Rigging Course in UNFICYP

The Blue Beret
February 2006

Meeting in Paris

Serving UNFICYP's civilian, military and police personnel

The Blue Beret

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Editorial

The Secretary-General and President Papadopoulos met in Paris on 28 February to review the Cyprus situation and look for ways to move the process forward. As in the past, they agreed that the resumption of the negotiating process, within the Good Offices framework, should be both timely and carefully prepared.

The SG welcomed the fact that the leaders of both communities had agreed to bi-communal, technical-level discussions on a range of issues. He and President Papadopoulos were hopeful these would help "restore trust" between the two communities and be a first step in preparing the way towards a comprehensive settlement. The SG noted that the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Talat, had assured him he too shared this aspiration. [Both the SG and Mr. Papadopoulos expressed warm wishes for Mr. Talat's recovery from recent by-pass surgery.]

The SG and Mr. Papadopoulos also agreed that all concerned would benefit, and the prospects for further talks would be improved "if progress could be achieved on further disengagement of forces and demilitarization on the island, on the complete de-mining of Cyprus, and on the issue of Famagusta".

Turkish and Greek Cypriot leadership had responded positively to SRSG Møller's pre-Paris efforts to explore the setting up of these technical committees. Suggested topics included health, environment, water and waste management, money laundering, crime prevention, road safety, immigration and trafficking, crisis management and humanitarian issues.

Clearly, all other topics of importance to both communities in their common search for a solution to the Cyprus problem, including those additional topics suggested in the Paris meeting, and the time and format of future discussions, are to be discussed and agreed on by the two sides.

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SG Meets Mr. Papadopoulos in Paris

Transcript of Press Conference on 28 February

Q: What will be the role of the EU during this process?

SG: As you know, during the exercise of my Good Offices over the years, we have cooperated very effectively with the European Union and we intended to cooperate with them. In some situations, they have provided experts and they have provided other assistance. In some cases, [we] exchanged ideas on some of the technical issues and process, of the exercise of my Good Offices and I would expect [them] to work with me in that spirit. Besides, they have a direct interest in the settlement of this issue.

TP: I agree with the Secretary-General. Our position is very clear. We want the European Union to have a more active role in the process and I have assurances that they are prepared to do that. The Cyprus problem remains under the aegis of the United Nations and the Secretary-General.

SG: As I said, the EU has always been supportive and I expect them to continue to be supportive. There is no problem about it.

Q: Mr. Secretary-General, what do you think of the recent Turkish proposals and, second, are you planning to invite Mr. Talat for the same meeting and are you going to appoint a new Cyprus envoy?

SG: First of all, we just wished Mr. Talat well. Be patient and be merciful. Let him get well first. Once he's back on his feet, it is not excluded that we will have an opportunity to meet in New York some time in the future. As I said, we took stock of the negotiations, of the process of settlement of the Cyprus issue and we also touched on the Turkish initiative. We are going to take a look at a whole series of actions and Turkey does admit that it has an obligation, under the EU requirement, to undertake certain steps which it will take. But, of course, there were other measures proposed in their plan of action and, today, we looked at a whole series of other activities that the two sides can undertake, I am talking of the Turkish Cypriot side and [the Greek Cypriot side] and we will see what proposals we bring together for the parties to act on. On the question of appointment of an envoy, yes, in the application of my Good Officesm I usually do have an envoy and, at the right time, I will appoint an envoy, but that does not mean that we are not doing any work on the question. First of all, I have a very competent Special Representative on the ground, Mr. Michael Møller, whom I hope most of you have met, and he's going to work with the parties on certain steps and certain actions that they will need to take. We will be back-stopping and preparing for these things in New York with my Under-Secretary-General, Ibrahim Gambari and his staff, and when the time is ripe I will appoint an envoy.

Q: Did you also discuss the issue of the missing people?

