

# The Blue Beret

November 2007



**Staying Sharp:  
Peacekeepers Test their Skills**





## THE BLUE BERET

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## Editorial

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has warned that violence against women has reached "hideous and pandemic proportions" in some countries recovering from conflicts. He has initiated a system-wide campaign to eliminate violence against women and girls.

The Security Council has also demanded an end to impunity for rape and other forms of sexual abuse.

The Council expressed deep concern that, despite its repeated demands for an immediate end to violence against women caught in armed conflicts, "rape and other forms of sexual abuse, as well as all other forms of violence, ... remain pervasive, and in some situations have become systematic, and have reached appalling levels of atrocity."

The Council stressed the need to end impunity for such acts as part of a comprehensive approach to seeking peace, justice, truth and national reconciliation. It also demanded that women be included in decision-making positions at every level of peacemaking and peace-building.

As the Secretary-General stressed, we all need to strengthen our collective and individual response to violence against women if we are to reverse the damage done by conflict, and to build more inclusive, accountable and cohesive societies, underpinned by viable democratic institutions.

This is an issue to be taken up not only by war-torn countries trying to rebuild, but those with a theoretically more equitable and balanced social and government structure, if "the veil of tolerance" which often surrounds violence against women is to be torn down.

Because violence against women and girls encompasses "physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family and in the general community, including battering, sexual abuse of children, dowry-related violence, rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women, forced prostitution, and violence perpetrated or condoned by the state."

We are all concerned by this problem, and we all need to act to bring it to an end.

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**Front Cover: Peacekeepers Test their Skills**  
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## Violence Against Women Always Unacceptable, SG says

### International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 25 November

Violence against women continues to persist as one of the most heinous, systematic and prevalent human rights abuses in the world. It is a threat to all women, and an obstacle to all our efforts for development, peace and gender equality in all societies.

Many countries have made considerable progress in changing laws, policies, practices and attitudes which in the past helped create a patchwork of impunity for this despicable offence. But there is so much left to do to tear down the veil of tolerance which still sometimes surrounds it.

Over the past year, our efforts have taken on new urgency. Following my predecessor's in-depth study in 2006, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a landmark resolution to strengthen efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women. The UN family is stepping up its activities at all levels – from new initiatives by the Regional

Commissions to better coordination and programming at the country level. Efforts are underway to raise public awareness, build political will and provide effective responses. And we are working on proposals to help States assess the scope, prevalence and incidence of violence against women, and respond to it more effectively.

To bring all these efforts together, I have decided to spearhead a system-wide campaign through 2015 for the elimination of violence against women. The campaign will focus on three key areas: global advocacy; UN leadership by example; and strengthened partnerships at the national and regional levels to support the work of Governments, civil society, the private sector and others. I have proposed that the General Assembly devote an agenda item every year to considering the question of violence against women. And I have called on the Security Council to establish a mechanism

dedicated to monitoring violence against women and girls, within the framework of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

In all this, I believe we can draw support from proposals to strengthen the UN's gender architecture, as presented by the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence. I believe we could significantly advance our cause by replacing several current structures with one dynamic UN entity. Such a new body should be able to call on all of the UN system's resources in the work to empower women and realize gender equality worldwide. It should mobilize forces of change at the global level, and inspire enhanced results at the country level.

Violence against women is always a violation of human rights; it is always a crime; and it is always unacceptable. Let us take this issue with the deadly seriousness that it deserves – not only on this International Day, but every day.

## Sounding the Alarm on Climate Change

### The SG in Antarctica

by Ban Ki-moon, 9 November

I am here today to observe the impact of global warming. To see for myself and learn all I can. We joke among ourselves that we are on an "Eco-tour", but I am not here as a tourist but as a messenger of early warning.

What we saw today was extraordinarily beautiful. These dramatic landscapes are rare and wonderful, but it is deeply disturbing as well. We can clearly see this world changing. The ice is melting far faster than we think.

All this may be gone, and not in the distant future, unless we act, together, now.

Look about us. We have seen it with our own eyes. Antarctica is on the verge of a catastrophe – for the world. The glaciers here on King

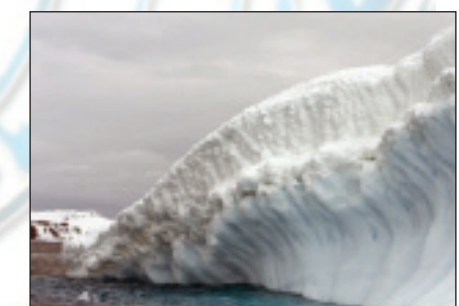
George Island have shrunk by 10 per cent. Some in Admiralty Bay have retreated by 25 kilometres. You know how the Larsen B ice sheet collapsed several years ago and disappeared within weeks – the size of Rhode Island, 87 km.

What alarms me is not the melting snow and glaciers, alone. It is that the Larsen phenomenon could repeat itself on a vastly greater scale. Scientists here have told me that the entire Western Antarctic Ice Shelf – the WAIS – is at risk. It is all floating ice, one fifth of the entire continent. If it broke up, sea levels could rise by six metres or 18 feet. Think of that. And it could happen quickly, almost overnight in geological terms.

This is not scare-mongering. I am not trying to frighten you. According to recent studies, 138 tons of ice are now being lost every year, mostly from the Western Ice Shelf.

You know, also that deep blue water absorbs more heat than sea covered with ice. The sea ice around Antarctica is vanishing too.

There are other deeply worrying signs. The penguin population of Chabrier Rock, a main breeding ground, has declined by 57% in the last 25 years. It is the same elsewhere. What will happen to the



View of the Collins Glacier in King George Island, Antarctica.

annual march of the penguins in the future? Will there even be one?

