

The Blue Beret

Volume 36 - April 2000



**pilgrimage to Apostolos Andreas
blood testing in Ledra Palace Hotel
mast building at Camp Duke Leopold V**



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editorial

Fifteen years after he first came to Cyprus, an UNFICYP staff member returned for a five-month stay with the Force and found that much had changed in that time. In and around Nicosia, the spread of concrete and asphalt and denser traffic, mobile phones beeping everywhere, a booming stock market... Water shortages remained the same or worse, but efforts were starting to confront the situation, whether through desalination plants or an undersea pipeline... There was now at least some evidence of a desire to preserve some green space; the precious Akamas and Karpas areas were potentially threatened but still mainly intact. Fortunately unchanged were the tantalizing smells of sheftali and kebabs on the grill, the jasmine-scented evenings, the friendly greetings of "kalimera" or "günaydin"...

Of course, the returning staff member found a smaller Force than before - but it was still successfully performing its tasks in the buffer zone. Some of the flags were new, but the spirit of cooperation and good humour among soldiers, police and civilian staff of all nations composing the Force remained alive, as it was in the mid-1980s. The unmanning of some posts along the Green Line had eased tensions and reduced dangerous incidents. While the Cyprus problem had outlived the 20th century, there were now signs that through the effects of the EU and Greek-Turkish rapprochement, there may be a better chance of reaching an agreement if the necessary will is there.

The staff member was glad to have had the opportunity for another stay on the island. Best of all would be to return again to a Cyprus whose people will have found the way to a settlement, a Cyprus where UNFICYP will no longer be needed.

Charles Gaulkin

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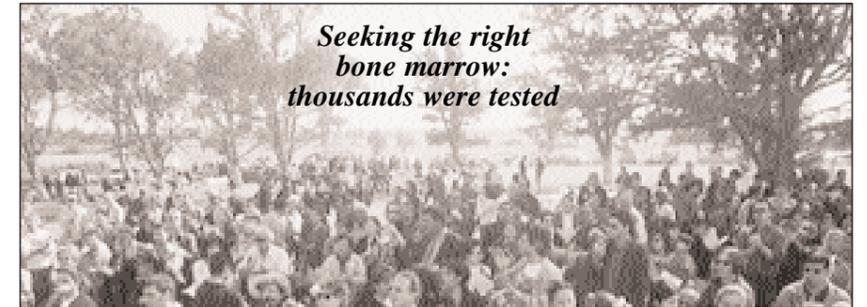


FOR ANDREAS AND KEMAL, THE HOPE OF HEALTH

They lined up by the hundreds and then by the thousands - Greek and Turkish Cypriots, giving samples of their blood. At the Ledra Palace, on both sides of the Green Line, and in Greece, Turkey and England, people were responding to the need for bone marrow transplants to help two children afflicted with leukemia: a Greek Cypriot, six-year-old Andreas Vassiliou, and Turkish Cypriot Kemal Saracoglu, 12.

The large number of potential donors was necessary because the odds of finding the right match were estimated at about 30,000 to 1. While they await results of the blood tests, the boys are undergoing treatment abroad - Andreas at a clinic in Texas, and Kemal at a hospital in London.

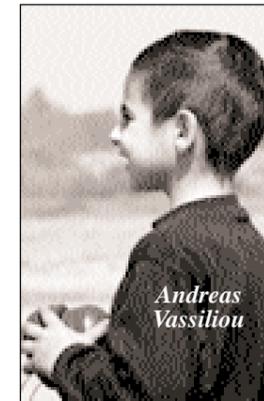
The campaign was initially launched by the Karaiskakio Foundation in Nicosia to find a marrow donor for Andreas, and the plight of Kemal was revealed later on. After



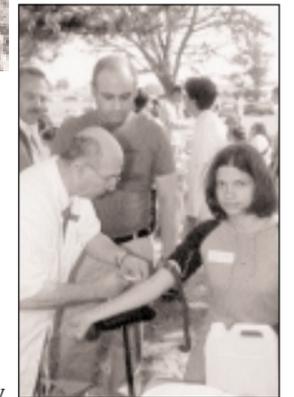
Seeking the right bone marrow: thousands were tested



Kemal Saracoglu



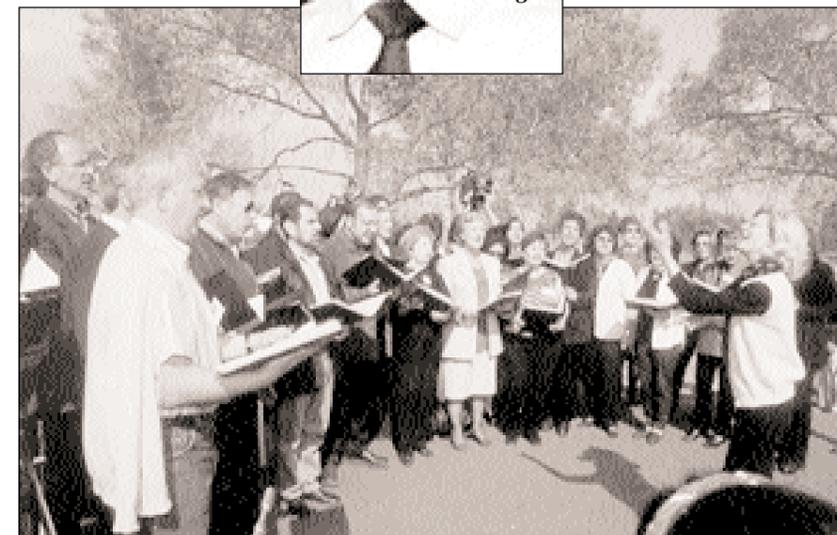
Andreas Vassiliou



they saw media reports about the campaign, Turkish Cypriots offered to participate. They joined Greek Cypriots in giving blood at a bicomunal youth festival in the Pergamos area, and then UNFICYP provided a blood-sampling location at the Ledra Palace in the buffer zone. More than 400 Turkish Cypriots came to be tested at the Ledra Palace, including political leaders Serdar Denktash and Mehmet Ali Talat. Blood donations continued later in north Nicosia.