SG: Yes, we are just about to appoint a third member of the [Missing Persons] Committee and they will begin their work very soon and I do expect the two communities to work very expeditiously on this and move forward. There will be a full-time member [of the Committee] on the island.

Q: Do you consider this meeting with President Papadopoulos a step forward in the process of the Cyprus problem?

SG: In negotiations, sometimes people say that as long as you are talking you are making progress. But what I have indicated, what I would want to see, is a much narrower gap between our words and our actions. In the next couple of months, we are going to do whatever we can to do narrow that gap as we move ahead with the process.

Q: Mr. Secretary-General, did you get in this meeting some new ideas from President Papadopoulos [inaudible] and that the process will start soon. Is there enough time to do it before the end of your term?

SG: Let me say that, yes, there were quite a few proposals that we've put on the table this afternoon, which we are going to analyze carefully and see how we can put them into action, after consulting the other side, working together and come up with a programme of action which we can begin to work on the ground. Obviously, when you are handling these sorts of negotiations, where there is a will among the parties, things can move very fast. When the will is not there, it can take you a long time. Let's start with the initiatives I just said that we discussed today and begin to take concrete steps and see how things can be accelerated. And I hope that it will help bridge what I refer to as the gap between words and actions.

Q. It is a symbolic question. We see you for the first time standing outside of the UN in front of the flag of the Republic of Cyprus. Is this some kind of measure that we have to keep in mind?

SG: Let me assure you that I will not want his job. I am looking forward at the end of the year, of having a balance between action and reflection and taking some rest. So, do not worry, I am not heading to Nicosia to take on another job.

TP: I will send my best wishes to Mr. Talat for a quick recovery. I wish him a speedy recovery. [inaudible]

Q: Mr. Annan, how optimistic are you?

SG: I am always optimistic.

CM Hosts Party to Greet the Staff

Less than a month after starting his assignment, SRSG Michael Møller invited all staff from HQ UNFICYP – national and international civilians, military and police – to a "get-to-meet" you reception at Ledra Palace. All turned out in their finery for a relaxed and convivial evening. Apart from meeting with the new CM, it was one of those rare occasions when colleagues got a chance to mingle in an off-duty setting.

Five days later, on 31 January, the CM was again at Ledra Palace, this time to meet with Cyprus media from both sides of the buffer zone. Again, it proved to be a very cordial event, with all leaving very happy to have been given the opportunity to meet UNFICYP's new chief.

... then Meets the Press

Alex Efthyvoulou (left) of The Cyprus Weekly and Costas Pavlowitch of The Cyprus Mail (centre) meet with the CM

From left: CM, Spokesperson Brian Kelly, Süleyman Ergüçlü and Basaran Düzgün of Kibris

UNFICYP Force Commander – Maj.Gen. Rafael José Barni

The Secretary-General has appointed Maj.Gen. Rafael José Barni of Argentina as Force Commander of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), in succession to Maj. Gen. Hebert Figoli of Uruguay who completed his assignment on 12 January.

Maj.Gen. Barni served as the Commanding Officer of the Argentinian Army Logistic Command from 2004 to 2005. Between 2003 and 2004, he was the chief of the Planning Department of the Argentinian Army, and from 2000 to 2003, he served as the Assistant Military Attaché to the Argentinian Embassy in Washington, D.C., and later as Director of the Centre for Strategic Studies at the Argentinian Army General Staff from 2002 to 2003.

As a Lieutenant Colonel, he was the Commanding Officer of the 15th Infantry Regiment from 1993 to 1994. He served in UNFICYP as the Commanding Officer of the Argentinian Battalion in 1997. He had previously served as a military observer in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) from 1989 to 1990. He also organised and participated in the preparation of combat teams for the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) in 1996 and for the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM) in 1995.

Maj.Gen. Barni has a university degree in strategy and organisation from the Command and General Staff College in Buenos Aires. He also holds post-graduate degrees in military strategic planning and strategy from the Command and General Staff College in Buenos Aires.

