

# The Blue Beret



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## Serving UNFICYP's civilian, military and police personnel

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# Editorial

Twice a year a multi-phased exercise takes place across the Atlantic at United Nations Headquarters in New York topped off by a formal procedure by which 15 national delegates determine the fate of our peacekeeping mission, some 9,000 kilometres away. This exercise involves a report of the Secretary-General, numerous meetings and discussions thereon, and, eventually, a vote cast by the 15-member Security Council extending our mission for another six months. This ritual has taken place each year, ever since the inception of UNFICYP in 1964.

Keeping with this well-established tradition, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently submitted a report highlighting some of the key developments over the past six months on United Nations' operations in Cyprus. The report itself reflects a number of key activities carried out by UNFICYP between late November last year and May 2011, and ultimately recommends the extension of the mission for an additional half year, or until 15 December 2011. Among the issues the report brings to light is the decrease in military violations compared to last year, and the role the mission has been playing to foster bi-communal cooperation and trust. While underlining the importance of civilian activities in the buffer zone as "a key component of the reconciliation process" which "fosters trust and cooperation", the Secretary-General also notes an increase in unauthorized civilian activities in the buffer zone.

Leading up to the beginning of this clear-cut exercise, much has been, and presumably will continue to be, written about the fate of our mission. While the report itself evoked such

comments seen in the media as "balanced" and "without surprises", it has, as expected, been preceded and succeeded by expressions from pundits and columnists who have spared no efforts to cast their opinions about possible strategies the world body might be contemplating vis-à-vis the future of the peace talks in the coming months and prospects of the United Nations' presence on the island.

While the May report of the Secretary-General does not address the activities of his good offices mission in Cyprus, it does indeed touch upon a number of issues which impact the peace process consistent with the overall aim of the peacekeeping mission to support efforts to bring the communities together and reconcile differences.

Over the years UNFICYP has seen its share of changes and has followed its own rhythm, although dictated to a certain extent by those behind the scenes who have directly or indirectly supported efforts to solve the "Cyprus problem" and events which surround it.

The Security Council completed the exercise by voting on 13 June to grant UNFICYP a new lease on life. Now, all eyes will sharpen their focus on the next big event – the 7 July meeting between the Cyprus Leaders and Secretary-General Ban in Geneva. What that meeting will deliver remains to be seen. However, if the hope of the Cyprus Leaders and the Secretary-General are realized and there is a settlement in the months to follow, the natural rhythm 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.





## Home for Cooperation opens in the buffer zone

Leaders of both communities, UN and EU officials, ambassadors and government representatives, members of civil society, and media attended the inauguration of the inter-communal Home for Cooperation (H4C), located in the buffer zone, opposite the Ledra Palace hotel in Nicosia.

The brainchild of the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR), a Cypriot NGO that consists of both Greek and Turkish Cypriot educators and researchers, the H4C is to provide a common meeting place for young people, students, teachers, academics and others who want to take part in dialogues and discussions, and contribute to the advancement of critical thinking on the island.

"The Home for Cooperation is a project borne out of an idea from the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research," said SRSG Lisa M. Buttenheim during the event that took place on May 6. "It is a clear manifestation of these ideals. Contacts to be made, and relationships built within these walls, will help Cypriots develop different perspectives, which in my view, is an essential element of a lasting peace and stability in Cyprus."

The H4C's space has been designed with flexibility in mind to accommodate conferences and exhibitions as well as office facilities for NGOs, a library, an archive and a café.

They are all housed in the renovated premises of a 1952-built building bought by the AHDR from a well-known Armenian Cypriot family, the Mangoians.

Avo Mangoian, the former owner of the building, says that at that time (in the 50s) the area was considered to be "a prime position" as it was opposite "the top hotel in Cyprus" i.e. Ledra Palace. Unfortunately, during the events of summer 1974 the house was caught in the middle of crossfire and its owner and tenants had to evacuate. They have never come back.

From 1974, the building found itself in the middle of the demilitarised buffer zone and for more than 30 years, was deserted and falling into ruin. Only a small shop on the ground floor that produced and sold T-shirts to the UN peacekeeping forces remained. However, its good luck came back when in 2010 the AHDR decided to convert it into a fully functional multimedia research centre.



SRSG Lisa M. Buttenheim gives a speech at the opening of the Home for Cooperation

Today, some bullet holes from the fighting in 1974 can be still seen in the H4C's façade since they have been intentionally left untouched by its renovators. According to architect George Zissimos, they let the building "tell its own stories", and such a philosophical approach is entirely appropriate given AHDR's commitment to promotion of dialogue on issues of history, including its teaching and learning.

However, as much as the Ledra Palace crossing encapsulates the divisions and disruptions of a tragic past, today it is also a vital bridgehead for interaction on the island, so essential to paving the way for a better future. Therefore, no wonder that for AHDR President Dr Chara Makriyanni, the H4C is also "to give the 'dead zone' a new purpose and role, and transform it from a symbol of separation to a symbol of co-operation". Let's hope it will happen.

The H4C Project is supported by grants from the European Economic Area, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands and a number of individuals, organisations and authorities, in Cyprus and abroad, as well as the UN Development Program and the US Agency for International Development.

## Illegal Drugs – "a problem where no border exists"

Illegal drug use and its prevention - in the words of UNFICYP Senior Police Adviser Chief Superintendent John Farrelly, "a problem where no border exists" - was the subject of a half-day seminar run by the UN-backed Technical Committee for Crime and Criminal Matters (TCCCM) in Ledra Palace Hotel, Nicosia, on 5 April.

