

The Blue Beret



Talks resume

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Editorial

A settlement is better than predictability

Life at UNFICYP, the UN's third oldest peacekeeping mission, follows its own rhythm. It is not a cadence like those that govern all living organisms, but it has become, after 46 years, a kind of natural cycle nonetheless. Twice a year, UNFICYP gets a new lease on life as its mandate is renewed by the Security Council. There is not much suspense in the exercise, at least not about the renewal itself: every six months since 1964 the Council has deemed that the presence of UNFICYP on the island is necessary in the absence of a settlement.

The Council resolutions on Cyprus take into account the bi-annual reports the Secretary-General prepares regarding the work of UNFICYP. For the current review, the Security Council is looking at an additional document, namely the latest report on the Secretary-General's mission of good offices in Cyprus. In that document, Ban Ki-moon writes that a "solution [to the Cyprus problem] is well within reach. As the leaders themselves said in their 1 February 2010 statement, however, time is not on the side of a settlement. On 21 December 2009, the two sides expressed their strong hope that they would conclude the negotiations by the end of 2010, and I share this objective. In pursuit of this objective, I will be monitoring closely over the coming months the progress made in the negotiations. I will submit a further report to the Security Council in November assessing the state of the process".

If the hope of the Cyprus leaders and the Secretary-General are realized and there is a settlement in 2010, the clockwork predictability of the Cyprus issue at the Council and elsewhere will give way to an exciting phase of implementation of that long desired goal of reunification. Come November, we should be in a better position to assess how close Cyprus is to that goal.



SG urges 'decisive push forward' in talks

The peace process in Cyprus resumed on 26 May after a short hiatus that saw the election of a new leader of the Turkish Cypriot community. Dervis Eroglu, chosen over Mehmet Ali Talat in polls held on 18 April, now sits across the negotiating table from Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias.

The Secretary-General in his report to the Security Council on the work of his Good Offices Mission for the period 25 November 2009 to 30 April 2010 notes that Talat had made an important contribution advancing a solution between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots and looked forward to Eroglu continuing on that constructive path.

He reports that considerable progress has been made in the United Nations-sponsored peace talks in Cyprus during the reporting period and notes there is now a unique opportunity to make a decisive push forward on the talks.

"The talks must build on the convergences achieved since the fully fledged negotiations began on 3 September 2008. This significant body of work should provide the basis for breaking new ground in the negotiations and bridging remaining divergences," he said.

The Secretary-General pointed out that the international community expects the peace process to succeed and following the change in leadership in the Turkish Cypriot community, the international community has encouraged the continuation of negotiations in a positive spirit and the pursuit of a settlement based on United Nations parameters set out in the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The evening before the first official meeting between Christofias and Eroglu, the Secretary-General's Adviser on Cyprus, Alexander Downer, hosted a dinner for the two leaders and their wives at a restaurant in the buffer zone area of Nicosia.

At the resumption of talks, the Secretary-General's sent a message to the two leaders which was read to them by the Special Adviser. The Secretary-General recalled that the parties had made strong progress before the talks were suspended in late March. "I am very encouraged by the convergences that were reached", he wrote. "I am also encouraged that the two leaders have agreed to continue on the basis of the UN parameters, Security Council resolutions and the joint statements made on 23 May and 1 July 2008.

"A settlement is within your grasp and this opportu-



nity must be seized, as time is not on your side", the Secretary-General continued. "Achieving an agreement will require vision, statesmanship and courage. Your communities want and expect a settlement. This will require give-and-take on both sides, and the ability to understand the issues and what is at stake from the perspective of the other side. You must convince not only your own community of the value of a settlement; you must also convince the other community of your good faith. This is not a zero-sum game. It is possible, and indeed necessary, to arrive at a solution that clearly benefits both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

The Secretary-General reminded the leaders that the international community is committed to continuing its support for the Cypriot-led peace process. "I truly believe that you can reach an agreement in the coming months. Together with my representative, Mr. Downer, I remain ready and willing to help", he concluded.



Work Commences on Limnitis/Yeşilırmak road in preparation for new crossing point



Ground was broken on 29 March on a stretch of road linking the towns of Kato Pyrgos/Asagi Pirgo and Limnitis/Yeşilırmak in the northwest of Cyprus, paving the way to the eventual opening of a new crossing point between the two communities. Some one hundred people gathered in the presence of the two Cyprus leaders at an event located at the actual construction site to mark the beginning of the work to be done along the road, which runs through the UN buffer zone.

The Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Cyprus, Alexander Downer, called the groundbreaking "a clear sign of progress in the peace process under the leadership of Mr Christofias and Mr Talat and further evidence that the boundaries between the two communities are dissolving".

