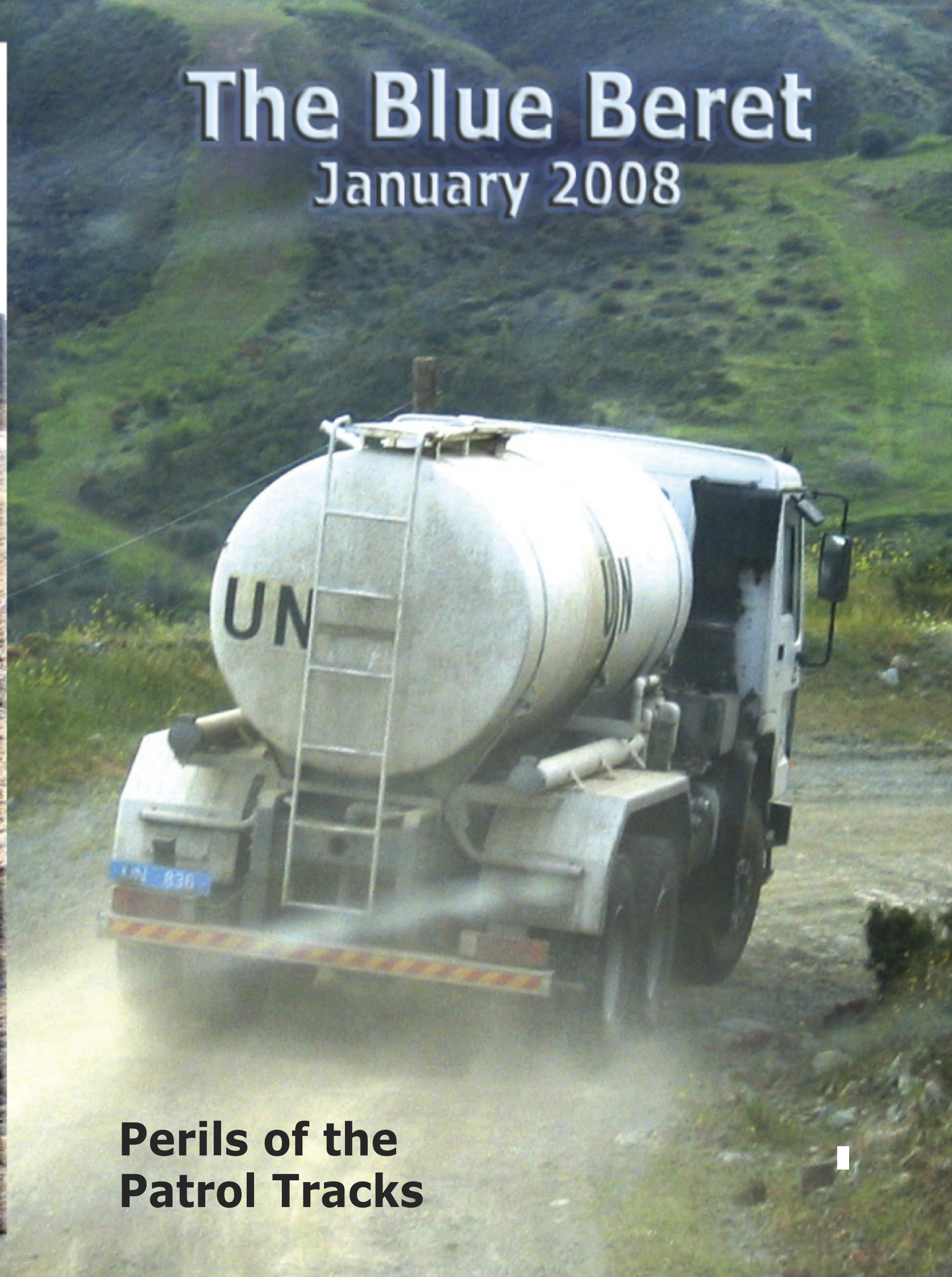


## Perils of the Patrol Tracks



# The Blue Beret

January 2008



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## THE BLUE BERET

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## Taking stock and looking ahead

Welcome to the first issue of the **Blue Beret** for 2008. In this edition we look back at the past year, one that saw, among other things, renewed hopes for progress on talks to settle the Cyprus problem, and ongoing work by peacekeepers and our UN colleagues on issues as diverse as safeguarding biodiversity in the buffer zone and encouraging bi-communal dialogue.

Last year, UNFICYP also conducted a survey on how it is perceived by Cypriots. This was the first such exercise in the mission's history, and was extremely instructive in showing the way forward for one of the UN's longest peacekeeping operations. In 2008 UNFICYP will mark its 44th year in Cyprus, meaning it has been around almost as long as UN peacekeeping itself. Indeed, the 60th anniversary of this crucial part of the UN's work, to be commemorated in May this year, will have special resonance in Cyprus.

In this month's **Blue Beret** we also read from our colleagues about the work they do and the things that make them unique. Some of this work is such a seemingly routine part of the operation that it is taken for granted, despite the risks and skill involved. "In the zone", a piece about UNFICYP's intrepid drivers, is something of a corrective to that view. In other articles, our peacekeepers chronicle their participation in athletic activities. These sporting exploits also serve to keep UNFICYP's men and women fit for duty in the buffer zone.

The BB has always endeavoured to show the different facets of the life of the peacekeeper – military, civilian or police – in Cyprus. We are also constantly striving to bring you a magazine that informs and, at its best, stimulates. This aspiration will continue to inform our work this year and will be evident, we hope, in what you read – and how you read it – in the coming weeks.

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## Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

### Looking back on his first year

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently looked back on his busy first year in office, which took him to nearly 40 countries or territories on six continents to push for progress in four main areas – United Nations reform, climate change, human rights and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and international security.

"I have not sat still this year," said Mr. Ban, who has flown over 125,000 miles since taking office at the start of this year.