Grass is growing for the first time ever here on King George Island – including a grass used on American golf courses. It rains, increasingly often in the summer rather than snows.

These things should alarm us all. Antarctica is a natural lab that helps us understand what is happening to our world. We must save this precious earth, including all that is here. It is a natural wonder, but above all, it is our common home.

It is here where our work, together, comes into focus. We see Antarctica's beauty – and the danger global warming represents, and the urgency that we do something about it. I am determined that we shall.



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (centre) addresses journalists during his visit to Antarctica





## HIV/AIDS Awareness as Important as Ever

**UNFICYP's HIV/AIDS Focal Point Netha Kreouzou** gave her first Town Hall meeting on 20 November in the International Cafeteria to over 160 military, police and civilian peacekeepers.

The same briefing was conducted on 22 November for newly arrived UNPOL members.

Outlining UN policies and the organisation's commitment to fighting the disease, Kreouzou said it is essential that all civilian and uniformed peacekeepers of all nations understand the significance of HIV/AIDS prior to taking on peacekeeping duties. She noted that it has been shown in recent years that peacekeeping operations may be playing a role in the spread of HIV/AIDS between high prevalence areas and low prevalence areas. Therefore, it was crucial for all staff to know the essential facts about HIV/AIDS, to be able to protect themselves and their families from HIV infection. She also stressed that it was important to live positively with HIV and let live by contributing to a tolerant, equitable and compassionate UN-system workplace.

Kreouzou highlighted the fact that although Cyprus is a country with a low HIV/AIDS prevalence rate at less than 1% of the population, the number of cases officially recorded has doubled in the last two years with 29 new registrations in the first six months of this year alone. A RoC Health Ministry epidemiological report for the period

1986 to 2007 (end of June) indicated that 547 HIV positive patients have been recorded, of which 289 were Cypriots and 258 foreign nationals. According to the data received from the health authorities in the north, in the period from 1990 to 2006, six people were infected, four died from AIDS and 11 HIV cases were detected during mandatory testing. However, she said there is no official statistical reporting on HIV/AIDS in the north.

Kreouzou said there are a number of other worrying indicators, including the lack of a comprehensive policy for education on HIV/AIDS, the increase in the number of intravenous drug users, and the fact that prostitution and human-trafficking continue to be a serious issue in Cyprus which are all factors that can contribute to an escalation of HIV/AIDS.

A common island-wide strategy to fight against HIV/AIDS does not yet exist and there is little dialogue between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot experts on this issue, she said. Since the partial lifting of travel restrictions on 23 April 2003, experts in both communities have expressed concern about the spread of HIV infections throughout Cyprus through movement of individuals seeking anonymity whilst entering into risky sexual behaviour.

Local use of illegal drugs on both sides of the island is low compared with the situation elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean and Europe, but this problem is growing. Although there have been no official reports of cases of HIV infection in Cyprus among known drug addicts who are regularly tested in drugs treatment centres, drug abuse is seen as one of the risks that could play an important role in the future spread of the epidemic, through transmission of HIV between intravenous drug users and their sexual partners. The HIV/AIDS NGO's insist that there has already been at least one drug-related HIV death on the island, and express concern that once this starts, the numbers could increase dramatically. The exact number of drug users in both communities is not known. The number of intravenous drug users is estimated to be between 1,500 and 6,000 in the Greek Cypriot community, and 400-500 in the Turkish Cypriot community.



Kreouzou said another high risk group is the increasing number of women from south-east Europe and the former Soviet Union who apply for work in Cyprus as "artistes", a generally accepted euphemism for women working as sex workers. Although by local law, every person intending to work in Cyprus has to undergo testing for HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and tuberculosis, this could be considered as a serious threat and a possibility for risky sexual behaviour and the spreading of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Men who have sex with men (MSM) remain highly stigmatized in Cyprus and, as a consequence, remain largely underground, she said. Officials estimate that homosexuals make up 6% of the male population. At the same time, of all the registered cases of HIV/AIDS, 50% of all cases are via homosexual transmission. Both officials and NGO's agree that men who have sex with men are a vulnerable population for HIV prevention on the island.

Transmission of the disease in 90% of all cases, both in the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot community, is through sexual intercourse, which Kreouzou noted is something that can be prevented via responsible behaviour and the use of condoms.

Briefings will continue for all newly-arrived civilian, police and military peacekeepers as part of their induction within the mission. Meanwhile, condom dispensers have been placed in 20 locations around the UNPA and Sectors 1, 2 and 4. A further 35 condom dispensers will be placed in the men's and women's toilets in the coming months.

UNAIDS has issued its 2007 AIDS epidemic update. It reports that global HIV prevalence has levelled off, although AIDS continues to be among the leading causes of death globally.

The number of people living with HIV is estimated at 33.2 million. The 2007 estimates are significantly lower than the 2006 estimates (of 39.5 million) with the reduction due to major improvements to UNAIDS and WHO methodologies – recently endorsed by independent international experts.

According to the report, the global number of new HIV infections has decreased in part as a result of the impact of HIV programmes. An estimated 2.5 million people became newly infected and 2.1 million people died of AIDS in 2007.

While overall estimates may be lower, the data continues to confirm AIDS is the leading cause of death in Africa. Over two thirds of people living with HIV and over three-quarters of HIV-associated deaths are in sub-Saharan Africa. Eight countries in southern Africa account for almost one third of all new infections and deaths.

Since 2001, the number of people living with HIV in Eastern Europe and Central Asia increased over 150% from 630 000 to 1.6 million in 2007, while 90% of people living with HIV in Eastern Europe are in Ukraine and Russia.

In Asia, the estimated number of people living with HIV in Viet Nam has more than doubled between 2000 and 2005, and Indonesia has the fastest growing epidemic.

