

THE Blue Beret

October 1997



SLOVENIAN TROOPS JOIN UNFICYP

Nestled between Italy, Austria and Hungary on the sunny side of the Alps, Slovenia declared independence six years ago and managed to escape the conflagration that engulfed fellow republics in the former Yugoslavia.

With only two million inhabitants in a country about half the size of Switzerland, Slovenia sees itself today as a part of Western Europe. It shows a strong desire to project itself as a dynamic new member of the United Nations family, and its contribution to UNFICYP is yet another step towards this end.



Slovenian troops at patrol base UN 140

The first Slovenian contingent (SLOCON 1) arrived in Cyprus on 23 September 1997, and is composed of four officers and six NCOs. Two officers will be conducting their duties at HQ Sector Four in Famagusta: the first is the Contingent Commander, Capt Boško Haupt, a Duty Officer, and his Deputy is Capt Damjan Fartek, a Supply Officer. Two officers are stationed in 2 Coy, one as Deputy Company Commander and the other as a Deputy Platoon Leader.

The remainder of SLOCON 1 is deployed at patrol base UN 140. Welcome to UNFICYP!

MUSICIANS IN THE SERVICE OF PEACE

Peace-keepers with the United Nations Force in Cyprus around Sector One are not restricted to soldiers on the line, engineers, clerks, etc. Since the Argentinian Contingent joined UNFICYP in September 1993, military musicians have been included in the Force.

After four years with UNFICYP, the Argentinian Military Band has become familiar to everyone, since they never refuse a request to play at contingent Medal Parades or national celebrations. Even though personnel rotate every six months, the Band members are wellknown around UNFICYP.

Within ARGCON, the daily duties performed by the musicians are the same as those expected of anyone else within the Sector. These include internal tasks in the HQ Company at San



The musicians of Sector One

Martin Camp, as well as operational tasks and training carried out by the Permanent Force Reserve company, and their ability in all areas of employment has proven most satisfactory.

Once a week, just before the start of activities at 7:00 am, the band plays a variety of songs, and they can be sure that the members

of Sector One really appreciate their effort.

It is a wellknown fact that soldiers perform to the best of their ability when their morale is high, and there is no doubt that the musicians of Sector One contribute to a healthy esprit de corps around the Camp, making Argentina just that little bit closer.

VOLUME 34 NUMBER 10 OCTOBER 1997

Published monthly by the Spokesman's Office of the United Nations Force in Cyprus, HQ UNFICYP, PO Box 1642, Nicosia, Cyprus
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The Blue Beret is the journal of the United Nations Force in Cyprus and, as such, is intended to provide a source of information on current events within the Force, on UN matters of general interest and on local tourist advice.

Articles of general interest are invited from all members of the Force. Photographs, together with captions, should accompany the articles.

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Printed in Cyprus by
Fri-El Press
13 King Paul Street
Parissinos, Nicosia
Tel: 350186

FRONT COVER:

**SLOVENIAN SOLDIERS
JOIN UNFICYP**

PHOTO BY
SGT BOBBIE LIPSETT

The Blue Beret



EDITORIAL

The numerical strength of UNFICYP has varied over the years since the inception of the Force. In June 1964, shortly after the first troops arrived, the strength stood at 6,411 all ranks with military contingents from Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom, and civilian police units from Australia, Austria, Denmark, New Zealand and Sweden. Since then, the Force has undergone many transformations to its current strength of about 1,200. For various reasons, a number of troop-contributing nations, such as Denmark, Sweden and New Zealand, withdrew their units from Cyprus; others, like Austria, Canada, Finland, Ireland and Great Britain, have significantly reduced their strength. Meanwhile, new contributing countries have sent their troops. In September 1993, we welcomed the Argentinians, followed by the Hungarians in November 1995. This month, we welcome our new colleagues from Slovenia. Yet another flag has been proudly raised in the service of peace.

Let us therefore welcome the 10-man Slovenian unit consisting of four officers and six NCOs, serving within the Austrian Battalion in the eastern part of the UN controlled Buffer Zone. Your first days on the island will no doubt have been difficult and demanding, but you will have been assisted and advised by all those who, for the time being, "know better". Above all, you are professionals, and you are surrounded by your brother peace-keepers of the UNFICYP family. Welcome!

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The United Nations officially came into existence on 24 October 1945. For the third consecutive year, Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots and members of UNFICYP celebrated the occasion together.



Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots celebrating United Nations Day together

This year, the UNFICYP bi-communal Open House event was organised on Saturday 25 October to give people of all ages a chance to meet and reach out to the other community in the true spirit of the United Nations. Once again, both communities had the opportunity to get first-hand experience of UNFICYP activities and to meet people from the troop-contributing nations.



The older generation taking it easy at the Ledra Palace Hotel

In his opening address, the Force Commander, representing the Chief of Mission, reminded everyone of the history of United Nations Day: ".....

