

# The Blue Beret

## May 2006



**Karpas  
Close-Up**

## THE BLUE BERET

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 Public Information Office  
 United Nations Peacekeeping Force  
 in Cyprus  
 HQ UNFICYP  
 PO Box 21642  
 1590 Nicosia  
 Cyprus  
 Tel: 2261-4550/4546/4408  
 Fax: 2261-4461  
 E-mail: [unficyc-blue-beret@un.org](mailto:unficyc-blue-beret@un.org)  
[blueberetcyprus@hotmail.com](mailto:blueberetcyprus@hotmail.com)  
 Website: [www.unficyc.org](http://www.unficyc.org)

### Editorial Team

Brian Kelly  
 Anne Bursey  
 Capt. Štefan Zemanovič  
 Miriam Taylor  
 Netha Kreouzos  
 Sgt. Jozef Kocka (Photographer)

### Unit Press Officers

Sector 1	Capt. Mauricio Silvestre
Sector 2	2/Lt. Kirstie Main
Sector 4	MSgt. Silvia Lojanová
MFR	Capt. Tibor Berecz
UNPOL	Lt. Belinda Stevens
UN Flt	Sgt. Aidan Lynham
FMPU	Lt. Wenceslao Bona
	Capt. Jozef Sventek

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## Environment Day - 5 June

Environment Day – 5 June – serves to remind us of our common responsibility for planet earth and of our duty to succeeding generations to look after it and to hand it on in good working order. It serves as an annual reminder of the green values that underpin the delicate balance of our shared eco system.

To help mark the occasion, UNDP Action for Cooperation and Trust (ACT) has put together a two-day Eco Forum, which is why this issue of the **Blue Beret** features a special UNDP/ACT supplement on environmental issues.

Here in Cyprus, there are common environmental problems which transcend the buffer zone, and which require strong bi-communal action for their resolution. Efforts to protect the island's environmental assets need an urgent integrated and co-ordinated approach.

As custodians of the buffer zone, UNFICYP's peacekeepers patrol and control a unique tract of land. Over the years, it has become a nature reserve. This is part of the island's heritage. We want to keep it that way. We want to be sure that when we leave, we hand it over intact and pristine to the people of this island.

The reality is that the two communities exist in a single, island-wide eco-system. One that knows no boundaries. One that recognizes no division. One that awaits no settlement.

The recent outbreak of bird flu proved this. Thankfully and tellingly, the outbreak was contained because there was dialogue, action and cooperation between the two sides.

We in the UN system here on the island, notably our colleagues in UNDP/ACT, were happy to play a part and help facilitate those exchanges.

The fact that the two sides are able to work together united by a common purpose, the health of the island, will hopefully inspire and invigorate current efforts to promote dialogue towards a united Cyprus.

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Front Cover: Karpas Close-Up  
 Back Cover: Thanks for coming

## SRSG Møller Visits the Karpas

SRSG Møller paid his first official visit to the Karpas on 18 May. During his familiarisation tour of the area, the Chief of Mission visited the villages of Leonariso and Ayia Triada, where he called upon Ms. Panayiota Kanaka and Mr. Savvas Liasi, spokespersons for their respective Greek Cypriot communities. Each briefed the SRSG about local concerns.

In Rizokarpasso, Mr. Møller met with Mr. Andreas Tannis, spokesperson for the Greek Cypriot community, as well as with the Turkish Cypriot muhtar, Mr. Arif Ozbayrak.

Mr. Møller also inspected the secondary school, where school principal Ms. Xenia Archontidou and members of her staff showed him the new student computer facilities. He also dropped in on the local coffee shop for a chat with members of Rizokarpasso's Greek Cypriot community.



SRSG Michael Møller views a computer class during his visit to the Rizokarpasso secondary school



SRSG Michael Møller in conversation with Savvas Liasi, spokesperson for Ayia Triada's Greek Cypriot community



Ms. Xenia Archontidou, principal of the Rizokarpasso secondary school, with UNFICYP Chief of Mission Michael Møller

Mr. Møller was accompanied on the visit by Ms. Kyoko Shiotani, UNFICYP's Chief Civil Affairs Officer, and members of the mission's Civil Affairs Branch.

They were escorted by members of the UN police component (UNPOL).



Andreas Tannis, spokesperson for the Greek Cypriot community of Rizokarpasso in the Karpas, makes a point when briefing SRSG Michael Møller during the UNFICYP Chief of Mission's visit to the area

# Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Cyprus

## I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations operation in Cyprus covers developments from 25 November 2005 to 17 May 2006 and brings up-to-date the record of activities carried out by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) pursuant to Security Council resolution 186 (1964) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution 1642 (2005).

2. On 31 December 2005, Zbigniew Włosowicz relinquished his post and on 1 January 2006, Michael Möller succeeded him as my Special Representative and Chief of Mission. The Force Commander, Maj. Gen. Hebert Figoli (Uruguay), ended his tour of duty on 5 January 2006, and was succeeded by Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni (Argentina) on 6 March 2006. As at 15 May, the strength of the military component stood at 859, all ranks, and the strength of the police component stood at 69 (see annex).

## II. Mission of good offices and other developments

3. Over the past six months, both the Greek Cypriot leader and the Turkish Cypriot leader renewed their calls for a resumption of my mission of good offices. While there were signals of some willingness to begin to re-engage, there have been no tangible indicators of an evolution in the respective positions.

4. On 28 February, I met the Greek Cypriot leader, Tassos Papadopoulos, in Paris. I conveyed my assessment that the situation was not yet ripe for the resumption of full-fledged political

talks and expressed my concern that the gap between words and deeds was still too wide. I encouraged him to do what he could to narrow those gaps. In March, I conveyed to the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mehmet Ali Talat, my readiness to meet with him at a mutually convenient time following his full recovery from a recent medical intervention.

5. In the course of the reporting period, I also had the opportunity to meet with both Greek and Turkish officials. Late in March, I met with the Greek Foreign Minister to discuss the situation in Cyprus and related issues. In January and March respectively, I met the Turkish Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. The object of the discussions was the action plan on lifting of restrictions in Cyprus put forward by the Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül, on 20 January 2006 (see A/60/657-S/2006/48, annex). In that connection, Nicosia indicated on 31 January that it was not in a position to accept Ankara's proposals (see A/60/671-S/2006/82). Athens held a similar view. I have since held extensive consultations on the proposals.