More than 30 representatives from civil society, the media, schools and universities from the two communities took an active part in the event. Many shared their views with the panel of experts in discussions that ranged over factors contributing to illegal drug use and ways and means of contributing to its prevention.

SRSG Lisa M. Buttenheim, UNFICYP Chief of Mission, set the tone in her opening remarks when she pointed out that the issue of illegal drugs is a problem that "touches all of us". The pernicious thing about the illegal drugs industry, she added, is that its victims are "often young" and that victims "fall into a vicious cycle".

"Without a doubt, illegal drug use has a devastating effect on individuals, families and on communities." The Chief of Mission commended seminar and organizers for "another excellent example of the cooperation between the two communities on law enforcement that seeks to ensure the safety and welfare of all Cypriots."

She welcomed the presence at the seminar of younger people from both sides of the island.

The seminar - "Illegal Drugs: Issues, Concerns and Future Directions with an Emphasis on Prevention" - was moderated by UNFICYP Senior Police Adviser Chief Superintendent John Farrelly.

It explored the causes of taking illegal drugs, the legal sanctions for those caught with illegal drugs, the impact on families when there is illegal drug abuse in the home, and preventive measures to help combat illegal drug use and related activities.

Presenters included a former drug addict who

shared his personal experiences of addiction and drug use and spoke movingly of the challenges he faced when trying to quit and rehabilitate.

UNPOL Sgt. Amy Poiner made a presentation on international efforts to promote drug prevention.

Illegal drug use was a matter of "common concern", Andros Kapardis, the Greek Cypriot team leader of the TCCCM said. He noted that the Committee "is committed to addressing and overcoming these concerns."

Hakki Onen, the TCCCM's Turkish Cypriot team leader, pointed out that this was the first time the Technical Committee had organised an event of this magnitude dealing with the issue of illegal drugs.

It was commendable and in keeping with the TCCCM's role given that it had been set up "to build confidence" between the two communities.

In the three years since its launch in April 2008, initiatives undertaken by the Technical Committee had included a seminar for youth at risk from possible involvement in criminal activities, an island-wide road safety campaign, and efforts to reduce the potential on island for money laundering.

One aspect of this cooperative drive to reduce crime and criminal activity potential on island was the establishment last July of the Joint Communications Room (JCR) in the buffer zone.

Run by law enforcement personnel from both communities, with UNFICYP support, and operating on a "24/7" basis, the JCR plays a significant crime reduction role by sharing information on crimes throughout Cyprus.

Summing up, UNFICYP Senior Police Adviser Farrelly noted the seminar had been "a huge success", providing a platform "to share experiences and expertise from both sides relative to a problem where no border exists."



SRSG Lisa M. Buttenheim speaking at the "Illegal Drugs: Issues, Concerns and Future Directions with an Emphasis on Prevention" seminar at Ledra Palace Hotel



## Buffer Zone Photo Exhibit Marks International Peacekeepers Day

**O**n 27 May, UNFICYP, the UN family in Cyprus, and dignitaries from the two communities marked the ninth annual International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers at the launch of a photo exhibition covering recent activities of the peace-keeping force.

The exhibition, on display in the Buffer Zone area at the Ledra Street crossing point in Nicosia, was opened by UNFICYP Chief of Mission Lisa M. Buttenheim. It includes photo coverage of the mission's police force at work because the theme of this year's international observance was the "rule of law".

Representatives of the Leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, George Iacovou and Kudret Ozersay respectively, also attended the opening ceremony, as did UNFICYP Force Commander Major General Chao Liu and Senior Police Adviser, Chief Superintendent John Farrelly.

At UN Headquarters, the day was marked with a wreath-laying ceremony and the posthumous award of medals to uniformed and civilian personnel who recently lost their lives while serving in peace-keeping operations.

In Nicosia, SRSG Buttenheim said that the recent loss of life of a number of colleagues around the globe had made this year's commemoration a particularly somber one. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, she noted, had pointed out how the UN over the past months "has suffered a series of tragedies in rapid succession".

More than 40 UN personnel had been killed in early April while performing their duties, among them seven murdered in Afghanistan and 32 killed when a UN aircraft crash-landed in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Others had lost their lives in Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Uganda, and Sudan, she said.

The Chief of Mission also paid tribute to the 181 peacekeepers who lost their lives here in Cyprus since UNFICYP's inception in March 1964. Recent deaths included Felisberto Novele, the UN de-miner from Mozambique killed just over a year ago in an explosion in a now-cleared minefield close to Nicosia, and Warrant Officer Graham Bean, a British soldier who died on duty in early May 2011.

More than 120,000 uniformed and civilian personnel serve today in 15 peace operations around the globe. UNFICYP is the UN's third longest standing mission. Over 150,000 UN peacekeepers from 40 countries have been deployed in Cyprus since the mission was launched in March 1964.

"UNFICYP military, civilians and police have, quietly and steadfastly, devoted themselves to bringing us closer to the day when all Cypriots share their island under peaceful and stable conditions", the SRSG said. "This year's focus on the theme of the "rule of law" had



SRSG Buttenheim hoped that the photo display would "raise awareness, and shed light on the work that we carry out in support of the two communities." "Although gathered together to pay tribute to UN peacekeepers, "we are also here as an expression of our unwavering support to the two sides in their own commitment in their search for a settlement and path towards peace."