As members of both communities joined in a common effort to help Andreas and Kemal, politicians and media on both sides welcomed what one paper called "the outbreak of generosity" which opened a bridge of communication.

(According to late reports, possible marrow donors for Kemal may now have been found.)



While donors gave blood samples, the Bicomunal Choir sang at a Youth Festival near Pergamos



ME AND MY OP

Hello, I'm Private Leigh Fowler from Stoke-on-Trent, England. I am 22 years old. Yes, you're right, I do look younger.

This is the first time I serve abroad. What do I think of it? I like the Cyprus weather very much, and the beaches. Recently I went to do some adventurous training. A bit of jet skiing and para-sailing. It was great! Good to be away from serving in the buffer zone for a while. The bad thing about missions is that I miss my fiancée Joanne (Joe) Lawton madly. Only three more weeks until the end of April, before I will have my leave. Joe and I will go to Paphos to have a good time there.

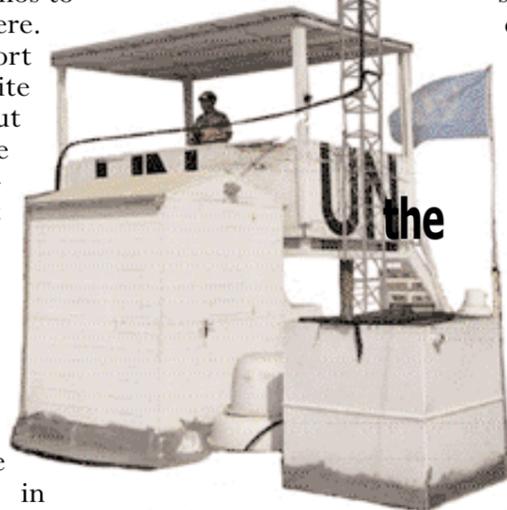
I also miss Port Vale, my favourite football club. But maybe they miss me even more. Without me cheering at the pitch, they ended up at the bottom of the 1st division. They've finally won a game 2:0, after losing 10 games in a row. Although I'll have finished my tour in

Cyprus before Euro 2000, I don't know if I'll visit the tournament. It all depends on the financial situation. We'll probably get married next year, you know.

My OP is UN Observation Post 62, on top of Ledra Palace. Do you want a tower brief, sir? Please take this set of binoculars. Please follow me to the front of the hotel. I'll show you how the buffer zone runs, and where Patricia Gate is. From this OP I have a perfect view over the area of responsibility of Ledra platoon. It's a bit hazy now, but on clear days, I can see most of the Mesaoria plains. Ledra platoon's operations room is a bit dark. That's why I always like to do my two-hour shifts here and get some fresh air. In wintertime it can be a bit nippy, especially when there's a strong wind.

When Ortona platoon was undermanned, I served three days in their area. I particularly liked to be in close contact with soldiers of both opfors. Up on my roof, everything's a bit distant.

But I see a lot happening down below. Look there, that Landrover takes the shortcut over the gravel path. If the driver had followed the road, it would have been a violation. And after all, that's what I'm here for, to observe and to report violations when they occur.



MEDAL PARADE IN SECTOR 1

As is customary after serving 90 days duty with UNFICYP, the UN medal was presented to those soldiers serving with the 14th Argentinian Contingent with UNFICYP. The first ceremony took place at San Martin Camp on



The second parade at Soli amphitheatre

on 14th March.

As personalities from UNFICYP, families and other civilian and military organisations looked on, the UN medals were presented by the Force Commander, assisted by four senior staff. The Force Commander then

addressed the troops in a short but moving speech, praising the professionalism and responsibility shown by all members of the contingent.

Following the medal presentations, members of Sector 1 left the military atmosphere and put

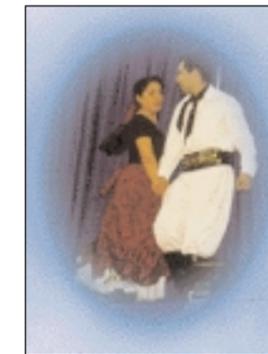


10th March, and joining them were Argentinian personnel from the UN Flight, the Mobile Force Reserve and the Force Military Police Unit. Only those on duty were not present, but they received their medals in a similar ceremony, this time held in the Soli amphitheatre



The Force Commander during the medal presentation

on a short demonstration of the Argentinian culture for their guests including traditional Argentinian popular songs, folkloric dancing and, of course, the tango. As one guest commented: "We were very impressed with the performance of the dancers. We would never have guessed they



weren't professionals! Not only that, but we were also invited to take part in the dancing afterwards with the charming men and women from Sector 1. They did their best to make each and every one of us welcome, and we felt like we were in Buenos Aires and the pampas."

Como de costumbre, después de haber cumplido los 90 días de servicio con UNFICYP, la medalla de las Naciones Unidas fue entregada a todos y cada uno de los soldados del 14^o. Contingente Argentino que han prestado sus servicios con UNFICYP por este período. La ceremonia se llevó a cabo el 10 de marzo en el Campo San Martín, estando presentes también, el personal argentino de UN Flight, MFR y FMPU. Únicamente aquellos que estaban de turno, no pudieron estar presentes ese día, recibiendo sus respectivas medallas en una ceremonia similar que se llevó a cabo posteriormente, el 14 de marzo en el Anfiteatro Soli.