The project, expected to be completed later this year, is to be carried out by a joint venture comprised of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot contractors. Overall, nearly 6 km of road between the two towns, including a 2 km section in the buffer zone, is to be enhanced in order to facilitate travel of both communities in the area.

Also attending the event were representatives of the United States and the European Commission, whose financial contributions made the project possible.

Praising the two leaders own commitment to the project and the peace process in general, Mr Downer

paid tribute to their "courage, leadership and vision through their support for this project". "Both men are committed to the peace process and to building a better life for all Cypriots. Today is another visible manifestation of their commitment", he added.

When the road is opened later this year, the Limnitis/Yeşilırmak crossing point will be the seventh such gateway facilitating movement between the two main communities of Cyprus. The event followed months of combined efforts by the two leaders and the United Nations, including the United Nations Development Programme – Partnership for the Future, the project's manager, and UNFICYP.

The opening of the Limnitis/Yeşilırmak crossing has long been a priority in discussions between the two communities. As they prepared to embark on renewed settlement talks, Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat made the opening part of the agenda in a joint statement issued on 21 March 2008.

During the course of 2008, the two leaders issued three joint statements – on 21 March, 23 May and 25 July – instructing their Representatives to take up the opening of Limnitis/Yeşilırmak "and other crossing points". Then, on 26 June 2009, the leaders formally agreed to proceed with the opening and decided that the crossing point would operate under the rules governing other crossings and underscored the role that UNFICYP would play.



New bi-communal 'road safety' leaflet launched

Mindful of the heavy loss of life in Cyprus resulting from traffic accidents, the UN-backed Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters (TCCCM) launched a initiative on 13 April 2010 to increase road safety for all drivers across the island. At an event attended by representatives of the two communities and UNFICYP, the TCCCM distributed a new road safety leaflet – in Greek, Turkish and English -- at the Ayios Dometios/Metehan crossing point in Nicosia to commuters traveling in both directions. The leaflets will be available at all motorist crossing points along the buffer zone.

"The production and distribution of the leaflets is another example of bi-communal cooperation on law enforcement and public safety issues in the interest of the welfare of all Cypriots", said Phil Spence, UNFICYP Deputy Police Adviser and TCCCM facilitator. The information booklets set out the road rules on both sides providing clear information to all road users, both Cypriots and foreigners, of the requirements of the road rules and the consequences if any road rules are broken. The initiative is being supported on both sides by the respective Insurance Councils.

"If we can all be safe on the road, then we're all winners", Spence said, speaking to participants at the event. "The key is to see a lawful, just and safe community in Cyprus and to make Cyprus a better place for everyone".

Technical Committee part of confidence building

The TCCCM is one of seven specialized committees formed as a confidence building measure between the two communities with support of the United Nations.



The Technical Committee, a direct result of an agreement reached between the two Cypriot leaders on 21 March 2008 through which they set out to resume full-fledged negotiations, is a mechanism for information sharing and joint initiatives on legal and criminal matters on the island.

The TCCCM has been successful in promoting a number of law and order and social issues in recent times including the establishment of the Joint Communications Room (JCR) in May of 2009 to facilitate the timely exchange of information in relation to crime and criminal matters. The JCR organizes meetings with representatives from both communities on a daily basis with the aim of providing a united approach to dealing with the issues of crime and criminals.

The TCCCM also facilitated a seminar on 'Children at Risk' in January 2010 where speakers from both communities addressed the issues surrounding youth crime and anti-social behaviour and mechanisms for dealing with these situations. The seminar was attended by teachers and councillors from both communities and was considered a great success.

Farewell to the Chief of Mission

On 13 May UNFICYP bade farewell to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tayé-Brook Zerihoun of Ethiopia, who served as Chief of Mission from May 2008 to April 2010. The Chief of Mission departed from Cyprus to take up the position of Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs in the Department of Political Affairs. The Secretary-General expressed his appreciation to Mr. Zerihoun for his dedicated service and exemplary leadership of UNFICYP over the last two years. He pointed out that Mr. Zerihoun also provided invaluable support to the Secretary-General's mission of good offices, acting as Deputy to his Special Adviser on Cyprus. Before his departure the Chief of Mission visited staff in their offices to personally thank them for their efforts during his tenure in Cyprus. National Staff union ULESO presented him with a symbolic gift and thanked him for his efforts in Cyprus.



