long, and if my husband and two sons in Holland will survive without me!

After a month with UNFICYP, I have already started to feel "at home". This is due to the fact that I had a very warm welcome by Geoff Hazel, John McGloughlin, and all the other members of UNCIVPOL, and I really thank them for that.

As a police officer in The Netherlands, I have worked in Surveillance, Special Forces, Community Policing, Investigations, and Project Management prior to arriving in Cyprus. I last worked in the Flevoland region, where I started my policing career over 23 years ago. My most recent project targeted unemployed young offenders. They were encouraged to take part in training courses and employment throughout the community with discipline. This became a successful project and is still ongoing.

I will spend Christmas with my family in Holland. We will have the traditional tree with presents for the children underneath. My extended family will visit us on the 25<sup>th</sup> and we will have a festive dinner together. This year it will be goose and hare. We Dutch always look forward to a white Christmas, but I think the last one was 12 years ago.

So let's see what happens this year. For all of you who are staying on Cyprus, have a nice, safe and happy holiday!



From the left: Insp. Ingrid Steuer, Comd. Geoff Hazel and Sen. Sgt. Gert Jan Hoolwerf

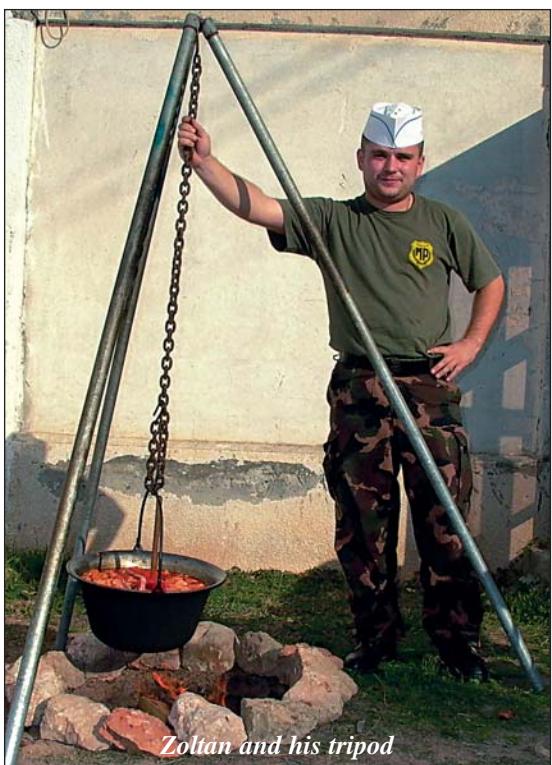
## Three Cheers for the Tripod Trio

By Capt. Fiona Smith

On 28 November, the scene for a party with a difference in the International Police Club Bar at UNPA, Nicosia. The occasion: a joint birthday party for three of the Hungarian Non Commissioned Officers based at FMPU.

Not content to organise their own party, the three decided to go back to their cultural roots and cook al fresco Hungarian style. All Hungarian hands were on deck early on that Saturday morning to ensure that preparations would go smoothly. All their investigative talents were required to locate the tripod, wood and shovels to start the laborious outdoor cooking process of the special Hungarian stew.

Zoltan the strongest member of the Hungarian team was called on for his spectacular digging style. Once he finished,



Zoltan and his tripod

## Arigato Michael-san

By Lesley Barlette

Quite frankly, when I took my 3½-year-old daughter Claudia to her first judo class, I thought it would probably be her last! But something, or should I say "someone", rather special happened. His name is Michael Clarkson.

Michael, a radio technician in the Communications Unit of Electronic Support Services, joined UNFICYP in January 1996. Twice a week at St. Michael's School, this gentle giant of a New Zealander with a black belt and 13 years of UN field service, dedicates his spare time to teaching children (and a few adults!) judo with influences of budo (karate, aikido and atemi). The rapport he has with his pupils is a joy to see. They not only learn valuable techniques for defending themselves in real life situations, they learn self-confidence, self-discipline and, most importantly, self-respect.