6. My new Special Representative took up his duties early in January and started to explore options to encourage progress on the ground and possibilities for a resumption of contacts between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots, which had been suspended for over two years. In February, both agreed to a proposal to establish a mechanism for them to engage on issues of common concern through bicultural discussions at the technical level. My Special Representative has since been involved in efforts aimed at reaching an agreement on the modalities for such discussions. In order to gauge the pulse of the communities, and build a broad base of support for progress toward the reunification of Cyprus, my Special Representative has also been in contact with wide sectors of civil society and with the wider diplomatic community on the island.

7. The bicultural discussions at the technical level are not intended to be a substitute for the negotiating process towards a comprehensive settlement in the framework of my mission of good offices, but a step aimed at building trust and understanding, paving the way for the resumption of full-scale negotiations leading to a comprehensive settlement. For the time being, both leaders have agreed in principle to my proposal that they meet on the occasion of the installation of the new third member of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus, anticipated for June 2006.

## III. Activities of the force

### A. Prevention of a recurrence of fighting and maintenance of the military status quo

8. The military and security situation along the ceasefire lines remained generally stable. Overall, the opposing forces showed cooperation and exercised restraint. The number of incidents

during the reporting period increased, although most were minor in nature. The Force recorded 468 incidents from November to May as compared to 397 for the same period in 2005. Minor incidents included overmanning, enhancements to military positions, stone-throwing, weapon-pointing and incursions into the buffer zone. Incidents of a more significant nature included cocking and pointing of weapons and hunting incidents. The noted increase may be attributed in part to the UNFICYP mobile concept of operations implemented since 2004, which brings the United Nations Force into more direct contact with the National Guard and the Turkish Forces/Turkish Cypriot Security Forces and facilitates detection of incidents.

9. A confrontation over the opening of a new crossing point at Ledra Street in old Nicosia substantially heightened tensions in the early weeks of the reporting period. Both the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots had agreed to open a new crossing point at Ledra Street with UNFICYP facilitation. However, late in November, the Turkish Cypriots decided unilaterally to construct a footbridge over a Turkish Forces patrol track close to the northern edge of the buffer zone. The south was unwilling to open its side of the crossing unless the bridge was removed while the north was unwilling to open its side without the bridge. The south also withdrew its consent for the United Nations to carry out the necessary repair work on the street inside the buffer zone which, for safety reasons, must precede any opening. Tensions subsided in January but neither side has been willing to compromise and Ledra Street remains closed. Both have challenged UNFICYP demarcation of the buffer zone in the area, compounding the difficulties of reaching a solution.

10. Disputes over demarcation of ceasefire lines and the authority of UNFICYP in the buffer zone increased. This is a long-standing problem, dating back to the failure of the opposing forces to agree on the ceasefire lines in the 1970s. Faced repeatedly with the practical problem of determining violations, in 1989 UNFICYP developed an aide-memoire on the supervision of the ceasefire in Cyprus, which remains the authoritative functional guide for UNFICYP. It was at the time presented to, though not accepted by, both sides. As part of an initiative to ensure that both sides honour UNFICYP authority in the buffer zone and decrease incidents and violations of the status quo, UNFICYP has invited them to engage in consultations to review the aide-memoire and the overall management of the buffer zone.

11. Over the past three months two violations of the status quo raised tensions in and along the buffer zone. The National Guard replaced and substantially improved an observation post in the vicinity of Dherinia by erecting a significantly larger structure. UNFICYP objected to the construction and repeatedly asked the National Guard to dismantle it and return the position to the status quo ante. At the time of writing, the National Guard had unmanned the position but the structure remained in place. The Turkish Forces initially did not react but then chose to construct a new observation post in the same vicinity. It is also currently unmanned. Each side cited previous infractions by the other to justify its own actions. Unless dismantled, both structures will be recorded as permanent violations. In general, both sides continued to react to provocative actions of the other rather than exercise restraint in order to defuse a situation.

12. The lifting of the restrictions on freedom of movement of UNFICYP personnel in the north referred to in my report of May 2005 (S/2005/353, para. 15) made possible restoration of operations in areas previously restricted. However, in January, new restrictions were placed on UNFICYP by the Turkish Forces on buffer zone crossing points in Sector 4 to the east of Nicosia. UNFICYP police also faced movement restrictions in the Karpas area affecting operations of the small UNFICYP police team based in Leonariso; meanwhile, a solution was found enabling UNFICYP police to operate effectively in the area.

13. Turkish Forces continued to man the checkpoint at the Louroujina pocket despite repeated protests by UNFICYP. The United Nations continues to hold the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo in Varosha. The Turkish Forces/Turkish Cypriot security forces remain in violation of the military status quo in Strovolia. Since March 2006, they have been manning the position with two soldiers whereas previously one soldier occupied the post. UNFICYP also noted an increase in the frequency of visits by senior officers to the position over the same period.

14. Both forces continue to perceive one another as a potential threat. That perception is reinforced by political and military

commentary on both sides. The vast majority of incidents occur in areas where opposing forces are in close proximity to one another, in particular in the Nicosia area where stone-throwing, ill discipline, threats and weapon-pointing incidents are a routine occurrence. Previous UNFICYP unmanning proposals have not been implemented owing to reservations held by both sides. UNFICYP intends to resume efforts to encourage the military of both sides to pull back from the buffer zone and unman positions in old Nicosia.

15. The United Nations military observer and liaison officer teams continued to make improvements in the exchange of information and the resolution of incidents. There is nevertheless room for improvement in the cooperation of opposing forces with the teams, which are an essential component of the new force structure. Further efforts will be made in the coming months to promote greater cooperation between the regimental commanders of the opposing forces and UNFICYP military observer and liaison officers.

### B. Demining in the buffer zone

16. Of the 48 minefields originally identified in the buffer zone, 20 have been cleared to date. Since National Guard minefields in the buffer zone had been cleared (with the exception of a small section in the Louroujina pocket), the focus during the reporting period was on Turkish military minefields in the Nicosia area, with four minefields, comprising 383,293 square metres, cleared. The Mine Action Centre activity is currently focused on the remaining minefields in the Nicosia area listed by the Turkish side for clearance. Since February, UNFICYP has been in consultation with the Turkish Forces to extend demining beyond the Nicosia area to the rest of the buffer zone. The Mine Action project is currently funded until the end of July 2006 and an agreement has been reached with the European Union to release a further €1 million to fund the programme until the end of 2006. An estimated €6 million would then be required to complete the demining project in the buffer zone.