Ayios Georgios pilgrimage

Approximately 150 Greek Cypriots participated in a pilgrimage to the abandoned Ayios Georgios village in the buffer zone area of Sector 1 on 9 May. The village is located approximately 1.5km from San Martin Camp, in the western part of the island. Although the day started off with an overcast sky and the threat of rain, the pilgrims were undeterred and arrived at the camp for a religious service held in the Orthodox Chapel located within San Martin Camp before walking to the village. Those unable to walk were

transported by peacekeepers in UN vehicles to the village. The often emotional pilgrims pointed out to the Argentinean peacekeepers their abandoned homes and recounted childhood memories of life in the village. A short stop was also made at the village cemetery where prayers were held before the pilgrims returned to San Martin Camp. The Argentinean medical officers on hand throughout the pilgrimage treated one elderly man for fatigue, administering first aid and transferring him to the Camp before releasing him.



UNFICYP Marks Anzac Day 2010



Sunday 25 April 2010 began very early for some—especially the members of the Australian UN Police Contingent who were hosting the annual ANZAC Day Commemorative Dawn Service at Wayne's Keep Commonwealth War Cemetery, inside the Buffer Zone near the UNPA.

Sprigs of rosemary, symbolising remembrance, were pinned on all the 150 or so guests as they arrived at the cemetery in the chilly pre-dawn darkness. Many commented on how spectacular the cemetery looked with the entrance way lit by hundreds of candles and the Cross of Sacrifice and the India Memorial standing out in floodlit poignancy.

Amongst the guests was 96-year-old Harold Berlowitz, an Australian World War Two veteran, who was one of the Rats of Tobruk and who saw action in many other areas. Harry, a regular at the Dawn Service, was soon surrounded by fans wanting to hear his fascinating stories and tales of action.

Members of 40 Signal Regiment Group currently serving in Sector 2 assisted in the service, providing drivers, a Catafalque Party, Bugler and Piper. Padre Giles Allen officiated, Contingent Commander Rick Smeltink was master of Ceremonies and UNFICYP Deputy Senior Police Adviser Phil Spence BM read the ANZAC Story. The service commemorated 95 years since the ANZACS and Allied forces landed at Gallipoli in WW1. Wreaths were laid at the Cross of Sacrifice by the Australian High Commissioner, the New Zealand Honorary Consul, the Deputy British High Commissioner and the UNFICYP Force Commander. Wreaths were also laid on five ANZAC graves in the cemetery by ladies in the congregation, escorted by Australian Police officers. David Hancock also laid a wreath in memory of his father, Colonel Malcolm Hancock MC, who, as a young Second Lieutenant with the Northamptonshire Regiment fought at Gallipoli, where he won a Military Cross for gallantry in the field.

The ANZAC Day Dawn Service in Cyprus is unique, as, not only is it conducted at the same time as the one in Gallipoli, but is the only Dawn Service in the world where armed soldiers are “on watch”. As the darkness faded and the still light of dawn gradually crept in from the East, guests could make out in front of them a Turkish Forces outpost on a hill.



The Chesterfield Parade and North Irish Horse Day

The North Irish Horse (NIH) was originally a yeomanry unit of the British Territorial Army in 1903. It was formed in the northern counties of Ireland in the aftermath of the Second Boer War. They were the first non-regular unit to be deployed to France and the Low Countries with the British Expeditionary Force in 1914.

One of the most notorious engagements for the NIH was its involvement in Op Chesterfield, which was the breaking of the “Hitler Line” (renamed Senger Line), at Monte Casino in southern Italy in 1944. On 23 May of that year, they supported the 1st Canadian Division in a frontal assault to break through the “Hitler Line” and came under withering fire from the heavily defended German positions.

Capt Donald Hunt, a tank commander during the battle, said during a visit to the Monte Casino battle site in 2008: “I remember looking out either side of my tank and seeing the Canadian Infantry dangling on the wire barriers like clothes on a washing line”. The Horse also took heavy casualties and had to regroup by merging depleted squadrons together. 23 May was later chosen as a Regimental Day to commemorate the

bloodiest day in the history of the NIH.

In appreciation of its support, the Canadians asked the NIH to wear the Maple Leaf insignia of the Canadian Military.

To commemorate this part of its history, each year 69 (NIH) Signal Squadron hold a ‘Hitler Line’ Parade and dinner at home in Northern Ireland. This year many members of the Squadron have been deployed to Cyprus as part of 40 Signal Regiment Group to man Sector 2 of the Buffer Zone. This year’s parade was hence held in the Buffer Zone, with a Drum Head Service in Wayne’s Keep Cemetery. 40 Signal Regiment’s Honorary Colonel, The Lord Rogan of Lower Iveagh, attended the parade.

The salute was taken by Commander 38 (Irish) Brigade, Brigadier E A Smyth- Osbourne.



International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers

The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers is celebrated on 29 May. This year, the UN focused its commemoration on the contributions made, and the loss suffered, by peacekeepers in Haiti. To honour fallen peacekeepers and those who continue to serve in the cause of peace, UNFICYP marked the day with a showing of photographs of peacekeepers at work in Haiti and in Cyprus. The photographs are mounted at the intersection of Kykkos and Ledra Streets, within the Buffer Zone in old Nicosia. They will be on view for one month. The photographs were also made available to the media from the UNFICYP Public Information Office.