Michael told me in his own words: "There is an ancient Chinese saying that a journey of 1,000 miles begins with the first step and the aim is to give my pupils the confidence and belief in themselves so that they can move on to bigger and better things. Children especially have to learn about themselves and identify what they are physically capable of and what they need to develop. My main goal is to ensure that when my pupils move on from Cyprus, they have acquired sufficient skills to be able to join another association and continue their learning and development".

Michael also indicated that he would very much like to be able to take his pupils on field trips to other judo clubs on the island, but recognises that time restraints and family commitments make this somewhat difficult. However, he would like to warmly invite anyone interested to come along to St. Michael's School, UNPA, on Wednesdays and Sundays at 5.00 pm (beginners) or 6.00 pm (intermediate).

Even the parents have been known to learn a thing or two thanks to Michael. For someone who didn't even know the difference between a teriyaki and a tamari, I am proud to say my Japanese is coming along nicely! So, on behalf of the pupils and the parents, I'd like to say a big "arigato" to Michael for his time, his patience and for teaching us all so many valuable things.



## "Dona" Mara

She may not know what the words are or what the right order is, but nevertheless she regularly sits in front of the computer and practices sending her dad messages. However, what she does know is how to make her dad understand that she needs and loves him and above all, how much she misses him.

She is WO Carlos Dos Santos's 18-month-old daughter Mara. Carlos arrived in Cyprus on 10 August on his fourth mission as a peacekeeper. He is a specialist on the Argentinian Air Force Hughes helicopter systems.

On this mission, he not only gets his wife's messages, but also his little daughter's as well. Mara manages to tell him what her heart feels. Photos and confusing messages with clear intentions are enough to keep Carlos happy as he follows his daughter's progress.

He tells us what it was like and what it is like to be a peacekeeper through the eyes of a father:

"Unlike my previous missions, when communication was something not quite so important, this time the need to keep in touch with my wife Neli and Mara is constantly with me. I can't wait to find out the latest thing my daughter has learned to do. When my wife tells her that she's going to talk to me, she starts mumbling in front of the screen and this makes me the happiest man on earth!"

Unable to keep his emotions to himself, Carlos says: "We had been waiting for a child for 10 years. Now we know it's the best thing that ever happened to us. But although being apart is a great sacrifice for my family and myself, I can't help feeling very proud of being part of this group of men and women who work every day to keep world peace."



## UNFICYP Finns Celebrate

Independence Day is Finland's most celebrated national holiday. Finland gained its independence from Russia on 6 December 1917, and during the early decades, this day was a very solemn occasion marked by patriotic speeches and special church services.



Lt. Col. and Mrs. Laukka greeting their guests

From the 1970s onwards, however, Independence Day celebrations have taken on livelier forms, with shops decorating their windows in the blue and white of the Finnish flag, and bakeries producing cakes with blue and white icing. Even more important and significant of the day are the two candles, one white and one blue, which are placed at almost every window in houses, offices and public places, signifying the nation's respect for the veterans who fought for independence.



UNFICYP Finns toasting Independence Day

### UNFICYP Holidays - 2004

01 January 2004	Thursday	New Year's Day
02 February 2004	Monday	Qurban Bairam* (Eid al-Adha)
23 February 2004	Monday	Green Monday
09 April 2004	Friday	Good Friday
12 April 2004	Monday	Easter Monday
31 May 2004	Monday	Whit Monday
01 October 2004	Friday	Independence Day
15 November 2004	Monday	Sakaer Bairam* (Eid al-Fitr)
24 December 2004	Friday	Christmas Eve Day
27 December 2004	Monday	Boxing Day Monday

\* As set by the General Assembly. Subject to change.



Capt. Raimo Päkäläinen with his peacekeeper's medal

All over the country, festivities take place including parades, parties, and of course family get-togethers. Today, even rock stars and entertainers have been accepted as worthy interpreters of Finnish patriotism.

No less so in UNFICYP when the three officers of the Finnish Contingent started the day off with a short wreath-laying ceremony at the Kykko Camp in honour of UNFICYP veterans. Later on, the Finns in the mission gathered together to toast the occasion at the sauna.

A reception was held in the evening to celebrate the day in style. 120 guests arrived and were welcomed by the Commander FINCON, Lt. Col. John Laukka and his wife Ritva. During the event, Capt. Raimo Päkäläinen was decorated by UNFICYP Force Commander Lt. Gen. Jin Ha Hwang with the UN peacekeeping medal.