### C. Restoration of normal conditions and humanitarian functions

17. UNFICYP continued to cooperate with its United Nations partners and the sides to facilitate projects of common benefit for Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots in the buffer zone and to promote confidence-building measures between them. The bicultural road construction project in the buffer zone at the Astromeritis/Bostancı crossing point, funded by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office for Project Services, was completed. UNFICYP obtained agreement for the operation of the crossing point on a 24-hour basis, commencing on 30 March 2006. The mission also facilitated other infrastructure improvements for the benefit of the civilian population in the buffer zone including the construction of the Akaki River dam west of Nicosia, road construction in the village of Mammari and the building of a warehouse in Peristerona.

18. Movement of people and trade across the buffer zone continued. UNFICYP has recorded a total of about 10.6 million crossings since the opening of the crossing points in April 2003. Approximately €C1.5 million (about \$3 million) worth of goods crossed the Green Line from the north to the south and €C350,000 (approximately \$700,000) worth of goods crossed from the south to the north. Only a fraction of the crossings have had any incidents associated with them; however, three years after the first opening, there is little to no evidence of integration.

19. During the reporting period, UNFICYP facilitated 43 bicultural events with the participation of 1,340 people. These events were held in Ledra Palace in the buffer zone, which continues to be seen as an essential neutral place to host sensitive activities involving members of the two communities. Regular monthly meetings between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political party leaders also continued to be held at Ledra Palace under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia. At their invitation, my Special Representative used the occasion of the meeting held in April to brief the political party leaders on his proposals to re-engage the two sides towards a solution of the Cyprus problem.

20. UNFICYP continued discussions with the Greek Cypriot side regarding the establishment of a Turkish primary school in Limassol, which is not yet operational. Since my last report, UNFICYP has pursued the matter by exploring various options with both sides. The Turkish Cypriot Teachers' Union filed a lawsuit at the Supreme Court to guarantee Turkish Cypriots' right to an education in their mother tongue. The trial began on 5 May. The special measures to upgrade the provision of primary education in the existing Greek Cypriot school for Turkish Cypriot students described in my previous report (S/2005/743 and Corr. 1, para. 20) are now in place. Late in March the Greek Cypriots offered to consult further with UNFICYP on modalities for opening a separate school; these consultations remain pending. UNFICYP continued to mediate the appointment of one additional teacher for the Greek Cypriot secondary school in Rizokarpaso.

21. In January, in the mixed village of Pyla in the buffer zone, UNFICYP assisted in bringing the children of the two communities together for a cultural event which was marked by the planting of joint "friendship trees" in their respective schools. The two schools, which are 100 metres apart, had not held any joint activities in almost 30 years. On 30 November, teachers of the two schools held a reconciliation workshop with UNFICYP support, in which pedagogical methods were also discussed.



22. UNFICYP conducted 64 humanitarian convoys, money deliveries and humanitarian visits as part of its mandated humanitarian tasks in support of the 385 Greek Cypriots and 132 Maronites living in the north. UNFICYP continued to assist Turkish Cypriots living in the south in obtaining identity documents, housing, welfare services, medical care, employment and education. On 24 April, UNFICYP facilitated the pilgrimage of 300 Greek Cypriots to Saint George's Church in Varisha in the buffer zone. In addition, UNFICYP mediated with both the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots for cooperation on the preservation and restoration of cultural and religious sites, particularly in the north.

23. UNFICYP has observed an emerging trend of an increase in unauthorized construction of buildings for personal and commercial use and utilization of land outside the areas designated for civilian use in the buffer zone, especially in the vicinity of Pyla and other eastern areas located in sector 4. These are primarily projects carried out by Greek Cypriots. UNFICYP has initiated discussions with the relevant authorities to establish practical procedures ensuring that civilian use of the buffer zone does not compromise the security situation or hamper the ability of UNFICYP to carry out its mandated functions.

24. UNFICYP police continued to strengthen the working relationship with both sides on enhancing the effectiveness of law enforcement and maintaining law and order in and around the buffer zone. Both the north and the south report an increase in crime through the buffer zone, such as smuggling of goods, including cigarettes, explosives (fireworks) and narcotics, and human trafficking. Local police and municipal authorities have begun to show some willingness to cooperate with UNFICYP on such matters and UNFICYP police have established a coordination mechanism to research and map reported crimes occurring in and across the buffer zone. UNFICYP police have also strengthened their patrolling capability and now conduct joint patrols with UNFICYP military in the Nicosia area. Increased interaction with the police services on the island facilitated good cooperation in dealing with public order and safety matters in the buffer zone, such as demonstrations, pilgrimages, hunter incursions and medical emergency transportation. Continued attempts to enhance information-sharing between the north and the south on criminal matters affecting both sides have met with little success. UNFICYP police continued to visit prisons in order to monitor the general conditions and fair treatment of Turkish Cypriots in the south and Greek Cypriots in the north. During the reporting period, there were four Greek Cypriots detained and released in the north; there are currently 27 Turkish Cypriots serving sentences in the south.

25. UNFICYP continued to coordinate activities on gender-related issues. On International Women's Day, UNFICYP hosted a bicultural panel of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot women to discuss the subject of trafficking of women in Cyprus.

## Continued from page 5

A bicultural anti-trafficking group was formed at the event and will meet periodically under United Nations auspices at Ledra Palace. In addition, UNFICYP continued to organise meetings and activities of the bicultural Cypriot Women's Policy Group, a group of prominent women who meet periodically to discuss modalities for cooperation between the two communities.

26. My new Special Representative has emphasized the need for greater cohesiveness in the efforts of the United Nations system in Cyprus. UNFICYP has been coordinating more closely with the United Nations Development Programme, represented on the island by two projects: Action for Cooperation and Trust and Partnership for the Future. Action for Cooperation and Trust was launched in November 2005 to build networks of cooperation between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. To date, the project has contributed to several joint activities between the north and the south to promote HIV/AIDS awareness. It has also facilitated a process of consultations among veterinary and health experts from the north, the south and the international community, including the World Health Organization, which intensified when avian influenza was found in birds on the island in January. Action for Cooperation and Trust has also collaborated with UNFICYP on the issue of religious and cultural heritage sites.

27. The project, Partnership for the Future, focuses on the rehabilitation of the old city of Nicosia in cooperation with the Nicosia Master Plan and provides direct support to small businesses on both sides of the island through targeted capacity-building activities and grant schemes. Following the commitment made by the European Union in 2004 to end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community, the project was entrusted by the European Union with helping to reduce the socio-economic imbalance between the two communities, thereby facilitating the reconciliation process. The project does this through targeted technical assistance initiatives covering private sector development, infrastructure development and the preservation of cultural heritage, and feasibility studies for the economic development of the northern part of Cyprus.

