

The Blue Beret



Anzac Day

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Editorial

Over three and a half years have passed since the current round of negotiations to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue began in September 2008. That year, the Secretary-General responded to the then Leaders and their desire to begin negotiations by assuring them that the UN would provide unwavering support in a process, the success of which would be critical to all Cypriots.

The aim of these talks has been to reach a comprehensive settlement based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation as set out in relevant Security Council resolutions. However, the negotiations have recently come to something of a standstill. Special Adviser to the Secretary-General Alexander Downer recently met with the Secretary-General in New York to discuss his assessment of the state of the negotiations. Following this meeting, the Secretary-General called both Leaders to express his disappointment at the lack of progress.

Earlier this year, the Secretary-General wrote to the two Leaders pointing out that the talks had moved into the final phase. The two sides went to Greentree in January to meet the Secretary-General and address three remaining challenges: the election of the executive, property and citizenship. However, only limited progress was made. The face-to-face meetings of the sides held since January have not resulted in convergences. The "food for thought" ideas that the UN has put forward have been welcomed by both sides. But the sides have yet to achieve a common

understanding on the property issue despite several months of work both at the Leaders' and Representatives' level

So, it was decided that the meetings between Greek Cypriot community Leader Mr. Cristofias and Turkish Cypriot community Leader Mr. Eroglu, more commonly referred to as the Leaders' meetings, will only take place when both Leaders agree to meet and that the Secretary-General will not call a multilateral conference just yet. While it certainly remains the Secretary-General's ambition to call a multilateral conference in the summer in order to conclude the final phase of the negotiations, this will ultimately depend on what agreement the two sides come to.

The UN Good Offices team will engage in shuttle diplomacy between the two sides to discuss the way forward. The Secretary-General has told the sides that it is never too late for bold and decisive moves and new ideas or innovative proposals. But if none are taken, then obviously there will be no further convergence on core issues.

Mr. Ban's Special Adviser on Cyprus, Alexander Downer, emphasized the critical importance of understanding that the process is Cypriot-led and Cypriot-owned. He said that: "The UN is only here to help. But in the end, the UN can never want this agreement more than the two sides. If the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Leaders cannot agree with each other on a model for a united Cyprus, then we cannot make them!"



The Secretary-General issues his assessment report on Cyprus negotiations

The Secretary-General issued his assessment report on the status of the negotiations in Cyprus on 12 March where he detailed how the two sides have continued their efforts to address the most crucial elements of the Cyprus problem.



In his observations the Secretary-General says: "Since my November 2010 meeting with the leaders, both sides have worked on the difficult task of breaking down the complex Cyprus problem into its core issues. Through this approach, the sides continued to identify and address the most crucial elements of a solution to the Cyprus problem, and have made some additional progress in resolving them.

I came away from our first meeting in Greentree assured by the leaders that a comprehensive settlement could be achieved. However, no further convergences in the talks were reached before our second meeting at Greentree.

I was disappointed with this lack of progress, and conveyed my disappointment to the leaders at Greentree in January. In this Cypriot-owned and Cypriot-led process, it is up to the leaders to take the negotiations to a successful conclusion.

Accordingly, I have reassured them that the United Nations does not seek to impose solutions. At the same time, I have repeatedly expressed my point of view that the negotiations should not be openended; the longer the talks have been drawn out, the more disillusioned the public has become and the harder it has become to conclude agreements.

At this advanced stage of the negotiations, it is important to recall that, since the start of the process, a significant number of convergences have been reached across various key chapters of the negotiations. As a Cypriot-led process, these achievements are entirely Cypriot-owned.

At the moment, however, the negotiations on the "core core" issues that remain to be agreed, are close to deadlock. Despite the leaders' repeated commitments to intensify the negotiations and push for a

conclusion as soon as possible, the fact that there has been such limited movement towards convergence on core issues in recent months is a matter of concern."

The Secretary-General concludes that: "The leaders must now make decisive moves that will demonstrate that agreement is indeed within their grasp. They must focus their efforts on resolving the outstanding challenges. In particular, they must find a way to move beyond the existing deadlock on the election of the executive and advance more definitively on property and citizenship.

Regarding property, while I understand that some aspects cannot be completely finalized until decisions are made on maps and figures relating to territory, it should now be possible for both sides to agree on a common understanding on property that is simple, clear, and contingent upon those decisions.

I note with satisfaction that the sides have embarked on the exchange of data on property referred to in my statement following the second meeting at Greentree. There is no doubt that the political environment in which the negotiations are currently taking place has become increasingly difficult. Nonetheless, it is incumbent upon the leaders to foster a more conducive atmosphere for the talks by refraining from engaging in negative rhetoric about each other and the process and by preserving the confidentiality of the talks.

In addition to preserving the integrity of the process, decisive action in this regard would also contribute to building public confidence in its viability which, at present, is low. Civil society also has a crucial role to play in building public confidence in the process. Unfortunately, civil society organizations, and women's groups in particular, remain outside the framework of the negotiations. I therefore call on the sides to step up their engagement with civil society and women's groups, with a view to building public confidence in the benefits of a settlement and ensuring that, once it is reached, the settlement is sustainable and truly representative of the needs and aspirations of all Cypriots.

The time for an agreement is now. The domestic, regional and international context is constantly shifting. The current window of opportunity is not limitless and there is little to suggest that the future will bring more propitious circumstances for a settlement.

The United Nations remains convinced that if the necessary political will could be mustered on both sides, a durable settlement could be achieved in the interests of all Cypriots. I have full confidence in the efforts of my Special Adviser, Alexander Downer, and his team to support such an outcome."