Personalidades de UNFICYP, familiares y personal tanto civil como militar de diversas organizaciones, presenciaron la entrega de medallas que fue hecha por el Comandante de la Fuerza, ayudado por cuatro oficiales más. El Comandante de la

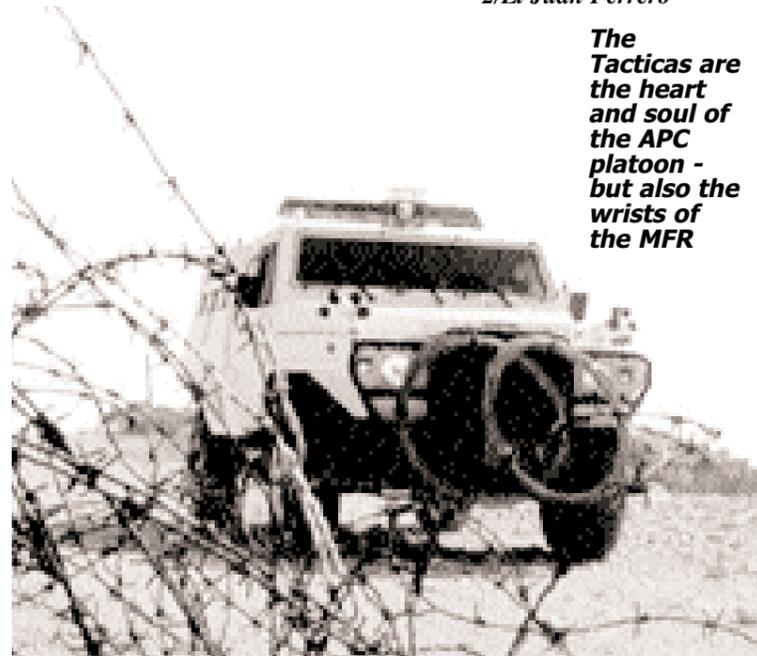
Fuerza dirigió unas palabras breves pero emotivas a toda la tropa, alabando el profesionalismo y responsabilidad mostrados por todos los miembros del contingente.

Después de la entrega de medallas, los miembros del Sector 1 dejaron el aspecto militar para brindar a sus invitados una breve demostración de su cultura, incluyendo canciones y música tradicional de Argentina, al igual que danzas folklóricas y por supuesto, no podía faltar el tango. Uno de los invitados hizo el siguiente comentario: "Pensamos que se trataba de artistas profesionales sin saber que solo eran aficionados. No solo eso, sino que también fuimos invitados por los encantadores soldados y soldadas del Sector 1 para bailar junto con ellos. Además, hicieron todo lo posible para que todos nos sintieramos como en casa, y en realidad nos sentimos como si hubieramos estado en Buenos Aires o en la Pampa."

The armoured gauchos

2/Lt Juan Ferrero

The Tactics are the heart and soul of the APC platoon - but also the wrists of the MFR



consist of a solid "o" ring inside the tyre, allowing the vehicle to run for 20k after a direct impact. The chassis floor can resist the explosion of two hands grenades per m2.

With a Mercedes Benz diesel engine (MB 366A), the vehicle can transport the driver, platoon/sector commander and eight riflemen in the rear. It is air-conditioned and also has a ventilation system installed in case of smoke inside the vehicle.

Among its main specifications, the Tactica has an empty weight of 6,500 kg and combat weight of 10,000kg. It can reach a maximum speed of 120km/h. Its fuel capacity is 167lts, giving it a maximum road range of 650km. It can reach a vertical obstacle of 0.3 m, a gradient 60% and side slope at 30%.

In addition to the roles already mentioned, the Tactica can be used as an ambulance with provision for two stretchers in the rear compartment. This is a very useful feature when it may be necessary to evacuate casualties in an operational situation.

The Tactics, a British-made vehicle adopted by the Argentinian Army, arrived on the island in 1997. Since then they have been on duty, providing the MFR and other UNFICYP units with the ability to carry out their mission successfully.

The Mobile Force Reserve (MFR) consists of four platoons - three rifle platoons and one Armoured Personnel Carrier platoon.

The vehicle currently in use within the MFR's APC platoon is the Tactica, a 4-wheel drive armoured personnel carrier manufactured in the UK by Globber Webb, now associated with Alvis. Designed for police, internal security and military uses, the Tactics are used for patrolling and also for crowd control tasks.

Here in UNFICYP, Argentinian

personnel make up the APC platoon and have nine Tactics under their control, with which they regularly patrol the length of the buffer zone.

The unit has a high level of mobility and ballistic protection. It can resist impacts of 7.62 (lateral 90 degrees and horizontal 50 degrees). The wind-screens are made of 5cm clear armour/protection of silicate and 6mm anti-silver polycarbonate. This also gives protection against fire or petrol bombs. The wheels have the "run flat" system which

the gauchos windsurf

By Capt Alberto Reyes

They are excellent horsemen, but now they've exchanged their horses for boards and sails.

They used to ride over the immense and silent pampas, but now they ride the waves over the blue, inviting Mediterranean.

No, they haven't changed their traditions; they're just enjoying the warm hospitality of Dhekelia Garrison (UNRRATT).

Although, they are novices at the art of water sports, they are quickly improving due to the skill and patience of the UNRRATT instructors.

All Argentinian soldiers from the Mobile Force Reserve who have visited Dhekelia Garrison (including myself) are very grateful for



The gauchos, ready for action

this invaluable experience.

In return for their hospitality, we invited the water sports instructors to taste our particular flavour of Argentinian "Mate" (a herbal drink) and "Asado" (a barbecue).

crime prevention advice:

remove the opportunity

Did you know that there are three basic elements to any crime, namely:

- the Victim,
- the Opportunity, and
- the Criminal.

If you remove any one of these three elements, then the crime cannot be committed. It goes without saying, therefore, that the most common reason criminals strike is because we have supplied them with the opportunity.

Don't forget that criminals do not always go out each day looking for crime: sometimes they just happen to come upon it. Take, for example, when you go down to the beach and, after relaxing for some time in the beautiful sun, you decide to go and have a dip in the sea. Where do you leave your beach bag containing your purse or wallet or other property? More than likely than not, under your sun bed.

To steal this property couldn't be easier. You have supplied the perfect opportunity for the criminal to commit the offence. It was easy for him, it takes him seconds and it's likely that nobody will witness a thing. You then become a victim of crime, your wallet contained your ID cards, driving licence, credit cards, money. So now you've got to start contacting all these agencies to replace or stop the necessary plastic. To make matters

worse, your bag could have contained your car keys, so now, to add insult to injury, you are also walking.