## IV. Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus

28. In the course of the reporting period, the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus finalized the project proposal document on the exhumation, identification and return of remains of missing persons. This marked the end of a lengthy process of discussions, analysis and consultations with all entities involved. The Committee decided to place emphasis on local participation and ownership, thereby strengthening the project's potential positive impact on the broader reconciliation process. Progress has also been made with regard to the necessary infrastructure. As agreed, an anthropological laboratory was built in the buffer zone for the examination and storage of the remains of missing persons. The Turkish Cypriot laboratory involved in DNA testing is operational. The project will be launched as soon as the necessary funding has been secured. All progress to date has been made possible by voluntary contributions.

29. Exhumations were carried out twice for capacity assessment purposes under the supervision of an international forensic expert. This occasion brought together, for the first time, the Committee's new bicultural team of archaeologists and anthropologists, composed of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot scientists who will play a major role throughout the project. Both sides agreed to the appointment of a new third member of the Committee, Christophe Girod, who will assume his duties in the course of June 2006.

## V. Financial aspects

30. As indicated in my previous report (S/2005/743 and Corr.1), the General Assembly, in its resolution 59/284 B, appropriated for UNFICYP the amount of \$46.5 million. In this regard, I am grateful for the voluntary contribution of one third of the cost of the Force, equivalent to \$14.7 million, by the Government of Cyprus, and the voluntary contribution of \$6.5 million by the Government of Greece. Other countries and organisations might wish to do likewise, in order to reduce the portion of the cost of UNFICYP covered by assessed contributions.

31. My proposed budget for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007, which amounts to some \$45.0 million, is currently under consideration by the General Assembly, which is expected to act on it shortly.

32. As at 31 January 2006, the total outstanding assessed contributions to the special account for UNFICYP for the period from 16 June 1993 to 15 June 2006 amounted to \$25.4 million.

The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peace-keeping operations as at the same date amounted to \$2,664.5 million.

33. Reimbursement of troop and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made for the periods up to 31 January 2006 and 31 December 2005, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

## VI. Observations

34. Over the past six months, the ceasefire in Cyprus was maintained and the situation remained stable. On the whole, both sides extended good cooperation to UNFICYP, with some exceptions. Threats to United Nations peacekeepers by soldiers of opposing forces and disagreements with UNFICYP over the delineation of the buffer zone are indications that both sides are willing to take security risks to make gains on the ground or score points against each other. Differing opinions on the regime in the buffer zone inevitably lead to encroachments and changes to the status quo. In the absence of agreed ceasefire lines, the National Guard and the Turkish Forces/Turkish Cypriot Security Forces should respect UNFICYP operational determinations on the parameters of the buffer zone. Such a message, if delivered by the command structures of the military on both sides to their rank and file, would help to reduce misunderstandings on the ground, thereby enhancing the security of UNFICYP soldiers.

35. The increase in civilian construction in the buffer zone may be a consequence of greater confidence in the security situation. While that would constitute a positive development as an indicator of normalisation of conditions, the ability of UNFICYP to ensure security will be steadily eroded by continued construction, without UNFICYP approval, of residential and commercial facilities outside areas designated for civilian use. It is hoped that both sides will extend their cooperation to UNFICYP in that regard.

36. It is clear that an early completion of the work of the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus and a solution to the issue of the missing persons would greatly contribute to reconciliation on the island. The appointment of the third member affords an opportunity to all concerned to redouble their efforts and put aside political considerations, in order to close this painful humanitarian chapter. I would urge the donor community to contribute to that effort.

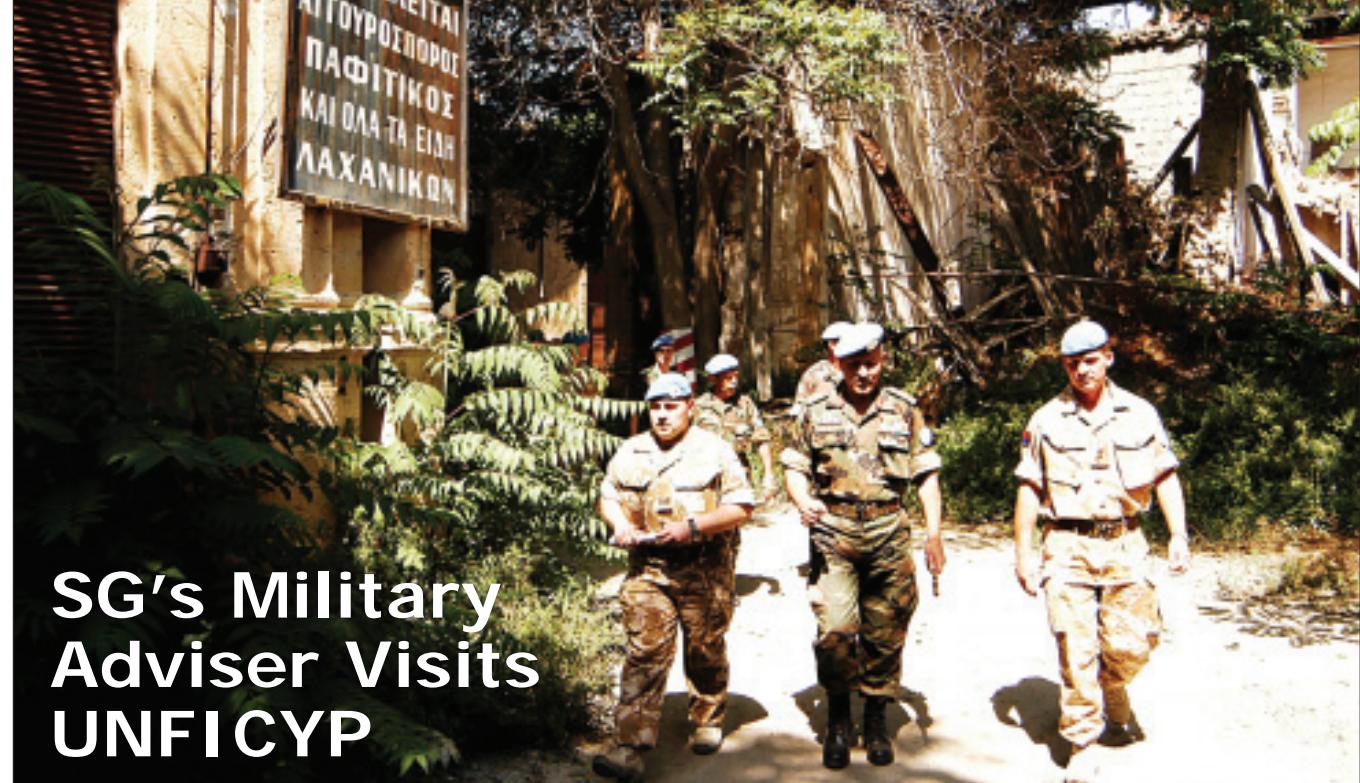
37. I note with satisfaction the progress in demining efforts in the buffer zone. I appeal to the international community to lend its full support to the successful completion of the demining efforts in the Nicosia area, in the whole of the buffer zone and ultimately the whole of the island.