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (centre) meets with Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot Leaders Demetris Christofias (left) and Derviș Eroğlu, for talks at Greentree Estate in Manhasset, New York. 23 January 2012

UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (left) greets Alexander Downer, his Special Adviser on Cyprus, at Greentree Estate in Manhasset, New York, where talks between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders are taking place. 23 January 2012

UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

UNFICYP Marks International Mine Awareness Day

On the 13th anniversary of the entry into force of the Ottawa Treaty and in accordance with the United Nations General Assembly resolution declaring the 4th of April of each year as International Day for Mine Awareness, an inspirational global campaign has been launched to put a full stop, within our lifetime, to the harm that mines still cause.

The United Nations is issuing a call for all Cypriots to join in the "Lend Your Leg" initiative to stop the devastating effects of landmines. An exhibit was held at the Home for Cooperation in Nicosia, from 29 March to 6 April featuring detailed descriptions of landmines removed from the buffer zone in the recent past and a short documentary of the land mine removal project in Cyprus.

Since the beginning of the UN mine action programme in November 2004, over 27,000 landmines have been cleared and destroyed by UN de-miners in Cyprus. In all, 73 mined areas have been cleared throughout the buffer zone amounting to almost 11 square kilometres of land; land which is now in condition to be farmed for productive gain and sustainable use.

UN de-mining activities have also helped pave the way for the opening of crossing points across the island, such as the Ledra Street crossing in downtown Nicosia and in Limnitis / Yeşilirmak in the northwest. Ridding the island of these deadly obstacles has enabled the two communities to move around more freely and has provided more opportunities for various

contacts including trade and commerce.

While much work has been done and major strides taken, more work needs to be done if we are to achieve our stated goal of a mine-free buffer zone and eventually a mine-free Cyprus. In Cyprus, mined areas are considered to be a relatively low threat.

And yet, for decades, the presence of mines and UXOs has prevented the rehabilitation of many areas and historical buildings both within and outside the buffer zone. Mines have also been a dangerous impediment to safe patrolling and other peacekeeping operations, and have caused delays in attempting to open new crossing points between the two communities.

For many farmers and their families on both sides of the island, the presence of these devices hindered access and production on their land resulting in significant economic losses. Moreover, the mines also acted as a constant reminder of the past conflict, posing a physical and psychological barrier to confidence building measures between the two communities.

Since 2004, the UNDP Partnership For the Future (UNDP-PFF), in partnership with the European Union, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), has been working together with the two communities to remove the landmines in order to contribute to a return of normal living conditions in the buffer zone.



Conflict as opportunity



Deborah Mendez and Gang Li from the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services (UNOMS) during an official visit to Nicosia from 5-16 March.

War, anger, frustration, anxiety, confusion, stress: these are some of the words that UNFICYP staff said they associated with conflict during an exercise led by Gang Li and Deborah Mendez of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services (UNOMS) during an official visit to Nicosia from 5-16 March. "Most people, when they are asked what conflict means to them, paint a negative picture," said Ms. Mendez, a mediator based at headquarters. After some discussion, she asked participants in the exercise to think about positive words associated with conflict. They came up with concepts like change, resolution and understanding. Ms. Mendez said: "That's how I see my work. My work is to help two staff members to bring about change in how they see things, to develop understanding, to try to resolve it. I always see conflict as an opportunity to solve a problem".

In addition to holding a town hall meeting, during their visit Ms. Mendez and Mr. Li, the Vienna-based regional ombudsman, organized a half-day training session on conflict competence and offered informal conflict resolution services to United Nations personnel at large. The aim of the visit was to clarify the informal, independent, impartial and confidential role of the Office, to build trust in dispute resolution mechanisms and to listen to individuals with particular issues and assist them work through those concerns in a non-judgmental way.

Ms. Mendez explains: "The Office works with parties in an informal and confidential way to bring about resolution — the approach is collaborative, not adversarial". While UNOMS has no decision-making authority or the authority to punish or investigate anybody, it can and does work through dialogue to identify options with the aim of achieving win-win solutions. Mr. Li stressed:

"The earlier a conflict is addressed, the more options are available". Even once a case has been filed with the formal system, ombudsmen and mediators can still work with the parties to try to avoid the relationship between co-workers in conflict from deteriorating further and the conflict from spreading to the whole team. In many cases, the staff members concerned will have to keep working together.

In order to build staff members' trust in informal dispute resolution, Ms. Mendez says: "The most important thing is that they must see us as people they can come to, that we will listen and are willing to act, to help." UNOMS offers ombudsman and mediation services to current and former United Nations staff, no matter what their level or location, in the six languages of the organization through eight offices worldwide.

By listening to UNFICYP staff during their visit, Ms. Mendez and Mr. Li were not only able to support staff dealing with specific issues, but also to integrate an educational and training component aimed at empowering them. According to Mr. Li, once staff have learned certain skills, they know they can do something to improve their situation. He added: "Ours is a double message: the first part is that everyone, staff and managers, need training so that they can manage themselves and so that they can manage differences at work; the second part is that we are conflict management professionals and we can be useful. Do not hesitate to come to us."

For more information, go to www.un.org/ombudsman. You can contact UNOMS by email, telephone or secure contact form (see the details listed on the contacts web page).

International Women's Day

International Women's Day is celebrated to honour the achievements of women. Women have played a significant role not just in civilian life but also in the military where they hold many important positions. Their courage, sacrifice and great skills are seen in their humanitarian work for peacekeeping missions like UNFICYP. Their sector commanders did not forget them on International Women's Day and the Commanding Officer of Sector 4 LtCol Jozef PAOKO and all their male colleagues prepared a surprise for them beginning with flowers in the morning followed by a day at a wellness centre where they had the opportunity to relax and pamper themselves.