He reiterated his call for the need to "change the UN culture and re-engineer the United Nations for life in our fast-modern world." While the UN must reform to better respond to global challenges, it must simultaneously attain the highest standards in ethics, transparency and accountability, he added.

To this end, the Secretary-General is working to re-organise key departments, including the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs.

Mr. Ban also highlighted his efforts in the fight against global warming, which he has called "the defining issue of our era" and which he has made his top priority.

Those efforts – including his trips to places such as Antarctica and the Amazon and his convening of the largest-ever gathering of heads of State to discuss the issue – culminated in the landmark UN Climate Change Conference in Bali, Indonesia, which ended last week.

In Bali, delegates "took a vital first step" towards reaching a comprehensive accord to replace the current Kyoto Protocol which expires in 2012, the Secretary-General said. "This is the year's key achievement," he declared.

This year marks the halfway point for the MDGs, eight targets to slash poverty and other ills by 2015, and the Secretary-General pointed out that despite progress made, challenges remain.

"For the poorest of the world's poor, economic and social advancement should be considered an innate



UN SG Ban Ki-moon's wife Yoo Soon-taek (front, right), accepts a bouquet of flowers when the SG (centre) arrived for a meeting with Vital Kamerhe, President of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), in Kinshasa on 27 January 2007

human right," he said, adding that he will expend great effort in 2008 to bolstering the UN's role in development.

In the 132 days he has spent on the road this year, Mr. Ban said he has visited a half dozen UN peacekeeping missions, including the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) known as MONUC to the mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

He highlighted the crucial role of the UN in Lebanon, Iraq, Bangladesh and the occupied Palestinian territories.

At the same time, he noted that "no geopolitical issue has absorbed more of my time than Darfur." While no advances towards peace were being made last year, there are peace talks underway now and a joint African Union-UN peacekeeping force is on the verge of deployment, he pointed out.

"The challenge for the coming year is to work continuously with the [Sudanese] government, rebel movements, representatives of civil society and regional leaders, as well as the UN Security Council and the international community, to ensure the ultimate success of both the talks and the military mission," he said.

## New Year's goodwill



LCpl. Pavel Judja giving blood

In January, the medical staff from the blood bank in north Nicosia's General Hospital visited Sector 4's Camp General Stefaník where Slovak and Hungarian troops donated blood.

The blood drive has become something of a tradition. There is a high prevalence of a genetic disorder called thalassaemia in Cyprus. Frequent blood transfusions are crucial for those affected, including children. It is estimated that up to 400 units a month are required, and that is only for the northern part of the island.

Twenty-three peacekeepers arrived at the Medical Centre on 9 January, some for the first time, and some of whom have reached 20 donations! After a routine medical check-up, the transfer of the life-saving red fluid began. Once post-donation examinations were carried out, light refreshments were served.

Many thanks go to all the volunteers who have participated so willingly in this humanitarian effort.







# Year in Review

**The New Year for the United Nations started with a new Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, taking over the helm of the organisation and raising hopes of his developing a new trust in the UN. In Cyprus, the year also brought high hopes that the foundations laid by the two leaders on the island for the 8 July process would lead to a resumption of negotiations. January began auspiciously when the Turkish Cypriot authorities opted to remove the controversial bridge that for a year had stymied efforts to get an agreement between the two sides on the opening of a crossing point at Ledra Street, in the heart of the old town of Nicosia. A reciprocal move by the Greek Cypriot side in March to bring down the National Guard post on Ledra Street was the second positive step towards opening the crossing point. However as the year closed, the crossing point remained closed. Another highlight of the year was the first meeting of the two religious representatives on the island, while the political leadership met for the first time in 14 months in September at the SRSg's official residence where they agreed on the need for the earliest start of the process.**



[1]

**The controversial bridge on Ledra Street, erected on the north side of the buffer zone on 27 November 2005, was finally dismantled on 11 January 2007. The bridge had been installed to facilitate the passage of pedestrians through what was hoped would be the opening of the most significant crossing point between the sides. The actual opening awaits agreement between the two sides on a range of issues, including possible demilitarisation of the area.**

- o -

On 15 January, the SRSg, Michael Møller, met with the newly-elected Mayor of Nicosia, Eleni Mavrou, in her office. Mayor Mavrou asked for Mr. Møller's support regarding the clean-up of the buffer zone and maintenance of dangerous buildings in the area.

- o -

**An explosion on a cattle farm in the buffer zone village of Pyla on 26 January resulted in the death of a man and a child and the serious injury of a third man. The blast was caused by a fuel tank explosion.**

- o -

**Ledra Palace Hotel was the site of an historic meeting between the two religious representatives on the island on 21 February. Archbishop of Nova Justiniana and All Cyprus, Chrysostomos II, and Mr. Ahmet Yonluer, Turkish Cypriot Director of Religious Affairs, met under the auspices of the President of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly René van der Linden as part of a series of bicomunal meetings the PACE President participated in during his visit to the island.**

- o -

**The highlight of March was undoubtedly the fall of the wall known as "Tourist Bunker" dividing Ledra Street on 8 March. Members of the Security Council welcomed the Cyprus Government's decision to remove the wall and National Guard post on Ledra Street as a step towards opening a new crossing point. They hoped both sides would be able to agree quickly on the practicalities for pedestrian access and they welcomed SRSg Møller's and UNFICYP's support for the initiative. The SC said it shared the SG's hope that confidence-building measures of this kind would be part of a broader move to resume full-fledged negotiations aimed at a comprehensive settlement.**



[3]



[4]

**International Women's Day, 8 March, was celebrated by UNFICYP at a bicomunal event at Ledra Palace where the phenomenon of violence against women and girls was highlighted through a short play performed by UNFICYP staff and then discussed by a panel of Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot women's rights activists.**

- o -

In April, UNFICYP presented the results of its first island-wide inter-communal public opinion poll which indicated that majorities in both communities consider that the United Nations has an important role to play in Cyprus and that its presence on the island is essential. At the same time, a majority of Greek Cypriots believes that the UN is biased in favour of Turkish Cypriots while conversely, Turkish Cypriots believe it is similarly biased in favour of Greek Cypriots. In both communities, a majority view suggests that the UN needs to make a stronger effort to reach out and understand the concerns of the wider public.