Born in 1950, Maj.Gen. Barni is married and has three children.

Sector 1 Medal Parade

ARGCON celebrated its medal parade on 10 February at Camp San Martín. The ceremony was presided over by SRSG Michael Møller, his first ever medal ceremony. Medals were presented to CO ATF, Lt. Col. Claudio Javier Piedra-Buena, and members of ATF and UN Flt who have completed 90 days of peacekeeping service.

Later, a reception was held at the Officers' Mess, where guests tasted different typical Argentinian dishes and watched an exhilarating display of how the tango should be danced.

Ringing the Right Notes in Pyla

A coming together of children from the two communities for a performance by the Merlin Marching Band of the Royal Fusiliers on 27 January 2006 marked the first visit of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Michael Møller, to the UN-supervised buffer zone village of Pyla.

Around 70 children from both schools gathered in the town square where they were given a hands-on, show-and-tell about the world of band music. Individual instruments were displayed and the band leader briefly explained how each is played. Children from both schools got a chance to play some of the instruments along with their head teachers. This brought on a chorus of excited giggles and happy laughter at the novel experience.

The band then led the children on a march through the streets of the village to the Greek Cypriot Primary School where a tree planting ceremony was held.

Turkish Cypriot children planted an olive tree in the schoolyard, while the Turkish Cypriot Parents Association planted a bay tree in a symbolic gesture of friendship and cooperation.

A similar ceremony then followed at the Turkish Cypriot School where Greek Cypriot children planted an olive tree in the schoolyard and representatives of the Greek Cypriot Parents Association planted a bay tree.

Both schools thanked the UNFICYP Chief of Mission as well as Civil Affairs Political Officer Sally Anne Corcoran for facilitating the event and presented them with plaques.

The two parents' associations also exchanged gifts.

After the event, the Chief of Mission met and was briefed by UNPOL officers on their work in the buffer zone village. He also met the head teachers of the two schools and the Turkish and Greek Cypriot Muhktars.

Tornado Sweeps Over Pyla

Pyla was one of three villages that suffered damage as a result of a tornado passing through the area on 7 February. According to press reports, around 50 homes were affected with slates blown off roofs and windows smashed. Cars were also damaged and water tanks destroyed. Trees were uprooted by the force of the tornado.

Two people were reported to have sustained injuries – one, a Turkish Cypriot man, was struck by metal debris flying through the air; the other, an elderly Greek Cypriot, sustained head injuries when hit by a flowerpot.

The tornado approaching Pyla village

Tornado damage in Pyla village

The tornado also damaged the nearby villages of Makrasyka, Ayios Theodoros and Engomi in the north, with Turkish Cypriot newspapers stating that numerous homes and 50 vehicles had been damaged.

UNFICYP Integrated Medal Parade

UNFICYP's third integrated medal parade, took place at the UN Flight hangar on 23 February. SRSG Møller welcomed guests, including the Ambassadors of Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, the Australian High Commissioner and the British Deputy High Commissioner, as well as members of the UN family in Cyprus to the parade, noting that it was being held in the buffer zone, "our place of business".

Those on parade represented a cross-section of UNFICYP's military contingents from all three sectors, he said. "The uniforms may differ from contingent to contingent, but the blue berets they all wear remind us that our peacekeepers are here, united in purpose and dedication, to serve in support of the UN's long-standing commitment to the cause of peace, stability and a return to normalcy on this island."

In the year since UNFICYP downsized into a reconfigured, more mobile and flexible force, "the buffer zone had not shrunk," he observed. "Our patrols continue to go out and cover the same ground, the same terrain, night and day.

"While we may be a smaller force than just over a year ago, we do not shrink from our responsibilities of patrol and control. The task of maintaining the integrity of the buffer zone is not always easy, particularly when UNFICYP patrols are challenged by one or other side as to where the buffer zone begins or ends.