It is the day on which, 52 years ago, the United Nations

Charter came into existence. Throughout the world, people commemorate this day to give true meaning to the preamble of the charter: "We, the people of the United Nations". We have been guests on this island for 33 years, and today, we want to reciprocate this hospitality. We want to give families from both communities the opportunity to come together in the spirit of the United Nations. This spirit is a commitment for us who work for the United Nations and a promise for you, who make up the peoples of the United Nations".

Extracts of the message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, delivered for the occasion worldwide, were also read: "I am pleased to extend my greetings to all the friends of the United Nations. In every corner of the world, in every village and city and community, the United Nations lives in the heart and mind of every citizen striving to end violence and promote tolerance".

A considerable amount of time and effort was put in by all members of UNFICYP, in particular the British Contingent stationed in the Ledra Palace Hotel, to organise the event. With the help of all other contingents, traditional delicacies were on offer including Apfelstrudel, empanadas, fish and chips, Irish stew and hamburgers, which were enjoyed by all age groups. Most of the drinks were generously provided by Cypriot companies. A birthday cake was even donated with the UN logo to celebrate the anniversary.



Turkish Cypriot traditional dancing

UNITED NATIONS DAY CELEBRATIONS



Irish stew ready for visitors with an appetite

Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot music and dances added to the festivities, and provided the two communities with a perfect opportunity to dance and celebrate together. The Argentinian and British bands also provided music, and amusements for children and adults ranged from abseiling to traditional British fair games. On display for the enjoyment of the children were an Argentinian Hughes 500 helicopter and a new TACTICA armoured personnel carrier, not forgetting the Fire Engine which attracted many a would-be fireman.

The warm weather created perfect conditions for a lovely day. In all, over 4,000 Cypriots from both sides came to the Ledra Palace Hotel to enjoy the music, food and entertainment, but most of all to meet up with long lost friends from the other side.

This was not the only recent successful bi-communal event. Only one month earlier, on Saturday 27 September, the inevitable downpour that had been threatening all day did eventually materialise, drenching the crowds who had gathered on the patio of the Ledra Palace Hotel.

The Chief of Mission, Mr Gustave Feissel, opened the fair at 1700 hrs, stressing the need to bring the two communities together in events such as these. He noted that 28 bi-communal action groups, representing a wide range of activities, had set up stands displaying

information about their activities and handing out leaflets. The Chief of Mission urged all present to familiarize themselves with what these bi-communal groups were doing and to become actively involved themselves.

These exhibits, coupled with the food and drink offered during the afternoon, were enjoyed by everyone. As the rainfall became heavier, the stalls were moved inside, but the rain did not dampen spirits in the least. Musicians and dancers entertained the crowd which reached nearly 4,000 - double the expected number. Greek and Turkish Cypriots danced on the patio - in spite of the rain. Sponsored by the UN and various diplomatic missions, this type of fair may well turn into a periodic event.

Efforts towards an overall settlement involve a variety of activities. Building up trust and confidence, through better knowledge and understanding of the other community, is one of the most important aspects of UNFICYP's daily functions on this divided island. Efforts of this nature are particularly important in regions where conflict and division have caused distrust. Establishing friendly relations and promoting understanding and mutual respect are an additional three ingredients necessary for establishing a lasting settlement in Cyprus.



Dancing in the rain: A Turkish Cypriot girl and Greek Cypriot boy dance together during the downpour

Photo by Christos Theodorides, Cyprus Mail

100% CYPRUS

These photographs were taken by Sergeant Michael Watkins, an Australian Civilian Policeman who served earlier in 1997 with UNFICYP. The pictures document his tour of duty with the UN and cover almost the entire island.

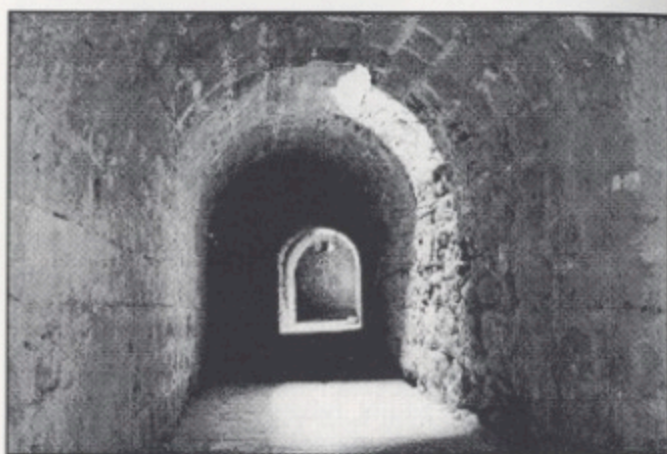
Michael has been a member of the Australian Federal Police for 12 years and has had an interest in photography dating back to his High School days. For the past five years, he has been working

in the Drug Operations Branch and the Observation Squad on Australia's Gold Coast. It was here where his interest in photography was rekindled.

A display of Michael's photographs was held this year at Intercollege, and received favourable reviews by all who attended. The Cyprus Tourism Organisation subsequently bought the rights to one of Michael's photographs, and a number of his works have also been purchased privately for the Cyprus Hellenic Museum in Athens.