I think we all get the picture. Do not let this happen to you. Always take the minimum required when going to the beach, and always lock your valuable property in the boot of your



car out of sight when parking and securing your vehicle.



CRIME - TOGETHER WE'LL CRACK IT
If you require any advice or assistance on any matter of crime prevention, please do not hesitate to contact your Force Military Police Unit on 4666 or 4669.

Road safety training for kids

In mid April, the Force Military Police ran a week of Cycle Safety Training for the children of UNFICYP personnel. The training was also open to local embassy families. Children from a total of eight countries participated.

The training took place in the UNPA Nicosia. It began with all important theory on the *do's* and *don'ts* of road craft, and progressed to practical lessons in how to ride a bicycle safely and legally on the public road.

Chief Instructor, Sgt Nigel King, and his wife, Sgt Jayne King, are both British MPs who have been trained to British Road Safety standards and have a wealth of experience in teaching road craft to youngsters. "I found this week particularly stimulating," said Nigel. "The children have all been so keen to learn from us and each other. Having kids from so many nations working together has given us a lot of pleasure and satisfaction, and it is a real advert for UN cooperation!"

The course ended with a theory exam, similar to the one required for most driving tests, and a

practical test where children were required to demonstrate that they could ride safely whilst correctly acknowledging road traffic signs.

Each child who passed the course was awarded with a certificate and medal presented by the Force Provost Marshal, Major Richard Moore.



Turning right



Sgt Shaun Turner, Cpl Steve Banks, LCpl Kurt Webster and Pvt Nathan Bate were amongst the 20 Staffords assisting the pilgrims at 6 am

It was just before 4 am when Andri Christodoulidou's alarm woke her up on Thursday, 6 April. Today, Andri would accompany her mother-in-law and a group of travellers on a journey through the north-eastern part of Cyprus. As a tourist guide, this was common practice for her, but this time it would be different. Her objective was not sight-seeing in and around Paphos, the company wouldn't be tourists.

Today, Andri would be one of the group of 607 pilgrims, travelling to the Karpas peninsula to pay homage at the



Vera and her "guardian angels" Joe and Pauline

holy site of Apostolos Andreas.

At the Ledra Palace checkpoint, Supt John Courtney checks his list of eleven names of United Nations Civil Police officers. All are present, awaiting orders. Then John walks to both sides of the checkpoint to meet and greet the Cypriot police on duty. All procedures are discussed beforehand, everybody knows what to do. Except for one detail, John is satisfied.

"The buses still haven't arrived," he says. "They should have been here ten minutes ago."

The only bus in the vicinity is the UN minibus, parked just behind the concrete barrier at the southern side of the checkpoint. Pte Rob Galli from the Motor Transport platoon is behind the steering wheel. He, too, knows what to do.

"I'll shuttle between both sides, to transport those who have trouble walking the distance of about 300 metres. Since most of the pilgrims are cancer and heart patients, I expect to have several passengers."

At 6.30 am, Sgt Cora Whelan escorts the first group of 40 pilgrims through the checkpoint. Most are carrying lunch boxes, masses of candles to light at the monastery, and empty jerricans or water bottles to fill with holy water to take home.

For safety purposes, each bus will have a nurse and a doctor, volunteers from several hospitals, on board. Joe Christodoulou, a UK-qualified nurse from Limassol, is a little upset when she finds out that some of these teams are split up over different buses. "This way, it is possible a doctor is in one bus, and the equipment he needs is in the other," she complains.

UNCIVPOL officers liaise to make sure all pilgrims will have sufficient medical support during the two-hour drive.

Once the groups start transferring, Rob Gallis' shuttle bus comes in handy. Several times, pilgrims decide to walk to the buses by themselves but prove unable to keep up with their group. To ensure that the convoy can set off promptly, Rob offers his shuttling services half way down the checkpoint yet again. This time, more



By Maj Paul Kolken

prayers and pilgrims at Apostolos Andreas

people get in.

Pte John Kily and LCpl Chris McFarlane hope they will not have any passengers today. Quite understandable. They are medics, escorting the convoy of 16 buses with their ambulance.

"It's always good to feel useful," according to Chris. "But for us, it's best when we don't have to use our skills. We are looking forward to the trip. We've heard that the Karpas is a beautiful area, especially in April when the flowers are in bloom and the area looks fresh and green. The weather looks good, and besides, it's always fun

to be a day away from your barracks."

When the convoy heads off, a Turkish Cypriot ambulance joins the link of vehicles. Later that day, this ambulance transported one of the pilgrims with heart problems from the monastery back to Nicosia. It's obvious: everything is very well organised.

When the vehicles finally stop at the monastery, the pilgrims rush towards the holy site, carrying the many candles they have brought along. People help each other to light them, after which they join the crowd inside to pray. Several are visi-

bly moved when they experience the atmosphere inside. Many wait patiently until it's their turn to kiss the icons.

Vera Milona from Limassol is one of the many who haven't been to Apostolos Andreas since 1974.

"I've really been looking forward to this trip. I'm so happy to be back here, and it's good to be taken care of this well," she says, gratefully looking up at Pauline Andreou and Joe Christodoulou, who together make sure Vera and her wheelchair are manoeuvred safely through the crowd. "They are my guardian angels,"

smiles Vera.

After all pilgrims had had the chance to pray inside and eat their lunch overlooking the Mediterranean, Vera still stares through the arches of the monastery, catching every ray of sun she can. Finally, pushed by her guardian angels, she too heads for the buses to start the return journey. She left her candles behind, but brought back with her holy water and the memory of a great experience.

Scarved in Cyprus

By Nurten Celik



Danish Nurten (second from left) with four of her schoolfriends

In Denmark, it's a tradition that you go on a study tour when you're in high school. My class chose to go to Cyprus because of its interesting history.

We travelled with our history and geography teachers, so we studied these two subjects thoroughly beforehand. My choice was influenced because I wanted to see if there is hatred between the two communities as I've always been told. That is why I, Nurten Celik, a 19-year-old Danish girl of Turkish descent, came to Cyprus, south of the buffer zone.