- o -

**SRSg Møller received President of the Slovak Republic Mr. Ivan Gasparovic on 18 April, accompanied by his wife Silva and the Minister of Defence of the Slovak Armed Forces, Frantisek Kasicky.**

- o -

**SRSg Møller inaugurated the first ever International Civil Society Fair at Ledra Palace organised by UNDP-ACT. Møller said Cypriots must feel that their voices have been heard and that they have had a say in shaping that solution – the Cyprus problem must have a Cypriot solution, he said. There can be no sustainable solution to the Cyprus problem unless and until every Cypriot is convinced that he or she truly understands all the ramifications.**

- o -

**The Federal President of the Republic of Austria, Dr. Heinz Fischer, who was on an official visit to Cyprus met with the Chief of Mission and Force Commander on 12 May.**

- o -

On 15 June, the Security Council adopted resolution 1758 renewing UNFICYP's mandate. In his report, the Secretary-General urged the two leaders to build on progress achieved to date and move from discussions on procedures to real engagement on substance. The SC urged all parties to move to full-fledged negotiations, saying the status quo is unacceptable and that time is not on the side of a final Cyprus settlement. The SG warned that UNFICYP's continuing involvement on the island should not be taken for granted, at least not in its present form.

- o -

On the occasion of World Refugee Day, the UNHCR representation in Cyprus launched the reality game "Taxidi Fygis", which is about the fear that every refugee experiences and the unavailability of any other option than fleeing. It is about the difference but also the challenges that any refugee faces in the new country.

- o -

The Cyprus Environmental Stakeholder Forum sent a multidisciplinary, bicomunal team of environmental experts to the 15th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development which took place at UN Headquarters in New York. The CESF group of 23 experts established a dialogue with worldwide sustainable development civil society networks, interacted with key global environmental stakeholders and even influenced the final global NGO position adopted at the event.



[5]



[5]



[6]



[7]



[8]



## Year in Review (continued)

[9] UNFICYP assisted the Cyprus Police and fire fighting services by putting a Hughes 500 helicopter and UN pilot at their disposal to fly over one of the worst fires the island has seen in decades to assess the course of the blaze and determine the best strategy for extinguishing it. The fire destroyed 11.8 square kilometres of forest land in the Troodos mountain range with around 370,000 trees turned to ash in the blaze that also scorched 15 homes.

- o -

[10] UNFICYP facilitated two religious pilgrimages for approximately 1,000 pilgrims in July, one in Dherynia and the other in Ayia Marina Skylloura on the outskirts of Nicosia.

- o -

SRSg Møller, addressing the UNFICYP Integrated Medal Parade on 5 July, said UNFICYP will continue to support civilian activities in the buffer zone in keeping with ownership rights, but not at the expense of stability and security.

- o -

In August, UNFICYP's three pillars facilitated the visit of 640 Turkish Cypriots to the cemetery in Kokkina to hold an annual ceremony to honour their fallen.

- o -

[11] UNFICYP advised the authorities that an illegal rubbish dump in the buffer zone area alongside the village of Peristerona, to the west of Nicosia, is believed to contain hazardous asbestos materials. UNFICYP cordoned off the area pending arrangements for the safe removal of the materials and for the site's clearance and closure.

- o -

[12] September saw Greek Cypriot Leader H.E. Tassos Papadopoulos and Turkish Cypriot Leader Mehmet Ali Talat meet for three hours in the UNFICYP Chief of Mission's official residence in the UNPA. The 5 September meeting was the first since they convened in the presence of Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambari on 8 July 2006. A joint statement was read afterwards by SRSg Møller which said the leaders "...agreed on the need for the earliest start of the process and discussed other issues leading to a comprehensive settlement."

- o -

On 23 September, the SG met briefly with H.E. Mr. Papadopoulos where they discussed the current status of dialogue between the two sides, ongoing support to UNFICYP and the issue of missing persons. The SG emphasized the importance of implementing the 8 July 2006 agreement.

- o -

[13] International Day of Peace was observed by UNFICYP with a peace candle ceremony alongside Ledra Palace Hotel. The event, hosted by SRSg Møller, was attended by members of the Cyprus World War II Veteran's Association, members of the diplomatic and international community and representatives of both communities on the island. Similarly, the World Peace Prayer representatives from Japan presented the Chief of Mission with a two-metre high peace pole to serve as a message of peace and the starting point for new ideas in Cyprus. In his remarks, the SRSg stressed that here in Cyprus, the people are an untapped resource for solving the island's problems, yet their willingness to engage and move forward cannot be questioned.

- o -

[14] In late September, UNFICYP's Argentinian and British Contingents, led by Force Commander Maj. Gen. Barni

and Chief of Staff Col. Fraser-Hopewell attended a memorial service for all who fell when their two nations faced one another in the Falklands/Malvinas conflict some 25 years ago. The Force Commander said, "It is a fitting tribute to those who lost their lives 25 years ago, that the soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen of both former adversaries work so closely together today in the common service of peace."

- o -

[15] SRSg Møller told guests at this year's UN Day reception in October that the 8 July process is flexible and viable enough to accommodate both sides' concerns and needs and to help deliver a reunified Cyprus. Over 100 guests, including Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat and House President Demetris Christofias, attended UNFICYP's 43rd UN Day celebration.

- o -

On 16 October, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon met with H.E. Mr. Mehmet Ali Talat, the Turkish Cypriot leader, at UN Headquarters in NY. They discussed the way forward on the Cyprus problem including implementation of the 8 July Agreement and confidence-building measures.

- o -

UNPOL and Cyprus game wardens began a joint campaign to halt illegal bird trapping in the buffer zone that kills hundreds of thousands of migrant birds, many of which are protected species.