HIV prevalence among young pregnant women (15 to 24) attending antenatal clinics has declined since 2000/2001 in 11 of the 15 most-affected countries. Preliminary data also show favourable changes in risk behaviour among young people in a number of countries, (Botswana, Cameroon, Chad, Haiti, Kenya, Malawi, Togo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe). These trends suggest that prevention efforts are having an impact in several of the most affected countries.

In sub-Saharan Africa, continued treatment scale-up and HIV prevention efforts are also bringing results in some countries, but mortality from AIDS remains high in Africa due to the extensive unmet treatment need. Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya and Zimbabwe, among others, have all seen downward trends in their national prevalence. Beyond sub-Saharan Africa, declines in new HIV infections have also occurred in South and South-East Asia, notably in Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand.

There is a need to adapt and revive HIV prevention efforts as some countries are seeing a reversal of declining trends. Burundi's declining trend from the late 1990's did not continue beyond 2005, and HIV prevalence started to increase again at most surveillance sites. Despite achievements in reversing the epidemic in Thailand, HIV prevalence is rising among men who have sex with men and has remained high among injecting drug users over the past 15 years, ranging between 30% to 50%.

UNAIDS and WHO officials point out that the new estimates do not change the need for immediate action and increased funding to scale up towards universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services.

**UN AIDS**



*Netha briefing the newly arrived UNPOL Officers*





## UN-EU Strengthen Cooperation



On 8-9 November, a two-day workshop took place in Brussels on current and future co-operation between UNFICYP and the European Commission.

The workshop allowed each side to present and explain its activities and exchange views on possible future cooperation in a range of areas. It showed there was a desire for closer cooperation, either to avoid overlaps or to reinforce synergies.

Importantly, the meeting provided the opportunity for face-to-face meetings between UNFICYP staff and the EC, including the Cyprus desks in the various services. The creation of networks was a major aim,

and contacts made will now allow us to tap directly into EC expertise to support our operations.

Peacekeeping challenges faced by UNFICYP were covered, in particular increased civilian activities in the buffer zone and how the EC can effectively support our operations in this area.

One lesson also shared was the importance of the active participation of civil society in the debate on the future of the island. To this end, the projects on the ground, implemented through UNDP and the European Union Programme Support Office, will benefit from better coordination, in particular in forging a common approach to challenges.

*Tim Alchin*

## Gurkha Regiment Arrives at UNPA

Following five weeks of intensive training at New Normandy Barracks and a 10-day exercise at Nesscliffe, Shrewsbury, 66 Sqn RLC of 10 Tpt Regt Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment finally arrived at the UNPA to begin their role as the Mobile Force Reserve (MFR).

The build-up training in the UK had prepared the Squadron well in terms of the skills required to carry out tasks such as crowd control and guard duties. We were not, however, so prepared for the integration with the soldiers from Argentina, Hungary and Slovakia. This had been talked about before our arrival, but it's never as easy when the situation is there in front of you. Fortunately, the universal appreciation by soldiers for physical training (PT) lessons, and the fact that all soldiers have a similar sense of humour, soon had the integration process moving along swiftly.

The situation at the MFR is fairly unique in that it is made up of four national armies, predominantly lead by the British contingent and is a very interesting place to work for all involved. There are great expectations and by the end of a tour here, many will have learned a lot from their contemporaries, especially in terms of the language barrier for which English and Spanish lessons are planned for the troops.

On arrival at Blue Beret Camp, the first task was to familiarise the three platoons with the equipment on issue. It takes a surprisingly long time to put on the full Robocop protective clothing and the body armour, and makes for some interesting performances from the guys as they mount and dismount the Tactica.

The crowd control training played a significant role in the preparation of the MFR. The ability to deploy to any part of the buffer zone and play out our role as the Force Reserve is key to ensuring UNFICYP's position of dominance is maintained. To that end, the training has been as realistic as possible, using projectiles and large numbers of "civilian" demonstrators to test the abilities of the three platoons during their training. This has led to several of the smaller British soldiers being used as shields by a certain Argentinian Staff Sergeant, who bench presses most of the weights in the gym like they are paperweights!

The training programme has also seen many members of the Sqn taking part in BZ recces using both the

UN Flight and the vehicles at our disposal. There have been two visits to Roca Camp in Sector 1, and thanks must go to them for providing us with a hearty lunch. These recces have also probably confirmed the myth that officers and maps should never be placed in close proximity of one another with a certain young Troop Commander managing to find himself navigationally challenged on a mountain pass. This part of the training has been very informative and has allowed the MFR to settle into its routine quickly and efficiently. Within the training package, the troops have also undertaken reaction to incidents and plenty of PT. This has enabled the MFR to very quickly become a credible and effective force that can be used to best effect whenever it is called upon. This credibility is in part due to the troops' professionalism in their current task role, and also due to the hard work that they have all put in to ensure their own understanding of what is required of them.

The MFR is a challenging environment to work in. The missions and tasks are varied and sometimes challenging with a large responsibility to act as the Force Reserve for UNFICYP. It is a task that the multi-national unit has set about in an eager and professional manner, making the MFR a very strong and effective team that is able to cope with all taskings in the manner that it is intended.

*2/Lt. Clive Allford*



*Pte. Bernard Shirley (UK), LCpl. Juraj Slavik (Slovakia), Cpl. Juan de la cruz Soto (Argentina) and M/Cpl. Peter Ando (Hungary)*

## Gurkha Religious Festivals

### Dashain

**Dashain** is the most auspicious time of the year for all Gurkhas and Nepalese. It falls during the bright lunar fortnight ending on the day of the full moon in late September or early October. In preparation for Dashain, every home is ceremonially cleaned, decorated and painted for the visits of Goddess Durga (Goddess of Power) and family members. The Dashain festival is celebrated for 10 days, with the Phulpati, Kalaratri, Mar and Tika being the most important days.