The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers was established by the General Assembly (GA) 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 lost their lives in the cause of peace.

The GA designated 29 May as the Day since it was on this date in 1948 that the UN's first peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), began operations in Palestine. This year, because 29 May fell on a Sunday, the ceremony was held on Friday, 27 May.



## SLOVCON Marks 10 Years in UNFICYP

**O**ver 100 Slovak soldiers lined up at the old Nicosia Airport on 27 May to celebrate the tenth anniversary of SLOVCON's deployment in Cyprus.

The event was attended by Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to Cyprus, Dr. Anna Turenčová, UNFICYP Chief of Mission Lisa Buttenheim, and Force Commander Major General Chao Liu.

"Slovakia must be proud of her sons and daughters who have been praised by their superiors over the years - for their impartiality, tolerance, patience, tact and diplomacy, which they consistently demonstrate in often difficult circumstances," Ambassador Turenčová told the gathering. She praised SLOVCON "for your excellent representation of our country, for your dedication, commitment and enthusiasm", noting that the contingent had always "set the highest standards and delivered the best results".

The Ambassador's words were mirrored by Force Commander Maj. Gen Liu who commended SLOVCON for its dedicated approach and its "precision, professionalism and 100% commitment" to every task. SLOVCON had consistently produced excellent results. "Your efforts have also been noted by many international visitors we receive -- all who comment upon good job you do".

The anniversary celebrations featured a SLOVCON Parade. Slovak folk dances were performed by contingent members in national costume. Guests were invited to share in a Slovak buffet style lunch including traditional dishes such as sour cabbage soup "kapustnica" and the meat soup "guláš", all topped off with a dessert of famous Slovak poppy seed cake. SRSG Buttenheim and Maj. Gen. Liu were presented with gifts of the traditional Slovak axes known as "valaška" on behalf of all SLOVCON members.

In his remarks, SLOVCON Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Vladimir Vostiar said how proud he was "of my soldiers" and how privileged he felt to be the Commanding Officer of the Slovak Contingent.



### History of SLOVCON in Cyprus

The first Slovak Contingent arrived in Cyprus in May 2001, taking over operational command of Sector 4 from the Austrian Contingent, which was moving on after 26 years of peacekeeping service on the island.

Since 2001, more than 2,000 Slovaks have participated in the mission, serving in different areas and units of UNFICYP's military component.

SLOVCON patrols and monitors military activity along a 65-kilometre stretch of the buffer zone, beginning at the east end of Kaimakli village [just on the edge of Nicosia] and ending at the village of Dherinia on the east coast of the island.

SLOVCON, as so-called Lead Nation, works with and alongside Hungarian, Serbian and Croatian soldiers, and its headquarters is located in Famagusta, at Camp General Stefanik.

SLOVCON also provides personnel for the Mobile Force Reserve and staff for UNFICYP Headquarters. Before coming to Cyprus, Slovakia had contributed troops and/or military observers to United Nations Yugoslavia, Eritrea and Ethiopia,

## Slovak and Hungarian Blood for Cyprus

**F**or the second time since December, SLOVCON and HUNCON volunteers have donated blood for the benefit of Cypriot medical services.

On 12 May, 18 SLOVCON members and one female HUNCON soldier donated eight litres of blood for use by patients at Larnaca General Hospital.

It was the second blood drive organized by the SLOVCON Medical Team led by Sector 4's Senior Medical Officer, First Lieutenant MUDr. Daša Marecova. On 15 December, 16 Slovaks and three Hungarians also donated eight litres of blood to the Blood Bank of the General Hospital of Nicosia-north.

Sector 4 peacekeepers have been donating blood since SLOVCON arrived in Cyprus in 2001. The inspiration then and now continues to be the satisfaction of helping those in urgent need of transfusions.



Slovak soldiers donating blood at Larnaca General Hospital



## The spirit of the Anzacs, on the far side of the world

**O**n 25 April I awoke at 2.30 a.m. Outside my hotel window I could hear the bustle of the still thriving old city of Nicosia. There was an occasional horn playing to the rhythm of banging doors, boisterous voices raised over the dying nights' drinks and one well intoxicated patron singing a tune in a slurred voice as he meandered up the street, twice collecting the side of a car, and once apologizing to it for doing so.

It was 95 years, 364 days and 20 and a half hours ago since the ANZACS landed at Gallipoli some 550km away from where I was now, and the ANZAC Day 2011 in Cyprus was about to begin. I was nervous with anticipation. The commemoration of the Day was to be the culmination of three months of my contingent's hard work, opportunity, pride and hair-ripping frustration. I hoped beyond anything else that it would go smoothly and with the dignity and honour it deserved.

Soon after I arrived at the University of Nicosia where members of my contingent - UN military with buses and Force Military Police Unit crews - were gathering. The clock was ticking, the pieces of the puzzle finally falling into place. A quick brief was held and within a short time, we were all driving in convoy formation back out onto the public streets, and turning into the buffer zone where a young National Guard (Greek Cypriot Forces) soldier ushered us through. For five minutes we jolted along the old worn and overgrown track to Waynes' Keep Cemetery, a Commonwealth War Cemetery located in Nicosia's buffer zone.

Finally we stopped at the gates of the Cemetery. We stepped into the chilly night and saw that the initial officers who had arrived there ahead of us had just turned the floodlights on, lighting the flagpoles and Cenotaph. The contingent began putting final touches in place while the UN military from Sector 2 (based in Nicosia) started a shuttle bus service between the University and cemetery to bring invited guests in. Visitors began arriving one by one: diplomats, police, military, and significantly one old digger from World War II by the name of Harry 'Happy' Berlowitz who himself was born a year before ANZAC.