38. Over the past six months, UNFICYP has continued to build on the advantages of the force structure adopted early in 2005 and to steadily improve coordination among its civilian, military and police components under the new concept of operations. I intend to continue to keep the operations of UNFICYP under review, with the aim of making recommendations for possible further adjustments at the appropriate time, taking into account conditions on the ground and progress at the political level.

39. I continue to believe that only the achievement of a comprehensive settlement will bring an end to the Cyprus problem. In the absence of such a comprehensive settlement, the presence of UNFICYP on the island continues to be necessary. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of the Force for a further period of six months, until 15 December 2006.

40. At this juncture, it is important for the parties to resume contacts and to begin to think about how to re-engage in the search for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. I continue to believe that there is a need to match words with action. To that end, my Special Representative has engaged in a process aimed at encouraging renewed contacts. As already indicated, I intend to dispatch the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs to Cyprus, Greece and Turkey in the near future to assess the political situation in and around Cyprus and the prospects for a full resumption of my good offices. My Special Representative will continue to function as a high-level point of contact on the ground for the two sides.

41. In conclusion, I wish to express my thanks to Zbigniew Włosowicz for his dedicated service over five years as Chief of Mission of UNFICYP and to Maj. Gen. Figoli for his command of the Force. I also extend my appreciation to Michael Möller and Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni, and to the men and women serving in UNFICYP, for the efficiency and dedication with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council.



## SG's Military Adviser Visits UNFICYP

The Secretary-General's Military Adviser Lt. Gen. R.K. Mehta arrived in Cyprus on 24 May from New York for a four-day familiarisation tour of UNFICYP. The aim, a routine working visit to update himself on the current military situation.

UNFICYP Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni received Lt. Gen. Mehta at the mission's headquarters in the UNPA. After inspecting an honour guard, Lt. Gen. Mehta met with Chief of Mission, SRSG Michael Möller. UNFICYP Chief of Staff Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell then briefed the Military Adviser about the mission's peacekeeping activities.

Next day, Force Commander Barni, accompanied by peacekeepers from Sector 2, escorted Lt. Gen. Mehta on a buffer zone tour of the old Nicosia area. Earlier in the day, the SG's Military Adviser met with police officers from UNPOL's Indian Contingent.

On 26 May, Maj. Gen. Mehta toured Sector 4 with members of the Slovak and Hungarian Contingent. The following day, before concluding his visit and returning to New York, he visited the Argentinian Contingent to inspect Sector 1's area of operations.





## How We Envy the World Cup!

You may wonder what a Secretary-General of the United Nations is doing writing about football. But in fact, the World Cup makes us in the UN green with envy. As the pinnacle of the only truly global game, played in every country by every race and religion, it is one of the few phenomena as universal as the United Nations. You could even say it's more universal. FIFA has 207 members; we have only 191.

But there are far better reasons to be envious.

First, the World Cup is an event in which everybody knows where their team stands, and what it did to get there. They know who scored and how and in what minute of the game; they know who missed the open goal; they know who saved the penalty. I wish we had more of that sort of competition in the family of nations. Countries openly vying for the best standing in the table of respect for human rights, and trying to outdo one another in child survival rates or enrolment in secondary education. States parading their performance for all the world to see. Governments being held accountable for what actions led them to that result.

Second, the World Cup is an event which everybody on the planet loves talking about. Dissecting what their team did right, and what it could have done differently – not to mention the other side's team. People sitting in cafés anywhere from Buenos Aires to Beijing, debating the finer points of games endlessly, revealing an intimate knowledge not only of their own national teams but of many of the others too, and expressing themselves on the subject with as much clarity as passion. Normally tongue-tied teenagers suddenly becoming eloquent, confident, and dazzlingly analytical experts. I wish we had more of that sort of conversation in the world at large. Citizens consumed by the topic of how their country could do better on the Human Development Index, or in reducing the number of carbon emissions or new HIV infections.

Third, the World Cup is an event which takes place on a level playing field, where every country has a chance to participate on equal terms. Only two commodities matter in this game: talent and teamwork. I wish we had more levellers like that in the global arena. Free and fair exchanges without the interference of subsidies, barriers or tariffs. Every country getting a real chance to field its strengths on the world stage.

**O**ut of the 13 UNFICYP troop- and police-contributing nations, eight have a direct interest in this year's World Cup finals which kick off in Germany on 9 June. Argentina, Holland, Italy, Australia, Brazil, Croatia, England and Paraguay have qualified and we congratulate their respective contingents and wish them well in the weeks ahead.

Some, like England and Paraguay (Group B), Argentina and Holland (Group C), and Australia,



Exponents of the beautiful game on the UNFICYP pitch!

**B**razil and Croatia (Group F) will meet in the initial phase of the tournament. Only later, when the knock-out rounds begin, will we likely see some of the more traditional rivalries to the fore.

None can be more dramatic than a possible match-up of Argentina and England.

Whatever the outcome, we can all look forward to exciting times ahead and can only wish that, regardless of who wins, the "beautiful game" will prevail.

## A Taste of Eurovision 2006 Finals

For football lovers in Europe, the Champions League may be the top event on their agenda; for cinema fans, it's the Cannes Film Festival. But for music followers all over Europe – and now even beyond its borders – the Eurovision Song Contest tops the charts.

Despite coming under fire at various times for being a low standard, low quality music festival, the ESC has managed to become one of the top entertainment events in Europe, its enormous viewing figures boosted anew, courtesy of the new public tele-voting system. The initial aim back in 1956 in Switzerland was to bring Europeans closer together. The ESC was born a year before the European Economic Community came into existence in 1957. Initially known as the Eurovision Grand Prix, it was inspired by the popular San Remo Festival. This year, the number of participating countries went up to 37 to include countries like Andorra, Armenia and Monaco.