Globally the eighth annual International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers was observed on 29 May 2010—a particularly sombre occasion due to the heavy loss of life of peacekeepers in Haiti and elsewhere earlier this year. The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers was established by the General Assembly in 2002 to pay tribute to all men and women serving in UN peacekeeping operations for their high level of professionalism, dedication and courage, and to honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace. The General Assembly

designated 29 May as the Day, as it was the date in 1948 when the first UN peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), began operations in Palestine.

One hundred twenty one peacekeepers who lost their lives while serving with the United Nations in 2009 will posthumously receive the Dag Hammarskjöld medal on 28 May. In addition, this year the UN will also honour those who died in January and February, 2010. Of the 101 fatalities suffered by the United Nations as a result of the 12 January 2010 earthquake, 96 were from the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the biggest single loss of life in the history of UN peacekeeping.

This year's commemorative ceremonies come at a time when the services of UN peacekeepers are in greater demand than ever. There are more than 124,000 peacekeepers, including 100,000 military and police personnel from 115 countries, serving in 16 operations on four continents. This broad-based participation not only bolsters the strength of UN operations, but it is also a clear demonstration of widespread respect for, dependence on and confidence in United Nations Peacekeeping.



Passers-by viewing exhibition to mark International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers



Photo UNFICYP



UNFICYP Finnish soldiers in May 1964 cycling to Nicosia from Dhekelia, a distance of over 190 km.



UN Photo/Pasqual Gorriz

Nepalese peacekeepers with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) carry out Civil-Military Co-ordination Activities (CIMIC), serving hot meals to earthquake survivors at a parish in Mirebalais, located on Haiti's Plateau Central. 18 February 2010 Mirebalais, Haiti.



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (left) and Edmond Mulet (centre), Mr. Ban's Acting Special Representative for Haiti and Head of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), attend a memorial service in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, for Hédi Annabi and Luiz Carlos da Costa, whose lives were claimed in the country's devastating earthquake. Mr. Annabi was Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Mr. da Costa, his Deputy Special Representative. 12 January 2010



Photo UNFICYP

UNFICYP peacekeepers during the evacuation of civilians from war-torn southern Lebanon to Cyprus in July 2006.



Photo UNFICYP

Children march with Canadian peacekeepers on patrol in Kyrenia in April 1964.



UN Photo/Marco Dornino

A military officer of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) gives food to child. 20 March 2009 Port-au-Prince, Haiti.



UN Photo/Pasqual Gorriz

Nepalese peacekeepers with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) carry out Civil-Military Co-ordination Activities (CIMIC), providing medical assistance to earthquake refugees at a parish in Mirebalais. 18 February 2010 Mirebalais, Haiti.

UN assists son in pilgrimage to fathers grave

The personal pilgrimage of Cypriot Alex Michaelides to visit his father's grave located in the buffer zone area of Nicosia was realized with the assistance of UNFICYP.

The story of Alex Michaelides was reported in local newspaper Cyprus Weekly which recounted that he was the orphaned son of Scottish RAF pilot John Alexander Gow who had been killed in a belly landing at a Nicosia airstrip while flying back from Cairo during the war in 1945. He was only 22.

The paper reported that Alex had tried to visit the cemetery but was unable to do so as it is located in the UN patrolled buffer zone and access can only be secured via the UN.

After reading his story the UNFICYP Public Information Office contacted Alex and offered to search the cemetery records to locate his father's grave in order for him to visit and pay his respects.

The search proved successful and the grave was located. On the appointed day an emotional Alex arrived clutching an old black and white photograph of the grave which he last visited at the age of 13 in 1959 before he left Cyprus to live abroad.

The now 65 year old Alex did not find the wooden cross beneath an acacia tree as he had last left it. In its place were a headstone and a well kept green lawn.

The inscription on the headstone gave his father's serial number and reads "Warrant Officer A. Gow, Pilot, Royal Air Force, 19th April 1945. Age 22. It ends with the epigram from Shelly's poem Adonis:

"He lives, he wakes – tis Death is dead not he; Mourn not for Adonais"

The British contingent padre, Father O' Connally who

coincidentally is also a Scot, escorted Alex to the grave site where he had placed a cross of red poppies against the headstone. He then paid tribute to the wartime hero by playing the bagpipes – a fitting salute to his countryman. As the sound of the pipes filled the air a tearful Alex expressed his gratitude noting that he had always felt a loss and emptiness growing up without a father. Being able to visit his grave gave him comfort, he said.