"Those challenges are a reminder to us all that the significance and reality of the buffer zone lies in the fact that it exists between unresolved cease fire lines between two opposing military forces.

"Thankfully, over the years, the level and nature of incidents has dropped off significantly. However, there are still sufficient instances of friction and fractious behaviour between the two to remind us on a daily basis of why we, the peacekeepers, are here and why UNFICYP's presence is still needed on this island.

"All is not frought, however. Supported by the UN family of agencies here on the island, working in tandem with the communities, we continue to promote the return of normal conditions in the buffer zone.

"Look at the dramatic impact the opening of the crossing points have had on the island's day-to-day life. See how de-mining has paved the way for new crossing points and how it has opened up new lands in the buffer zone to the farming community. This is a fine example of cooperation between the UN, the European Union and the two communities. How much better, if this cooperation were extended beyond the buffer zone confines and we could proceed to demine all the island's minefields!"

The SRSG congratulated all the medal recipients for a job well done.

Polish Posters on Display

One highlight of the Integrated Medal Parade was a special exhibition of Polish poster art celebrating the UN's 60th anniversary.

The prize-winning graphics by young Polish artists were displayed alongside designs by some of Poland's most eminent printmakers. All were made available for display through the generosity of the Polish Government.

SRSG Møller thanked Poland's Ambassador to Cyprus, H.E. Zbigniew Szymanski, for the gesture and urged those attending the parade to visit the show.

Maria Skotnicka's "We, the peoples of the United Nations... 60 years of international solidarity

UNFICYP Conducts Rigging Course

DPKO does not recruit specialised rigging staff. Nevertheless, DPKO communications technicians conduct all tower work including the erection of communications towers, installation of antennas, co-axial feeders, obstacle lights and lightning protection systems. At the end of the mission, they take it all down again, a practice which also requires special equipment and training.

Recognising the need to train Communication and Information Technology Section (CITS) technicians to use safe working practices and modern safety equipment while on the towers and to be fully versed in appropriate rescue techniques, CITS in UNHQ, along with colleagues at the UN Logistics Base, set up a two-week "safe working practices at heights" course in the UK in November 2004. UNFICYP's communications technician Emirali Tunay attended, as did staff members from several other field missions.

Subsequently, UNFICYP was requested to host the second formal rigging training course in November 2005. Participants included:

Mahmut Devin	–	UNFICYP
Hazem Abdulbaqi	–	UNAMI
Jimsher Kurtanidze	–	UNOMIG
Mike Kundodyiwa	–	ONUCI
Sando Burphy	–	UNMIS
Per Svedling	–	MINURSO
Rashid Sankoh	–	MONUC
Tariq Masood	–	UNAMA

Chief of UNFICYP CITS Robert Walker and his staff managed the course administration. This included arranging vehicles, accommodation, security passes, training room facilities and the additional equipment for the students and instructors to ensure the course was a success for CITS and for UNFICYP.

Both instructors and students used towers in several UNFICYP locations including UNPA's 36-metre (120-foot) freestanding tower. This tower provided the introduction to safe working practices, rope work, and rescue techniques. During the two-week course, the students were introduced to standard and specialized rigging equipment; harnesses, helmets, clamps, descenders, types of ropes and knots, rescue techniques, installation of antennas and feeders on towers and removal of loads from towers using various methods.

Despite the disruption caused by the striking potato farmers on the road to Pyla, and the additional work/travel time involved, the students and instructors also managed to visit tower sites in the buffer zone at OP 123 – Pyla and Camp Izay – Athienou.

The 36-metre freestanding tower at OP 123 provided a more challenging task, as students worked at the full height in the gusting winds above Pyla, while taking in the spectacular views of Larnaca, Agia Napa and Famagusta.