My grandfather arrived in Denmark in the '60s with my father. Later my father married my mother, who then came to Denmark from Turkey. My siblings and I were all born in Denmark, but raised as Muslims. I've only been to Turkey four times in my life.

A month before the trip, my class was split up into groups. Each group had to find facts on a subject on something specific for Cyprus. One example is the UN. A group had to find information about the UN troops on Cyprus. When we were driving from our hotel in Paphos to Nicosia, we told the other students about it. Every time we were about to visit churches, ruins, graves, or the Troodos Mountains, a group presented the results of their fact-finding mission about that particular subject.

I must admit that I didn't think



there is no enmity and hatred between the two communities.

When we were in the buffer zone, I was sad that there was no time for me to cross to the north and visit

I'd get that much attention wearing a headscarf. I thought about the fact that not many other people in Paphos would be wearing one, but I hoped that I wouldn't be the alone. Actually, I only saw one other lady with a headscarf. She greeted me with a greeting from the Koran. I was really happy to meet her, a person looking more like myself. However, I'm sure she took me for an Arab, just like all the Arab men who called at me saying "ya habibi, ya habibi" which means "I love you". They were very surprised that I was from Denmark and not from an Arab country. They told me that they were proud of me because I wore a headscarf and had kept my religion, even though I lived in a Christian country.

Some people knew right away that I was Turkish and this made me nervous; what if everybody could see that I wasn't Arab? I told most people that I was from any Arab country that came to mind because I wasn't sure if I could say that I am Turkish without getting into trouble. I did tell some people though that I have a Turkish background and they all reacted very positively. One Cypriot guy asked me to marry him, and when I reminded him that I was Turkish, he told me that that wasn't a problem. He'd have to be a Muslim if he wanted to marry me, but he said that he would do anything for me.

According to him, there is no enmity and hatred between the two communities.

the Turkish Cypriot people on the other side. I wanted to see how they lived, I wanted to talk to them, and I wanted to meet people of my own origin. When we were walking around in Nicosia near the Green Line, my Turkish friend Gülümser and I heard the praying from the mosque on the other side. We wanted to go there and we had tears in our eyes...we hadn't heard that sound for a very long time.

I've told my friends and my family about my experiences with the Greek Cypriot people, and they were all surprised that the response I received was so positive. They had also expected some difficult situations, but there were none. My family was glad that I had the chance to go to Cyprus, but they felt sorry I wasn't able to cross to the north. That would have been a memorable experience for me.

I think the day in Nicosia and in the buffer zone was the best day of our trip. We all thought it was a very educational day with a lot of excitement and interesting information. I think it's a good idea that UNFICYP takes school classes to see the UN headquarters. Visitors get a broader understanding of the problems on Cyprus, and you can see exactly how serious the situation is when you walk through the buffer zone and the abandoned airport of Nicosia.

I'm very happy I was able to go to Cyprus and meet the Cypriots who are very nice and hospitable people. Even though we are of Turkish descent, they didn't have any prejudice against Gülümser and myself. I don't think there is any hatred between the two people; they just have to learn to live together again.

This trip has answered many of my questions and I hope the conflict will soon come to an end. Then it will be possible for me and other Turks and Greeks to travel around the whole island. It's really worth visiting.

Holding a high position

By Maj Paul Kolken

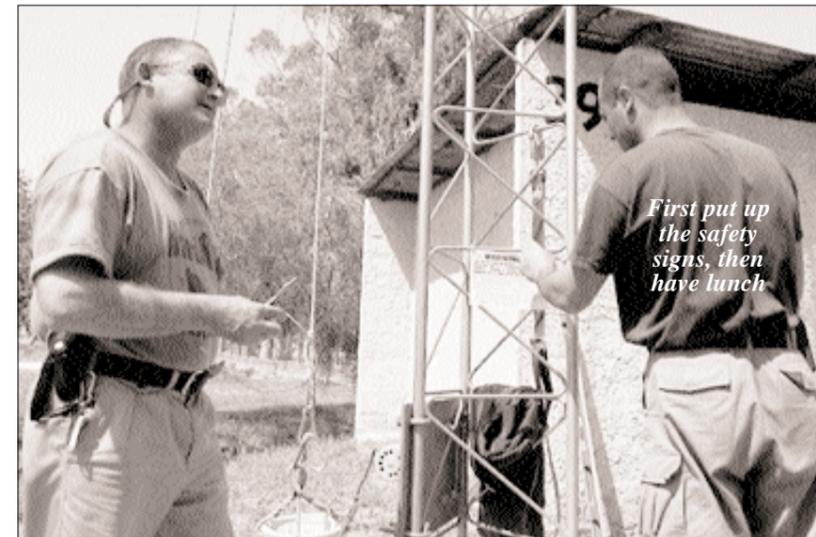


Ground crew and mast climbers - a balanced team

Like a giant mosquito, an ultra-light plane circles above and around Camp Duke Leopold V. The bright colours of the triangular-shaped creature match the colours of the Austrian national flag. The pilot has airspace for him alone. That is, with the exception of two silhouettes, almost atop of a 120-foot mast.

Turkish Cypriot Ali Tunay and New Zealander Tim Sopp ignore the aircraft. Just below the top of the mast they focus on their dangerous task: erecting and securing a new mast, strong enough on which to mount several antennas, and safer than the old mast, still guaranteeing communication between Camp Duke Leopold V in Famagusta and the UNFICYP Headquarters at the United Nations Protected Area in Nicosia.

At ground level, Mahmut Devin and Danish Avedis Bitchadjian are busy connecting the steel cables that support the mast to the solid anchors, positioned at the corners of a virtual triangle with the mast as its centre. The



First put up the safety signs, then have lunch

team of four is part of UNFICYP's communication branch.

Close to the most western anchor, Austrian Private Gerald Rosker reconnects electricity cables. "These were in the way of some steel supporting cables," he explains. "Yesterday I had to disconnect them for an hour. Since that meant about half of our camp, including living quarters, was without electricity, I reconnected them as soon as the mast builders left our camp. Today, I have to do the same strategy again. For me, it's a piece of cake. I am an electrician by trade, one of the four regimental engineers."