Alex has since visited the grave regularly and the British contingent has promised to search the RAF files for more information about his father and possible other relatives.



Opening of Peace Park

The opening of the Carob Tree Peace Park, celebrating the efforts of current and former residents to revive cultural heritage monuments, took place in Kontea/Türkmenköy village on Sunday the 16th of May 2010. The event was attended by some 400 people, including the former and current residents of the village and their families. The festivities included traditional food shared by all, and outdoor games and activities for the children.

The celebrations began with welcome speeches by the implementing and funding organisations followed by a ribbon cutting ceremony with the Ambassador of the United States of America, H.E. Mr. Frank C. Urbancic Jr., together with Mrs. Androula Alekou and Mrs. Nursal M. Vahip. Individuals who made significant contributions to the project received special Appreciation Certificates.

"The opening is a bi-communal event to celebrate the completion of the Peace Park and the beginning of its use as a public picnic area and a space for open-air activities. Both current and former residents and the partner organisations working on the project feel privileged that time and energy has been invested in the people and in the preservation of the cultural and natural heritage of the village. We are very excited that the Peace Park has been completed and we hope it will act as a meeting place between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in the future" said Charalambos Perikleous, President of the Kontea Heritage Foundation.

The Peace Park is the first phase of the project initiated in 2007 and entitled 'Cultural Heritage Circle Preservation'. The project aims to rescue and

revitalise a unique historical site on the outskirts of the village of Kontea/Türkmenköy, which consists of the Orthodox Church of Agios Charalambos and its Auxiliary Buildings, a Catholic Chapel and cemetery, a Frankish Manor from the time of the Crusaders and an Ottoman irrigation system of stone cisterns and aqueducts.

A proposal for the rescue and protection of this unique historical site has been formulated by the former (Greek Cypriot) residents and the current (Turkish Cypriot) residents with the participation of the descendants of the European family which used to own the manor, with a view of establishing a sustainable cultural preservation effort, which will result at an improved socioeconomic environment for all involved and benefit the present and future generations.

The partner organizations working for the implementation of the project are the Union of the Chambers of Turkish Cypriot Engineers and Architects (<http://www.ktmmob.org/>), and the Kontea Heritage Foundation (<http://www.konteaheritage.com>), with the cooperation of former and current residents. The project is made possible with funding from UNDP - Action for Cooperation and Trust.



The Ulstermen have arrived!



April saw the arrival of 40 Signal Regiment Group to Cyprus as part of the normal rotation of troops in the UNFICYP area of responsibility known as Sector 2 (Nicosia). They travelled from Northern Ireland after an intensive period of training and were delighted to exchange the rain and wind in Magilligan for the sun of Cyprus (at least temporarily). The men and women for S2 were drawn mainly from the Province of Ulster and bring with them many of their Celtic traditions, among them the Blackthorn.

For their tour of Cyprus, the Regiment has welcomed fellow soldiers from Scotland, England, Wales and even Africa into their midst to form 40 Signal Regiment Group.

In the short time the Regiment has been here, many visitors -- be they UK military, the diplomatic community, the Turkish Forces, the Republic of Cyprus National Guard or UN staff -- have already experienced

traditional Northern Irish hospitality. Those who are in close proximity to Wolseley Barracks at 6 AM or 6 PM will be treated to a bugle call. More unusually, there are at other times, the lilting sounds of bagpipes or, less lilting, the resident band, "The Kings of Ledra".

Many of the officers in Sector 2 have been on previous UN tours. A number already have UN medals for undertaking a previous "Op TOSCA", as the British contingent's tour in Cyprus is called.

In addition to experience of UN missions, and tours in Iraq, Afghanistan, the former Yugoslavia and the Falklands, 40 Signal Regiment Group comes from a background of conflict. Belfast has a wall splitting the city and a history of divergence. They have worked, and talked, their way to a new understanding. They have seen the way the two communities in Northern Ireland can live together. With this background, the soldiers are ideally suited to the UNFICYP mission as they can comprehend the importance of respect, tact, sensitivity and diplomacy.

The background of the S2 soldiers is very varied, from window cleaners and security guards to teachers and bee keepers. The plethora of skills, both technical and "soft", that direct exposure to the civilian workplace provides enhances the proficiency of the 40 Signal Regiment Group soldier.

And while 40 Signal Regiment Group provides 24/7 service, its life is not all work. Thirty personnel successfully took part in the Army Benevolent Fund 10K run at Paphos, and at the Orienteering Competition WHAT? ORIENTEERING COMPETITION? WHEN? WHERE?, Lt Lyndsay Fulton scooped First Female Overall, and First Male Guest went to Maj Mark Emmerson.