- o -

In November UNFICYP launched a series of HIV/AIDS awareness briefings for military, police and civilian peacekeepers where UN policies and the organisation's commitment to fighting the disease was highlighted as well as the importance of living positively with HIV by contributing to a tolerant, equitable and compassionate UN-system workplace.

- o -

Senior management attended a two-day workshop in Brussels on current and future cooperation of UNFICYP and the European Commission from 8-9 November.

- o -

In December, the Security Council adopted resolution 1789 renewing UNFICYP's mandate for a further six months. The resolution deplored the continued failure to implement the 8 July 2006 Agreement, and urged the leaders of both communities to act to start the process without delay in order to prepare the ground for fully fledged negotiations leading to a comprehensive and durable settlement. The Secretary-General's report stressed that the coming year may prove to be crucial in the search for a comprehensive settlement.

- o -

[16] To mark World AIDS Day, UNFICYP held an auction and raffle to raise funds for local NGO's supporting HIV/AIDS patients on the island. C£1,500 was raised for charities north and south.

- o -

[17] At the request of both primary school principals and heads of the parents/teacher associations in Pyla, UNFICYP facilitated the first ever bicomunal basketball match on 6 December. This mixed sporting event prior to the school's closure for the winter break was intended as the kick-off for closer bicomunal co-operation in that village.

**Netha Kreouzoz**

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[13]



[14]



[15]



[16]



[17]



[9]



[10]



[11]



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[13]

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# In the zone

Very few of us who sit behind our desks in UNFICYP, and until recently I included myself here, really appreciate what the men and the one fantastic woman driver of the ISS/Transport Unit do when they disappear out of Foxtrot Gate in their UN trucks. In fact, most of the routine assignments mean they will be driving along some very treacherous mountain roads.

For a number of years, I have routinely issued MOP's (Movement of Personnel) for the drivers to various Observation Points (OP's) in the middle of nowhere. I have listened to the stories of their latest manoeuvre to avoid their truck diving off the side of the mountain because of a sudden rockfall, or how the thick, slippery mud in the wet weather caused their 10-ton vehicle to almost plunge over the edge. Some of those stories have gone down in our unit's history, such as the daredevil tactics some drivers have used to get out of a tricky situation. Or it could be that they are extremely talented drivers, and not just lads playing in big trucks.

It was high time I experienced a bit of this for myself.

I had a chance to take a trip along the patrol track when our former Supervisor of Vehicle Maintenance and Repairs, Jerry Ashcroft, took a last trip down memory lane in one of our 4x4 double cabins before leaving UNFICYP to join the mission in Haiti. I'd call him a brave man, but as I had failed to mention my problem with heights, or the fact that I screamed in terror on the Dumbo ride in Disneyland, he wasn't to know that.

So, on a hot summer day with my very own MOP, I had the chance to actually see the places I'd heard about and understand what my colleagues were talking about. Were they exaggerating or were they just a bunch of moaners?

Very soon we were making our way along the winding, uneven tracks in Sector 1; uphill and down, negotiating sharp bends, sometimes very close to the mountainside or right to the edge.

The views were astounding. The silence was overwhelming and the warm summer breeze was perfect. We would drive along a narrow rocky trail which would suddenly open up into a beautiful vista of forest covered



Recovery truck in Sector 1's AOR

mountains, which, on this clear sunny day, seemed to continue right into the distance.

Sometimes the road would narrow so much it seemed it just couldn't possibly be wide enough for our car; at other times, it simply seemed to disappear in front of us. So, what happens if you meet a vehicle coming the other way? Close your eyes and go for it?

The answer became clear during the journey when Jerry started speaking into the radio. When the track is only wide enough for one vehicle, the driver is required to request "Track Clear" along the route between the various OP's; and that's how we avoid an oncoming vehicle.

Occasionally, we would skid sideways because of the loose surface – can you imagine that happening in a 10-ton truck? This is being improved by the Force Engineers, who are using huge road rollers to flatten the surface to increase safety.

As you drive on, you can see the isolated OP's scattered around the mountains. Many of them are now deserted since the reduction in troops, but you can still see the remnants of the soldiers' efforts to make their little stations more like home. Without doubt the soldiers wake up to some magnificent views, but it is probably a little lonely and a harsh existence during the extreme weather conditions.

To appreciate the skilled work of our drivers, I reminded myself I was a passenger in a small 4x4 pickup, while they drive on these perilous tracks in huge trucks to deliver water and carry out the Honey Wagon (sewage collection) duties, all in support of the troops. The water bowser becomes a potential danger because the action of the water sloshing around inside the tank causes the truck to become unstable while negotiating the winding roads.

They drive the big recovery truck up there as well to collect broken down vehicles. One look at the size of UN 839 up at the Transport Unit car park will give you some idea of what that might involve. It's enormous!

These patrol tracks have taken their toll in lives over the years. The awful accident in Sector 1 in 2003 involving a 4x4 double cabin resulted in the deaths of two Argentinian soldiers with a third man very seriously injured.



4x4 after an accident on the patrol track



Dangers of Sector 4's patrol track

Fortunately there have been very few major accidents recently, but we have had incidents from which the drivers have miraculously emerged unscathed. I have been involved in the paperwork following some spectacular incidents, but to actually see the accident sites was a very sobering experience. They serve as a reminder of the risks our colleagues face daily.

A few years ago, a Mercedes truck went over the edge, but the passengers escaped because a tree stopped the truck from landing a further 300 m down. The recovery operation took precision planning; the

removal of mines around the accident area and a track had to be dug into the mountain to position the recovery truck correctly before the crashed vehicle could be pulled back up.

The only reason we haven't had more accidents is down to the experience and skill of our drivers. Their capacity for enduring the extremes in weather, their high levels of concentration over long journeys and their ability to get the job done and their sense of humour deserve our admiration.

This is the reality of driving in UNFICYP's buffer zone.

by Christine Iacovou

Photographs, including front cover, by Paul Cartwright



# Me and MY ....

## We have a rock star in the Supply Unit ...

You know Jonathan in Supply? Did you know that if you give him a funky hat to wear and strap a guitar to him he becomes a rock god? Take it from his new number one groupie: he **is** a rock star!