At 5.05 a.m., in the pitch black, crystal clear and chilly morning, almost 96 years to the minute when Australian and New Zealand troops landed on the Gallipoli peninsula, the service began with an opening speech by our Contingent Commander, Superintendent Greg Mowle.

Members of the Contingent delivered readings, followed by a short service and dedication by our Padre, Rev. Paul Whitehead from the British Armed Forces Cadre Service. A number of wreaths were then laid at the graves of four Australian and one New Zealand servicemen killed in Cyprus during and just after World War II.

British troops from BRITCON Sector 2 marched in from the entry to the Cemetery and formed an honour guard at the Cenotaph. The Last Post was played by twin Buglers from the 3rd Royal Anglian Regiment, Queens Guard.

By S/SGT (F/A AFP) Josh Lloyd  
UN FMPU & Ops Police Liaison Officer

## Argentina's National Day Celebrated

**O**n 25 May, the Argentine Contingent celebrated Argentina's National Day with a crisp military ceremony at Sector 1 headquarters in General San Martin Camp (near Skourotissa village).

The ceremony was attended by SRSG and Chief of Mission, Mrs Lisa M. Buttenheim, and Force Commander Major General Chao Liu.

The ceremony included an inspection of troops in formation by the Chief of Mission and the Force Commander. This was followed by the national anthem and then a prayer by Sector 1's chaplain Luis Adrian Altamirano.

In his remarks to the assembled guests, Lieutenant Colonel Marcelo Adrian Calvo, Argentine Contingent Commander, said 25 May, Dia de la Revolucion de Mayo, marked the onset of the May Revolution, the beginning of Argentina's struggle for independence from Spain. [The May Revolution is considered the starting point of the Argentine War of Independence, although no formal declaration of independence was made until July 9, 1816.]

Celebrating the National Day overseas ("about 13,000 km from our beloved homeland") was different, he observed. At 201 years of age, Argentina may be relatively young compared to many other nations but it has "a strong national identity", he said.

The formal ceremony ended in a march past in front of the guests by the assembled troops. Then, guests



and hosts adjourned to a traditional breakfast, including such delicacies as empanadas and pastelitos, that as ever was testimony to the warm traditions of Argentine hospitality.

By Capt Marcelo Alejandro Quiroz

## Death of Warrant Officer



**W**O2 (QMSI) Graham Bean tragically died on the evening of 3 May 2011 whilst serving on operations with the United Nations in Cyprus. Employed in the high profile post of VIP visit coordinator, Graham was known by many and his sudden passing has been deeply felt across the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

Graham joined the Territorial Army in May 1975 as a Sapper in 75 Engineer Regiment but subsequently transferred to 73 Engineer Regiment based in Nottingham. His natural style and flare led to swift promotion to Lance Corporal in just over a year and by 1996 he had achieved the rank of Warrant Officer. Employed in a wide range of posts and locations during a varied and challenging career, Graham filled a variety of roles including Squadron Sergeant Major of 272 Field Park Squadron and Troop Commander of Regimental Headquarters. In addition he served on operations in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Iraq prior to deploying to Cyprus on Operation TOSCA in March of this year.

A highly professional and able soldier, it was

Graham's personal qualities that really set him apart; loyal, diligent and with a real zest for life, he provided an outstanding example of everything a soldier should be - his ability to walk into a room and lift everyone's spirits is something that he will be truly remembered for. As a practical example of his selflessness, Graham raised over 1000 Euros for the Army Benevolent Fund in his first month in Nicosia.

Graham died doing something he cared passionately about, in the service of peace and of his country. He leaves behind three children David (28), Hazel (26) and Nicola (17) with David currently preparing to deploy with the British Army in Afghanistan.

Graham's funeral ranks as one of the largest ever in his home town Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire. There were 750 people there to pay their respects and all of the shops closed for the day as mark of respect. Graham was a man that lived life to the full and always had time for everyone he met, anyone who met him will remember him with a smile and kind words.

WO2 (QMSI) Graham Bean will be dearly missed by all whom have had the privilege of working with him over the years.

By Sgt Andy Kirk and Capt Matt Lindow

# Military Skills

## Team A from Sector 4 wins MSC for the second time in a row

Soldiers from all sectors of UNFICYP had trained hard ahead of this year's Summer Military Skills Competition (MSC) that took place on 26 May 2011 in UNPA.

While the Winter Champions – the Team A from Sector 4 (stationed in Eastern Cyprus) – were expected to defend their hard-won title, all other team were sharply focused on winning the trophy. The spirit of competition was felt in the air.

In total, nine teams lined up to participate in the event: two from each sector, plus one team from UNFICYP HQs, the mission's Mobile Force reserve and the United Nations Police deployed to the peacekeeping force.

The tests started at 6 a.m. sharp when UNFICYP Force Commander Major General Chao Liu blew the horn announcing the beginning of the first discipline of the day – "the Endurance Stand". Following this task, all teams, supported by energetic shouts and cheers from the public, proceeded to other more sophisticated tests that were to examine not only their physical readiness but also their military knowledge, skills and team spirit.

Participants underwent driving skills, command tasks, incident reaction, map reading, shooting, patrolling and observation, and fought hard to score as many points as possible and get ahead in the competition.