The seventh day of Dashain is known as Phulpati, where the whole village goes in procession to the countryside to collect Phulpati (offerings of flowers and lucky plants). They are followed closely by the Pundit (priest) and Pujaries (worshippers) carrying sacrificial Konras and Khukries (knives). On arrival at the selected spot, a shrine is erected, a sacred fire is lit and prayers are offered. The Phulpati is blessed. The procession then reforms and brings the collected offerings to the Mandir (Temple).

The eighth day of Dashain is known as Kalaratri (Black Night). A Dashain Hall is decorated specially for this celebration. The activities commence in the evening with drinks followed by the main dinner – the Bada Khana. Meanwhile, the Pundit (priest) and the Pujaries

### Tihar

**"Tihar"**, the festival of lights, is one of the most dazzling of all Hindu festivals which falls during late October or early November. During this festival, Goddess Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and fortune, is worshipped. All Gurkha/Nepalese houses are decorated with lit oil lamps. Thus, during the night, the entire village or town resembles a sparkling diamond.

This festival is celebrated for five days, starting from the thirteenth day of the waning moon of the month. The third day is the most important day of the festival.

### Dashain Celebration in Cyprus

This has been a busy year for 10 Transport Regiment QOGLR. Having completed a six-month tour in Iraq, and some well-deserved post operational tour leave (POTL) in July, the Regiment started preparing for Op Tosca deployment. After the pre-deployment training and two weeks' confirmatory exercises, the Regiment arrived in Cyprus at the end of September. On 1 October, 10 Transport Regiment took over responsibility of Sector 2 UNFICYP Roulement Regiment from 8 Transport Regiment RLC.

This year, Dashain fell between 18-21 October. Two out of these four days were more important – 19 October was Kalaratri (Black Night) and 21 October was Tika. Despite the very busy period and ongoing opera-



(worshippers) continue with the rituals of the worship of Goddess Durga in the temple. At midnight, all the lights are switched off for a minute to symbolise Kalaratri (Black Night) and Goddess Durga is worshipped. In the Dashain Hall, a variety of Nepalese cultural dances are performed to entertain guests.

The ninth day of Dashain is Mar (also known as Balidan) and is the climax of the Dashain celebration. The tenth day of Dashain is known as Tika. On this day, everybody assembles at the temple where the priest (and, in the case of British Army, the senior Gurkha Officer), puts Tikas (a red/white mixture of rice and yogurt) on their foreheads and hands out tufts of barley shoots along with his blessing and good wishes.

It is obligatory for all Nepalese to visit their elders on this day. It is a day in which family members who are unable to see each other during the year come to the main house (or the ancestral house in which the eldest members of the family usually live) and receive blessings from elders and exchange gifts. In the afternoon, the Phulpati collected on the seventh day is ceremonially escorted from the Temple to a nearby stream or countryside and the final rites are carried out.

It is called "Laxmi Puja", the day when we worship the goddess of wealth. On this day, very early in the morning the cow, is worshipped. Tika is put on her head and a garland around her neck, then she is fed with a variety of foods. A cow symbolises wealth and it is the sacred animal for all Hindus. The cow is also the national animal of Nepal.

Throughout the evening, groups of boys and girls go to houses singing songs of praise and they are treated as guests and given gifts.

tional commitments, we managed to organise the celebrations. Capt. Pradip Limbu (senior Gurkha Officer) took overall in charge of the arrangements, and under his supervision we celebrated Kalaratri on the evening of 19 October. In spite of very little time and lack of resources, everyone put their best efforts into making the Kalaratri night exciting and memorable.

Many key personalities were invited. By 7.30 p.m., all regimental personnel arrived at the Ledra Palace Hotel swimming pool for the first phase of the evening. The party officially started on the arrival of our main guest, Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael Barni, who was welcomed to the Ledra Palace by CO Sector 2, Lt. Col. A. P. Duncan and Capt. Pradip Limbu.

The second phase was Bada Khana (buffet). The master chef and his team had produced a variety of delicious national delicacies for our guests. Our soldiers then performed cultural and traditional dances. Everyone enjoyed the performance, particularly our guests who had not witnessed this type of event before. Once the show was over, everyone was invited to join in and enjoy the cultural dances – some were quicker to learn Nepalese dance than others! The party ended at approximately 11.30 p.m.

The event was a great success, thanks to the effort made by everyone involved. We all had a splendid and unforgettable evening.

*Cpl. Sushil Gurung*



*Sorathi – Gurung Dance*

November 2007 – The Blue Beret



# UNFICYP Military Skills Competition



UNPOL on the assault course



Sector 1 on the assault course



Sector 2 on the assault course

Although the title states "A hot day in the oven", that's purely an idiomatic phrase used by our Argentinian team captain, Capt. Gordillo, who likened it to a day spent in the UNFICYP Military Skills Competition!

The event was held on 21 November, the second Mil Skills of 2007. Teams from all Sectors, the MFR, FMPU, UNPOL and HQ (my team) entered. We woke at 3.00 a.m. to the sound of rain. It was an effort to get up so early, but we managed. We all looked so awful that the jokes started – and continued throughout the day. We had a quick breakfast, and by 5.00 a.m., we were standing in line for the first gruelling part of the competition – the endurance march. We were all nervous, but once the gun went off, we too were off!

My advice to the team was not to strain ourselves straight away, since the first part was uphill and very tough. My team, therefore, split into three groups – the first was the very keen and fit WO2 Aramayo, who wanted to win. The second were the "hard-headed triplets" – SSgt. Rodriguez, SSgt. Ughy and LCpl. Frost, and last but not least, the two very proud captains, Capt. Gordillo and Capt. Fragni. The run went well until we reached the worst part of this exercise – the stretcher carrying four heavy bergens. We started wrongly, and that was why we finished last. The team was a little gloomy after this, but when Capt. Gordillo started to sing our team song, the soundtrack from the Flintstones, the mood immediately changed. From then onwards, we always started to sing this song when we approached another stand.