I know this because I bought two tickets to Waterblack's debut live performance at the The Half Note in Limassol and took along my son Liam, a former singer/guitarist partner of Jonathan's at the UN Day party and currently undergoing his own rock star apprenticeship.

Liam had such a great time and was so impressed with the great musicianship that he begged to write the review of the concert. Well, he's the expert and my only comment would be "I had a blast!"

A few days after the show, I spoke to Jonathan about his music to find out where it all began. I knew his dad, "Jimmy the Greek", was a musician, but I didn't realise what he was to the rock world. Jonathan's dad plays electric guitar and has jammed with the likes of Mark Knopfler (Dire Straits) and the great Gary Moore. Jimmy's friends included the guitarist in Iron Maiden and the drummer from Status Quo who he played with in a local Liverpool rock club.

Jimmy was born and raised in Greece and played regularly as part of the rock scene, until one day, a bassist called Gerry McAvoy walked in and heard him. Gerry played bass with the late Rory Gallagher, so to have him walk in and hear you play and then invite you over to England to join his band is the only way to describe how accomplished Jonathan's dad really is.

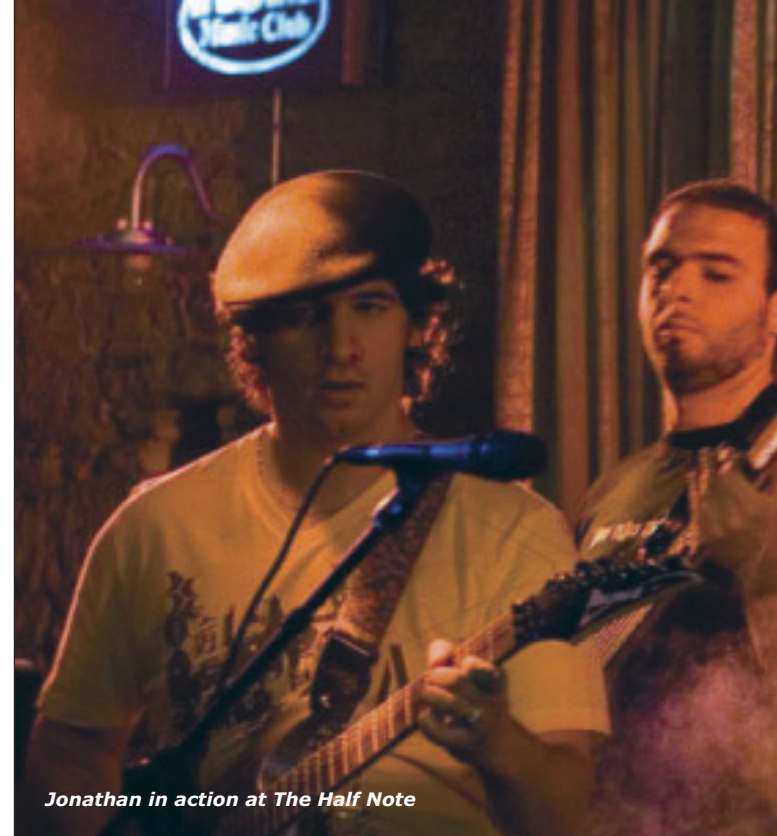
What made Jonathan pick up a guitar for the first time? "When I heard The Who sing 'The Kids are Alright'." He saved up and bought a Stratocaster and was hooked. He attended North Trafford College in Manchester to study music and joined a pretty successful funk band, playing at parties and weddings. He was on his way to signing a contract to play guitar for a singer in the UK and put a lot of hard work into the project, but in the end the singer was not prepared to do the same.

You heard him perform at the UN Day party and he amazed us once again with his ear-busting guitar skills at "The Half Note" in Limassol on 5 January 2008.

We arrived at the already crowded venue in time to see a Greek rock band "Kakes Parees" who were actually pretty good and went down very well with the audience. As the night progressed, you could see Jonathan getting more and more edgy as the adrenaline rush kicked in.

At last, Waterblack was introduced onto the stage for the first time ever. People were screaming out their names and cheering them on, and that's when they started playing their amazing alternative rock/grunge music. Very loud, heavy rock music and a totally brilliant and original sound.

The combination of a great singer who wrote their songs, an insane bassist, a genius keyboard player who also produced their CD, an amazing drummer



Jonathan in action at The Half Note

A year ago, Waterblack, a Limassol band, was looking for new members and contacted Jonathan. They had recently recorded a CD called OREM and already had a strong local fan base. The culmination of a year's work was to be heard at their first live performance in Limassol and was a huge success.

There are plans for another live event in Nicosia in the near future, and if you would like to add their CD to your collection, just call Jonathan.

The last obvious question I put to Jonathan was where he found his inspiration. "My dad", he replied instantly, closely followed by his other heroes Frank Zappa, Jimi Hendrix, Ritchie Blackmore and The Who.

As Jonathan reaches the dizzy heights of stardom, I felt I should ask him the appropriate questions on behalf of his growing legion of fans. The way to Jonathan's heart? Support Liverpool Football Club and understand the off-side rule thing; the colour red; Cadbury's Fruit & Nut, and a chicken gyro. It will also help if you can recite the Monty Python scripts from memory using the correct voices, and you must have total belief in Rocky Balboa.

Christine Iacovou

and Jonathan's face-melting guitar solos created some of the best songs I have ever heard.

They included some brilliant covers by the legendary Nirvana and the Foo Fighters, both excellent choices that blended in so well with Waterblack's sound that even my mum looked puzzled when she suddenly realised she was singing along with one of the songs.

"Why do I know the words to this song?" My mum knows the words to "In Bloom" by Nirvana!

They finished their appearance with another song from OREM, and ended with Jonathan amazing us once again with his ear-busting guitar skills and, being a true rock star, throwing his guitar to the ground whilst soloing.