After almost ten hours of hard work under the burning sun and in the scalding heat, the teams' points were counted, and winners were announced. The results were: Sector 4 (team A) again in first place, Sector 2 (team A) in second, and Sector 1 (team B) in third.

The winning teams felt that victory itself and feelings of joy and triumph made every single moment of hard training worth it. However, they were not the only



By Capt. Michal Harnadek



# Military Skills



# A Day in the Life of UNPOL Officers

Two police officers from opposite hemispheres share their impressions of life and duties as serving members of the UN Police (UNPOL) deployed in UNFICYP. For both, it's their first time serving with the UN, and for both the experience is markedly different than policing back home in Australia and Ireland respectively.

Sergeant Louise McGregor, a member of the Australian Federal Police Contingent, is Team Leader of the Dhenia UNPOL Station located in Sector 1. Sgt. James Connor, a Patrol Officer attached to Ledra Station in Sector 2, has been a member of An Garda Siochana, the National Police Force of the Irish Republic, for 30 years.

Let's start with Louise (Sergeant McGregor), who, as an operational patrol member of Sector 1, works a seven-day roster, mostly day shifts. However, she and her colleagues also take turns being on call to attend to any incidents that may occur in the buffer zone outside of normal hours.

"When I am rostered, the day starts sometime between 5.30 and 6.00 a.m. I leave home for work between 6.30 and 7.00 a.m. If I have been on-call the night before, or I have a UN vehicle, I take the opportunity to patrol the tracks between the UNPA and Dhenia on my way to work since I live in Nicosia. On arrival in Dhenia, we tackle some administrative duties, check the "Daily Summary" for an update on what has occurred over the past 24 hours and double-check to see if there have been any changes in the taskings."

**"When I am rostered, the day starts sometime between 5.30 and 6.00 a.m."**

main track along the buffer zone in Sector 1 (western Cyprus). Louise admits it was pretty ambitious given the distance involved and the hilly terrain of Sector 1. Adding to that, she and Zvonimir were the only available patrol team in the sector had it been necessary to respond to an incident.

However, there was real purpose to the extended patrol since it was intended to give the newcomer, Zvonimir, a chance to familiarise himself with the sector's main and secondary tracks, as well as putting him through his paces in the tricky terrain using the vehicle's four-wheel drive system.

According to Louise, the standard day for an UNFICYP UNPOL patrol officer is not unlike that of police on general duties elsewhere around the world insofar as one never knows what the day may bring. "On this occasion, Zvonimir and I were fortunate to be able to enjoy the beautiful sunshine of Cyprus and the stunning diversity of the terrain within our sector." They paused at her "favourite" Sector 1 UN observation post (OP) -- OP 09, her favourite UN observation post in Sector 1. Known for its stunning 360-degree views of the northwestern end of the island, the OP is located a short distance from Kato Pyrgos and the recently

opened Limnitis/ Yesilimak crossing point. The OP is still utilised but no longer serves to accommodate UN personnel on a 24-hour basis. "During our patrol, we were on the lookout for any unauthorised incursions into the buffer zone by hunters, with or without weapons or dogs, and signs of unauthorised farming or construction activity. Louise notes that incursions such as these are a regular feature in the course of the year, depending on whether it's hunting or farm planting season.

"For example, earlier this year, we were having numerous incursions from members of the public entering the BZ to pick wild asparagus and to train their hunting dogs. In most instances, these incidents are dealt with by UNPOL with little fuss."

However there have been occasions when the assistance of the Cypriot Police (CYPOL) has to be sought to help deal with individual civilians who have become verbally abusive or simply refuse to move out of the BZ. In some instances, the concern is not about the fact that the individuals were picking asparagus or simply within the BZ itself, but rather that they had strayed too close to a designated mine field or military position. Recent incidents have included civilians having been arrested for crossing into the opposing territory and a fire truck that drove over a land mine when fighting a fire within the BZ.

Louise has a full programme agenda in addition to her patrol shifts. Recently, she has been juggling a number of other duties including that as the Deputy Contingent Commander for the Australian Police Contingent and as a member of the UNPOL team that participated in the Summer Military Skills competition held on 26 May 2011 (UNPOL finished in seventh place). She was also directly involved in the planning and execution of the ANZAC Day commemoration. To top it all off, Louise is also studying for a Bachelor Degree in Vocational Education through the Charles Sturt University in Australia.

This is the third overseas deployment for Louise as a member of the Australian Federal Police. "Prior to UNFICYP, I was deployed to the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) as an Advisor to the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF). I have been a police officer in Australia since February 1992 and next February marks my 20th year as a police officer."

As noted above, Ireland's Sgt. James Connor has 30 years policing under his belt. Interestingly (but just how, he won't tell), James began his UNPOL tour of duty with UNFICYP as a Patrol Officer attached to Ledra Station in Sector 2 this year on Valentine's Day.

"I am a member of An Garda Siochana, the National Police Force of the Irish Republic. I have 30 years service as a police officer and have served in various administrative and operational posts.

Prior to deployment to Cyprus I was Sergeant in Charge of the Continuous Professional Development Unit which handles everything to do with training and professional standards." In addition to delivering training to members of his own police organisation, James was also responsible for devising and delivering training programmes to external agencies such as the Fire Service, the Health Service and other non police agencies involved in Major Emergency Management.