To commemorate the 104 years of struggle for women's rights, UNFICYP Focal Point for Women (FPW) Ms. Renalyn Natural and Alternate FPW Ms. Athena Georgiou in coordination with UNFICYP Chief Security Mr. Larry Ellis have organized an event on "Safety for Women." The discussion included a power point presentation with practical tips on how to avoid becoming a victim. The presentation was informal and interactive and invited audience participation. The over arching theme of the presentation was how not to be a victim.

In Celebration of the 104th International Women's Day

 Safety for Women

Presented by:
Mr. Larry Ellis
UNFICYP Chief Security Officer

Welcome by:
Ms. Freda Mackay
OSAG Coordinator

To learn more please join us:
Thursday, 8 March 2012
1:30 PM – 3:30 PM
Operations Briefing Room
UNFICYP Headquarters

Contact:
unficypolcp@unwomenstudies.org.unficyp.unitedmissions



In keeping with tradition, Senior Police Adviser Mr John Farrelly invited all his female Police Officers to celebrate International Womens' Day on 8 March with an informal breakfast in the international cafeteria. All eleven ladies currently serving with the mission attended along with his PA Ms Diana Bridger and the Deputy Senior Police Adviser Miroslav Milojevic. Ms Freda Mackay from the Good Offices also graciously accepted the invitation. A very pleasant start to the day was had by all.



Anzac Day

As dawn broke on 25 April 1915, sixteen thousand soldiers of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, affectionately known as ANZAC's, landed at Gallipoli Peninsula at a place now known as Anzac Cove as part of a large allied expedition aimed at capturing the Dardanelles in Turkey. The ANZAC's were met with fierce resistance from the Ottoman Turkish Defenders commanded by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and suffered great human losses as a result.

Gallipoli marked the first major test in battle for both the young countries of Australia and New Zealand. Australia had only become a federation fourteen years earlier and with a small population of four million people sent 350,000 men to the other side of the world to fight in World War One. Each year since 1916 on this day, aptly named ANZAC Day, Australians and New Zealanders gather together in locations all around the world to commemorate the sacrifices made by the original ANZAC's along with the sacrifice and service made by the living and deceased veterans from all wars. The spirit of ANZAC, with its human qualities of courage, mateship, and sacrifice, continues to have meaning and relevance for our sense of national identity.

On 25 April 2012, at 5.00am, 250 guests comprising members of the diplomatic community, UN dignitaries, police, military and civilians gathered at Wayne's Keep Military Cemetery in the Buffer Zone, to attend this year's dawn service. The darkness in which five of our ANZAC servicemen were laid to rest was lit by rows of candles leading to the cenotaph guarded by four members of the current serving British 29 Regiment in Cyprus. The special guest of honour, World War II veteran Harry 'Happy' Berlowitz was escorted to the cenotaph to lay the first wreath. At 98 years old, 'Happy' is sharp of mind, but battled with his frail body to pay his tribute to fallen mates at the ANZAC Day service. We thank him for making the day so special.

The crisp morning air grew colder as the sun rose

from behind the mountains and the resonating sounds of "The Last Post" echoed through the valley as the final salute to the fallen. Padre Mark Speeks concluded the ceremony with a last prayer in a time which the war cemetery was saturated with light reinforcing the impact of human loss on all nations beyond our five servicemen buried in the cemetery.

The service was followed by a traditional "gunfire" breakfast at the UNPOL club and concluded with an Australian Federal Police medal ceremony for overseas and operational service. Thus began the festivities led by Happy in games of two-up that led to traditional Australian celebrations with cold beer and a barbecue under the sun.

A special thanks to the Australian Police Commander Superintendent Peter Bond and Police Sergeant Astley Tually who co-ordinated the ceremony and celebrations, the Australian High Commission and New Zealand Consulate for their support and funding, the Australian Police contingent and their family members who worked tirelessly to make the day happen, and to members of the military, especially the 29 Regiment for providing ceremonial and logistical support. Special thanks go to our UN Police colleagues, in particular our Irish colleagues, who generously donated their time to transport duties and other duties. The day will be cherished by the Australian Police contingent and for those who made the effort to rise before dawn - we hope that you felt welcomed as part of our community. Anzac Day is a day on which we commemorate the sacrifices made by all our nations as a result of war and other conflicts and is recognition of the bond we all share. *Lest We Forget.*

**By Sergeant Erin Johnston
Australian Police Contingent**





St Patricks Day celebrated

St Patricks Day was celebrated on the 17 March by the 19th Irish Contingent of An Garda Siochana, the Irish Police Service who are attached to UNPOL within UNFICYP.

The festivities began with a Holy Mass held in St. Columba's Church in the United Nations Protected Area (UNPA) which was attended by members of the Irish Police Service, The Senior Police Adviser, Mr. John Farrelly and his wife Luma as well as the Irish Ambassador to Cyprus – His Excellency, Mr Pat Scullion. The Chief of Staff, Lt. Col. Gerard Hughes and his wife Gi together with representatives of the Chief of Mission and the Force Commander were in attendance. Over 200 invited guests including our international police colleagues and friends from the UNFICYP family also joined us.

The Mass was celebrated by Fr. Juan from the Holy Cross Church in Nicosia and assisted by colleagues from Italy and Cyprus as well as by Padre Deniol Morgan from Sector 2. The choir was made up by members of the Irish Contingent under the guidance of Sergeant Dympna Flynn.

Superintendent Michael Lernihan, the Irish Contingent Commander and UNPOL Commander of Sector 2 addressed the attendance in both the Irish and English language and formally welcomed all to the celebration of Ireland's national day. His Excellency, Mr Pat Scullion read

out a message from the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins. When mass was over all 18 Irish Garda members sang the Irish National Anthem "Amhrán na BhFiann" from the altar and then formed a Guard of Honour outside the church to welcome all those who attended the Mass.