The fans had been waiting a long time for this event, and were not in the least bit disappointed with their band's performance.

It truly was a great night!

Liam Iacovou

## A "cakewalk" through the buffer zone

At the beginning of last December, Maj. Adam Ainsworth, SO2 Ops Air, decided to test the physical abilities of the duty officers in the HQ UNFICYP Joint Operations Centre. Their duties are usually sedentary and he wanted to gauge how they would react under stress.

So Adam, who is an engineer, came up with the idea of "Exercise Sappers Stroll". Capt. Marian Paller (Slovakia), Capt. Gonzalo Gordillo (Argentina), Capt. Cesar Fragni (Argentina) and 1/Lt. Attila Vámos (Hungary) would march 45.5 km of the buffer zone. The men each carried back packs weighing approximately 10 kilos which included a radio, batteries, torches, change of clothing (four sets!) and food/drink supplies.

At the last light of 17 December, the fading sound of the helicopter that dropped them off indicated the last mechanized movement these four men would hear for a while. They started the march at 5 p.m. from OP-08, near Kato Pyrgos. The weather was perfect, and the men were in a very good mood, so much so that the march only took four (instead of the estimated five) hours. At the first stand, OP-11, the men changed their clothing, and were then tested on their knowledge of the Force Employment Book (FEB) which took 45 minutes.

By the time the group started off for OP-15, there was a full moon and a star-studded sky. The terrain was difficult – a hilly patrol track. Nevertheless, the men were still in a good psychological and physical condition – chatting to each other and making jokes to pass the time. This stretch took them another four hours, reaching OP-15 at 1 a.m. After a quick change, they were tested on the Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs), then off they set again, this time heading for OP-17.

## MFR bikers test their mettle for charity

Soldiers from UNFICYP's Mobile Force Reserve cycled the length of the buffer zone between 11 and 13 December to raise money for UNICEF and the British Army Benevolent Fund.

The peacekeepers – Cpl. J.J. Shaw, Pte. Painter, Pte. Craig-Douglas, Pte. Stevens and Pte. Hassall – began their odyssey in Sector 1, in the western part of the island. Morale was high as they made their way eastward to Sector 2, but the mood changed as soon as they hit their first mountain. The five riders were relieved to reach the downward slopes, attacking the tarmac at such speed that a few of them crashed. "There were some spectacular but comical crashes along the way", said Cpl. Shaw, adding, "Pte. Craig-Douglas appeared to spend more time picking himself up from each of his numerous falls than actually cycling".

As the first day wore on, it became clear that some of the bikes, and bikers, were not going to make it to the end. The first in the safety vehicle was Pte. Stevens, with an injury to his shoulder. Next up was Pte. Hassall, who actually managed to snap the chain on his bike. At the end of the the day, there were some very tired men, but also some very tired-looking bikes.

Day two started in the UN Protected Area, site of UNFICYP headquarters, leading down to the Ledra Palace Hotel. "The second day certainly wasn't as much fun as



From the left: Capt. Fragni, 1/Lt. Vámos, Capt. Paller and Capt. Gordillo

The strenuous walk began to leave its first signs on the officers. Legs were aching and feet were sore. They were glad to see OP-17 loom in the distance, even though it meant being tested on the MIP (Major Incident Plan).

At 5 a.m., the group set off for the last leg of the journey. Dark clouds suddenly appeared, followed by strong winds and then rain. By now, the men were really feeling the strain, and the weather conditions did not help. The route became muddy. The pace had slowed down and one team member (no name!) started to limp. However, the aches and pains failed to dampen the team's enthusiasm, and morale stayed high all the way.

The march ended at 10 a.m. at San Martín Camp. Chief Operations Officer Lt. Col. Carlos Quinteros and CO Sector 1 Lt. Col. Edgardo Calvi were at the gate to welcome the group.

So came to an end the first JOC Duty Officer march. Maj. Ainsworth, evaluating their efforts, stated: "A very successful night. Although not exactly a 'cakewalk', Exercise Sappers Stroll tested the physical and mental abilities through a non-tactical march, interspersed with written tests. The results were excellent."



Cpl. Shaw handing over the cheque to UNICEF representative Ms. Maro Panayiotou

the first", said Cpl. Stevens. "Due to the flat nature of the land, there were no spectacular crashes at all!"

The journey continued in Sector 4's area of responsibility and the team finally made it to the eastern finish point at OP-146 (Baywatch), much to the relief of the troops.

Day three was another early start, with the bikers on the road at 6 a.m. By this stage there was only a handful of men who had managed all three days, and it was starting to show on the weary bodies of Cpl. Shaw, Pte. Painter and Pte. Craig-Douglas. The riders established a quick pace, covering about 15 km in a little under an hour, much of the way uphill. They made it back to Sector 2 tired, relieved and with £340 for charity.

Cpl. J.J. Shaw



# FMPU roles and tasks

**Things you (probably) did not know about the Force Military Police Unit**

A recent conversation with an international staff member of several years' service within UNFICYP highlighted to the Force Provost Marshal that there are still many within the mission who do not fully understand the role and function of the Force Military Police Unit (FMPU).

Many see the high profile FMPU deterrence patrols within UNPA but do not realise that the unit's area of responsibility actually covers the whole island of Cyprus (less the UK Sovereign Bases Area). The FMPU is not simply focused within the buffer zone or UNFICYP installations, but covers the largest territory of any policing agency on the island. The FMPU has jurisdiction over all members of UNFICYP; international staff, UNPOL and military. This responsibility extends whether mission members are on or off duty, is island-wide and, in certain circumstances, applies to locally recruited civilians.

As you would expect from a policing agency, the FMPU is tasked with the investigation of all criminal, non-criminal and military offences relating to UNFICYP personnel and property. They do so by the provision of island-wide police patrols to react to and deter crime or road traffic incidents. Additionally, they conduct customs checks on UN flights and are responsible for all police matters on the UNPA and other UNFICYP installations. So for example, if you are involved in a road traffic collision in your privately

owned or rented vehicle in Paphos, you should call FMPU immediately, who will provide the roadside advice and police support in dealing with the local authorities.