Special thanks go to the Force Signals Officer, Maj. Ghiosi, and to UN Flight for a one-off helicopter flight. This allowed the instructors and several students get to OP 123 and set up the safety ropes, antenna loads and other equipment for the day's training, saving valuable daylight hours and training time. Unfortunately the other students had to face the two-hour drive out to the site in the morning and a two-hour return in the evening that day!

It is mandatory for all CITS staff who attend UN-sponsored courses to conduct end of training briefings for staff in their unit. This further benefits the mission and CITS. The additional knowledge gained by working with professional trainers with corporate knowledge and real experiences, and operating industry-proven specialized equipment means CITS staff are now equipped with the best safety equipment available. Of course, the other benefit of attending such courses is the chance to meet new people, exchange ideas and experiences, to visit new countries and indulge in the culture.

The UNFICYP-run course was a great success. Future courses have been planned by UNLB for June 2006 and June 2007. We look forward to hosting the next course, as UNFICYP will gain training and personal benefits by working with CITS profes-sionals from other field missions.

BL

Driving Safety

Road Rage - What is it?

As "road rage" incidents make daily headlines and aggressive driving becomes a greater traffic safety concern, UNFICYP's Master Driver explains what road rage is and how to deal with it.

Road rage is defined as "an assault with a motor vehicle or other dangerous weapon by the operator or passenger(s) of another motor vehicle or an incident that occurred on a roadway". In order for an incident to be defined as road rage, there must be "wilful and wanton disregard for the safety of others". In other words, road rage means that someone deliberately tried to harm you as a result of something that happened while you were driving your car.

Bob continued to yell at other drivers long after he arrived home.

Aggressive driving is defined as a progression of unlawful driving actions such as: speeding, improper or excessive lane changing, failing to signal intent, failing to see that movement can be made safely, or, improper passing (such as using an emergency lane to pass, or passing on the shoulder). Aggressive drivers know that you don't know who they are, so they feel like they have more power and can do as they please. They don't believe there will be consequences to their actions.

Signs of Aggressive Driving

You may not even be aware of it, but if some of the following items sound like you when you drive, you are probably an aggressive driver:

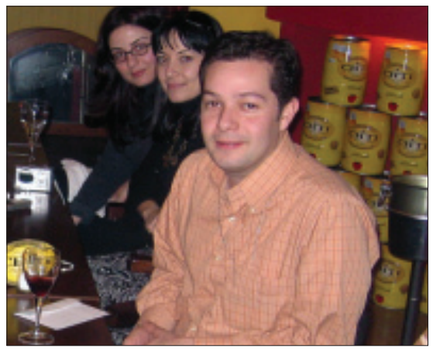
- Expressing frustration, cursing, yelling, gesturing to other drivers
- Not paying attention. Eating, drinking, talking on the phone, reading while driving
- Frequently changing lanes
- Running red lights
- Speeding

These driving patterns can change by concentrating on the issue at hand – *driving*. Be calm, drive at the same speed as the cars around you (although this is not a legal excuse for driving too fast), take less congested or easier routes (making a series of right turns may be a lot easier than trying to make a left turn through six lanes of traffic), leave yourself enough time to get where you are going without driving like a maniac, and, if necessary, decide you'll be a little late and stay calm.

If an aggressive driver confronts you, your best course of action is to get out of his way. Swallow your pride, and let him do whatever he pleases, so he can get away from you. Resist the urge to not let him pass, or not let him merge. Do not make eye contact. You don't want to see any gestures he may be using, and you don't want to be tempted to return the sentiment. This back and forth is exactly what often leads to road rage.

WO2 D.A. Goodchild, Master Driver

Departing Colleagues



During February, a number of colleagues reached the end of their tours and left the mission, all sad to go but happy to return to their homelands.

Above (left) is Jurgen Leitner, who held the post of Supply Officer in UNFICYP's Integrated Support Services. He returns to Austria after four-and-a-half-years with the mission and looks forward to his new career – farming artichokes!