An "Irish Coffee" reception was then held at the UNPOL Club followed by dinner for all who attended. An Irish guest and resident of Nicosia Dominick Hraby played and sang traditional Irish songs and Julie Ann and Jarlath danced some 'Jigs and Reels'.

At the UNPOL Club, Superintendent Lernihan made a presentation to the Irish Ambassador marking the occasion and thanked all those present. The "Ceol agus Craic" (Music & Fun) lasted for many more hours thereafter.

It was a fantastic day enjoyed by all those that attended and the Irish Contingent and Community would like to thank all those who assisted us in having a very successful day (and night!).

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir agus is mian maith don todhchaí.

Michael Lernihan
Superintendent
Irish Contingent Commander.

The wartime origins of Nicosia airfield, and their traces today

Part 2

The strategic plan was that Cyprus should be available as an air base for offensive operations – and most of the airfields were clustered in the Mesaoria, where they could be easily defended by the island's garrison. Nicosia, however, remained the only airfield with facilities for refuelling and rearming aircraft, with a connection to the railway, with flare paths and beacons so that it could receive landings at night, and capable of handling heavy bombers.

Although the RAF never operated any heavy bombers in Cyprus during the war, Nicosia airfield played a role in one famous bombing raid by the US Air Force – on Ploesti in Rumania on 1 August 1943. One hundred and seventy-eight Liberator bombers set out from Libya to destroy the oil refineries at Ploesti that provided 40% of Germany's fuel. Almost a third of the aircraft never returned.

The bombers approached their targets at very low altitude, barely clearing the tops of the refinery chimneys. Damage to the aircraft from the anti-aircraft defences was severe. It had been expected to be. Pilots had been warned beforehand that, if they thought they were too badly hit to complete the 1,300 mile flight back to Libya, they should head for Cyprus, the nearest friendly territory to Ploesti. Ten bombers accordingly landed at Nicosia in the evening of 1 August 1943. All but one, which had crashed on landing, left again the following day.

Within weeks, the airfield experienced its second period of significant operational activity during the war, when it served as a base for the campaign in the Dodecanese. Two Squadrons of long-range fighters arrived at Nicosia in mid August, initially carrying out attacks against Italian forces in Rhodes and elsewhere; then, on the surrender of Italy on 8 September, supporting the troops that were sent into the Dodecanese to take control of the islands; and finally resisting the German counter-attack when it came in October.

By the end of November 1943, however, the Germans had recaptured all the Dodecanese islands except Castelrosso. And by the end of the year, the fighter aircraft had been withdrawn from Cyprus. With the end of the campaign in the Dodecanese, all the war fronts where actual fighting was going on were too far from Cyprus for the airfield to be of any use for combat purposes.

A plan was already in hand, however, to put the airfield to use for another purpose, as an Operational Training Unit – OTU, where aircrew were sent after finishing flying school for practice in flying the aircraft that they would later take into battle. For the first half of the war, virtually all OTUs were in England – but, by late 1943, ten were being set up in the Middle East, including one in Cyprus. The purpose was to free up airfields in England for use for the forthcoming invasion of Europe.

No 79 OTU at Nicosia was to be a large establishment, with some 80-odd aircraft, and extensive preparations were put in hand in late 1943 and early 1944. A new control tower was built, the taxiways were straightened, and the maintenance area was expanded and equipped with a large new prefabricated "Bellman" hangar. New camps were built, to the east of the airfield for the trainers and pupils of the OTU and to the



north for the numerous new maintenance personnel who would be needed to deal with the frequent accidents that were expected (and occurred).

A large administrative structure was put in place too, and the airfield was formally designated an RAF Station on 1 February 1944. No 79 OTU opened in May 1944.

Alongside the training courses for novice pilots, one final brief episode of combat operations was mounted from the airfield. In June / July 1944, Nicosia was used as a base by light bombers for a six-week campaign of air raids on Rhodes, Leros and other islands that still had a German garrison – one of many diversions from the huge Allied landings that were happening in Normandy at the time, designed to induce the Germans to spread their troops over as many fronts as possible. Nicosia itself experienced no air raids after 1941.

In 1944, the only damage inflicted on the airfield occurred in a ferocious storm on 16 October: roofs were ripped off buildings, some aircraft were blown over, and others were punctured by huge hailstones. Wear and tear from the OTU, however, was heavy, particularly on the runways. It also became obvious within weeks of the training courses starting that the parking area at the maintenance hangar was only half the size needed and that the fighter pens were dangerously close to the runway.

Remedial work was carried out during October and November 1944: the runways were resurfaced; the fighter pens were demolished, and a clear strip at least 100 yards on either side of the runway was created; and the hardstanding at the maintenance hangar was nearly doubled in size.

By 1945, with the end of the war in sight, it was obvious to all that the RAF no longer needed a large supply of new pilots. In Nicosia, and elsewhere, Operational Training Units were being closed. No 79 OTU took its final intake of new pilots in April 1945, and finally closed at the end of June. Its personnel returned home to Britain, and the training aircraft left too.

The airfield, of course, remained. Much of the layout and many of the buildings of the wartime airfield are still present today, 70 years later.



Two of the three runways remain, extended, widened and resurfaced at least twice between 1945 and 1974. The third runway was disused by the 1950s; its eastern half now lies underneath in front of the apron of the 1960s terminal, but the decaying tarmac of its western half is still clearly visible on aerial photos and amid the grass. On the western and northern side of the airfield, the old perimeter taxiways are also still present, although heavily overgrown. The old Morphou road can clearly be traced, criss-crossing the runways and taxiways in front of the 1960s terminal. The fifth milepost has disappeared (although the fourth still stands, a mile to the east).

Of the wartime buildings, perhaps the most striking survival is the control tower. It is probably the only public building from the early 1940s standing in Nicosia today.