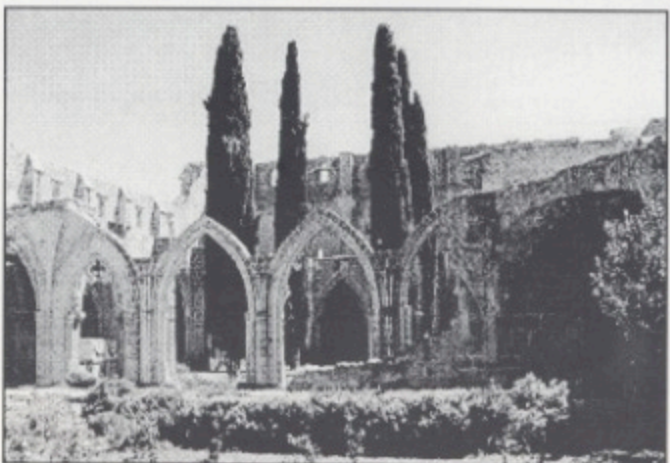
Kyrenia Harbour



Inside the Fort at Kyrenia Castle



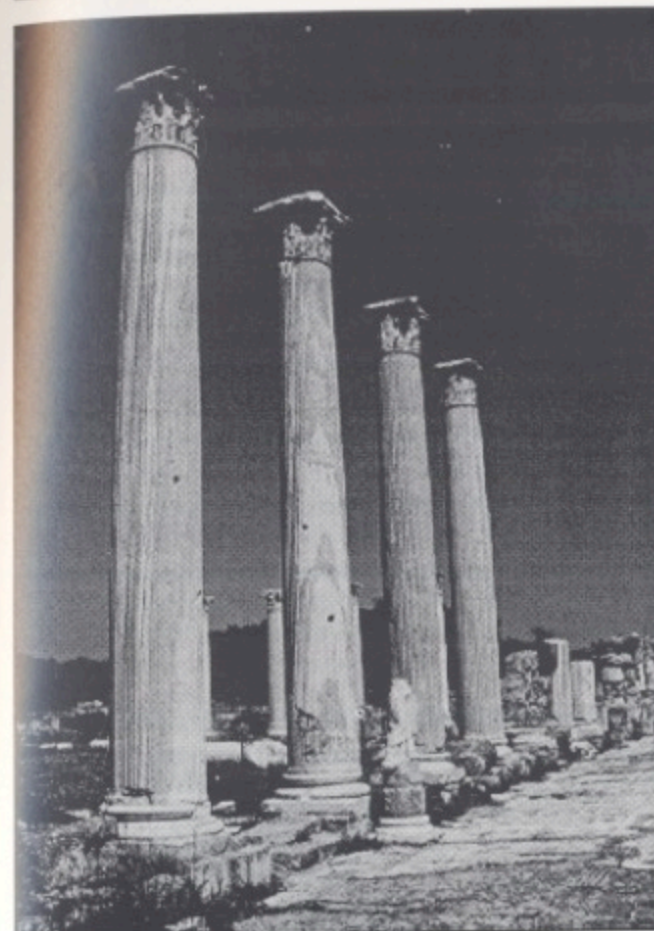
The flamingoes at Larnaka Salt Lake



Bellapais Abbey



View of Kyrenia from St Hilarion Castle



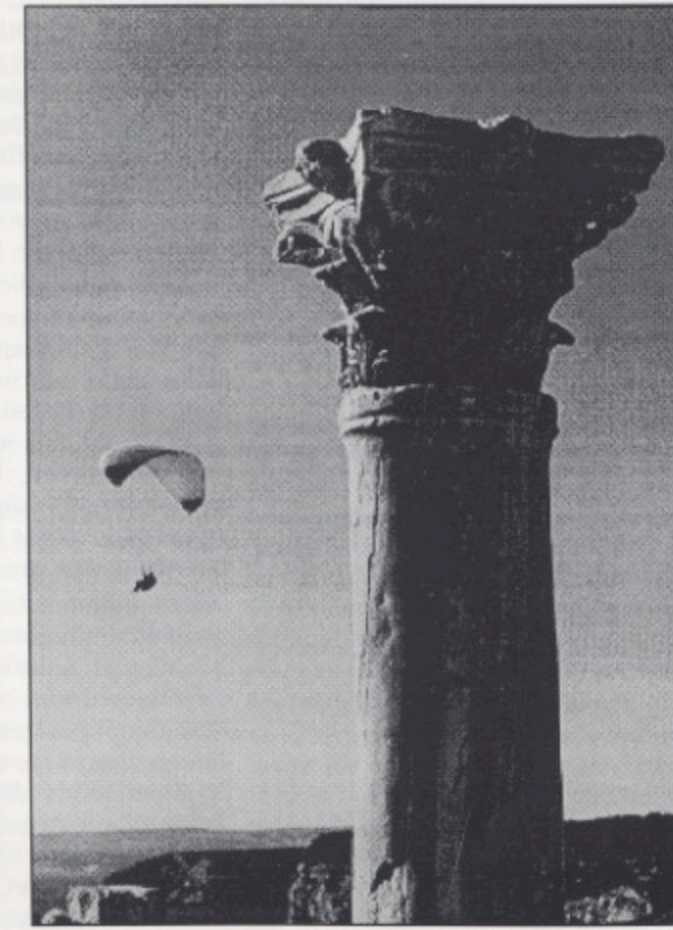
Salamis



View to Kyrenia from Bellapais Abbey



The Rock of Aphrodite



Paragliding at the Temple of the Gladiators in Curium

A BRIEF ENCOUNTER WITH THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF CYPRUS - Part XIV