40 Signal Regiment Group Traditions - The 'Blackthorn'

You may have seen Officers and Warrant Officers from S2 carrying an unusual walking stick and wondered why able bodied men, and women, need this support. As with many Regiments, 40 Signal Regiment Group brings to the UN its traditions.

The carrying of The Blackthorn goes back to the 18th Century when large numbers of Irishmen joined the British Army. They introduced the "Shillelagh", Bata or Blackthorn stick, which was originally used as a weapon like a cudgel, and was first used in battle in 1209.

The Blackthorn tree is linked with warriors, war, blood and death and is referred to in many stories about the ancient kings of Ireland. It is believed to have magical properties, and its fruit, the sloe berry, is used to produce gin. This popular drink is said to be good for the body and to boost a man's vigour.

Over the centuries, the Blackthorn has been used for hunting, for games and as a symbol of authority. Often referred to as "companion for life", nowadays it is a popular walking stick and souvenir. The Blackthorn stick has long been associated with the Soldiers of Ireland.

Sometimes, the knob on the end was hollowed out and filled with molten lead; this was known as a "loaded stick." For added toughness, the bark is left on and often a metal ferrule is secured at the end opposite

the knob. Traditionally during the drying process, sticks were often buried in a manure pile, or smeared with butter and placed in the chimney to cure.

The Blackthorn is considered a badge of honour for those who carried it. Irish boys were exposed to the traditions of the Bata, and when they came of age, to carry a stick was viewed as a passage into manhood.

The Blackthorn has been carried by many famous Irish men including the ancient Ulster hero Cuchulan and Field Marshall Montgomery of El Alamein.

Today this tradition is carried on by the Officers and Warrant Officers in the Irish Regiments, including 40 Signal Regiment Group.



Fire Alert

Fire, Fire, Fire ! This is possibly one of the most frightening alarm calls you could experience. The best way to ensure that the only time you hear this alarm call is during a drill or exercise is, of course, through prevention. During 2009, the UNFICYP Engineering Section Fire HQ received 119 fire emergency calls for blazes within, close to or around the buffer zone. Of these fires, 73 posed a direct threat to life, property or buffer zone areas. During the same period, a total of 1138 UN personnel had received fire training at different levels, ranging from the Complete Train the Trainer Fire NCO's course, to Emergency Evacuation Briefings. The UNFICYP Engineering Section / Fire HQ have the responsibility for the Mission's fire safety, fire-fighting and prevention programme. This includes prevention inspections, risk assessment and management, checking, testing and maintaining the fire equipment, fire trainings at different levels, fire drills/exercises and the distribution of fire related information.

Basic Precautions against Grass or Forest Fires

The greatest fire hazard within the buffer zone at this time of the year is dry grass and vegetation. Attention to a few details can prevent fires, thereby saving lives and property. Everyone should remember the Following:

- 1.Place cigarettes/matches in ashtrays or proper containers - never throw them out of a window;
- 2.Avoid using plastic bins to put out cigarettes;
- 3.Don't leave glass materials such as empty bottles or broken mirrors in dry grass areas, as they could act as magnifying glasses in high temperatures;
- 4.Never park your car near any dry grass or vegetation - a hot vehicle engine can cause a disaster;
- 5,Always switch your vehicle engine off - never leave it running;
- 6 Always carry a fire extinguisher in your car;
- 7.Use only designated areas for barbecues - never anywhere else;
- 8.Never leave your barbecue unattended;
- 9.Never forget, when finished, to use water or sand/soil to damp down the fire.

Safety measures for UN personnel and civilians working in the buffer zone

- 1.Use designated smoking areas - NOT offices and accommodation buildings;
- 2.Always use dry powder/CO2 fire extinguishers, fire beaters or green tree branches if electricity poles are involved in a fire - never use water;
- 3.UN patrol vehicles are required to carry at least four fire beaters, a minimum of 500 grams in the dry powder fire extinguisher and a medical kit;
- 4.Always attack any fire in groups - never fight buffer zone grass or forest fires alone;
- 5.Remember never to fight buffer zone grass fires up- or down-wind, but always from a cross-wind direction, being mindful of smoke and radiation heat;
- 6.When fighting fires, watch out for the fenced off minefields that remain in the buffer zone;
- 7.Wash your boots when you leave a fire area - otherwise you could easily help it spread;
- 8.Your life comes first - never risk your life to fight a fire. Take all safety measures possible, and contact the fire crew immediately.