Sergeant Louise McGregor at her favourite UN observation post in Sector 1

"Working as a Patrol Officer in Ledra is quite different to anything I have previously experienced. It is a unique experience in that it provides an opportunity to work with personnel from other countries. At present we have police officers from Montenegro, Bosnia, Croatia, Ukraine, Australia, El Salvador, Italy and Ireland. It is truly remarkable that persons from such diverse backgrounds and cultures work so well together and this spirit of co-operation in many ways typifies what the United Nations and international co-operation can achieve.

"The primary responsibility of a patrol officer is to monitor the buffer zone within the designated areas and to ensure that only authorised persons enter the buffer zone. Regular checks are carried out to ensure that persons in the buffer zone have permission to be

there and have valid permits to cover the activity they are engaged in e.g. farming."James notes how patrol officers are called upon to take decisive and effective action in line with standard operating procedures when it comes to dealing with matters like illegal dumping, hunting and fires as and when they arise in the buffer zone. Moreover, as patrol officers he and his colleagues work in close co-operation with military personnel and regularly conduct joint patrols.

"All of our work is predicated by an adherence to the highest professional standards both in our standard of attire and the manner in which we deal with those we encounter. Courtesy and respect for all, both colleagues and the local population, helps to maintain the high standards which have been a hallmark of the UNFICYP mission in Cyprus."



Sgt. James Connor, Patrol Officer attached to Ledra Station in Sector 2

## Pilgrims visit Varisha and Ayios Georgios



Some 650 Greek Cypriot and 200 Armenian pilgrims attended religious and commemorative events in the north of the island and in the buffer zone with support from UNFICYP between 25 April and 8 May.

It was a busy time for all involved yet everything went off well thanks in no small part to the efforts of the Sector Civil Affairs Teams (SCATs), and the sector military and United Nations Police (UNPOL).

In Sector 1, the highlights were the two traditional pilgrimages that took place in the abandoned villages of Varisha and Ayios Georgios Soleas in the buffer zone in the west part of the island, on Monday, 25 April, and Sunday, 1 May, respectively.

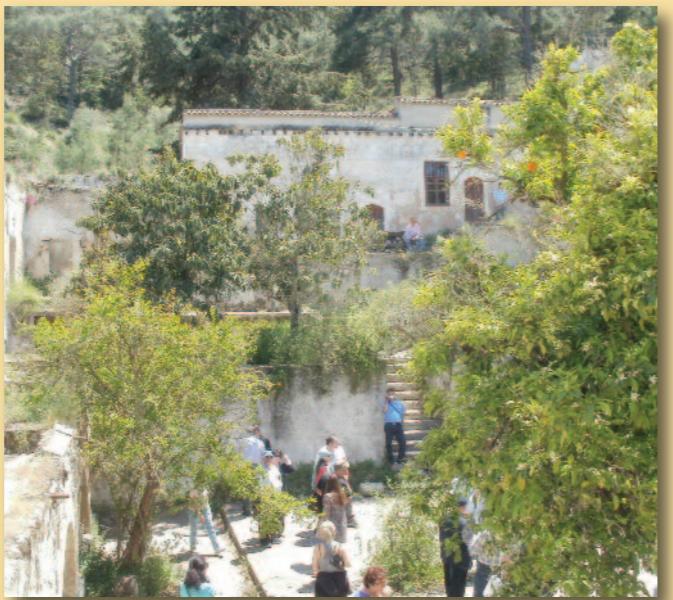
More than 250 Greek Cypriot pilgrims visited Ayios Georgios Church in Varisha for the annual religious service there. A week later, another pilgrimage of some

## St. Barnabas, Sourp Magar Events

On 30 April, 150 Greek Cypriot pilgrims attended an Easter Mass celebrated in the monastery of Apostolos Barnabas near Salamis, and on 8 May, 200 members of the Armenian community took part in the Sourp Magar pilgrimage in Chalefka/Alevkayasi.

Both are historic sites of religious and cultural significance to pilgrims worldwide. The monastery of Apostolos Barnabas was originally founded in the late 5th century (the present church was built in the 17th century) while the Sourp Magar was first constructed around 1000 AD as a Coptic monastery (the current ruins however date from the 19th century).

UNFICYP's Civil Affairs Section worked with both the Turkish Cypriot authorities and the organizers to ensure the smooth conduct of these significant religious events. For the Armenian pilgrimage, people came from all over the world to participate. SCAT Ledra supported this event by escorting the pilgrims and monitoring the event.



## Goodwill initiative by people of Athienou and Louroujina

More than 200 people from villages of Louroujina in the north and Athienou in the south enjoyed a unique bi-communal picnic inside the buffer zone on Sunday, 10 April. The very special gathering, the first of its kind since the island was divided in 1974, was initiated by the Mayors and Mukhtar of the two villages situated in the central part of the island.

The event was considered a great success as villagers from the two communities shared meals and each other's company near the site of Agia Marina Church.

Building on the long-standing good relationship between the inhabitants of the two villages, Mayor Spiros Pappous of Athienou, and his counterpart Louroujina Mayor Hassan Barbaros along with his sister Sultan Barbaros, the Muktar of Louroujina Village, proposed the idea of the picnic, warmly welcomed by the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission which was on hand to provide its assistance.

Villagers present at the picnic site, which was determined based on its accessibility from their two villages, were clearly enthused to participate in this unique gathering. Many attended with their children and participated in games for all including football and volleyball.

Families brought food contributing to the inter-communal cookout consisting of barbecue-grilled hamburgers and steaks with lots of local bread and

salads. The Blue Beret learned that there was even an exchange of recipes, however that is privileged information.