Picturesquely situated at a height of 688 m (2258 ft) on top of a crag with striking contours, Stavrovouni Monastery dominates the districts of Larnaka, Nicosia and Limassol and the southern coast of Cyprus. Traditionally one of the three Cypriot churches built by Saint Helena in the 4th century, it is the most ancient religious establishment of the island, although it has been rebuilt and reshaped several times since then.

Originally an Orthodox monastery of the Basilian Order, it also flourished under the Latin Benedictine Order in the Lusignan and Venetian periods and attracted many Western pilgrims. It has known

periods of abandonment following the Mamelukes' victory over King James II of Cyprus in 1426, and once again in 1570/1 in the wake of the Ottoman conquest. Restored in the early 19th century, it has become one of the most venerated monasteries.

For a number of years now, the monks have followed very strict rules and they do not permit visits by the undevout or women. Women may, however, go to the monastery's dependencies of Agia (Saint) Varvara at the foothills of Stavrovouni, Panagia (Virgin Mary) Stazousa, Agios (Saint) Modestos and a former dependency, Agios Georgios at Arpera.

HISTORY

In classical times, the mountain of Stavrovouni was called Olympus and was crowned with a temple to Aphrodite, which became a place of pilgrimage.

The foundation of Stavrovouni monastery is attributed by ecclesiastical tradition to Saint Helena, who was sent by her son, Emperor Constantine the Great, to Jerusalem in search of the Holy Crucifix. He was anxious to win the allegiance of the ever-growing number of Christians in order to consolidate his newly-established Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium, 330 to 1453). On her return to Constantinople (modern Istanbul) with the Holy Cross and those of the two thieves, Saint Helena stopped over in Cyprus in 327. Her ship was driven by storms to the south coast and she came ashore at a place still called Vasilikos (*royal*) in her memory. She fell asleep, "being wearied of the sea", and dreamed that a young man commanded her to build many churches here, just as she had done in Jerusalem.

On waking, she discovered that the cross of the Good Thief had been miraculously transported to the top of a nearby mountain. The Empress Helena built a church over the temple ruins to which she donated the cross of the Penitent Thief and a splinter from the Holy Crucifix. Hence the

mountain was renamed "Stavrovouni" (Greek for "Mountain of the Cross").

She is also credited with sending the first monks here from Palestine - and the first monastic cats. During the Lusignan (1192-1489) and Venetian (1489-1570/1) periods, the Orthodox Basilian monks were replaced by the Latin Benedictines. Early records have not survived its later pillaging and destruction, but the establishment of the Latin Church attracted many mediaeval Western pilgrims who chronicled the miraculous cross, which hung unsupported in the air beside the altar.

The Mamelukes sacked and destroyed the monastery in 1426 and carried off the cross, by then encased in gold. All Benedictines left Cyprus in that year, and it is uncertain who succeeded them, but the buildings were repaired - only to be burnt down again by invading Ottoman Turks.

Under the Ottomans (1570/1 to 1878), the monastery was unoccupied until the 17th century, when it finally passed into the hands of Greek monks who re-erected it on the original site.

During the Greek uprising of 1821, Stavrovouni was searched, and the monks discovered hiding in the crypt were all massacred. Another period of abandonment followed until the year 1840 when a Cypriot, *Dionysios Chrestides*, came to live here with



Stavrovouni Monastery

four other monks. As their means of subsistence was very limited, they had to leave.

In 1888, a fire destroyed all perishable materials except the cross of the Penitent Thief with the encased splinter from the crucifix. In 1889, Chrestides returned and refurbished the establishment. He became the first modern abbot of the monastery, which has been functioning ever since as one of the most sacred and definitely the strictest on the island.

Nowadays, peace prevails and there are about 25 monks who follow the very strict rules of the monks of Mount Athos in north-eastern Greece. The honey and halloumi cheese produced by the monks is sold to visitors at Agia Varvara.

The steep, 9½ km road leading up to Stavrovouni is reached by turning off the Nicosia-Limassol highway, about 32 km from the capital.

STAVROVOUNI MONASTERY

DESCRIPTION

The monastic buildings form a rectangle with the eastern side occupied by the church. The entrance to the monastery is at the west extremity of the rock.