Evidence prepared by FMPU is used to support proceedings in military and civilian courts worldwide, coronial courts, boards of inquiry and tribunals. They

maintain very close liaison with the other policing agencies operating within Cyprus, especially the Republic of Cyprus Police (CYPOL) and the Turkish Cypriot Police Element (TCPE).

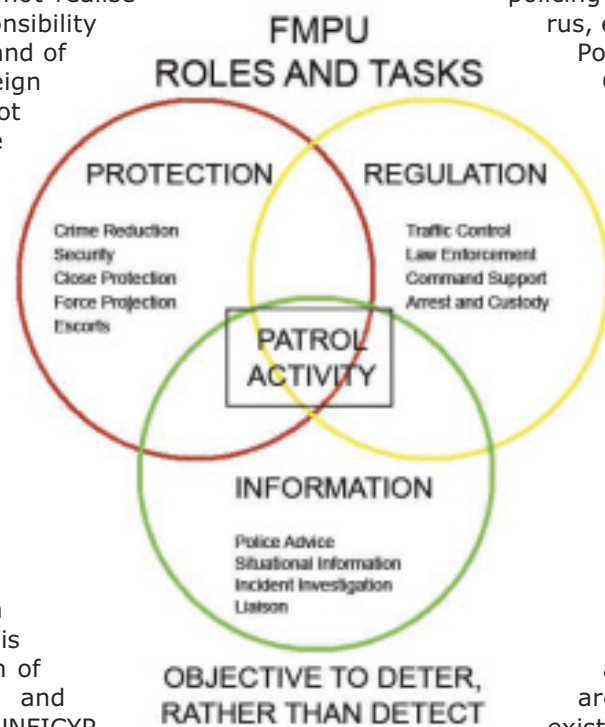
The FMPU also provides a crime scene investigation service in support of their own and UNPOL investigations; delivering a capability to an internationally accepted policing standard.

In addition to their role within Cyprus, members of FMPU also visit the contributing nation states to deliver police-related training to soldiers destined for employment with the FMPU prior to their arrival in Cyprus.

Covering a range of topics from basic evidence awareness, jurisdiction and initial actions at a scene, the packages are designed to supplement the existing training undertaken by all those deploying to UNFICYP. A similar package is presented locally to UN police and

medical staff.

The FMPU provides this policing support 24 hrs a day, 365 days a year from the main police station on the UNPA. There is also a small detachment located in Dherynia, covering the Sector 4 area of responsibility.



## From Bollywood to the buffer zone

Sector 2 and the MFR were graced early last month with the presence of Sofia Hyat, a Bollywood actress from the UK.

Sofia arrived at the Ledra Palace on 5 January and received a brief on the history of the Regiment and its role here in Cyprus. She then began her tour of all troop locations and not a moment was lost for photo opportunities! After lunch, Sofia watched a COP WOODPECKER demonstration and was amazed at how a truly multi-national force can operate in a joint environment.

In the evening, Sofia sang for the soldiers and enjoyed an excellent Ghurka curry and bhat! This was a delightful day for soldiers and Sofia alike, and an excellent morale-boosting visit.

Capt. D.R.M. Gordon



## Visitors

**UNFICYP extended the usual courtesies when the Chief of Mission, Force Commander and Chief Civil Affairs Officer received the following visitors during this month:**



**14 January:** Secretary of State, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, H.E Mr. Michael Zilmer-Johns (top left with Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni)

**17 January:** Swiss Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Peter Vogler (above with the FC)

**18 January:** Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Mr. Alireza Bigdeli (left with SRS Michael Møller)

**19 January:** Chief Current Military Operations Service, DPKO, Col. Willem Van Dulleman (below left [right]) with Lt. Col. Surendra Sijapati, Peacekeeping Affairs Officer, CMOS [centre] and Chief Civil Affairs Kyoto Shiotani)

**22 January:** Embassy of the State Qatar, H.E. Mr. Mubarak Bin Rahman A. Al-Nasser (below with SRS Møller)



## Ambassadors visit the Karpas

On 17 January the Ambassadors of Denmark, Finland and Sweden visited the Karpas together with the UNFICYP patrol for home visits to the enclave. They visited the Greek Cypriot community spokespersons in Leonarisso, Ayias Trias, and Rizokarpasso. In Rizokarpasso they visited the Greek Cypriot secondary and high schools and met with the Turkish-Cypriot president of the municipality."

**From the left: Amb. Svend Wæver (Denmark), Dima Abdoul Samad, Civil Affairs Liaison Assistant, Panayiota Kanaka, spokesperson of Leonarisso Village, Sgt. Allison Flynn, SCAT Pyla member, Amb. Risto Piipponen (Finland) and Amb. Ingemar Lindahl (Sweden)**





## New Faces

### Chief of Integrated Support Services



The new Chief of Integrated Support Services, Thomas Gerard (Gerry) King, arrived in UNFICYP on 15 December 2007. Gerry joined the United Nations as a Logistics Officer in 2001 and served in UN HQ New York until May 2004 when he was assigned to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI). He served with UNAMI until July 2006 when he returned to UN HQ. In March 2007, he was assigned to the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) as Chief Logistics Officer until his redeployment to UNFICYP.

Prior to joining the UN he served for more than 20 years as an Infantry Officer with the

Irish Defence Forces. During his military career, he has served twice with UNIFIL, and also with UNPREDEP and UNTAET.

Gerry is from County Mayo in Ireland. He holds a primary degree in Business Administration and a Master's Degree in Public Administration. He has two children in their 20s, and both have assured him that they will be frequent visitors to the island.

He was a keen sportsman in his youth and played Gaelic football and rugby at representative level. Nowadays he is an enthusiastic sports fan. He also enjoys reading and music.

### Deputy Senior Police Officer



Chief Superintendent John Farrelly joined UNFICYP on 15 December.