Senior Fire Officer Nadeem P. Qadir

The UNFICYP Fire Emergency number is 22-61-4777



New Faces

Chief of Mission Support



Paul Aghajanian was appointed Chief of Mission Support of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) on 22 March 2010. He was born in Jordan in 1955 and graduated as an electro-mechanical engineer from the Soviet Union in 1978. Before coming to Cyprus he served as Chief of Mission Support of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) from September 2007 until March 2010. His previous appointments include Chief Administrative Officer of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) in Laayoune (June 2005); short term temporary duty with the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) from March to May 2005; and Chief Administrative Officer of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in Kinshasa (as Acting Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Administrative Services) from September 1999 to December 2000; Burundi (UNOB) from July 1997 to September 1999, and the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) from November 1995 to June 1997. He began his service with the United Nations as an Administrative and Finance Officer in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in 1993. He joined the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in September 1994 when he first served with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) in Kigali as Accommodation Officer, Administrative Officer, and Budget Officer, and was on loan to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Rwanda as Chief of Administration. Mr. Aghajanian is fluent in Arabic, Armenian, English, French and Russian. He has two daughters and two sons.

Chief of Civil Affairs



Sunaina Lowe is the new Chief of Civil Affairs in UNFICYP. Sunaina has worked in peacekeeping since 1994 both at Headquarters and in the field: in Liberia, the former Yugoslavia and South Africa. At Headquarters, she helped set up the Department of Peacekeeping Operations' Lessons Learned Unit in 1996, which later became the Peacekeeping Best Practices Section. In addition to conducting evaluations of UN peacekeeping experiences in Angola, Haiti, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda, among others, she has been involved in the development of peacekeeping policy and training for military, police and civilian peacekeepers. Prior to working with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, she was with the Department of Public Information (DPI), which she joined in 1984. For DPI, Sunaina has worked in the UN offices in New York, Vienna and her native Jamaica. Sunaina has a Master's degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, USA.

Officer Commanding, Mobile Reserve Force



Major Adrian Patrick was born in Ballymoney, Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland on the 20th August 1956. He joined the Territorial Army as a Private Soldier on the 09th November 1975 and achieved the rank of Warrant Officer Class 1, prior to being selected for a Late Entry Officers Commission in July 2001. In civilian life Adrian is a qualified Heating and Electrical Engineer within the NHS. Adrian has served in the Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Germany, Holland, Gibraltar and Iraq during Operation Telic 4. He currently holds the appointment of Officer Commanding, 211 (Ulster) Transport Squadron, Royal Logistic Corps. In March 2010 he deployed on Operation TOSCA to Cyprus and assumed the appointment of Officer Commanding, Mobile Reserve Force on 01 April 2010. Adrian is married to Janet and they have five Cavalier Spaniel show dogs. His interests include long range rifle shooting, practical pistol shooting, swimming and football.

Liaison Officer to the National Guard

LtCol Ing. Klaus "Nik" Peer joined UNFICYP in March taking up the post of Liaison Officer to the National Guard. He was born in Leoben, Styria, Austria, on 20 February 1962. He joined the Army in 1984 and graduated as Infantry Officer in 1987. During his career, he has served in a number of positions, including Platoon Leader and Deputy Company Commander, Company Commander in the 10th Infantry Regiment, Staff Officer Ops in the 10th Infantry Regiment, Military Assistant to Direktorate General in Federal Ministry of Defence in Vienna, Staff Officer Pers in the Command of the 1st Army Corps, Mission Officer for UN missions with Austrian contribution in the Austrian International Operations Command, InfoOps Officer within UNDOF / Golan Heights, Military Assistant to Commander of the Austrian International Operations Command, UNLO to NG UNFICYP HQ Nicosia and Staff Officer Plans / J5 Branch / Austrian Joint Forces Command. LtCol Peer is married to Silvia and has a daughter, Sophie, 19 years old. His hobbies are motor-cycling, skiing, running and fishing.



Chief of the Military Training Cell

Commander (Marines) Emilio Vera arrived in Cyprus on 30 March to take up the post of Chief of the Military Training Cell. He was born on 30 May 1965 in La Plata, Argentina and graduated from the Navy Academy in 1989 as Midshipman - Marines. He has served in a number of different appointments including 1st Marines Field Artillery Battalion, Anti Aircraft Marines Battalion, Marines Brigade Logistic Support Unit, Marines Security Battalion, Fire Artillery Analysis Group. This is his third tour with UNFICYP having served in 1997 as 2IC of "C" Coy Marines, located in Brown Base (Box Factory) and in 2001 he commanded the same company. In 2004 was deployed to MINUSTAH (Haiti) as Staff Officer of the Argentinean Battalion and in 2006/07 he served again in Port au Prince as HQ Staff Officer. In 2008 as Lieutenant Commander he graduated from the Command and Staff Course and in 2009 he finished the Joint Staff and Planning Course. Emilio is married to Guillermina and they have three children (Pilar 14, Lourdes 10 and Jose Francisco 6). His interests include rugby, swimming and football.