Although the present buildings are relatively modern, the crypt is probably original. The church is tripartite - a very early plan - and has two central domes. To the east are the scant remains of the Roman temple of Aphrodite, and on the west, three massive flying buttresses support the outer wall of the monastery - a legacy of the Latin monks, added in the 14th/15th century. There is a large wooden cross dated 1476, minutely carved with scenes from the life of Christ. This was encased in silver in 1702 and contains a splinter of the true cross in a gold cover. In the north corridor is a plaque engraved with a prayer by an 11th century monk. Until recently, rainwater was collected and was the only water supply.

In the last few years, major works have been undertaken and some are still in progress. In 1983, electricity, water supply and telephone communications were installed while the old monastic buildings were refurbished. The church itself was decorated with wall paintings by **Father Kallinikos** of Stavrovouni. A chapel dedicated to the "Saints of Cyprus", a new central gate and two wings, one for the cells of the monks and the other for workshops, were also built.

Stavrovouni has four dependencies (*metochia*, which is plural of "metochi", a Greek word denoting monasterial farmland which is

normally cultivated by some of the monks of the main monastery). As these monks also live and exercise their religious duties in the metochia, there are always cells and a church attached to them.

Agia Varvara Metochi

Originally built in the 13th-14th centuries, it was refurbished with a donation by a Russian nun who visited the monastery and the metochi in 1819. The buildings of the metochi have also recently been refurbished.

The Panagia Stazousa Church

The Panagia Stazousa Church, situated about 3.5 km north-west of Klavdia village in the Larnaka district, is part of a ruined Cistercian monastery of the 14th century. Nowadays, only some derelict rooms of the monastery are to be seen west of the church.

Description

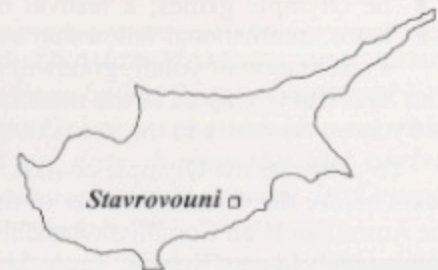
A well-proportioned small church with a nave measuring 10.5 x 5.5 m and a narthex 5.5 x 5.5 m. Daylight in the nave came through two upper windows on each of the north and south walls, a smaller one in the hemispherical apse, as well as a round window in the east wall.

Agios Georgios at Arpera

The church of Agios Georgios at Arpera, an extinct mediaeval village, is situated about 2½ km north-west of Tersephanou at some distance from Stavrovouni. The present church was built in 1736 on the ruins of a previous church, and was decorated with wall paintings in 1747.

Description

It is single-aisled, vaulted in the Franco-Byzantine style and reinforced externally with five buttresses on the north and south walls. At the west end of the aisle, wooden beams support the secluded women's gallery, from where they could follow the service unobserved through the lattice work of the upper part of a wooden parapet. It is gathered from this that women were kept strictly apart from men.



The wall paintings, which were never completed, cover parts of the north and south walls and the *bema* (the area containing the altar).

Depicted over the north door is the family of the Greek donor, Christophakis Constantinou. He was the Ottoman governor's "Dragoman", which is the misspelling of the Turkish word *tercuman* meaning *interpreter*.

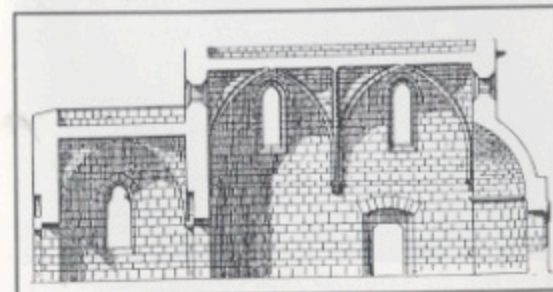
Christophakis is richly dressed in a long robe, fastened at the neck and decorated with grey fur down the front openings, the cuffs, the pockets and the collar. He is wearing a black fur cap, of the type worn by the Turkish dragoman. His family is also richly dressed.

Facing this group is Saint George behind a replica of this church. A supplicatory inscription on the scroll of an angel near the bema mentions the names of the members of the family, some of which are of western origin. This indicates that the family had western relations, which explains the Franco-Byzantine style in the architecture and paintings of the church.

On the north wall are also Saints Symeon Stylites and Tryphon. Next to the window is Saint Peter and further on is Saint George, the honoured saint. On the south wall are Saints Paul and Michael. In the bema, we have "the Deposition", showing Christ in a sarcophagus and a worshipping angel on either side. Two other angels are coming towards him.

Metochi of Agios Modestos

Situated about 3 km north-east of Ayia Varvara on the way to Pyrga village is a small, modern church of the 1940s, dedicated to Agios Modestos. It constitutes the most recent acquisition of Stavrovouni Monastery.



Cross-section of Panagia Stazousa Church

THE OLYMPIC FESTIVAL

The Olympic games; a festival of sporting excellence, international fellowship and sportsmanship; a celebration of youth, goodwill and achievement. The XXVIIth Olympiad of the modern era is to be held in Sydney, Australia in the year 2000.