John has been a member of An Garda Síochána (Ireland's Police Service) for the last 32 years, most of that time in Dublin City. During this period he has held two national profile positions. Between 1993 and 2004 he was the Press and Public relations officer for the force. In 2004, as Chief Superintendent, he was appointed Director of the Garda National Traffic Bureau.

John always wanted to serve overseas on a UN mission, so when the opportunity came in late 2007, he seized it with both hands. He

says, "I have enjoyed every minute of it so far, there is a lot to learn and it is so different from normal policing, but the UN family has been very welcoming and helpful and therefore has made the transition painless".

John has been awarded two bravery awards. He holds an Honour's degree in Police Management, is a member of the Public Relations Institute of Ireland and is a member of the International Institute of Security.

John, whose partner's name is Catriona, has two daughters, Stephanie (25) and Michelle (22).

### Transport Sqn Driver



Xenophon Xenophontos took over the job of driver in the Transport Squadron on 2 January, replacing Andreas Kyriakou Azas who retired at the end of November 2007.

Xenophon (known to his friends as Xenios), who comes from Nicosia, spent 14 years in the UK and returned to Cyprus in 1983. Since then, he has worked for Marks & Spencer, the Canadian Immigration Office, the American Embassy, UNDP/Iraq

and IIIC.

Xenios is married to Ria, and they have a son Sotiris (22) and a daughter Andriana (19), both at university in the UK.

One of Xenios' hobbies is archery. He has participated with the Cyprus archery national team in small state competitions, travelling to Slovakia, Greece, San Marino and winning a bronze medal in 2004 for his team.

### CO Sector 4



Lt. Col. Juraj Varga took up the position of Commanding Officer Sector 4 on 3 January, replacing Lt. Col. Jaroslav Schön-vický.

Lt. Col. Varga served as senior officer of the military police in the Slovak Republic's Ministry of Defence from 1992 to 2002 where he was actively involved in crime investigation. From 2003 to 2005, he was

the senior officer in the Slovak General Staff's military command centre. Up until his arrival in UNFICYP, he acted as chief of the current operation watch team of the Slovak armed forces.

Lt. Col. Varga is married to Miroslava and they have two children, Martina (18) and Marek (13).

His hobbies include sports activities.

### CO UN Flight



Lt. Col. Jaime Luis Antich, CO UN Flight, arrived in UNFICYP on 14 January, taking over from Lt. Col. Guillermo Garcés.

Lt. Col. Antich joined the Argentinian Air Force in 1981. Since then, he has undergone several air-related courses gaining qualifications in fixed wing aircraft and helicopters. He has also acquired over 3,500 flying hours, and has completed several special tasks in Antarctica.

This is not Lt. Col. Antich's first tour with

UNFICYP, having spent six months in 1996 with UN Flight. He also served with MINUSTAH for six months in 2006.

Lt. Col. Antich has a degree in Human & Public Relations and Aerial & Aerospace Systems, and a Masters in Business Administration.

He is married to Michelina, and they have two sons, Augusto (eight) and Octavio (six). In his free time, he likes reading and keeps fit by running.

## Sport

### Sector 4 Soldiers Test Endurance and Determination in Run from Athineou to Dali

A group of sector 4 soldiers have renewed with the origins of the modern marathon, running 42,195 km from Athineou to Dali and back last month in a gruelling test of endurance.

With the legend in mind of their fellow soldier Pheidippides, who is said to have run from the battlefield in the town of Marathon to Athens in ancient Greece to deliver word of his army's victory, SSgt. Laczko, MCpl. Hegedus and WO3 Vakulya set out from Athineou on the morning of 19 December for a run of over 42 km. Maj. Bucsanszky and Lt. Kovacs provided vehicle escort and medical support. Weather conditions were ideal, although the frequent hills tested the team's determination.

The team successfully reached Dali, the halfway point, in an impressive 1 hour 47 minutes. On the way back to Athineou, they were joined by Lt. Kovacs who ran with them for the next 5 km. At about the 27 km point, the team began to feel the effects of the distance and terrain, and SSgt. Laczko required treatment for cramps. He quickly recovered, however, and rejoined the group at the 35 km point. Lt. Kovacs provided further moral support at the 30 km point, once again joining the run.

As the end drew near, the going became arduous with team members hitting the infamous "wall", so dreaded by long-distance runners. They all dug in, however, and arrived back at Athineou together.

But the run did not end there for WO3 Vakulya, who literally went the extra mile (or miles) and successfully completed a total distance of 50 km.



**Distances covered: Lt. E Kovacs, Sector 4 (15 km); SSgt. A. Laczko, Sector 4 (35 km); MCpl. P. Hegedus, Sector 4 (42,195 km); WO3 SZ Vakulya, FMPU (50 km)**

### Zenobia Wreck Explored by MFR

The "Zenobia" was a Swedish car ferry that sank in July 1980 about two miles from Larnaca port.

The wreck measures just over 180 metres long, and lies in approximately 40 metres of water at its deepest point. The ship is laid on its port side and has remained the top dive site in Cyprus for many years.

On 22 December, a team of divers from the MFR travelled to Larnaca to visit the Zenobia. The team included Capt. Dove, Lt. Meehan, 2/Lt. Allford, LCpl. Halliday and LCpl. Older (see photo right).

The first dive saw us floating in crystal clear water as we explored the hull, taking in the stern of the ship with its open deck and giant propellers. There are still the remains of lorries and cars chained to the deck. Our

second dive was planned to be a penetration of the wheel house and the restaurant areas. The dive was a success, and finning through the wheel house was very spooky as we passed over the captain's chair and the control centre.

Our third dive took us into the accommodation section of the ship, where we passed through the restaurant and along several corridors in the bowels of the wreck. This dive was very technical, requiring us to move through tight spaces whilst being visibly restricted by the light. It was quite claustrophobic, but we all passed through the ship without problem.

The dive team is now looking forward to completing more dives and exploring deeper into the wreck in the future.