*The Eurovision Song Contest, a beloved if sometimes mocked fixture on the European TV calendar, has a strong following in Cyprus. One devotee of this annual ritual is UNFICYP Information Assistant Loukia Vassiliou, who travelled to Athens for this year's finals. Here is her account.*

Thousands of spectators arrived at the OAKA Indoor Hall in Athens to feel the Eurovision rhythm up close, just a few hours before the grand final. A colourful mixture of people gathered outside the stadium holding hundreds of flags from various countries, chanting and cheering for their song. Some had their bodies or faces painted in their national colours, some were wrapped in their flags and some simply took group photos with fans from other countries.



The opening ceremony left the audience speechless as the two hosts, Maria Menounos and Sakis Rouvas, flew over the spectators to take their places on stage. The opening performance, based on themes of sea and sunshine, saw a female performer, dressed like a mermaid amidst waves, dolphins and ships, as a huge sun descended at the far end of the arena.



This year's ESC catered to all tastes, beginning with Finland's monstrous, hard rocking winners Lordi, complete with "wings on their back and horns on their head", whose "fangs were sharp, and eyes were red"! Not quite angels, like they admitted, as they called on the audience to join them or... go straight to hell!

Russia's new playboy-star Dima, performed a ballad with a female dancer who popped out of the white piano covered in red roses. Dima, who came second, was rewarded by screams of excitement from all the young girls in the crowd!

Bosnia and Herzegovina's entry proved that Eurovision is not all about wild performances, smiles and partying. Their moment of melancholy won them third place.

Sweden, represented by the famous Swedish Eurovision veteran Karola, managed to get the audience on its feet with her dance song "Invincible" (echoes of Abba tunes). A wind machine made her long blue and gold dress ripple and shimmer in the light – classic Eurovision style, and a fourth place finish.

Who could forget Lithuania, with the LT United band singing "We are winners" – and really meaning it! In the end, despite the many boos from the crowd, the group secured fifth place. Crazy but fun.

For the Eurovision romantics, this year's ESC had the standard melodic ballads from Switzerland and Ireland, and from Cyprus, although we did not make it to the final.

Some countries brought back memories. Denmark, with the "Twist of Love", took their inspiration from the U.S. of the 1950s and the rock and roll of "Grease" and "Happy Days". Germany performed a country rock song surrounded by luminous cacti!

Croatia finished lucky thirteen. Red-hot Severina, wearing a frilly red dress with a daring split up the front, performed a traditional Croatian dance song. In classic Eurovision style, the bottom of her dress was soon ripped off and Severina was lifted on high by her male dancers.

UK rapper Daz Sampson, singing a catchy teenage tune, did not get high marks, despite being accompanied by five girls in cute school uniform.

This year's ESC proved that it is not about the singer, but the song and how the audience relates to it and the country it represents. Greece, represented by the Greek Cypriot "diva" Anna Vissi, failed to win the hearts of Eurovision fans after all, despite being favoured to win outright.

# Pilgrims Progress to Buffer Zone

Whenever possible, UNFICYP blue berets help oversee pilgrimages to religious sites within the buffer zone as part of our mandated normalisation activities. Since 2001, Varisha chapel, located only 400 metres from the former Varisha village in Sector 1, has been the meeting point for an annual pilgrimage.

On 24 April, St. George's Day, some 300 worshippers gathered to celebrate a service in honour of the saint and visit the ruins of what once was their home town. Sector 1 deployed personnel to help ensure that the event went off well.

Pilgrims started arriving at 9.00 a.m. and were escorted to the chapel in UNFICYP vehicles. Immediately after the service, nostalgic pilgrims took advantage of the occasion to visit among the ruins of the now deserted Varisha village. Amidst much poignancy, aged villagers, accompanied by sons and grandsons, walked the narrow streets. For some, it was their first visit back to their birthplace since 1974.

The day ended peacefully with many thanking the Argentinian peacekeepers for their help and sensitivity on the day.

Another pilgrimage took place six days later on 30 April, when 145 worshippers were escorted to the church of Ayia Marina in Sector 4. This congregation, in fact, belongs to the parish of Ayios Memnon, but since their church lies within the inaccessible confines of Varosha, they hold their annual pilgrimage in the neighbouring Ayia Marina church.

Prior to the service, SCAT, UNPOL and Sector 4 met with the organising committee to coordinate the event. Arrangements were made to improve the road approach from the edge of the buffer zone to the church, a distance of approximately 1.5 km. Gravel was provided by the Ayios Memnon committee, the work was carried out by the Dherinia municipality and UNFICYP personnel organised and oversaw the proceedings.

The day started with a prayer service at 8.00 a.m. in Dherinia town. By 10.30 a.m., pilgrims were arriving at the buffer zone. They either travelled in their own private vehicles under escort, or were ferried in UNFICYP vehicles to the church.



Pilgrims walking towards Varisha chapel

Following the service, a meal was organised in a Paralimni restaurant for the pilgrims. UNFICYP personnel who assisted with the day were cordially invited. During the meal, many expressed gratitude for the peacekeepers' support. Being allowed travel in their own cars to the church brought them closer, they said, to normality and a sense of home.



Following the service at Ayia Marina Church

**NB:** The Ayia Marina annual pilgrimage, also held in the same church, takes place in July, when up to 1,500 people will attend. Again, UNFICYP will provide all necessary support and assistance.

## ANZAC Day



Peninsula, where they honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice so many years ago.

UNFICYP honoured the ANZACs this year with the traditional dawn service at Wayne's Keep cemetery, celebrated by BRITCON Padre Stephen Hancock RACD. The Australian and British High Commissioners, Garth Hunt and Peter Millett, together with the New Zealand Honorary Consul Mr. Tony Christodoulou, headed the list of dignitaries who joined the SRSG/CM

Mr. Michael Møller, FC Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni, COS Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell, SPA Carla Van Maris, CAO Frank Clancy, Sector Commanders and Australian UNPOL Commander Col Speedie in paying their respects.

All UNFICYP sectors and units were represented, many travelling from afar for the 5.00 a.m. start of service. The surreal atmosphere included a slowly rising crescent moon fading behind the cenotaph as the dawn began to break, just moments prior to the congregation beginning to sing a hymn for the fallen. The service was a moving tribute to all those who lost their lives whilst serving Australia and New Zealand in all theatres of war.

After the service, a traditional "gunfire" breakfast was held at the International Mess. The "gunfire" element consists of a shot of Bunderburg rum in a black coffee to start the day.

By late afternoon, a large crowd had gathered by the "Two Up" ring at the UNPOL Club, where a game was in full swing. Two pennies are tossed in the air and the onlookers bet as to whether they land with matching sides showing. The Australians made a large number of converts to the tricks of this once-a-year game.