The second stand was the command task. The aim was to set up a tent, which may sound an easy thing for a soldier to do – but not when he or she is blindfolded. Every member of the team had to participate in this exercise, guided by the team captain. We were clumsy, and felt just like malfunctioning robots!

We didn't manage to finish this exercise, nevertheless we proceeded to the next stand, where we had to position five tyres in a specific order. This should have been a pretty easy task, however, my team captain gave the orders in Spanish. I'm Hungarian. I don't speak Spanish! Nevertheless, in our normal happy team spirit, we found a way to communicate. This was the stand I enjoyed most!

The next exercise was the map reading. Well, we thought it was.... But we mislaid the timetable and arrived at the wrong location. Gloom was about to set upon us, when we spotted WO1 Reinhard Zeller giving out rolls, and happily accepted them. Regretfully, we missed the map reading, so we went directly to the Incident Reaction stand.

Arriving late, we had less time to solve the hunting situation. However, thanks to Capt. Gordillo's experience here and the team's quick reactions, we earned good points at this stand.

After this, my team finally arrived at the map reading. By this time we were soaked, and very disappointed that there were no more free rolls! Nevertheless, due to LCpl. Golding's good training, we finished the map reading quickly and proceeded onto the next stand – the cross country driving.

This was an exercise of the Military Skills I was definitely not happy about. I had taken part in this competition last summer, and had been involved in a crash there. This time, however, I was not the driver – only a passenger. At least, that's what I thought until Capt. Gordillo informed me that I was the driver's guide, who went ahead to make sure the road is safe.... So, Frosty and I had to plod through ice-cold water on slippery mud, almost falling over on several occasions. We got completely soaked (again), but luckily we did well on this stand. I must say a big thank-you here to Capt. Fragni for lending me a dry pair of socks!

The next stand we also did well on – patrol and observation. It's important to comment here how much it meant to us to have our cheer-leading team join us, including the wives of Capt. Gordillo and Capt. Fragni, Capt. Gordillo's daughter, Capt. Fragni's son and our driver, SSgt. Pancho Almiron.

The last but one stand was the shooting competition. This was split into two parts. The first was the shooting, and the efforts by our Commando, SSgt. Rodriguez, was outstanding. If I hadn't seen his performance with my own eyes, I would never have believed it! Then there was the re-assembling exercise, which started off well, but then Capt. Gordillo found himself in trouble with part of the Hungarian AK63D rifle. Although we had spent many hours practising, he was not able to re-assemble the weapon in six minutes, so we didn't do so well here.

After a short rest, we arrived at the most arduous part of the competition – the assault course. This involved a long track with many obstacles along the way. As if this wasn't enough for the Training Officer, we had to carry a 25-litre jerrican full of water, and an ammo box full of stones! We started off well, but half way through, fatigue fell upon us. It was our cheerleaders who gave us the will to carry on, finding strength that we never knew we had. We managed to finish in good time, although we had a 30-second penalty lodged against us for not having a woman in our team!

Out of the 10 teams which participated, we managed to gain 7th place. This was a very good effort, since we were on 24/7 duty during the training period and had no chance to practise as a team.

All in all, it was a great experience, working together as "brothers" and enjoying a multi-national camaraderie. We will definitely take many memories home with us.

SSgt. Balasz Ughy



Sector 2 on the cross country driving



Sector 4 Hungarians on the assault course



Sector 4 Slovaks map reading



Sector 1 on the command task



The winners!



HQ team on the assault course



## Prevention is Better than Cure

During October and November, just under 200 Slovak troops underwent vaccination treatment against influenza. The vaccinations were carried out by the medical staff of Camp General Štefánik.

In the past, preventative flu treatment has been offered to troops. This year, however, the vaccinations were obligatory. Orders were received from the military supervisors of the Slovak Army Forces Military Staff, based on the revised national law. Only those suffering from health problems were excluded.

Vaccines against seasonal flu were purchased from the local UN pharmaceutical contractor and paid for through national funds. The vaccine was selected because in recent years, it has proven to have fewer side effects and adverse reactions. There is no vaccine which can give 100% protection against the flu, however if it is contracted, there are usually fewer complications.

Troops not only have to be vaccinated against influenza. They also have to be immunized against a number of infectious diseases before joining the mission, including hepatitis B, dysentery and meningitis,



in order to minimize the risk of infectious illnesses and their spread, and to maintain a good health status of troops and operational capability as well.

There has been a lot of public discussion – positive and negative – on the benefits of this type of vaccination. However, it is not a mistake to be vaccinated, as the risks are minimal. Just think back to the Avian flu panic two years ago! We, as peacekeepers, should never forget the goals of the World Health Organisation who, apart from fighting the problems of lack of food and water, are facing the challenges of eliminating infectious diseases. It is our duty to help them.

**Capt. Igor Gergič, MD**

## Kitchen Upgrade in Sector 4

The kitchen in Camp General Štefánik, Famagusta got a facelift at the end of October. It was completely refurbished, in line with health and technical standards.

The renovation work started last summer. All cooking equipment was moved to a temporary kitchen whilst the works were ongoing. These included the repair of electrical wiring, plumbing, drainage, as well as wall, ceiling and floor surfaces. Everything had to be retiled, and windows, doors and sinks replaced.

A lot of work went into this effort. In addition to the reconstruction works underway, the daily provision of meals for the troops in Camp General Štefánik in temporary facilities had to be organised.

As work progressed, unexpected problems arose which delayed the completion of the renovations. Of course, all peacekeepers in CGS still had to be fed! As the saying goes, "Rome wasn't built in a day".