SO2 Policy & Planning

Maj. Zsolt Princz took over the post of SO2 Policy and Planning in the Ops Branch on 17 March 2010. He was born in Zirc, Hungary on 3 January 1975. He graduated from the Kossuth Lajos Military Academy as an engineer in 1996 and during his career has served in a number of appointments, including 87 "Bakony" Combat Helicopter Regiment, Platoon Leader, Company 2IC, Company Commander, Battalion CoS. Since 2004 he has been working at Papa Air Base as a Deputy Chief of Staff. In 2009 he graduated from the National Defense University in Hungary and in 1999 he served in SFOR, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Maj. Princz is married to Anita and they have one child, Levente. They are expecting a baby in November of this year. In his free time he enjoys fishing, reading and motorcycling. He is looking forward to the arrival of his family in Cyprus.



Military Assistant to the Force Commander

Major Simon Thomson took over the post of Military Assistant to the Force Commander in May 2010. Major Thomson was born in Zimbabwe and spent much of his childhood in Southern Africa before returning to the UK. He commissioned into the Royal Regiment of Artillery in 2001 and has completed two tours of Iraq: one in 2003 as a troop commander of an isolated location in the infantry role, and in 2007 to command the Brigade Fires Cell. Upon returning to the UK he worked for 2 years at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, training officers for the British Army. A keen sportsman; he has represented the British Army at Snowboarding and the Royal Artillery at rugby, cricket and hockey. He is married to Louise, they enjoy their Mini Cooper, travel and the company of their energetic dog Murphy.



Patrol "25 De Mayo"

Members of the Argentinean contingent trekked across the buffer from 18-24 May in a week-long patrol to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Independence of Argentina.

The patrol members who volunteered to walk the length of the buffer zone from east to west covering an average of 30km a day aimed at emulating the mass marches by the patriot troops in the Argentinean May Revolution who from May 25, 1810 marched across Argentina spreading the ideals of freedom and independence.

The patrol members spent their nights at the various observation posts across the buffer zone, with each sector offering them support and assistance as required.

On 20th May the patrol members passed through the UNPA where they were met by Force Commander Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez Debernardi who congratulated them and expressed his support for their efforts.

The patrol members included Captain Pablo Jose Slavik, WO III Hernan Ariel Diaz, WO III Luis Bernabé Ruiz, SSGT Ceferino Manuel Figueroa, SGT Carlos Javier Tarrio, 1st Cpl Carlos Guillermo Conde and Cpl Amaro Arias.



Visits

UNFICYP extended the usual courtesies when the Chief of Mission, force commander and Chief of Staff received the following visitors during April-May 2010.



Croatian Brigadier General Ivan Beneta visited UNFICYP on 19 May 2010 where he met with the Force Commander Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez Debernardi.



Bulgarian Ambassador, H. E. Mr. Vesselin Valchev, met with Force Commander Rear Admiral Mario Sánchez Debernardi on 26 May 2010.



A delegation from the Cyprus Ministry of Foreign Affairs was hosted by the Chief of Mission Tayé-Brook Zerihoun on 12 April. The delegation was given a tour of the old Nicosia Airport and a briefing on the work of UNFICYP.



Air Marshall Sir Stuart Peach KCB CBE RAF Chief of Joint Operations, PJHQ was welcomed by the MFR honour guard before meeting with the Chief of Staff, Col Gerard Hughes

UNFICYP Shines at 2010 Cyprus Services Orienteering Championships



UNFICYP fielded 12 runners in the 2010 Cyprus Services Orienteering Championships held at picturesque and hilly Melanda of the Limassol district on 13 and 14 May. The team, which included military personnel from 40 Signal Regiment Group in Sector Two and civilian staff members, came home with an impressive haul of seven trophies and twelve medals. Pictured is the UNFICYP team with their trophies and medals. From left to right: Kirsi Mantovani, LCpl Keith Hercus, Diana Bridger, Kyriacos Michaelides, Inga Gustavsson, Janni Kontturi, Lennart Gustavsson, Maj Mark Emmerson, Cpl Stanyer, Spr Smyth, LCpl Dandy and Lt Lindsay Fulton.

Buffer Zone Cycle Ride

An intrepid band of cyclists from UNFICYP HQ tackled the challenge of riding the length of the Buffer Zone (BZ) from west to east on 14 and 15 April. The ride turned out to be a test of both mental and physical strength that took the cyclists through 230 kilometres of BZ patrol tracks in two days. To sum up the trek in numbers: 10 riders, 146 OP's, 6 flat tyres, 5 fallers and 7 finishers. Maj Jamie Humphreys, Major Jon Stanier, Lt Jo McParland, WO2 Lee Bailey, Sgt Andy Gillies, Sgt Tom Pollock and Diana Bridger completed the ride.



Anzac Day 2010