# Ambassadors Briefing

**O**n 23 May, the Chief of Mission, SRSG Møller, UNFICYP Force Commander Maj. Gen. Barni and heads of UN agency components held a special briefing session for members of the diplomatic community at UNDP conference facilities in the UNPA. The aim was to update ambassadors and other diplomatic representatives about recent UNFICYP and UN system activities on the island. The Chief of Mission said he intended the briefings to become a regular feature of the UN family calendar here in Cyprus.

Mr. Møller told his diplomatic visitors of the close cooperation and coordination that exists between UNFICYP's three pillars – military, police and civilian – and of his hopes and intentions for a more cohesive, coherent and proactive UN presence on the island. The SRSG cited growing concerns about increased criminal activity within and on both sides of the buffer zone since the opening of the crossing points. This was reason enough for UNFICYP's police element, UNPOL, to continue to build on its close contacts with the police authorities on both sides as well as to sustain efforts to promote improved cooperation between the two, he said.

The SRSG also noted how the mission has been coping with increasing demand for civil use projects, including a spate of unauthorised building construction in the buffer zone. He pointed out that the mission has procedures for processing civilian requests for construction in the buffer zone and how all applications are handled on a case-by-case basis, on their individual merits.

Mr. Møller cited hopes for improved understanding between the mission and the two sides as to buffer zone parameters, configuration as well as use in the name of ensuring a secure environment for all Cypriots on both sides of the line.



... In Sector 1

On the political front, Mr. Møller reported that the Secretary-General believed there was as yet no basis for a full-fledged resumption of good offices. However, he did report ongoing discussions with both sides on setting up technical committees as part of efforts to lay the groundwork for the eventual resumption of negotiations.

Force Commander Maj. Gen. Barni spoke of the peacekeepers' task to prevent a recurrence of fighting, to maintain a stable environment, and to de-escalate the military presence along the buffer zone, all in support of efforts to arrive at a comprehensive and lasting political settlement. He said this was being done to the fullest extent possible within buffer zone confines through sustained patrols, observation, and military liaison activities. He also acknowledged the close coordination between civilian, police and military, the mission's three operational pillars, in trying to bring this about.

Mine Action Centre project manager Mick Raines gave an update on de-mining activities. Andrew Russell, Programme Manager, UNDP Action for Cooperation and Trust, Tiziana Zennaro, Programme Manager, UNDP Partnership for the Future, and Cristina Planas, Representative of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees also briefed on their respective programmes and activities.

## Blue Beret Retrospective

**S**ince UNFICYP began in March 1964, the mission has had its own publication. It carries the name of the **Blue Beret** from that time. The first issue was dated 20 April 1964.

The very first editor was a British Captain, David Lees, who now follows UNFICYP's progress on line through the **Blue Beret** on the mission's website, [www.unficyp.org](http://www.unficyp.org). Through this medium, he recently wrote to us with many kind words on the present day publication.



The compositor at work as David looks on



Meeting President Makarios at a reception. On the right is Maj. Gen. Gyani, the then UNFICYP Force Commander



David today – at a dinner dance

Nowadays, the whole magazine is prepared using a desk-top publishing software package and handed to the printers on a CD. Back in those days, however, before the computer age, type-setting was literally "done by hand". The compositor had to take out each letter

As if that task wasn't daunting enough, proof-reading was in eight languages, since all contributing nations published articles in their own tongue. Letters simply had to compare with letters, with the Irish script being the most difficult!

After an exciting career with the British army, David taught English, Drama and General Classics (Greek in translation) at a secondary school, becoming Head of a Drama Department. He now devotes his time to writing, as most editors do!

## New Faces

**S**ector 4's new Commanding Officer **Lt. Col. Jaroslav Schönvicky** arrived in UNFICYP on 16 May.

Born on 24 January 1968 in the city of Krompachy. Lt. Col. Schönvicky attended the Military Faculty of the Ilina University from 1987 to 1992. Since graduation, he has served in positions dealing mainly with search and rescue operations.

From 1994 to 1996, Lt. Col. Schönvicky gained peacekeeping experience in the former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) as an Engineering

Company DCO. Following his return to Slovakia, he took up the position of battalion commander, again dealing with disaster relief efforts at scenes of floods, accidents, fires, etc.

Lt. Col. Schönvicky is not a newcomer to UNFICYP, having served from March 2003 to September 2004 as Sector 4's Engineer Officer. With this experience, he returned to Slovakia as Deputy Commander and then Commander of the Slovak Republic's General Staff in the United Nations Training Centre, Nitra.



**B**orn on 24 September 1962, Deputy Commanding Officer Sector 1 **Lt. Col. Hector Marcelo Tomas** comes from Entre Ríos. He graduated from the "Colegio Militar de la Nación" (Argentinian Officers' Academy) in 1984, and then served in Artillery Battalion No. 121 and later on at Artillery Battalion No. 1. He also took up the post of professor in the School of Artillery, later returning to the Argentinian Officers' Academy to instruct officer cadets. From 2001 to 2003, he was appointed Ops Officer and then DCO of Artillery Group No. 11, a unit provided with Argentina's most modern 155mm calibre self-propelled artillery vehicles.

Lt. Col. Tomas recently served in Army HQ, where he worked as the Press Liaison Officer as director of the army's official radio and monthly publication "Radio Soldiers" and "Soldier Magazine". His qualifications include a master's degree in Business Administration and also in Strategy and Organisation.

Lt. Col. Tomas is married to Virginia and they have one son, Manuel. The family will arrive in Cyprus next July and will stay until February 2007. His hobbies include swimming, literature and travel. He is enjoying his tour, particularly working alongside soldiers from so many different countries.

## Force Commander's Visits

The first was Sector 1 on 16 May. On arrival of Maj. Gen. Barni and his team at San Martín Camp, Argentinian Task Force members were presented to the Force Commander. After that, the inspection team was briefed by CO Sector 1, Lt. Col. Piedra-Buena and by ARGCON MOLOs.

Then began a tour of San Martín Camp. Linou's UNPOL station was next on the list, where the team attended a briefing with members of UNPOL and SCAT from Sector 1.

After lunch, the Force Commander inspected ARGCON's positions along buffer zone. Following a briefing on patrolling procedures and the most common problems and incidents in specific areas, the Force Commander then joined a patrol of the line between PB 32 and OP 35. Of course, Maj. Gen. Barni is very familiar with the Sector 1 AOR, having served as ARGCON's Commanding Officer in 1997.

On 22 May, the Force Commander inspected Sector 2. He was accorded the customary honour guard on arrival at Ledra Palace. Then, following a briefing, he toured the Sector 2 AOR, starting off in the west before moving on by helicopter to take in Sector 2 east.