There are still a number of problems which have to be dealt with, but the logistic and engineering personnel of Camp General Štefánik and HQ have managed to reinstate the new kitchen facilities, enabling the chefs

to move back in. In spite of all the holdups, the kitchen now has a completely new look and is well in line with safety and hygiene standards.

**1/Lt Miroslav Šelep**



## UNPOL Medal Parade

An UNPOL Medal presentation was held at the UNPA on 18 November 2007. Six Dutch UNPOL officers were among the medallists.

A group of 13 Dutch senior police officers, comprising the Dutch Police International Deployment Agency and staff members' supervisors, travelled to Cyprus for the event.

Chief of Mission Michael Møller addressed the group and provided them a view on the political background, while DSPA Col Speedie held a presentation on the tasks and role of UNPOL. Meanwhile, SPA Carla van Maris received some of the Dutch visitors for an office call. A guided "green line tour" formed one of the highlights of the visit.



**CM Møller presenting Dutch police officer Senior Sergeant Angelique van Oyen with her medal**

## Me and My ....

This month, the Blue Beret is starting a series of articles on staff members – civilian, military or police – who are, in their own way, special. S/he could be someone with a specific talent (singer, sportsperson, craftsman), somebody who has helped in an accident, someone who – in their own way – is special.

Evrikos Demetriou, known to his pals as Rick, holds the position of Finance Assistant here in the HQ. But when he's not number-crunching, he enjoys working in the outdoors.

Rick grew up in North London. His father, Peter, was a builder and so Rick, along with his three brothers Chris, Jim and Mario, used to accompany their father at weekends and on summer holidays on building stints around the country to earn their pocket money. This enabled Rick to follow his beloved Arsenal Football Club's progress, although, as Rick says, "Some of the money went on the girlfriends... In those days, there was no pocket money. It had to be earned, and what's more, we didn't begrudge doing the work. It made us appreciate the value of money more."



**George and his BBQ**

Back in 2000, Rick's office was located near the Irish Club (now held by the R & I Unit and PCIU). Nearby, Rick spotted a pile of bricks which the Irish used as a basic, no-frills BBQ. Rick's (then) boss suggested that it could be improved upon, if Rick had the time and the inclination! Rick persuaded the PWD office located nearby to donate some bricks, so after work, every day for a week, Rick beavered away and produced a barbecue which surpassed everyone's expectations!

In February this year, the Hungarians discovered the barbecue – and Rick's talents. They approached him and asked him to construct one at their bar. Following several meetings, where the design and construction were discussed, Rick agreed to go ahead. The Hungarians offered to pay but he refused. However, Rick did accept the help of three (rotating) assistants, since this project was considerably larger than his first. The work started in July, during a heat wave when temperatures rose to over 40°C at midday. Therefore, work commenced at weekends at 6.00 a.m. until noon and, on the odd occasion, in the evenings after work. During the bricklaying, Rick and the Hungarians

would share refreshments – and stories. Like when Rick was a boy, helping his father, and decided to bring his father's van closer to the skip – and backed right into it....

The Hungarian project ended up with 635 bricks being laid with loving care. It is now proudly used by the Hungarians for their barbecue and goulash – parties which Rick and his wife Stella (also an UNFICYP colleague working for the Chief of General Services) are invited to as honoured guests! Rick says it was a collective effort where everyone pulled together. They wanted something practical and impressive, and they certainly got it.

Rick's brick-laying skills can be viewed at his house too, where a barbecue with all accessories takes pride of place in his back garden.

The family tradition continues with his son, George, learning the trade from Rick. George assisted his father as Rick had done years before in constructing the barbecue and, of course, George got his pay too. Only now George spends it on books, PlayStation games and his beloved bike. Apart from earning his £60, George learned a life lesson in the value of money.

Rick, however, also enjoys building football teams and, as many of his colleagues in UNFICYP are aware, another of his activities is "Saturday Soccer" coaching for children on the UNPA football pitch. This is something he has done for the last three years with children from various schools in Nicosia. The teams include 7-11-year-olds and 12-14-year-olds. Rick never claims to be a professional, but says it's all in the name of fun and the children get to learn to play properly with the training they are given.

So from building bricks to building characters, Rick sets the example...



**Rick working on the Hungarian BBQ**



# Art Attack

On 21 November 2007, Action for Cooperation and Trust (ACT), the Europe Mediterranean Art Association (EMAA) and the Cyprus Chamber of Fine Arts (E.KA.TE) announced the 32 winners and runners-up of the ART ATTACK Cyprus Art Competition at a prize ceremony in Nicosia.

As the official guests of the event the representatives of the two communities of Nicosia, Eleni Mavrou and Cemal Bulutoğlu, had the pleasure of presenting the finalists with their prizes.

"These winning artworks contain powerful messages about what is important to Cypriot people," said Jaco Cilliers, ACT Programme Manager. "They deal with topics such as the destruction of the environment, gender inequality, the feelings of teenagers, the common Cypriot culture and how people see the future. We would like to thank everybody who made the effort to send in an artwork."

The island-wide art competition was launched in May 2007 and invited Cypriots of all ages and abilities to express their ideas by submitting an artwork reflecting one of the following themes: Environment – Identity – Difference and Equality – Memories – Spirituality – Future – Line.

The competition was developed by members of the Cyprus Art Competition Advisory Board – 14 Cypriots from across the island representing the fields of fine art, design, literature, arts education, arts pro-



From the left: Ms. Eleni Mavrou, Mr. Cemal Bulutoğlu, Pembe Mentesh and Jaco Cilliers

motion, photography, galleries, film and theatre. Each individual contributed specialist experience, knowledge and guidance to the project.