Both the camps built in 1943 are largely intact. The camp that was built to house the maintenance person-

nel remained in use for military accommodation for many years, under the name of Jubilee Camp. Its buildings are now disused and increasingly derelict but still standing, adjacent to the car park at the 1960s terminal building. The OTU camp, by contrast, is still in use, as UNFICYP's main base. Its accommodation huts and mess halls, built seven decades ago on the edge of the barren plateau, now stand amid mature trees and have been converted to offices and briefing rooms.

The Bellman hangar that was erected in early 1944 has been re-clad but still stands, and now houses the UN helicopters. The original maintenance workshop, which was just to the north of the hangar, survived into the 1950s but was subsequently demolished. Its concrete plinth, however, is still present.

The two heavy bomber pens that stood at the south western corner of the main runway have similarly been demolished, but their tarmac bases are still present, and the rubble of the walls of the southern pen still lies strewn around it. The two huts that stood between the two bomber pens, and which housed the Air Sea Rescue flight office during the war, have also been long since demolished; but, again, their plinths remain, as does the concrete path linking them to the main tarmac.

Twelve underground fighter pens were originally built on the airfield. Eleven have been completely destroyed, but one partially survives. Its ramp has been flattened and the underground pen largely in-filled with earth, but its concrete roof-slab is still in place in and a small cavity remains beneath it.

The railway and siding were lifted in 1952. The closed road that bounds the north-western corner of the airport was built on the line of the old railway. The flat strip of land alongside the road, just outside Crash Gate 5, was once the site of the siding.

Overall, Nicosia Airport is an open air museum. Many of its exhibits date from the Second World War, when the site was transformed from a bare plateau into a large and well-equipped airfield with all the installations and facilities to become one of the RAF's most important overseas stations.

By Tim Reardon



Archive photos from the Press and Information Office of the Republic of Cyprus

The floral charm of the UNPA in spring

Despite being only four kilometers from the heart of Nicosia, the UNPA remains a delightfully natural biosphere with plenty of wonderful plant species, including some that are endemic or unique to Cyprus.

This past, particularly wet, winter has brought out the best of this floral charm in all its glory. A walk around the UNPA this spring can be most gratifying, as an amazing display awaits those who keep their eyes peeled on the ground.

No one can miss the masses of yellow, the predominant colour of spring, provided by the cape sorrel or Bermuda buttercup (*Oxalis pes-caprae*), the crown daisies (*Glebionis coronaria*), white mustard (*Sinapis alba*), and Asiatic anemones (*Ranunculus asiaticus*) that abound beside the road as they drive through. Even the pretty lilac, mauve and white crown anemones (*Anemone coronaria*), white chamomile daisies (*Matricaria chamomilla*) and red poppies (*Papaver rhoeas*) can be spied without even getting out of the car.

Apart from the more common species of road-side flowers there are some rarer ones as well. At least five varieties of beautiful and delicate orchids can be found if you know where to look - and if they haven't been sadly mown down by the golf course grounds man with his tractor-mower! Small Carmel orchids (*Ophrys flavomarginata*), Yellow orchids (*Ophrys lutea* ssp *galilaea*)

and a particularly pretty *Ophrys argolica* ssp *elegans* can be found down in the woods. On nearby slopes, rarer Fan lipped orchids (*Ophrys collina*) can be found poking up amongst the thyme (*Thymus capitatus*), spiny burnet (*Sarcopoterium spinosum*) and wild asparagus bushes (*Asparagus acutifolius*). There is even a patch of giant orchids (*Himatoglossum robertianum*) over behind St. Michael's School on the British married quarters side.

Grape hyacinth (*Muscari Parviflorum*), *Romulea* (*Romulea tempskyana*) and the mythical Mandrake (*Mandragora officinarum*) are just three of the purple flowers you can find, while tiny blue Iris (*Gynandris sisyrinchium*) and Blue Pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis caerulea*) can also be spotted.

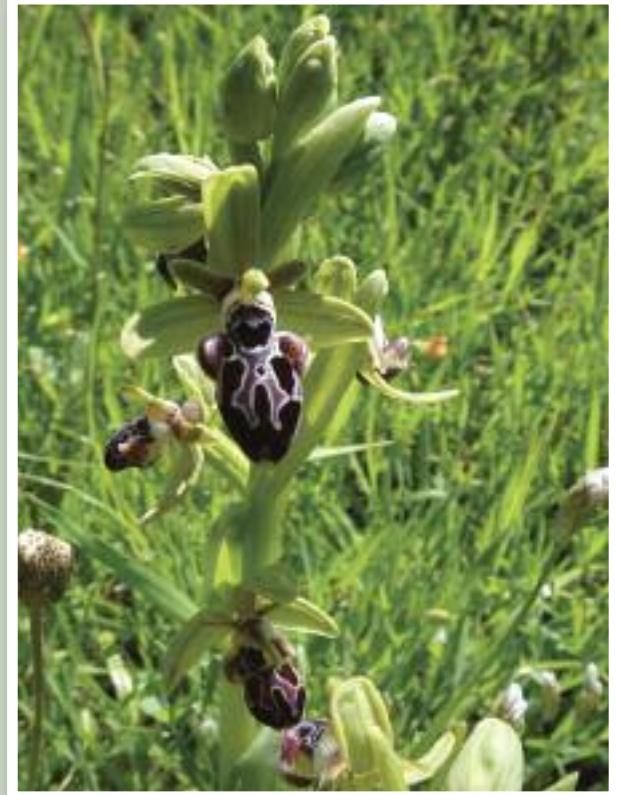
More yellow flowers can be found if you look closely - Field marigolds (*Calendula arvensis*), Everlasting sun gold (*Helichrysum stoechas*), Common buttercups (*Ranunculus bullatus*) and even Grecean flea bane (*Phagnolium graeca*).

