

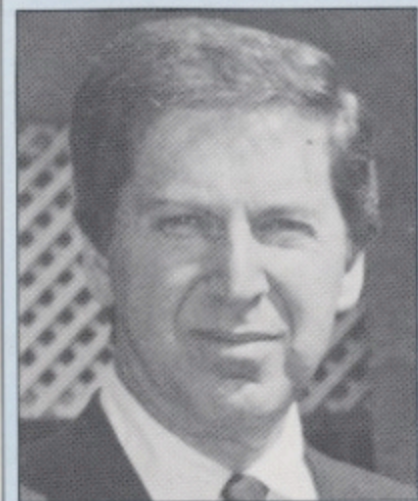
THE Blue Beret

December 1994





CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF OF MISSION



As 1994 draws to a close, it is the time to reconnect with our loved ones, reflect upon the events of the past year and establish our priorities for the New Year's coming challenges.

Christmas is a time for family reunion. For most of you serving here in UNFICYP, this will not be possible. It is the fate of the soldier of peace to serve under awkward conditions, away from family comforts, observing cease-fire situations, patrolling the Buffer Zone or monitoring the maintenance of peace. However, you should take heart in the knowledge that the

message of Christmas is one of peace on earth and goodwill towards men, ideas pursued by tens of thousands of peace-keepers like yourselves in more than 18 peace-keeping operations worldwide. You should feel privileged and proud of the contribution you are making. I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that your offering is recognized and appreciated.

I wish you all a safe and merry Christmas, and a happy and prosperous New Year.

GUSTAVE FEISSEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM ALL IN UNFICYP

Hyvää ja rauhallista joulua sekä onnea uudelle 1995

CO FINCON

Ba mhaith liom beannachtaí na Nollag agus athbhliain shona a chur chuig gach duine o hEireann ata ag obair leis na Naisuin Aontaithe anseo faoi lathair.

Sean Mac Fhiontaigh, Ard/Cheannfort

CO IRCIVPOL

Ich wünsche allen Soldaten des österreichischen Bataillons und deren Angehörigen ein gesegnetes Weihnachtsfest und viel Erfolg für 1995.

CO Sector Four

Deseo a todos los integrantes de la FTA 3 que estas fiestas cristianas que pasaremos alejados de nuestra familia, tengan toda la calidez de la familia "adoptiva" de los camaradas que comparten esta misión con nosotros.

Que la "noche de paz" nos encuentre en paz con Dios y con nosotros mismos. No olviden elevar una oración por la solución definitiva del problema de Chipre, que es un país fracturado por la guerra.

¡ Felices Fiestas!

CO Sector One

Fearaim Nollag fe mhaise do gach bhall de Airm na hEireann ata ag freastal le UNFICYP.

CO IRCON



The 1994 UNFICYP Christmas Card

The Canadian Contingent wish all members and families of their brother contingents sincere best wishes for a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

OC CANCON

Away from home, we come to realise just how important the family unit is and that we are paying a high price for peace. Hopefully, our efforts in this regard will help to make Christmas a far happier time for the residents of this troubled island.

On behalf of AUSTCIVPOL, I would like to wish all our friends in UNFICYP a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We hope that all your dreams come true.

CO AUSTCIVPOL

On behalf of the incoming Regiment of Sector Two, The Queen's Royal Lancers, I wish all members of UNFICYP and their families a Merry Christmas and all the very best in 1995.

CO Sector Two



The multi-national Military Police Element of UNFICYP would like to wish all members of UNFICYP and their families Merry Christmas, Frohe Weihnachten, Feliz Navidad and Nollag fe mhaise.

OC UN MP Elm



The Blue Beret



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The Blue Beret is the house journal of the United Nations Force in Cyprus and, as such, is intended to provide a source of information on current events within the Force, on UN matters of general interest and on local tourist advice.

Articles of general interest are invited from all members of the Force. Photographs together with captions should accompany the articles. This is an official publication prepared under the direction of the Chief of Mission. The views expressed are, however, those of the author concerned and do not necessarily conform with official policy.

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Front Cover

Christmas in UNFICYP

by Sgt Joe Relihan

EDITORIAL

Holidays at this time of the year add excitement and anticipation to the calendar. They stop work, break the routine and add ritual and festivity to the season.

Traditionally, this is the time we choose to spend with our family and associates in a spirit of goodwill. Although the commercialism of this holiday is frustrating to many, the celebration gives a warm glow at this time of year. Neighbours speak, old friends get in touch and strangers share a greeting. People in a hundred languages sing the joys of Christmas and enjoy their respective country's traditions. Parties that are a mixture of all ages add to the spirit of the season.

The Blue Beret devotes a major part of this issue in sharing with you the customs and rituals of the multi-national nature of UNFICYP. Although many countries lay claim to various traditions such as Father Christmas, the giving of gifts, carol singing, the Christmas tree, etc, so far, no country has yet laid claim to the traditional hangover! During these holidays, be extra careful. If you are going to drink, don't drive.

From the Blue Beret, season's greetings and best wishes to you and yours!

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CHRISTMAS SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

Compiled by Mrs Miriam Taylor

Christmas means different things to different people. It's that time of year again for family gatherings, hanging decorations, lighting candles, giving gifts, making resolutions and doing lots of eating. Christmas for most people is envisioned as the happy, peaceful holiday during which everything is wonderful and glowing with the whole happy family sitting around the fireplace.

However, people can schedule so many enjoyable things at Christmas that these events soon become tasks. That's when you know you're doing too much! People forget to relax and enjoy themselves. These winter holidays are supposed to be a time of joy, peace and tolerance of others and yourself. If you can remember that, that's what Christmas is really all about, that's all you need to do. And, if you can continue to do that throughout the year, that's even more wonderful.