To celebrate the Olympic countdown, exactly three years before the commencement of the Sydney games, the Australian High Commission and the AUSTCIVPOL contingent held an 'Olympic' festival between 17 and 22 September 1997.

Following an official opening ceremony, where the two Olympic flags were raised and the Olympic torch was lit by Sgt Toni McNeill of the Australian Contingent, the sporting festivities commenced.



Sgt Toni McNeill lights the Olympic torch

Over the following five days, swimming, football, volleyball, tennis, touch football and tug-of-war competitions were held, finishing with a five kilometre fun run around the UNPA. Competition was intense in the true spirit of the festivities and with the usual high standards and surprise winners associated with any Olympic competition.

A full list of the winning teams appears on the right, and our thanks and congratulations are extended to all those who took part. Members from the Argentine, British, Irish and Austrian contingents helped us make it a truly memorable week of sporting greatness.

At the closing ceremony, the Australian High Commissioner, John Sullivan, presented the winners with their gold medals. Celebrations continued in true Aussie style with a barbecue at the Kangaroo Club. Who can now wait for the year 2000?



The Olympic flag is hoisted outside Headquarters AUSTCIVPOL by Sgt Joseph Kocka RFD

List of Winning Teams

Swimming:	IRCON
Soccer:	ARGCON
Touch Football:	AUSTCIVPOL
Tug-of-War:	AUSTCIVPOL
Volleyball:	ARGCON
Tennis:	AUSCON
Fun Run:	ARGCON



From the left: the Australian High Commissioner, Commander AUSTCIVPOL and the Chief of Mission

I AM (REMEMBRANCE)

On 29 September 1997, a Remembrance Service was conducted at St Columba's Church on the UNPA to pay tribute to police killed on duty in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

The 29 September is St Michael's Day. The Archangel Michael is the patron Saint of police. This year is the first time the Service has been conducted in Cyprus.

The Service was conducted by BRITCON

Padres Richard Dunstan-Meadows and Kevin Prince, with readings by Sgt Tracey Duck and Sgt Joe Kocka. Supt Dobrich read the Honour role of police killed on duty during the last twelve months. All police elements serving in Cyprus were invited to attend.

The National Law Enforcement Memorial Poem, "I Am (Remembrance)", composed in 1995 by Sgt Vince Pannell, and read during the Service by Sgt Joe Kocka, is reproduced below.

I am a Constable,
an officer of the Law;
I seek such little credit,
but give of so much more.

I served in Sydney and in
Melbourne,
in Perth and Brisbane too;
in Darwin, Hobart, Adelaide,
in Canberra wore the blue.



Sgt Vince Pannell (right) and Sgt Mick Jarratt lead the AUSTCIVPOL Colour Party and Escort into the Church carrying both the Australian and Australian Federal Police flags

And at the stations in between
I gave my very all;
I kept my pledge to the end
until a higher call.

I rode saddled as a Trooper
and camel past Lake Eyre;
I searched hard in Alpine blizzards;
Cyclone Tracy, I was there.

I pursued across the city streets,
burning houses entered free;
Plucked children from their taker
at the Hilton, that was me.

I swam against such torrents,
a little life to save;
I swept aside the consequence
and never thought it brave.

I have served in Cambodia,
Cyprus, and Haiti's heat;
in Mozambique, malaria,
disease and death to greet.

I often did not question
the tasks so set for me;
nor harboured thoughts of valour
or wistful gallantry.

I took with me my chances
and often paid a price;
'The Job' so like no other,
to cost of one their life.

I died in Walsh Street, and Russell,
and then at Crescent Head;
I died before so often
for sworn oath such I've bled.

I ask no retribution
no hurtful anger dealt;
Just guard for me my family;
hold my children, such loss now felt;

And of my grieving sweetheart,
comfort for now alone;
explain in words of kindness
no more will I be home.

Chosen bearers, six in all,
bore the weight of me;
As carried forth with deep regret,
and lowered tenderly.

I saw for me the slow march,
the draped flag lay so still;
my peak cap rest majestic,
my heart with pride to fill.

For mine was not a death of vain
and never see as such;
I lived and passed with honour,
who else can say as much?

I look upon you, gathered
this quiet September day;
await the pipers sad lament,
muffled drum and wreaths to lay.

Once yearly, quiet pilgrimage,
silent homage, paid respects;
spit polished, stand in reverence,
pressed tunics free of flecks.

You come to praise those fallen,
comrades one and all;
who made the highest sacrifice,
in duty we stood tall.

I am a Constable
of past and present day;
And of the future, friends
in your hands may I say;

We stand beside you in the shadows
learn from our mistakes;
cherish values that we died for,
be warned the price it takes.

And now as you kneel in silence,
gently bow your heads to pray;
I thank you for all of us,
whose sacrifice marks this day.