Operational Commander Miodrag Stijovic helped coordinate the event with support from UNPOL officers:

Inspector Rosano Leonardo and Detective Bernadette Gillespie from UN Athienou Police Station, Inspector Prassad Kvm from UN Pyla Station, Colonel Andrii Shavarikhin and Inspector Predgrad Movic of the mission's Civil Affairs Section, and peacekeepers from the Hungarian Contingent at St.Istvan Camp, Athienou, led by Lieutenant Adam Bado.

This integrated mission effort brought UNPOL and SCAT [Sector Civil Affairs Team] officers together. They worked diligently from early morning to ensure that all preparations were in place at the picnic site and along nearby access roads for those attending from north and south. It contributed to the overall success of the event.

The media was also on hand to report on the bi-communal encounter and portrayed it as a positive "confidence building measure".

Evidence of the success of the event was the commitment of its organizers to hold another picnic sometime in the near future. When this happens UNFICYP will surely be available to help in any way it can to assist the villagers in their endeavour.



Villagers of Louroujina and Athienou enjoying a bi-communal picnic inside the buffer zone

# New Faces

## Public Information Officer



**A**gnieszka Rakoczy took up the post of Public Information Officer at UNFICYP Public Information Office in May 2011. Agnieszka is Polish and studied Law at the University of Warsaw in Poland as well as Russian and Asian Studies at Durham University in the UK and Sophia University in Tokyo. Following her graduation in 1996, she worked as a freelance journalist in Great Britain, Cyprus, Turkey, Ireland, Belgium, France, Albania and Poland. Between 2008 and 2010 Agnieszka lived in the Sudan where she worked as a media consultant for an international strategic communications company, and run media-related projects both in the north and south of the country as well as in Darfur. Agnieszka likes people, animals, books, films and travelling.

## Training Officer



**L**t. Col Ricardo Nibeyro took up the Training Officer post at UNFICYP HQ on 8 April 2011. He joined the Argentinean Army in 1984 as Artillery Officer and served in many different appointments at Mountain Troop, Paratrooper and Armored Artillery Regiments. After he graduated from the Army Command College as Staff Officer; he served in the Army HQ at Operations Branch and then, posted as Commanding Officer in the Artillery Regiment near the Andes Mountains. His last appointment before being deployed to UNFICYP, was at the Army General Inspection. He gained experience through different post in United Nations Mission in the former Yugoslavia and Cyprus as a Platoon leader, Coy Commander and SOO in Sector 1. He also attended a course at the Superior Command and Army Command College for the Chinese People Liberation Army (CPLA) in Nanjing. He holds a degree in Strategy and Organization, and coursred master degree in International Affairs at Buenos Aires University (UBA). He is married to Juliana. His interests are long-distance running, skiing, parachuting, basketball and most type of adventure training.

## Chief Operations Officer



**L**ieutenant Colonel VELARDE was appointed Chief Operations Officer to UNFICYP on 11 February 2011 following his appointment as Chief of Planning and Organization in the 5th Mountain Brigade in Salta, Argentina. Immediately preceding this appointment he was 2IC to the 20th Mechanized Infantry Regiment. Commissioned an Infantry 2nd Lieutenant in 1988, he was posted to the 16th Mountain Infantry Regiment in USPALLATA as Platoon commander. Since then, he has served in Army Infantry School and 11th Mechanized Brigade HQ. This is his second tour of duty in Cyprus; in 2004 he was stationed in Sector 1 as Operations Officer. He has also served in UNCRO - CROATIA (1995) as a Mortar Platoon Leader and in MINUSTAH- HAITI as a Deputy Commanding Officer of Argentinean Joint Battalion in 2007. Lieutenant Colonel VELARDE is a Staff Officer, a Mountain Warfare Specialist, Parachutist and a Mechanized Infantry Specialist. Throughout his military career he has pursued a number of courses: Junior Command/ Staff College (Captain Level) in the Argentinean Army Infantry School, Command/ Staff College (Major Level) in the Army War College. He also graduated from the Catholic University of Buenos Aires in International Rights in Humanitarian Assistance. Lieutenant Col VELARDE is married to Martha Nancy Vargas and has two children, Hernan y and Ezequiel.

## SO2 Operations Officer



**M**ajor Rich Vines arrived on 9 May and took up the post as the SO2 Operations Officer at HQ UNFICYP. He joined the British Army in 1998 and spent one year training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst before commissioning into the Queen's Royal Hussars. He qualified as a Troop Leader on Challenger 2 Main Battle Tanks and soon deployed to Kosovo as part of KFOR. A second tour of Kosovo followed, as a Squadron Intelligence Officer, before assignment to Germany. As well as Germany, he has spent time training in Poland, the UK, and Canada. Major Vines deployed to Iraq in 2003 as a Squadron Operations Officer, responsible for mentoring the Iraqi Police Service in Basrah. Major Vines has worked in America for 2 years as a Staff Officer to the Military Attaché at the British Embassy in Washington DC. Following this he worked as an Adjutant with the Queen's Own Yeomanry, a Territorial Army Armoured Reconnaissance Unit in the north of England. On promotion to Major he attended the Intermediate Command and Staff College (Land) at the Defence Academy in Shrivenham before being assigned as a Squadron Leader of a Challenger 2 Squadron in Germany. Major Vines enjoys all water and motor sports, although ideally not at the same time. He is married to Katie and they have an 18-month-old daughter called Hannah and a mischievous Labrador, Alfie.