The judging took place in early October at the Ledra Palace Hotel bi-communal rooms. International curators came to Cyprus from France and Turkey, especially for the judging.

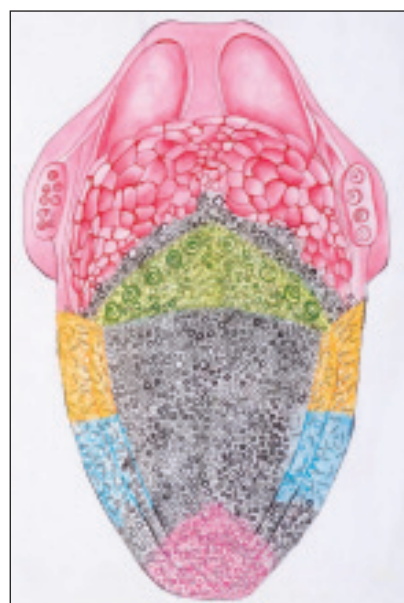
Starting in Nicosia and travelling to six other major cities, an exhibition of the winning entries will tour the island during 2008. The aim of the exhibition is to prompt discussion and reflection on the issues which Cypriots care about and which are visualised through the art medium. The objective of the project and the message of the exhibition is that Cypriot society possesses a rich cultural diversity which can be

explored through the visual arts, and ultimately this diversity needs to be shared and celebrated.

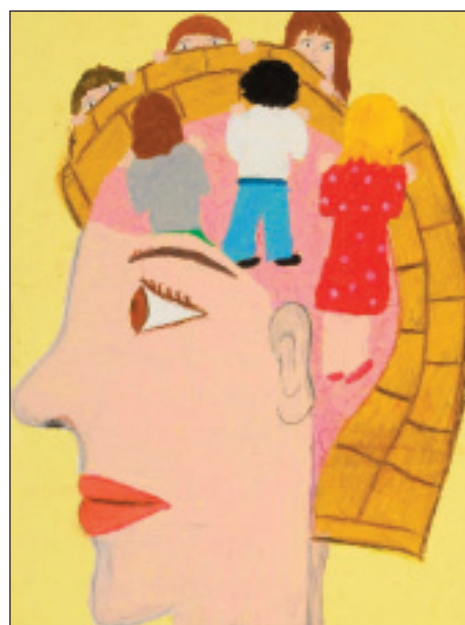
More than 900 entries were received for the competition from all parts of Cyprus, proving that art can be a powerful medium for exploring the island's social and cultural space.



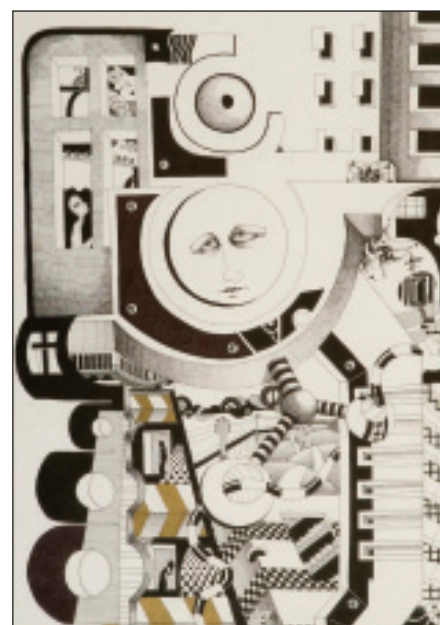
Ms. Eleni Mavrou and Mr. Cemal Bulutoğlu with Third Prize winner Anna Charalambous



"Traditional sweets, meatballs, pickles and coffee" by Margarita Kotsoni (13)  
First prize: Age 13-17 category



"Don't let a wall between us" by Cagla Iskan  
First prize: Age 10-12 category



"Under the Skin" by George Kvezereli  
Second prize: age 18+ category

# Visitors

UNFICYP extended the usual courtesies when the Chief of Mission and Force Commander received the following visitors during this month:

## Visiting Slovak Ministry of Defence State Secretary

The Slovak State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, Jaroslav Baška, accompanied by his delegation, paid an official visit to UNFICYP on 15 November.

After inspecting a guard of honour, SRS Michael Møller welcomed the party to his office. Force Commander Maj. Gen. Rafael J. Barni and Chief of Staff Col. Peter D. Fraser-Hopewell then gave a presentation, after which the delegation paid a visit to the Slovak Engineers based in Camp Tetry in the UNPA. UN Flight then flew the State Secretary to Camp General Štefánik in Famagusta, where CO Sector 4 Lt. Col. Jaroslav Schönvický briefed the visitors on the structure, tasks, important issues and other matters currently being dealt with by the Slovak Contingent.



Slovak State Secretary inspecting the guard of honour



Slovak State Secretary with CM Møller

The next day, the delegation was taken on a tour of the buffer zone within Sector 4's area of responsibility, to get a feel for the operational tasks carried out by Slovak soldiers. The tour started at OP129, situated in the centre of the bicomunal village of Pyla, then continued to PB126, and finally up to PB123, overlooking the area of responsibility of a Slovak platoon, led by Lt. Martin Obšatník.

The day's programme ended with a lunch in the buffer zone, where the State Secretary expressed his great admiration of the work being carried out by the Slovak peacekeepers.

1/Lt. Miroslav Šelep

# New Faces



Maj. Gábor Gion, MD, took over the post of Force Medical Officer on 16 October.

Born in Szeged, Hungary, Maj. Gion studied at the SZOTE Albert Szentgyörgyi Medical University, Szeged, Hungary from 1985 to 1991 and graduated as a General Practitioner. In 1999, he gained a diploma as an anaesthetist and intensive care specialist and in 2002 in

"oxyologia" emergency medicine.