Amongst the endemic specials we are fortunate to find in the UNPA are Golden Drop (*Onosma fruticosum*), Veined Sainfoin (*Obnobjchis venosa*), Star of Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum umbellatum* ssp *divergens*) and Rockrose (*Helianthemum obtusifolium*). So, if you go down to the woods today, you're in for a nice surprise!

by Diana Bridger



Giant orchids (*Himatoglossum robertianum*)



Small Carmel orchids (*Ophrys flavomarginata*)



Star of Bethlehem
(*Ornithogalum umbellatum* ssp *divergens*)



Rockrose (*Helianthemum obtusifolium*)



Ophrys argolica ssp elegans



Golden Drop (*Onosma fruticosum*)



Yellow orchids (*Ophrys lutea* ssp *galilaea*)



Fan lipped orchids (*Ophrys collina*)

Humanitarian face of peacekeepers

Peacekeepers In Sector 4 held a blood donation on 20 March in support of the community in the north where there is increased need for blood transfusions for thalassaemia patients. The inherited blood disorder affects approximately 5% of the population on the island and originated around the Mediterranean region from where it derives its name - thalassa is

Greek for the sea, Haema is Greek for blood. The disease is also sometimes referred to as Mediterranean anemia. Medical staff from the Thalassaemia Centre of north Nicosia General Hospital together with the Medical Centre in Sector 4 conducted the blood donations and received blood from 35 peacekeepers (22 members of SLOVCON, 10 SERCON, and 3 HUNCON).

**By Lt Col Andrej HARENDRÁČÍK, M.D.
(Senior Medical Officer Sector 4)**



Environmental committee welcomes the new bicycle transportation system

Transport is a main contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. This means that it has a direct impact on climate change. The first mile of every journey produces an excessively high level of carbon dioxide (CO₂), which is very harmful for the environment when you consider that one in four car journeys are less than two miles, especially if you live on a small island like Cyprus. However, this is not the case if the transportation you are using is a bicycle! Bicycling is considered by many as the healthiest, most competent and one of the cleanest forms of transportation.

The UNFICYP Environmental Committee is therefore pleased to announce the Transport Unit's initiative to introduce a bicycle transportation system within the UNPA. The bicycles are used by the Unit's staff for deliveries of internal mail and Good Offices mail, attending meetings and going to lunch. The bicycles are also used for picking up vehicles from the contractor Astra, on the base. What is more exciting though is that the bicycles are available to use by all civilian, police and military personnel of UNFICYP upon request!

UNFICYP is a community that cares for the environment and this attempt proves it once more.

Important note for cyclists: You should always be careful when riding a bicycle.

- Do not use a mobile phone or headphones while using a bicycle. Lack of concentration is dangerous for you and other people around you.
- Since you are in Cyprus, ride your bicycle on the left of the road in the same direction as the rest of the traffic.
- Always use hand signals when performing a left or right turn.
- Be alert. Always pay attention to what pedestrians and cars around you are doing, to avoid any unfortunate accidents.
- Use the right cycling accessories and safety equipment.



29 Regiment Group

Sector 2 UNFICYP Roulement Regiment ~ 1 April 2012 – 1 October 2012

29 Regiment Group was formed specifically for the UNFICYP Sector 2 role. It has been drawn from 29 Regiment RLC and augmented by 20 primary British Units.

The largest single unit representation in the 29 Regiment Group is provided by 29 Regiment RLC. Although only formed in 1970, 29 Regiment has a long and distinguished history in a number of combat service support disciplines. It is a unit delivering unique and niche defence capabilities in support of the United Kingdom's military capability worldwide.

Capabilities of 29 Regiment are diverse and include Movement Control, responsible for the movement of troop, vehicles and material from the point of origin to both operational and non-operational theatres. Postal and Courier Operators play a vital role in the litigation against insurgents, couriering forensic evidence from operational theatres to specialist units within the UK. Finally, Air Despatch is the UK aerial delivery capability, despatching loads from fixed and rotary wing aircraft for high intensity operations. This also includes permanent support to the UK National Standby commitment. 29 Regiment also operates the

Joint Air Mounting Centre (JAMC), enabling the deployment of troops required for enduring and contingent operations. The JAMC processes up to 40,000 troops per year, facilitating not least the entire British military commitment to Afghanistan.

Also included on this UN deployment are chefs, pioneers, drivers, vehicle mechanics, carpenters, joiners, plumbers, human resource specialists, communication specialists, petroleum operators and combat engineers. All of our attached personnel bring a wealth of experience and add flavour, our diversity of trades and experience is a real strength to 29 Regiment Group. The Force Commanders' Mobile Force Reserve (MFR) is provided by 10 Queens' Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment RLC (QOGLR) and 155 Regiment RLC (V).

29 Regiment RLC has been committed on operations continuously, deploying no less than 120 soldiers per calendar year since 2002, to either Iraq or Afghanistan. The Regiment will remain at the forefront of logistic force elements on operations in the coming year, with over 200 personnel deployed in support of the 2012 Olympic Games, UNFICYP, Afghanistan and Tri-Service deployments.

The units that make up 29 Regiment

29 Regiment RLC	10 QOGLR	24 Regiment RLC
102 Bn REME (V)	27 Regiment RLC	8 Regiment RLC
38 Regiment RE	23 Pioneer Regiment RLC	5 RMP
APHCS	162 Regiment RLC (V)	155 Regiment RLC (V)
Catering Support Regiment (V)	3 Royal Anglian Regiment (V)	395 AD Troop RLC (V)
335 Medical Regiment RAMC (V)	71 Signal Regiment (V)	37 Signal Regiment RS (V)
16 Medical Regiment RAMC	1 Medical Regiment RAMC	



Senior Police Adviser bids farewell

After nearly four and half years of serving with UNFICYP, UNPOL's popular Senior Police Adviser, John Farrelly is leaving the mission.