Centre is Lt.Col. Osvaldo Albanesi who returns to Argentina after holding the post of OC UN Flight for one year.

On the right is Maj. Horacio Ghiosi, the outgoing Force Signal Officer, who also returns to Argentina after one year with UNFICYP.

Above you can see Aldo Henriquez who acted as the Spokesperson's Assistant for two years. He returns to HQ New York.

Last but not least, we bade farewell to Duilia Infante, the Chief of Mission's secretary, who left UNFICYP at the end of January after a three-year tour. Duilia also returns to HQ New York.

Heads Up!!!

New CO UN Flight

Lt. Col. Fernando Augusto Simo was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He graduated from the Argentinian Air Force Academy in 1984 as a military pilot and holds a degree in aeronautical and aerospace systems. Having passed the helicopter pilot's course, he has been working with helicopters ever since.

This includes many dangerous assignments involving natural disasters, floods and forest fires. In 1988, he was commissioned into 1 Sqn to fly the Bell 212 and participated in seven campaigns in Antarctica. In 1991 he graduated as a Staff Officer in the Argentinian Air Force's Air War Superior School and in 2000, he was appointed Commander of 1 Sqn, VII Air Brigade. From 1994 to his arrival in UNFICYP, he was a pilot in the Presidential Squadron.

Lt. Col. Simo is married to Maria Cristina Cesare and they have three children, Debora Romina (17), Maria Lucia (11) and Nicolas Matias (9). In his spare time, he enjoys fishing and eating good "asados" (barbecue).

New CO Sector 4

Lt. Col. Jaromír Kameništ'ák was born in Turzovka, Slovakia. He began his military career in the Slovak Republic's Secondary Military Grammar School in 1974, and graduated with an engineering degree from the Military Academy of Brno in the former Czechoslovak Republic in 1978.

During his service he has held various military appointments in Slovakia including Company and Battalion Commander, 2IC of the Training Mobilisation Centre, 2IC of the National Guard Chief of Staff's 3rd Bde and the Senior Officer in Command of the Land Forces. Prior to his arrival in UNFICYP, he was the Commander of the Basic Command and Staff Course at the Slovak Republic's National Academy.

In 2002 he passed the multinational Staff Officer's Course in Germany. In 2003, he attended the Infantry Career Course at Fort Benning in the USA, and in 2005, he attended the Higher Command and Staff Course in Estonia.

Apart from his mother tongue, Lt. Col. Kameništ'ák speaks English, Russian, Czech and a little Spanish.

He is married to Margita. and they have three sons, Marian, Roman and Lukáš. His hobbies include computers, travelling, movies and photography.

Looking Back at Blue Berets

UNFICYP has been in operation for more than four decades. The **Blue Beret** *has been reporting its activities over the last 42 years. A look-back at past issues not only reflects the wealth of people and resources the mission has drawn on in that time, but it also serves (literally) as a "timely" and salutory reminder of the unchanging similarities between service then and now.*

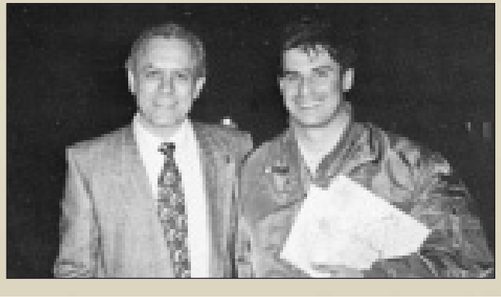
February 1976

As part of the humanitarian and economic tasks carried out by UNFICYP, 308 tons of wheat flour was transported from Limassol to Nicosia for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The flour had been given to UNHCR by the West German Government.

February 1996

On Tuesday 13 February, the Argentinian pilots of UN Flight took to the air on an emergency flight against the clock to transport a doctor from Nicosia to Paphos to operate on a kidney donor.