In the meantime, Tim came down to assist Mahmut. "Ah, a report for the Blue Beret. Good. Then Mr Clemens Adams (Chief Administrative Officer) can see we actually do work," Tim jokes. On a more serious note he added: "We're in a hurry. Yesterday the weather was fine, but look now, the temperature is rising quickly. This is hard work. Each of the 10-foot sections weighs 35 kilos, The United Nations uses this American mast system in all their operations. Thanks to this magic winch", and he pats a device at the foot of the mast, "it's possible to build this mast without the help of cranes. There are two more masts to replace. One of these is in Dherinia, the other is in Rocca Camp. And we have to be ready before summer strikes hard."

When Ali takes off his safety harness, he confesses that sometimes he feels a bit shaky up there. "Look at the leaves," he says, pointing towards the treetops. "Down here it seems to be a calm day, but I can assure you that above the trees, there's a firm breeze. When the ground team is not as experienced as this one, sometimes there's a sudden jerk on the cables. But you get used to working at these levels. You could say I hold a top position at UNFICYP."

Avedis points out that the team members are very committed. "Yesterday we were really working hard. We even didn't even have a cup of coffee, let alone take a lunch break."

But Tim, the team leader, assures everyone while he takes off his bright blue overall: "Today we will have lunch." And to prove his point he connects a safety warning to the foot of the mast, and escorts his colleagues to the Mess.

Civilian personnel

Top cops

By Sgt Mark Yarrow

With the return of Graham Taylor to Australia in February, Chief Superintendent Michael Fitzgerald has stepped up from his post as Deputy Commander to become the new Commander UNCIVPOL.

Chief Superintendent Fitzgerald is a career police officer with 35 years service in the An Garda Síochána, the Irish Police Force. During that time, he has worked in uniform Garda duties, the Technical Bureau, crime and anti-terrorist investigation, the Immigration Unit, VIP protection and management.

Recounting some of his memorable experiences as a police officer, Michael spoke of his involvement in investigations into the Dublin bombings in 1974, an aircraft hijacking, kidnappings and 30 murders, one unfortunately involving a colleague. During his time with the An Garda Síochána, he has also qualified as a fingerprint expert, not an easy field of policing.

Michael arrived in Cyprus in June 1999 and is accompanied by his wife, Margaret, who, as time goes by, is enjoying her Cyprus experience more and more. Margaret is currently teaching bridge to her international friends, and finds this activity a tremendous source of satisfaction.

In talking of his UNFICYP experience to date, the new UNCIVPOL Commander said: "I find it great to integrate with other people through the United Nations and, as the work



is quite different to my previous role, my position with UNCIVPOL is a challenging experience which has been of tremendous benefit."

Supporting Chief Superintendent Fitzgerald in the management of UNCIVPOL is Commander Graham Gartside of the Australian Federal Police, who has taken over the position of Deputy Commander UNCIVPOL.

Commander Gartside is no stranger to Cyprus, having previously served with UNFICYP from 1987 to 1988. At that time, he held the position of what is now known as United Nations Liaison Officer (Police).

Graham has also been fortunate enough to work overseas as the Australian Senior Police Liaison Officer in London from 1993 to 1996. His area of responsibility in that role not only covered the United Kingdom but also Western Europe, the former Soviet Union, Ireland and the Channel Isles.

While working with UNFICYP

in 1988, he was accompanied by his family and again his wife, Joy, has made the journey from Australia. Joy has a passion for archaeology. She is happy to have the opportunity to roam the Cyprus Museum and other archaeological sites, and would love to be involved in an archaeological dig. She is also learning bridge.

When comparing his past experience in Cyprus with his current one, Graham said: "The integration of the UN civilian police forces provides a new experience and variety, and I believe that one of the benefits is the sharing of work practices and cultures with the Irish Contingent."

Further reflecting on UNFICYP in general, he said: "Although UNFICYP was a larger and more vibrant community in 1988, the air of friendship, camaraderie and the positive attitudes of the personnel are still as strong as ever, despite the reduced numbers."

news crew doing a small story on the efforts of the UN personnel in attempting to save them.

As the usual authorities could not take the dogs, Capt Alvarez, the Commanding Officer of Charlie Company, ARGCON, came to the rescue, offering the services of SSgt Roberto Rocha from UN 35. SSgt Rocha, a dog trainer with the Argentinian Marines for five years, immediately took the pups into his care. After a quick physical, during which he assessed that the puppies were only six hours old, SSgt Rocha commenced the first of the hourly feedings that he would give each puppy, if it were going to survive the night.

Come the morning, a very tired-looking SSgt Rocha returned the dogs, all alive and well, to UNCIVPOL, who had been able to arrange for them to be given into the care of UN Dog Control.

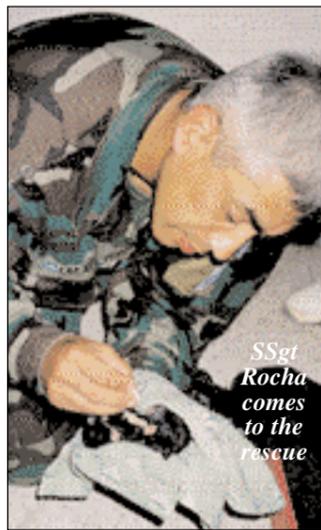
and top dogs

By Sgt Mark Yarrow

Whilst escorting a news crew in the Buffer Zone on 21 March, UNCIVPOL members Garda Trevor Graham and Sgt Mark Yarrow from Dhenia Station came across eight puppies that had been dumped in a plastic rubbish bag near Dhenia. Two of the puppies had already died, but the remaining six were alive and squealing.

Calls were immediately made to the Nicosia Dog Shelter and UN Dog Control for help. Unfortunately, due to a lack of space and the late time of day, neither agency was able to assist.