© Detective Constable V J Pannell 1995



Commander AUSTCIVPOL (left) with Father K Prince (right) and the Reverend R Dunstan-Meadows CF

AUSTCIVPOL MEDAL PARADE

On 21 August 1997, members of the 51st and 52nd AUSTCIVPOL Contingents received their UN peace-keeping medal for service in Cyprus at the AUSTCIVPOL Medal Parade.

15 members were presented with medals by the Force Commander, Major General EA de Vergara, while a further four received numerals for additional tours.

The parade, held at the Kangaroo Club, was attended by the Australian High Commissioner, His Excellency Mr John Sullivan, and staff of the High Commission.



Two Australian children helping with the medals tray



AUSTCIVPOL Medal Recipients

Following the parade, some 300 guests were treated to an Aussie-style barbeque, complete with a spit roast of genuine Australian lamb. This was followed by an evening of music and dance.

As always, AUSTCIVPOL received invaluable assistance from members of other contingents. They would like to thank in particular members of HQ staff, Camp Command, Sector Two's catering staff and the ARGCON band, and offer commiserations to all those who had to work the following day.

OPENING OF THE NEW SUPPORT SERVICES COMPLEX

On 22 September 1997, the new Support Services Complex was officially opened by the Chief of Mission. Under the administration of the CAO, it is a civilian component comprising international and local staff who provide logistic and technical support to the Force.

The new Support Services Complex houses three technical units: transport, generator and services workshops, which came into being as an entity upon the withdrawal of the UK Support Regiment from UNFICYP in October 1993. Originally housed in



An aerial view of the new complex

several locations scattered across Blue Beret Camp and coupled with the fact that the former buildings were dilapidated, unsafe and beyond economical repair, it was soon recognized that this situation was unsatisfactory. A survey was carried out and the site of the present complex chosen. Financed by the United Nations and the Cyprus Government, the construction was completed in July 1997.

In his opening speech, the Chief of Mission thanked all those who contributed significantly to this assignment, and particularly to the Cyprus Government, without whose financial support this project could not have been realized.



The CAO with Mr Athos Petrides of the PWD, Ministry of Communications

SOLDIERS FROM SECTOR TWO RECEIVE THEIR UN MEDALS

After many hours spent on the drill square, it would be difficult to say who was more relieved that the day of the Medal Parade had finally arrived - the soldiers or the Regimental Sergeant Major!



Bdr McRae plays the RSM and Orderlies onto the Parade Square

Wednesday 24 September was fine and pleasantly warm; an ideal day for a parade. With the guests

seated, the Chief of Mission, Force Commander, British High Commissioner and Commander British Forces were driven separately onto the parade square, each receiving a salute from the Regiment.

After the Force Commander had inspected the parade, medals were presented to the 108 soldiers and 11 officers on parade by the Force Commander, the British High Commissioner and the Commander British Forces. The parade then marched off to the Royal Artillery Slow March, and the Band of the Royal Lancers played a Sunset Ceremony, accompanied by Bombardier McRae, the Royal Artillery's piper. Once the flags were lowered, guests were invited to join 5th Regiment for drinks and a buffet supper. The evening finished with Bombardier McRae playing from the roof of the Ledra Palace after dark and a spectacular firework display in front of the hotel.

Without doubt, the Medal Parade was thoroughly enjoyed by members of the British Contingent and their guests.



Sgt Alan Pickering and Gnr Merrick Johnson stand at attention during the firework display



A 'SUIT' ABLE MEETING

After 23 years of separation, Mr Osman, a Turkish Cypriot, and Mr Sophianos, a Greek Cypriot, both of whom we in UNFICYP all know so well, finally had the chance to become re-acquainted at 5th Regiment Royal Artillery's Medal Parade.

On 24 September, both were able to meet at the Medal Parade, and they spent four hours together, catching up on news at the party which followed.

A handshake after 23 years! Mr Sophianos (left) with the Commanding Officer Sector Two and Mr Osman



NEW UNFICYP POLITICAL AFFAIRS OFFICER

Mrs Juliette Remy was born in France in 1962. She graduated with a Master's Degree in Political Sciences at the Institute for Political Studies in Strasbourg, and later qualified in Law at the Sorbonne in Paris. Apart from French, Mrs Remy is fluent in English and Spanish.

Mrs Remy started working for the United Nations in 1991, when she took up the post of Project Officer in the United Nations Project Services in New York (UNOPS). There she was involved in projects in Burma and Cambodia. Then in 1992, she took up the post of Special Assistant to the Associate Administrator in UNDP New York.

In 1993, Mrs Remy was posted to Haiti where she carried out the tasks of the Political Affairs Officer. She then joined the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) in 1994 as a Desk Officer and Special Assistant to the SRSO.

In 1995, she was appointed UN Policy Affairs Officer in UNDP New York, working for the Administrator of UNDP. During the first part of 1997, Mrs Remy was responsible for drafting the first policy paper on UNDP and human rights.

On 14 August 1997, Mrs Remy joined UNFICYP as the Political Affairs Officer, and is involved inter alia with bi-communal and humanitarian activities.

Mrs Juliette Remy is married to Jacques-Emmanuel, an architect, who is accompanying her on this assignment, and they have a 20-month-old daughter, Zoe.