John has been in this position since 26 April 2009 and previously served as the Deputy Senior Police Adviser between December 2007 and December 2008, returning to Ireland for four months in between taking up the position as SPA.

As Senior Police Adviser he has been charged with the responsibility of overseeing and managing 69 officers from ten different countries and ensuring that the UNPOL mandate is carried out to the letter of the law. He has also been involved in overseeing the ongoing dialogue between both sides as part of the peace talks as the facilitator and chairman of the Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters as well as the Joint Communications Room which was successfully set up as a communications system between the police forces on both sides of the island.

John retired from An Garda Siochana (Ireland's Police Service) at the rank of Chief Superintendent in October 2011. He had been in the force since 1976, and some of the key positions he held during his service included being spokesman and press and public relations officer for twelve years for the organization as well as heading up the Road Safety and Traffic Department.

John is the holder of two awards for bravery, one being awarded by the Government of Ireland for saving the life of a man who had fallen down a cliff face.

He is a member of the Public Relations Institute of Ireland. He holds a diploma in Public Relations, is a member of the International Institute of Security, and has a Bachelor of Arts Degree (Hons) in Police Management. John plans to return to Ireland but one cannot imagine him taking it easy for too long.

John takes home many fond memories of his time in Cyprus but his prize acquisition is definitely his lovely Jordanian wife Luma, whom he married in Amman in August 2010.



NEW FACES

Chief Civilian Personnel Office



Eran Schweiger arrived in UNFICYP in April to take up the position of Chief Civilian Personnel Officer. Eran Schweiger joined the UN in January 2007 (as part of the National Competitive Recruitment Programme) with previous assignments as Head of Staff Administration with UNESCAP and recently Head of the Quality Assurance Unit in the Field Personnel Division in DFS, specializing in human resources policy, performance management and the Administration of Justice system. Eran holds degrees in Law and Business, and has previously worked as a corporate lawyer in private sector firms and investment banks.

Liaison Officer to the Turkish Forces



Lieutenant Colonel Vladimír Jaklovský was appointed UNFICYP Liaison Officer to the Turkish Forces on 22 March. Prior to arriving in UNFICYP he was appointed as Deputy Commander of the Air Command, Control and Surveillance Brigade in Zvolen. Lieutenant Colonel Jaklovský joined the Air Force in 1980 as a cadet in the Air Force Academy Košice. He graduated from the Academy in 1984 and was promoted to Lieutenant and was posted as the liaison officer of the Command Post of the 2 Air Defence Division. He served as a Fighter Controller and Fighter Allocator until 1990. He was then appointed as instructor to the Air Force Academy. In 1991 he transferred back to Air Policing with the 1 Air Defence Division in Zvolen, where he served in various positions at the Control and Reporting Centre (CRC) until 2003. In 2004 he became staff officer and was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and consequently posted as Deputy Commander of the Air Operations Control Station in Zvolen. During the period 2005 – 2008 Lt Col Jaklovský was sent to NATO as a Section Head reporting on the Air Operations Centre Ramstein, Allied Air Component Command HQ Ramstein, Germany. Following his NATO operational tour he was appointed Deputy Commander of Air Command, Control and Surveillance Brigade in Zvolen. Lieutenant Colonel Jaklovský has also taken the Staff Course of the Royal Air Force, Henlow and has participated in various courses, mostly dealing with Air Policing, Forward Air Control and Close Air Support issues. UNFICYP is his first UN mission in his military career. Lieutenant Colonel Jaklovský is married to Bronislava and has three children.

Civil Affairs Military Liaison Officer



Lieutenant Colonel Walter Absmann joined UNFICYP at the end of March taking up the post of Civil Affairs Military Liaison Officer (CAMLO). He was born in the city of Mozart, Salzburg, Austria on 5 May 1957. After attending a technical collage he joined the Army in 1976 and graduated as a Logistics Officer in 1980. During his career, he has served in a number of positions, including Technical Officer of an Engineer Battalion and Anti-Aircraft Regiment and running a Tank and Vehicle Maintenance Department at Army level. For a period of about five years he used to work as a Technical Manager in the bicycle and motorbike company KTM in Upper Austria. This is his fourth tour with UNFICYP after being deployed as a platoon leader in Pyla and Louroujina back in 1994 - 1995, Motor Transport Officer with AUSCON in Famagusta in 1998 and CAMLO at HQ UNFICYP from 2001 - 2004. He was also deployed as a MOVCON Officer to UNMIS, Sudan in 2005, Military Observer with MINURSO Western Sahara 2006 - 2007, Military Assistant with AUTCON/EUFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2008 - 2010 and 2011 and Arms Monitor with UNMIN in Nepal 2010. LtCol Absmann is married to Bojana and has a daughter, Julia, 20 and a son, Alexander, 9 who was born in Nicosia during his last tour of duty with UNFICYP. His hobbies are skiing, touring, swimming and travelling.

Officer in Command of the Mobile Force Reserve



Major Craig Hampton-Stone is the new Officer in Command of the Mobile Force Reserve. He commissioned into the British Army in April 1996 with his first posting being to 3 Close Support Regiment Royal Logistic Corps (RLC). He served subsequent postings at the Training Regiment and Depot RLC, 4 General Support Regiment RLC before completing the Ammunition Technical Officer Course. He then spent time as the second-in-command of 92 Ammunition Squadron and Officer in Command of 90 HQ Squadron. In 2007 he deployed to Afghanistan as the Senior Ammunition Technical Officer. On his return, he completed the Intermediate Command Staff Officer Course (Land) and was posted to HQ Division RLC as the Corps Recruiting and Liaison Officer. He is currently employed as Officer in Command of 66 Fuel Squadron in 10 Queens Own Gurkha Logistics Regiment. On return to the UK he is posted to the Joint Force Logistic Component in Permanent Joint Head Quarters as SO2 J5a. He is married to Jo and has a step-daughter called Gemma. He is a passionate fan of rugby and is painfully dedicated to supporting the Newport-Gwent Dragons. He enjoys playing cricket, golf, squash and the majority of team sports. He is known to play the guitar from time to time.