By this time, the puppies were already on their way to stardom with a Mega TV



SSgt Rocha comes to the rescue

Come celebrate with us

By Sgt Cora Whelan

The Hibernian Club at the UNPA, Nicosia was the place to be on 17 March 2000 for those who wished to raise a glass to Saint Patrick and to celebrate Irishness.

The entire Irish Contingent currently serving within UNFICYP turned out to offer a traditional "cead mile failte" (a hundred thousand welcomes) to each and every one of their guests. Sprigs of shamrock were handed to guests upon their arrival by the Irish children present.

The sounds of ceile music and



When Irish (and other) eyes are smiling....

merriment gained momentum early in the evening, while appetites were whetted with wild Irish smoked salmon on home baked brown bread, along with more familiar Irish liquid refreshments.

As the evening guests arrived, the entertainment took a decidedly international flavour and it was thanks to the delightful members of

the Argentinian Army Band that the rafters of the Hibernian Club were most definitely raised in honour of Saint Patrick. Impromptu displays of dancing from traditional ceile to rock'n'roll simultaneously took place that would put "River Dance" in the halfpenny place! As the Argentinians said, "we must do this again".



Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, is one of Christianity's most widely known figures.

But for all his celebrity, his life remains somewhat of a mystery. Many of the stories traditionally associated with Saint Patrick, including the famous account of his banishing all the snakes from Ireland, are false, the products of hundreds of years of exaggerated storytelling.

It is known that Saint Patrick was born in Britain to wealthy parents near the end of the fourth century. He is believed to have died on 17 March, around 460 A.D. Although his father was a Christian deacon, it has been suggested that he probably took on the role because of tax incentives and there is no evidence that Patrick came from a particularly religious family.

At the age of 16, Patrick was taken prisoner by a group of Irish raiders who were attacking his family's estate. They transported him to Ireland where he spent six years in captivity. There is some dispute over where this captivity took place. Although many believe he was taken to live in Mount Slemish in County Antrim, it is more likely that he was held in County Mayo near Killala.

During this time, he worked as a shepherd, outdoors and away from people. Lonely and afraid, he turned to his religion for solace, becoming a devout Christian. It is also believed that Patrick first began to dream of converting the Irish people to Christianity during his captivity.

After more than six years as a prisoner, Patrick escaped. According to his writing, a voice - which he believed to be God's - spoke to him in a dream, telling him it was time to leave Ireland. To do so, Patrick walked nearly 200 miles from County Mayo, where it is believed he was held, to the Irish coast.

After escaping to Britain, Patrick reported that he experienced a second revelation - an angel in a dream tells him to return to Ireland as a missionary. Soon after, Patrick began religious training, a course of study that lasted more than 15 years. After his ordination as a priest, he was sent to Ireland with a dual mission - to minister to Christians already living in Ireland and to begin to convert the Irish, although there is also a widely held notion that Patrick introduced Christianity to Ireland.

Familiar with the Irish language and culture, Patrick chose to incorporate traditional ritual into his lessons of Christianity instead of attempting to eradicate native Irish beliefs. For instance, he used bonfires to celebrate Easter since the Irish were used to honouring their gods with fire. He also superimposed a sun, a powerful Irish symbol, onto the Christian cross to create what is now called a Celtic cross, so that veneration of the symbol would seem more natural to the Irish.

A three-leafed clover, the shamrock is the national emblem of Ireland. Although it is widely believed that Saint Patrick used the shamrock to illustrate the Christian doctrine of the trinity, this idea cannot be proven. In fact the first written mention of this story did not appear until nearly a thousand years after Patrick's death.

The Shamrock, at one time called the "Seamroy", symbolises the cross and blessed trinity. Before the Christian era it was a sacred plant of the Druids of Ireland because its leaves formed a triad.

The wellknown legend of the Shamrock connects it definitely to Saint Patrick and his teaching. Preaching in the open air on the doctrine of the trinity, he is said to have illustrated the existence of the Three in One by plucking a shamrock from the grass growing at his feet and showing it to his congregation. The legend of the shamrock is also connected with that of the banishment of the serpent tribe

from Ireland by a tradition that snakes are never seen on trefoil, and that it is a remedy against the stings of snakes and scorpions.

The trefoil in Arabia is called *shamrakh*, and was sacred in Iran as an emblem of the Persian triads. The trefoil, as noted right, being a sacred plant among the Druids, and three being a mystical number in the Celtic religion as well as all others, it is probable that Saint Patrick must have been aware of the significance of his illustration.



SGTS' MESS SEC 2 GRAND PRIX

By WO2 J Kennelly

The Formula 1 season has got away to a great start this year. As always, expensive cars, beautiful women and large cash prizes fill the headlines.

However on 22 March at the Old Nicosia Airport, an event took place which would have put Michael Schumacher to shame. Go-karts, ugly men and a prize with a value of at least 2.00 CYP. You've got it - the Sector 2



Sgts' Mess held a go-kart afternoon. Four-man teams from S2E, S2W, the Ledra Palace and the MFR competed for the prestigious Road Rage Trophy.

The first race started tentatively as the racers got used to their karts and the track. A cunning overtaking manoeuvre by CSgt Lester, MFR, in the first heat was swiftly punished by CSgt Billings (S2W) who took great pleasure in introducing young Lester to the tyre wall at great speed.

As the racers got into the swing of things, so the speed and daring of the competitors increased. Size played an important part. The bigger driver's weight was an advantage on the bends, but the lighter drivers had the advantage on the faster parts of the course.

The afternoon finished with one

kart damaged, and so a final race of three competitors was held to decide the overall champion. The final result saw a commendable performance by WO2 Steve Prowse (Chief Clerk Sec 2) in third place, SSgt (Ferrari) Dorst of the MFR finishing in second but the outright winner was CSgt (8 stone, in wet clothes) Lester of the MFR, winning the final race by some 100m.

Special thanks go to Padre McCormack who runs the go-kart events. His powers of tolerance are to be commended, as he remained cool throughout.

The go-kart facility is available every Tuesday afternoon, and anyone wishing to stage a similar event should contact Padre McCormack at the UNPA on (09) 457275 or (02) 359108.