Maj. Gion has served abroad in Hanoi, Vietnam (2001-2002), Kabul, Afghanistan (2004-2005) and Pristina/Prizren, Kosovo (2006-2007).

Maj. Gion is married to Orsolya Molnár, and they have a daughter Vivien (16), a daughter Panna (12) and a son Márton (six).

His hobbies include writing, taking photos, history of Vietnam.

14 January was a special day in the Qadir household. **Arena**, the first child of Senior Fire Officer Nadeem Qadir and his wife Xenia Antipova, was born.

Weighing in at just over 3 kg, Arena arrived by Caesarian section. Nadeem (or Paul, as he is known to his colleagues) says, "Natural childbirth was planned, however there was a last-minute emergency and Xenia was rushed to the Nicosia Polyclinic where Arena was delivered by a team of expert doctors". Paul, who assisted during the operation, advised

fathers to stay away from the operating theatre if they can!

The couple met on 13 September 2000, and on 26 December 2001, Paul proposed marriage to Xenia in front of 300 people – at Larnaca International Airport! Less than three weeks later, on 14 January 2002, their wedding took place.

Arena, who is a beautiful mix of her Pakistani and Russian heritage, put on 300 grams within the first three weeks, much to the delight of her doting parents. Mother and baby are both doing fine.







From the left: Mr. Ali Riza, representative of the Turkish Cypriot Veterans Association, Kyrenia Branch, Mr. Zachariades, representative of the Greek Cypriot Veterans Association, and LCpl. Nick Hammond, MFR

Although a British tradition, commemorating the fallen of all wars on the Sunday closest to Armistice Day with a Remembrance Day service is a truly international affair in Nicosia, where soldiers of the Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment joined with other uniformed members of the United Nations, with their civilian confreres, with the wider international community and with veterans of wars past and present to remember the dead. Remembrance knows no boundaries and the dead share one nation. Representatives

## "The Dead are of One Nation"

At the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, Britain stands silent in memory of those who have given, and continue to give, their lives in service of their country.

The silence of Armistice Day is begun by a solitary bugle sounding the Last Post, and there can be fewer more poignant places for it to sound than across the buffer zone that still divides Cyprus. One would like to think that, as sentries from both sides looked down onto the international community gathered in Wayne's Keep Cemetery to mark Remembrance Sunday, they would have acknowledged the futility and waste of war; but human history seems to refute that.

from nations who have warred against each other in the past laid wreaths of poppies in a common gesture of respect and in a common sense of brotherhood.

The end of the silence is announced by the sounding of Reveille, waking not those who have made their sacrifice, but those who have stood in silent remembrance. For those who have stood in contemplation, the Reveille is a true awakening, there is a palpable sigh and straightening of shoulders.

For peacekeepers, the act of remembrance should also serve as a reminder of the consequences when peacekeeping fails, and an incentive to carry forward the work of those who strive for a peaceful world.

Maj. S. King



## WO2 Stephen Alan Goldsmith RLC

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of WO2 Stephen Alan Goldsmith RLC, who was killed in a car accident on 23 November in Nicosia.

During his service, Stephen amassed many qualifications which led to his appointment as Master Driver. He served in operational areas including Northern Ireland, the Balkans and the Gulf.

His commitment to the peacekeeping role in Cyprus was no less

total. In his year with UNFICYP, he has earned the respect and regard of his multi-national colleagues in the UN and in the wider community of Cyprus.

Stephen was a keen sportsman, a strong friend and a catalyst for fun away from duty. All who knew him appreciated his good humour, total honesty and refreshing candour.

Stephen, you will be much missed. May you rest in peace.

Steve was an integral part of the Transport Unit for nearly two years. During that time, we came to respect him and to know him as one of the best!

From a "girl" point of view, he had a gorgeous smile and a string of chat-up lines that never failed to make your day; well alright – my day – but I know I wasn't the only one to fall for his charms.

From a "bloke" point of view, he enjoyed his job and, as a soldier, he was a true professional

and spent his time ultimately trying to keep us safe.

But most of all, he enjoyed the continuous banter with the boys in Transport. Steve was often away in the UK for training and his favourite "set-up" was the life-size cut-out photograph we made of him which we would casually display in his absence during meetings, coffee breaks or just sitting at his desk to the shock of unsuspecting soldiers and to our delight! Steve's face, when we

presented him with the resulting photographs, was priceless.

His loss has been devastating to the unit, and we are all struggling to come to terms with the fact that he is no longer with us.

Steve, it has been an honour for all your friends in Transport to know you and to work alongside you. Although you will be missed, we will always have the memories of all those good times.

God bless

Christine Iacovou, Transport Unit



## When the Stars Come Out

Approximately 600 peacekeepers and their families attended the UNFICYP Bonfire Night celebrations on 2 November.

The Force Commander's wife, Mrs Maria Rosa Barni, lit the bonfire at 7.30 p.m., setting off the revelry. The many days of hard work by the Bonfire Committee preparing the event "went up in flames" to the cheering crowds.

Assisted by the MFR, tents had been erected to enable contingents to offer national dishes and also to display information about their countries. The Slovak Engineers put in a lot of hard work collecting wood, paper and combustible materials for the bonfire. A total of nine trucks of burnable materials was

transported to the site, which took several days to prepare. After the event, two trucks were required to dispose of the ashes.

The children present were invited to arrive in fancy dress and at 8.00 p.m., when the fireworks were set off, they were left open-mouthed at the magnificent display which adorned the night skies.

All guests then visited the tents and enjoyed the national delicacies on offer.

During the entire event, Paul Qadir, the Senior Fire Officer, was on hand to guarantee that safety measures fell in line with standing orders.

All agreed it was a great evening.





**Laying of Wreaths in  
Memory of the Fallen:  
Wayne's Keep Cemetery,  
11 November**