Dr. George Kyriakides, Director of the Paraskevaidion Surgery and Transplant Centre, and implementing partner of UNHCR bicommunal projects in Cyprus, requested the assistance of the United Nations to provide a helicopter for the emergency transport of transplant organs from Paphos to Nicosia to save two patients in Nicosia.



MFR – Always Training

The MFR continued its operational readiness training on 18 January by conducting a range serial in the old copper mine at Troulli Village in Sector 4. The exercise consisted of firing vehicle-mounted machine guns from the Company's armoured TACTICAs and was organised by Capt. Lucas Filippi and Lt. Juan Mujica.

Lt. Mujica also used the exercise as a familiarisation period and selected a deployment route through the buffer zone to test his soldiers' driving ability along the winding tracks. Once at the firing range, the exercise started with a basic shoot and finished with all four vehicles conducting a "pairs fire and manoeuvre" exercise. This final exercise tested the drivers, the gunners and the commander who had to control the movement.

At the end of the day, in line with Argentinian custom, we all gathered around an improvised table in the back of the pick-up to enjoy a traditional Asado. We want to thank the kind cooperation of Sector 4 and FMPU, who supported us.

Tacticas overlooking the Troulli shooting range area

MFR members administering first aid

On the same day, MFR training included a CASEVAC Exercise in Sector 4, near UNOP 122. The scenario consisted of a car crash in the buffer zone where two men were injured, one of them with a broken leg and the other with an abdominal injury. The exercise was organised by Lt.Col. Victor Nuñez (CMTC) and Capt. Lucas Filippi (2IC MFR), and tested the capability of MFR soldiers and UN Flight crew members to work together in helicopter CASEVAC drills.

Bdr. Daly, patrol commander during the exercise, was ordered to patrol the area between UNOP 122 and UNOP 123. Suddenly, the patrol came across a car on its side and two people injured. Bdr. Daly first organised his patrol to provide the casualties with first aid, reported the incident to the JOC and then prepared the helicopter landing site.

While Bdr. Daly and his patrol were dealing with the situation on the ground, UN Flight crew members were receiving orders from their OC, Lt. Col. Simo, whilst the "chopper" was being prepared for a CASEVAC.

Whilst in the air, Capt. Oviedo faced an unexpected difficult situation due to strong wind and rain. He managed to land the aircraft for immediate CASEVAC. However, during the flight back to the UNPA, they had to make an emergency landing in Latsia because of bad weather conditions.

Apologises to UN Flight personnel for this "surprise" and congratulations for handling the situation so well.

Capt. L. Fillipi

Three Treats for Sector 2

Soldiers of 12th Regiment Royal Artillery got a surprise treat when they were visited by England Rugby Union star Kyran Bracken and models Lucy Pinder and Michelle Marsh, courtesy of Combined Services Entertainment (CSE).

CSE has been providing entertainment to British forces abroad since the end of World War II, offering a welcome respite from the rigours of being stationed abroad.

Kyran Bracken enjoyed a training session with the 12th Regt RA "Stormers" RFC, current holders of the MacIlwaine Cup. He was also challenged at every sport from football to ping-pong by both the soldiers of Sector 2 and the Multinational Force Reserve (MFR).

Lucy Pinder and Michelle Marsh posed for photographs with soldiers before being given a tour of the buffer zone.

Kyran Bracken with WO2(BSM) Rawcliffe

Lucy Pinder and Michelle Marsh with OC Sec 2, Maj. Mark Ross

The end of the visit culminated in an all-ranks party in Ledra Palace Hotel, marking the four-month point of the Regiment's fourth UN tour in Cyprus.

ATF New Sergeant Majors

Argentine Armed Forces regular promotions take place every December 31st. This year, three of the members of the ATF were promoted to the rank of Sergeant Major, the highest NCO rank in the Argentine Armed Forces, while deployed in UNFICYP.