SECTOR TWO TRIATHLON

On Sunday 14 September, Sector Two staged its much awaited triathlon. Response to the event amazed the organisers with a total of 23 teams and four individuals entering. Each team was comprised of a mountain bike cyclist, a swimmer of a high standard and a runner who needed lungs the size of Yorkshire.

With registration complete, the cyclists departed the Ledra Palace Hotel (LPH) for the New Nicosia Cemetery to start the gruelling 18.5 mile cycle through the BZ. As the race progressed, there were several retirements, but the front runners rarely changed with SSgt Kabasser

(AUSCON) winning in 55'40", followed by WO1 Friedl (AUSCON) in 61'15" and Lt Cowell third in 63'50".

The runners set off from Bengal (OP 45) to LPH, a gruelling 9.2 mile heat. By then, word had started to seep through that a 12-year-old girl by the name of Jennifer Burke, representing IRCIV-POL, had amazingly swum 40 lengths (1 km) of the LPH swimming pool in a time of 13'59", followed by Lt Fletcher in 14'52". Third was Capt Mandl (AUSCON) in 14'53".

The runners approached LPH looking wetter than the swimmers. Sgt Schrottenbach (AUSCON) was the clear leader in 53'24", closely followed by the new RAO, Capt Donaghue, in 55'24" and Gnr Brown third with a time of 55'28".



Competitors race through the Buffer Zone on the first leg of the triathlon

As he presented the prizes, the CO Sector Two, Lt Col Potts MBE, congratulated the exhausted competitors on an outstanding performance.

The overall winners, and also guest team winners, were the Austrians I with a combined time of 123'07". P Bty I were the Sector Two winners with a time of 140'13".

As the competitors relaxed by the pool, enjoying a much deserved beer and B-B-Q, the Sector Two Humanitarian Team congratulated themselves on raising £230 for charity. Overall, not a bad day's work.



WO2 (BSM) George Buck under pressure in the swimming pool

BRIDGING THE GAP

In November 1996, English language classes were initiated for local UNFICYP staff members with the simple aim of improving the level of communication skills. Far more valuable, however, has been the unexpected grass-roots bi-communal movement among the staff attending the English classes.



Cypriots from both communities enjoying a meal together

For one hour, twice a week, the classes bring together Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot staff members into an arena where they are required to talk to one another. In the course of practising their English skills, they share common and differing perspectives, experiences and opinions.

Building on the friendship developed in class, and wishing to spend more social time together outside of the office, Ms Maria Ferrigan of Camp Command organised a dinner. On 4 July 1997, with the help of the Humanitarian Branch, 12 Turkish Cypriot staff members and their families were able to visit the south of Nicosia for a dinner hosted by 10 Greek Cypriot staff and families at the Epicurus restaurant.

Returning the compliment, Turkish Cypriot staff member, Mr Turgay Shevki, who works in the Supply/Warehouse Unit, organised a visit in the north of the island. On 6 September 1997, 27 Greek Cypriot staff and their families, together with one of the English teachers, Ms Valerie Mavratsas, and 15 Turkish Cypriot staff and families visited Bellapais, Kyrenia and Lapithos.

The first stop was Bellapais. On their arrival, the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot women greeted each other with flowers. After touring Bellapais Abbey, they headed off to the Kyrenia waterfront. For many, this was their first visit to area since 1974 and brought back a flood of memories. The staff and families then continued on to Lapithos where they had dinner at the Shatal Lambousa. In true bi-communal spirit, the after-dinner entertainment included a performer who sang both Greek and Turkish songs.

In an Island that remains divided, these members of staff have managed in their own small way to create a sense of community within their working environment that truly reflects the aims of the United Nations - to serve the broad ideals of peace and to foster peaceful co-existence. Their efforts should serve as an example to others of the ways in which individuals can contribute to bridging the gap between the two communities.



A Turkish Cypriot woman (left) greeting a Greek Cypriot woman with flowers

VISIT OF DPKO'S DEPUTY MILITARY ADVISER

Brigadier General Mohinder Bhagat (India), the Deputy Military Adviser at the Department of Peace-keeping Operations in New York, visited UNFICYP from 3 to 8 August 1997.

During the course of his visit, General Bhagat received briefings from the Force Commander, Senior Adviser, Spokesman, Chief Administrative Officer and Branch Heads as well as military and police commanders on all operational, logistical, administrative and financial aspects of the Force.

The DMA also toured the Buffer Zone, spending one day in each sector. Finally, General Bhagat was briefed on the proposals for reducing tension along the cease-fire line and on all sensitive sectors in the area of operations.



Major General de Vergara (left) with Brigadier General Bhagat



UNFICYP CELEBRATES UNITED NATIONS DAY



AN ARGENTINIAN COUPLE DANCE DURING THE UN DAY FESTIVITIES AT THE LEDRA PALACE HOTEL, WHILST THE BI-COMMUNAL CROWDS WATCH IN DELIGHT