Wreath-laying ceremony at Kykko Camp

Rumour has it that following the official function, celebrations continued back in the only place Finns really feel at home – the UNPA sauna! Only after spending time in this location can the Finns truly feel that Independence Day has been properly celebrated.

## UNFICYP Bids Madeline Farewell



After four years with Civil Affairs, Madeline Garlick is moving on following what the Chinese would certainly characterize as "interesting times". Madeline joined UNFICYP in 1999. At that time, the two sides had no formal contacts; neither was any peace initiative being actively pursued, and UNFICYP was the only bridge between the two. Proximity talks started in late 1999 but floundered after five meetings until nearly a year later when the leaders met face to face and the UN good offices process resumed with direct meetings. As a lawyer and as someone who had worked on property issues in Bosnia, Madeline became a natural choice to assist the team on property issues. Within Civil Affairs of course, Madeline would be known for her precocious engagement in bicultural affairs, Pyla, UN Day and women's issues, amongst others.

On the personal side, these years with UNFICYP saw her acquire the coveted status of motherhood. Little Maxine could have not chosen her arrival more pertinently – she came even as the Annan plan was being presented to the sides.

Madeline had also thrown herself into some of the many wonderful activities that the island offers: history, archaeology and art; the island's culinary delights; swimming; walking and, more strenuously, running. As a survivor – and ladies' winner – of a Cyprus Walkdown and a Cyprus Walkabout, half-marathons in Paphos, Nicosia, and around the walls in Famagusta, plus countless runs along the Old Nicosia runway – she has come to know and love the island through running around it! We wish her well.

## Joanna Retires



On Friday 28 November 2003, a presentation buffet-lunch was held in the Warrant Officers' & Sergeants' Mess BRITCON, to say farewell to Mrs. Joanna Kirmizi on her retirement after 45 years continuous service with NAAFI.

Joanna started with the NAAFI at the age of 16 in the Nicosia City NAAFI in 1958, and moved to the NAAFI shop in RAF Nicosia (which later became NAAFI UNPA) in the same year, where she has remained until present day.

Andy Leonard, the NAAFI Operations Manager for Cyprus, made the presentation of a retirement gift on behalf of the NAAFI and Joanna's work colleagues. Then Louisa Venizelos (Nicosia shop Manageress) made a presentation of champagne and flowers. A further bouquet of flowers was presented by Amina Ravenhill on behalf of all staff from the Property Management Office. Col. Ian Sinclair, Commander BRITCON, presented Joanna with a certificate of "Gratitude for Exemplary Service to the British Contingent UNFICYP" in recognition and gratitude for 45 years exemplary service.

Our sincere best wishes go to Joanna for a very happy and well deserved retirement.



## Farewell Joanne

Joanne Kelly from Personnel Branch HQ UNFICYP is about to leave to make a new life for herself and her three children in the UK.

Joanne has been with UNFICYP for the past seven years. She is about to settle in Chichester and will be taking up a post with the British Ministry of Defence in early January.

During her time with UNFICYP, Joanne has met with all locally engaged civilian personnel who pass through the mission. She says: "I've had a great time working with UNFICYP and meeting people of so many different nationalities and backgrounds. It's been a great experience, and I'd like to thank everyone from the bottom of my heart for the help and support I've had during my time with the mission".

We wish Joanne all the best in the future.

# Sobering Conversations

"I enjoy wine with my meal,  
but if I don't feel completely fine,  
I'll have a strong black coffee  
before going anywhere near the car."

"I've got better than a breathalyser -  
I've got her! If she's ever  
not sure, she takes the keys  
and she drives, and that's that."



"I can hold my drink probably better  
than most, but I never overdo it -  
after all, you never know how many  
other people have had, do you?"

"Look, I drive for a living, I'm not a  
big drinker - I know my limit and  
I never go over it."

**Would you take a lift from any of these drivers?**

**In all seasons,  
the best greeting is:**

**If you drink, don't drive.  
If you drive, don't drink.**

**It's that simple.**