Sergeant Major Gerardo José Rojas joined the Army in 1975, when he entered the Service Support NCOs School to become a cook. He was promoted to the rank of corporal in mid-1976 and served as cook in several units and headquarters. He holds particularly fond memories of his service with the 8 Mountain Cavalry Troop and the 15 Light Cavalry Battalion, where he is currently posted with UNFICYP. While you might not have met him, you surely have tasted or heard about his snacks and empanadas at Sector 1 ceremonies or HQ Friday breakfasts.

Sgt.Maj. Gerardo José Rojas

Sgt.Maj. Rómulo Humberto Morales

Sergeant Major Rómulo Humberto Morales joined the Army in 1976, when he was admitted to the NCO School. He was posted to the cavalry unit and, after finishing a two-year course, was promoted to the rank of corporal in 1977. He served in the 4th Mountain Cavalry Battalion, the only Army unit entirely outfitted with horses, and with the 15 Light Cavalry Battalion. Both units are deployed in the Andes. This is his first deployment to a peacekeeping operation. He serves as driver to the CO Sector 1.

Sergeant Major Adrian Antonio Paulucci belongs to the Clerks Corps. He has been in the Army since 1980 serving at Headquarters, 8th Mountain Brigade. This is his first mission overseas and he works at Camp Roca JOC.

Congratulations to all three on their promotions and may thay have a happy return back to Argentina next April!

Sgt.Maj. Adrian Antonio Paulucci

On the Sporting Front:

Squash

Run by the MFR, a squash tournament including all UNFICYP sectors and units took place on 30 January. It was organised as an individual tournament with a play-off system.

Nevertheless, every competitor gained points according to the level they reached and then those points were added together for a final sector/unit score. The results are as follows:

Individuals:
1st Place: Capt. N. Henderson
2nd Place: Capt. L.J. Filippi

Teams:
1st Place: Sector 2
2nd Place: MFR
3rd Place: HQ

Running

UNFICYP runners got it together for a run in Petrovilia, Larnaca district, on 29 January.

The big event was the UltraSports half marathon (21.1 km) along a scenic route that hugged the coastline and went through the village. The 5 km and 2 km races were a challenge for novice competitors, including teenagers. The temperature hovered around 14 degrees, making it a warm run for January.

Terrific prizes were awarded to runners in many categories. Indeed, just about anyone who turned up won trophies, ranging from windbreakers to shampoo!

Orienteering

The 2006 Cyprus Services Orienteering League Night Championships, known as the Night Owl event, was hosted by UNFICYP this year and held in the UNPA on 15 February. The event, organised by veteran orienteer Diana Bridger, was sponsored by Marios Hadjipetris of ***GET OUT*** outdoor gear shop.

Twenty six keen competitors braved probably the coldest night of the year so far and ran on one of the two courses set round the roads, tracks and bondhu near the old Nicosia International Airport.

The results were as follows:

A Course
Winner: Sgt. John Thomas
Runner-up: Cpl. Colin Raynor

B Course
Winner : Cpl. Hendry
Runner-up: Amanda Wright

Overall Winner (A and B courses)
Winners: WO2 Will MacGill and Cpl. Hendry
Runners-up: Sgt. Thomas and Capt. Hannah Frost
Third: Sgt. Richard Burnham and Kyriakos Michaelidou

Visitors to UNFICYP

17 Feb: Director of Infantry, Brig. Scott-Bowden MBE ADC, following his inspection of the Honour Guard

22 Feb: Mr. Gábor Világosi, Vice President of the Hungarian National Assembly, inspecting the Guard of Honour before paying a courtesy call on the Chief of Mission

16 Feb: The Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, H.E. Mr. Y. Zhao, inspects an Honour Guard before paying a courtesy call on Chief of Mission Michael Møller

23 Feb: Chief of the Royal Artillery, Brig. W.J.F. Kingdon, having inspected the Honour Guard, is accompanied by Chief of Staff Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell to a courtesy call on the CM