... In Sector 4

On 18 May, Sector 4 laid on an honour guard when the Force Commander and his team arrived at Camp General Štefánik by helicopter at 9.30 a.m. After a briefing by the DCO, Lt. Col. Béla Cserenyecz, Maj. Gen. Barni inspected the Camp. He then travelled to the Dherinia Line in the east of Sector 4's AOR, moving westwards and inspecting all patrol bases along the way. The tour ended at OP 91, just short of the boundary with Sector 2.

The FC has pronounced himself most impressed with all three inspection visits, and has commended the Sectors accordingly.

## Sector 2 Reception



1 Battalion the Royal Welsh Regiment (the Royal Welsh Fusiliers) band provided a spectacular drum display. Their Regimental goat was much admired. The evening was rounded off with some ground-level fireworks.

Although a long-standing custom, no record exists of the origin of the custom that the Royal Welsh Fusiliers march with a goat with gilded horns at their head.

In 1844, Queen Victoria gave the first Royal Goat and since then, the regular battalions and most of the territorial battalions have had a goat presented by the sovereign. The goats selected are from the royal herd which was started from stock given to Queen Victoria by the Shah of Persia. In recent times, when no goat was available in the royal

herd, the Queen has presented a wild goat from the mountains of North Wales, where several herds still exist.

The goat, never referred to as a mascot, is an essential part of the Regiment and accompanies it wherever it goes. Every goat has a silver headplate identifying it as the gift of the Sovereign. Goats wear no other decoration, although traditionally, their horns are gilded. The goat is in the care of a soldier with the honorary title of Goat Major.

## Heat can Kill... You are all responsible for prevention!

When the body is unable to cool itself by sweating, several heat-induced illnesses such as heat stress or heat exhaustion and the more severe heat stroke can occur, and can result in death.

### Factors Leading to Heat Stress

High temperature and humidity; direct sun or heat; limited air movement; physical exertion; poor physical condition; some medicines; and inadequate tolerance for hot workplaces.

### Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

- Headaches, dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting.
- Weakness and moist skin.
- Mood changes such as irritability or confusion.
- Upset stomach or vomiting.

### Symptoms of Heat Stroke

- Dry, hot skin with no sweating.
- Mental confusion or losing consciousness.
- Seizures or fits.



### Preventing Heat Stress

- Know signs/symptoms of heat-related illnesses; monitor yourself and co-workers.
- Block out direct sun or other heat sources.
- Use cooling fans/air-conditioning; rest regularly.
- Drink lots of water; about one cup every 15 minutes.
- Wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeinated drinks, or heavy meals.

### What to Do for Heat-Related Illness

- Call the UNFICYP Medical Centre on 22-61-4445 at once.

### While Waiting for Help to Arrive:

- Move the worker to a cool, shaded area.
- Loosen or remove heavy clothing.
- Provide cool drinking water.
- Fan and mist the person with water.

4th Regiment Royal Artillery hosted a welcoming reception on 27 April at the Ledra Palace Hotel. Over 200 civilian and military guests, including SRSG/CM Mr. Michael Møller, FC Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni, COS Col. Peter Fraser-Hopewell, CAO Frank Clancy, SPA Carla Van Maris, Commander British Forces Cyprus, British High Commissioner, Defence Adviser to the British High Commission and Chief of Staff British Forces Cyprus attended.

Guests were able to view a Regimental silver display, brought from the Regiment's base in Germany, as well as a slide show and photograph display showing the Regiment at work, in barracks, on exercise and on previous military operations.

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## Andreas Retires after 40 Years Service

May saw the retirement of Mr. Andreas Rodosthenous from the PROM Office. His retirement party was held at a local Nicosia restaurant and was well attended by his many colleagues in the Property Office's section.

Andreas has been an employee of the British Ministry of Defence for almost 40 years. During his distinguished career, he has served with the British Forces in a variety of locations in Cyprus.

In 1967, in the Troodos Mountains, Andreas found an unconscious soldier lying in the snow. Andreas carried him back to camp and cared for him until he recovered.

During the troubles in 1974, Andreas was heavily involved in assisting the United Nations restore the power, water and infrastructure to the International Airport.

Andreas has gained the respect, trust and admiration of the whole workforce and also the numerous clients, agencies, contractors and military personnel he has dealt with on a daily basis. His considerable knowledge and experience, coupled with his reliability and resourcefulness, enabled him to fulfil the high demands placed upon him in his specialist field of work. In 2002, Andreas was awarded the Commander British Forces Cyprus Commendation.

All of us in BRITCON would like to thank Andreas and his wife Aphrodite for the warmth, friendship and assistance shown to our community. We hope they both enjoy a happy retirement together.

GSR



From the left: Len Moscrop (Defence Estates), Paul Kilmartin (CE), Andreas with his wife Aphrodite, Maj. Fred Reid (PROM), Pambos Androutsou (DE) and SSgt. Iain Thompson (PROM office)

## Sport... bringing people closer together



On 20 May, Argentinian personnel in Sector 1 organised a family marathon, inviting entries from Sector 2, Sector 4, UNPOL, UN Flt and Headquarters. Participants had a choice – the 5 km family run or the demanding cross-country circuit of 15 km.

At about 8.00 a.m., more than 200 civilian, military and police started arriving for the run. But the nicest touch to the day was the friendly, social atmosphere created by the attendance of runners' wives and children who turned up in strength to support the event.

Sector 1 have close "running" ties with the Nicosia-based Pericles Demetriou runners' club. A five-member team was invited and took part in the event, headed by Club President Mr. Socratiou.

During the race, Sector 1 medical teams were on call with water points spread along the route to quench runners' thirst. The whole event was a great success and ended with a lunch and prize-giving ceremony in Camp San Martin.



In true Latino fashion, Argentinians are a very sociable people. High on the list for Sector 1 soldiers is the wish to represent Argentina through the spirit of its men and women, and also to integrate with the people of the island as much as possible. One of their greatest achievements in this respect is the regular and active participation of Sector 1 soldiers in the Pericles Demetriou running club.

Founded in 1987, this club began with the purpose of integrating the community through sport, especially running. It organises several competitions every year, and Sector 1 personnel take part as often as possible.

On 3 May, this prestigious club organised a dinner honouring its best sports participants. Among its guests were the Argentinian military. More than 80 prizes and awards were given to winners. The Argentinian delegation was honoured to receive a plaque, the only sector within

UNFICYP to do so. DCO Lt. Col. Héctor Marcelo Tomas accepted the award on behalf of the Sector, to the applause of all present.



Thanks for  
coming