Commanding Officer of Sector 2



Lieutenant Colonel Anna E. Kimber is the new Commanding Officer of Sector 2. Educated at Millfield School and Birmingham University, Lieutenant Colonel Kimber was introduced to the Army during a one year University Gap Year Commission in Hong Kong in 1989. She commissioned into the Royal Logistic Corps in 1993 and spent her first tour with 10 Transport Regiment, which included a tour of Northern Ireland supporting 1 PARA (Infantry Battalion). A subsequent posting to Germany as Squadron Second in Command at 7 Transport Regiment enabled her to complete a tour of Bosnia as the Theatre Local Resources Commander. Lieutenant Colonel Kimber then assumed the appointment of Adjutant at Army Training Regiment Pirbright, which included the dubious pleasure of conducting a number of mounted parades – an interesting concept for a non-horse rider. After promoting to Major in 1999, staff appointments included

a brief time at the Logistic Information Systems Agency, before a year in the Directorate Corporate Communications (Army) in the Ministry of Defence. Whilst there, she deployed to Sierra Leone and Macedonia as Media Operations/Spokesman. Having been selected to attend Advanced Command and Staff Course, her first year was spent completing a Masters Degree in Public Communication and Public Relations. Following this, she was given command of 19 Tank Transporter Squadron in Bulford, UK. From here, she deployed to Afghanistan to command both the International Security Assistance Force Protection Company and Transport Squadron, based in Kabul. On return, she was posted as Directing Staff of Intermediate Command and Staff College (Army), where she was selected for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel in 2008. Following promotion, she worked in Force Development at Headquarters Director Royal Logistic Corps. She assumed command of 29 Regiment Royal Logistic Corps, based in Wiltshire, UK, in June 2010. A former Combined Services athlete and basketball player, she is married to Phil, who commands 1 MERCIAN (Infantry Battalion) and they have three young sons. Interests include still participating in sport wherever possible, working cocker spaniels and good red wine.

Deputy Commanding Officer of Sector 1



Lieutenant Colonel Nestor Gabriel Oprandi arrived in UNFICYP in March to take up the position of Deputy Commanding Officer of Sector 1. He was born on 8 November 1968 in the city of Esperanza in Santa Fe. He graduated from the Argentinean Military College in 1990 and is an Infantry Officer in the Argentine Army. He attended the Argentinean Military Tertiary School of Warfare and the Italian Army Tertiary School of Warfare and has a Masters in International Studies and Military Strategy. He has worked in a number of positions including Section Chief of Infantry and Section Chief of Cazadores (Hunters), a Senior Instructor and Chief of Company in the National Military College and currently he serves as a Chief of Mountain Hunters 6 Company. Lt. Col. Oprandi also participated in the Armoured Troops Course (Federal Republic of Germany) and served on the Mechanized Battalion 332 in Germany. He has a special aptitude as a Mountain Trooper, Military Para trooper and Military Commando. He is married to Amelia and has three children Matias, Lucas and Milagros.

Chief of the Military Training Cell



Lieutenant Colonel Francisco Machinandiarena arrived in UNFICYP on 30 March to take up the post of Chief of the Military Training Cell, primarily responsible within the Force for the development and supervision of training, including the delivery of training guidelines for the contingents/components or units training activities and for coordinating all of UNFICYP military and sports competitions. Lt Col Machinandiarena has served in the Argentine Army for 28 years and has participated in numerous professional and career development trainings at home and abroad. He is a graduate of the Command and General Staff College in Buenos Aires. He has a unique blend of command, staff and instructional experience in different establishments, including army headquarters and the Training Academy in the country. His previous peacekeeping experience includes a tour of duty as the Signal Platoon Leader in UNPROFOR from April 1992 – October 1992 and the Contingent Communications Officer in UNTAES from May 1996 to November 1996. Before arriving in UNFICYP he worked within the Argentine Army to plan, coordinate, conduct, evaluate and report on all units information and communications technology training activities including courses, and seminars; to prepare and present briefings on training policy and guidelines to senior management. He is married to Estela and they have two children, Maria Cruz (20) and Francisco Enrique (18). His interests include sports, running and swimming.

Public Information Officer



Rama Maria Razy joined the Public Information team in UNFICYP on 19 April. She had previously worked for the UN mission in East Timor as their head of publications as well as for other UN agencies including the World Food Programme and the World Health Organisation. She has been working in international development for the past 11 years, concentrating on communication projects in Cambodia and East Timor. Rama holds degrees in journalism and international relations. She is joined by her husband and three lovely daughters.

VISITS



UNFICYP Chief of Mission Ms. Lisa Buttenheim greets Mr. Dragan Sutanovac, Serbian Minister of Defence during his visit to UNFICYP Headquarters on 18 April.

VISITS



General Bertrand Ract-Madoux Chief of Staff of the French Army visited UNFICYP on 29 March and met with Force Commander Maj General Chao Liu and Chief of Staff Col Gerard Hughes.



Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach accompanied by Air Vice Marshal G.E Stacey met with Force Commander Maj Gen Chao Liu and Chief of Staff Col Gerard Hughes on 5 April during a visit to UNFICYP.



On 28 March Lt Gen David Capwell accompanied by Air Vice Marshal G.E Stacey visited UNFICYP and met with Force Commander Maj Gen Chao Liu and Chief of Staff Col Gerard Hughes.

International Day For Mine Awareness