## UNPOL Staff Officer Logistic



**H**igher Inspector Dusko Simic took over the position as UNPOL Staff Officer Logistics on 10th of May 2011. He was born on 19 May 1969 in Banja Luka, Republic of Srpska, Bosnia & Herzegovina. He joined the police in 1993 and during his police career he has attended a number of courses including Crowd Control in France 2001, MSU NATO base B&H 2001, UNPOC in Norway 2004 and Sweden 2009, as well as others. His last appointment before joining UNFICYP was as the Commander of the Support Unit in Banja Luka, Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Srpska. From 2006 to 2008 he served in the UN mission in Liberia, as Regional Commander Region 3 and as Bosnia & Herzegovinian Contingent Commander. He is currently concluding postgraduate studies in Terrorism and Counter Terrorism Operations at the Security Faculty at Belgrade University. Higher Inspector Simic is married to Daliborka and they have a son Luka (9) and a daughter Lana (4). His hobbies include sports such as running, swimming and karate.

## Officer in Command Mobile Force Reserve



**M**ajor Huw Gilbert assumed command of the Mobile Force Reserve Company on 31 March 2011. This is his first experience of a UN Mission and prior to this posting he was serving as the Battery Commander of 211 (South Wales) Battery, 104 Regiment Royal Artillery. Early service within the Regiment was as an Air Defence Troop Commander although his parent unit has now re-rolled to become an Unmanned Air Vehicle Regiment. As with all of the UK soldiers currently serving in the Mobile Force Reserve Company he is a Territorial Army soldier. For a civilian career he works as a Mountaineering Instructor based in North Wales, spending his summers climbing rock and his winters climbing snow and ice. He is 33 years of age, is married to Joanne and they have two children, Tomos (3) and Martha (1).

## Camp Command



**W**o Zoltan Kiss-Jakab was born on 17 April 1977 in Orosháza, Hungary. He has served in the Armed forces for 16 years. His military career started at the Military Secondary School, from where he graduated in 1996 as Engineer NCO. In 1996 he joined the Hungarian Defence Forces as a squad leader in the Engineer Regiment in Szentes. Throughout his military career he has worked in different positions as a first sergeant of a platoon and personnel NCO of a company. He is a staff NCO in the Personnel Section in Szentes. His first nad second mission were in the SFOR in Former Yugoslavia in 1997 and 1999 respectively. This is his second tour of duty with UNFICYP, having previously served in 2005-2006 as the QM of the Hungarian Contingent. He is in a happy relationship with his partner Monica. His hobbies are, traveling, music and watching movies.

## Visits



Chinese General (Air Force) Ma Xiaotian, Dep.Chief of the General Staff, visited UNFICYP on 26 April 2011 where he met with UNFICYP Force Commander Major General Chao Liu and other officials.

## Visits



UK Chief of Joint Operations, Air Marshal Sir Stuart Peach visited UNFICYP on 20 April 2011 where he met the Force Commander Major General Chao Liu and Chief of Staff Colonel Gerard Hughes.



UNFICYP Force Commander Major General Chao Liu welcomes Mr. Richard Sulik, Chairman of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, on his official visit to UNFICYP HQ on 28 April 2011.



Bulgarian Ambassador Mr. Vesselin Valchev, visited UNFICYP on 5 April 2011 where he met with Force Commander Major General Chao Liu.



Brigadier General Sandor Fucsku, Chief of staff of Joint Force Command in Hungary presents UNFICYP Force Commander Major General Chao Liu with a gift during his official visit to UNFICYP on 17 May 2011.



Serbian Major Gen Zivkovic, visited UNFICYP on 31 May 2011 where he met with Force Commander Major General Chao Liu.



On 6 May 2011, Foreign Affairs Minister of the Slovak Republic Mr. Mikulas Dzurinda attended a bi-communal meeting organized by H. E. Ms. Anna Turenecova at the Ledra Palace Hotel. This was followed by an office call with SRSG Lisa M. Buttenheim and SASG Alexander Downer and a presentation of Sector-2 by Sector-2 Commanding Officer.

## Dinner Diplomacy



Progress yes, but still a long way to go, that was the message when Alexander Downer, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General, spoke with media after a working dinner with the leaders at the UNPA residence of UNFICYP Chief of Mission, SRSG Lisa M. Buttenheim, on 14 April.

Neither the Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias nor the Turkish Cypriot leader Dervis Eroglu made a statement. Both were accompanied to the two-hour-plus working dinner by their top advisers George Iacovou and Kudret Ozersay. It had been a "working" rather than a "social" evening, Mr Downer said, but there had been convivial conversation too. Much of the focus had been on the talks and the process, "in particular, a discussion about the way forward over the next few months". He had also spoken with the leaders about the "upcoming meeting" with the Secretary-General.

Overall, it had been "a very useful, very friendly and very warm occasion", he said, adding that "we look forward to hosting another dinner sometime in the not too distant future."

Mr. Downer said the meeting dealt with issues about international treaties and had been "very good". Progress had not been "insubstantial" just as there had been progress in the preceding weeks on discussions about internal security. However, he also indicated that the negotiations still had "a long way to go", telling reporters that he did not want "to over-egg the omelette" by risking possible exaggeration.

Looking ahead, Mr. Downer said the talks would continue through the upcoming Greek



SASG Alexander Downer addressing media following the leaders dinner

Cypriot and Turkish elections and that the Secretary-General would meet the two leaders on 7 July for "substantive discussions with them about the future."

# International Peacekeepers Day

## Photo Exhibition