UNPA Sports Day

By LCpl Paul Mather



The winning team

After months of training, the combined British and Dutch team consisting of myself, Ptes Frank Arlington, David Smith and Mark Evans from Irish Bridge, and seven from our Dutch friends at Ypenburg and Bengal, arrived at the UNPA's football field on 6 April at 0830 to receive a brief. Then 45 minutes later, once the remaining teams had arrived, the games began.

We started off with football, volleyball and much shouting from the Chief Clerk; whose bird-man impression as HQ Coy's goalie was superb. I went with the volleyball team. We beat S2E but suffered two defeats by the MFR and HQ. Unfortunately for them, despite the bird-man's efforts, HQ company's football team was beaten by S2W and also the MFR.

The afternoon's events consisted of basketball and water polo at two different locations. I went to play basketball where the language barrier was a slight problem. During the game, instructions in Dutch meant nothing to me, however despite some confusion, we still managed to beat the MFR and S2E. We did suffer a defeat at the hands of HQ (although the referee was HQ; not that he would have been biased at all?).

Other than some Dangerous Brian hats, I didn't see any of the water polo, but all the teams assembled at the pool afterwards, giving LCpl Tommy Noaks the perfect opportunity to take his top off and show everyone he had been to the gym once or twice.

The final event of the day was the swimming relay which was won by MFR with S2W coming second, HQ third, and S2E fourth.

We then had the prize giving and a delicious barbecue without anyone getting food poisoning, which was nice. All in all, a lovely day at the UNPA!

ARGENTINIANS RUN IN TSERI

By SSgt Sergio Castillo

Every year on 25th March, hundreds of runners turn up at the peaceful and picturesque village of Tseri for the 5,000 metres Christos Salides Race. The event has become a tradition since 1986, and is carried out to commemorate Christos Salides who was born in that small village and died there in 1963.

As is customary, men, women and children are grouped into their categories according to age. Adults run 5,000 metres and children 3,000 and 1,000 metres.

UN troops are also invited and generally they come from the sectors representing their nations. However, this year only two Argentinian families serving in UNFICYP attended the event, those of WO III Jimenez from Sector 1 and SSgt Castillo from HQ UNFICYP.

Even though the challenge was difficult, every member of both families finished the race in good time - and all within the first 10. Therefore, trophies as well as medals were awarded to them.



The two Argentinian families

At the prize-giving ceremony, both families were presented with a memento to record their participation in the race, and were warmly invited to come back next year. Once the prize-giving was over, all the participants were served with local food and beverages in a café - a happy ending to an unforgettable but exhausting day.

INTERSERVICES HOCKEY CYPRUS

By 2Lt Catherine Tye



Friday 3 March saw the annual interservices hockey competition Army v RAF. The Army team was selected from all units within BFC, including those personnel currently serving with the United Nations in Nicosia. 2Lt Catherine Tye, Sgt Kath Munro MBE and Cpl Lisa Watson, all AGC (SPS) personnel serving with 1 Staffords, were selected to represent the Army in this high profile event.

At first, the RAF appeared to have the upper hand, scoring within the first five minutes of the whistle blowing. The army,

determined not to be defeated in this annual battle of the services, regrouped and soon scored the equaliser.

The Army then went from strength to strength, soon dictating play in the mid field. Following several high quality build-ups, the Army strikers went on to score two more goals.

At half time, the score was 3-1 and the RAF were beginning to show signs of distress. The Army were encouraged by the local Dhekelia primary school, chanting at the sidelines. Fully enthused by the sup-

port and their own confidence, the Army continued to control the momentum of the match and went on to score a further two goals.

Due to the increase in temperature, the umpires found it necessary to introduce a water break. The RAF, determined not to be defeated, fought hard in the final quarter and scored two goals against a now exhausted Army defence.

The final score was 5-3, the Army regaining the trophy after last year's narrow defeat on penalties.

Popular passion

By Capt Carlos Ferreyra

As most people know, football is the most popular sport in Argentina. It is, therefore, very difficult to select team players for any football match from Sector 1, as the entire contingent wants to participate.

Nevertheless, Sector 1 have picked a team and has held several matches, two recently with Sector 2. The first was won by Sector 1 with a score of 6:0. During this game, the British team had one female player and the Argentinians had a problem settling the dispute of who was going to exchange T-shirts with her!

The second match, again against the Staffords, saw the British team winning this time, 3:1.



Sector 1 is now holding an inter-contingent championship. But they'd like to play another "international" match before the end of their tour in the hope of exchanging goals, camaraderie and T-shirts with their counterparts!

UNDERWATER ESCAPADES

By Lt Andy Thornton

Since deploying to Cyprus in Dec 00, members of 1 Staffords have been involved in underwater escapades in the form of SCUBA diving.

Most individuals have opted to do PADI courses run by civilian instructors. The use of civilian instructors allowed the courses to be tailor-made to the working hours of those on the line.

Classroom work after 'office hours' were followed by pool sessions and then ocean dives at local dive sites such as Cape Greco. Enthusiasm knew no bounds. Gear was purchased in vast quantities with individuals buying just about every item of diving equipment that is manufactured. Fortunately, MFO boxes are not large enough to accommodate diving bells or surface support ships or those would have certainly also been acquired. Only peer pressure stopped some individuals from testing their 'underwater combat diving knives - the bigger the better' during pool sessions.

The first couple of ocean dives were for many a learning experience. The lower temperatures at 20 to

30 metres deep offered a fantastic opportunity to purchase yet more gear in the form of hoods and gloves. The additional pressure underwater meant the normal military solution to illness of gritting one's teeth and getting on with it just did not apply. With minor colds on the surface quickly becoming unbearable at 2 to 3 atmospheres (10 - 20m) even if one had completed several courses at Brecon.

Cyprus offers many exciting opportunities to go diving. Hopefully interest will be maintained on returning to UK in June 00.



Through the blue

Photo by Capt John Jones

sports

sports

UNFICYP's road safety training for kids