The Blue Beret Christmas and New Year Special pages aim at providing readers with some tips, comments, stimulating thoughts and, of course, the season's greetings from UNFICYP.

CHRISTMAS — A FAMILY AFFAIR

Traditional Christmases are the ones we tend to remember best, the gatherings of family and friends, the parties at places of work, the general atmosphere of goodwill which permeates everywhere — and the right clothes to meet the resulting variety of occasions.

Children come first, for to them, Christmas is a wonderland come true. For men, the holiday usually means plenty of good food and drink, and indoor games.



Men may help with rituals such as putting up the tree!

Wives and mothers are, in most cases, in charge of organising Christmas. While men may help with some of the rituals such as putting up the tree and decorating the house, women invariably are the ones working in the kitchen and wrapping up the presents. Consequently, a special outfit is a well deserved gift!

SHOPPING AND GIFT GIVING

Holiday shopping can be a frustrating experience for anyone. A lot of people who are normally good about balancing their budgets overbuy around the holiday period. Psychologists suggest that excessive holiday shopping can be attributed in part to an attempt to promote a better self-image through buying multiple or expensive presents. For others, gift giving is seen as a way of reassuring their status or making up for

other weaker aspects of the relationship. Often, buying, gifts can make people feel good about themselves and this gives them an emotional lift.

In order to decrease anxiety and improve rational decisions, people are advised to begin their Christmas shopping early or to go during hours in which stores typically are less crowded, such as during lunch time or special extended hours. Shopping before the Christmas rush also allows more financial flexibility in purchasing presents.

When buying gifts, always remember that often, it is not the gifts people remember as much as the caring and feeling experience. When buying children's toys, select those that require the use of imagination and creativity and also provide an opportunity to practise social skills. Although practical toys are important, creativity and fantasy are equally so and help children to develop more well-rounded personalities because they begin to see things from a different perspective. Books, music and art help promote fantasy.

Psychologists point out that not having a fantasy life as a child, or having it taken away — by being told, for instance, that there is no Santa Claus — can make it difficult to solve problems as an adult.

Probably the worst Christmas gift for a youngster is his or her own television set. TV tends to create a kind of passivity with the world, especially when it is in the child's own

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sketches by Mrs Jenny Hart

room. Outdoor toys, such as soccer and basket balls, are good because they help kids develop a sense of confidence as well as physical ability. Sports and board games teach children to abide by rules. Handmade gifts, such as a sweater, made by family members for family members, represent part of the person.



The worst Xmas gift for a youngster is his or her own TV set!

Parents who can't afford or who don't wish to buy a particular toy for their child should not feel guilty about it. In fact, adults who feel they should meet every wish their child has should ask themselves "Do I get everything I want?"

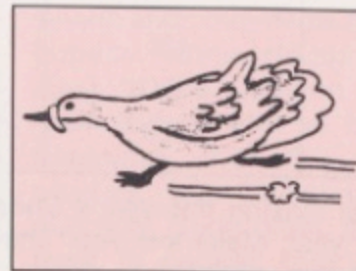
Finding the perfect present is rarely easy, especially when it's for an elderly relative or friend who seems to have acquired almost everything imaginable. Perhaps choosing 'healthy' gifts is a way of indicating to older adults how much you care. Consider a box filled with items such as soups, tea, cereals and dried fruit — or any other health food. How about a juice extractor, a lightweight mixer or a blender that would ease food

preparation? Other useful items such as clothing would be welcome, especially boots, slippers and socks. It goes without saying that handmade presents are a joy to receive, and reflect the kind thoughts of the giver.

EATING SMART DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Wouldn't it be great if people could eat as much as they wanted? The following simple guidelines suggest how you can control calories, fat and cholesterol intake without subtracting from savoury meals:

- When shopping, read labels. This is one way to find healthier ingredients for seasonal recipes. Comparing calories and grams of fat per serving helps find good-for-you products.
- Avoid frying and instead bake and broil food. This eliminates much unwanted fat from both the food itself and the use of oil or butter.
- Remove as much visible fat as possible from meats prior to cooking.
- Use low cholesterol, low sodium and low fat foods in soft drinks, cheeses, biscuits, etc.
- Use artificial sweeteners instead of sugar, egg whites without yolks and skimmed milk or non-fat yogurt rather than mayon-



naise. Fruit juices or apple sauce can replace fat and retain moistness in breads, cakes and biscuits.

TALK TURKEYS

For most of us, the turkey is part of the Christmas tradition. But how it found its way onto our table is an interesting story.

The turkey originated from the American Continent and the American Indians hunted it for food and used the feathers to decorate their head-dresses, but the Mexican Aztecs were responsible for domesticating it. It was imported into England in the 16th century, and Henry VIII was the first monarch to dine on turkey, although Edward VII made it fashionable to eat at Christmas.

The origin of the word "turkey" is not so easy to trace, but one story suggests that its name may have evolved from the days the turkey was first distributed in England by Turkish merchants. Another story attributes the name to the curious gobbling noise of the bird which sounded rather like Arabic. Up until the 1950s, turkey remained a luxury food, available only to the rich.

SEASON'S TIPS

An orange a day keeps the ophthalmologist away, so new research suggests. The report confirms that a diet rich in vitamin C can help to prevent the development of cataracts, which frequently afflict the over-65s.

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While children under seven need full-fat milk because they are still in the early stages of development, older children should preferably have skimmed or semi-skimmed milk.

SERVING WINES

Most wines contain between 8.5% and 15% alcohol. Liqueurs or fortified wines such as port and sherry are given a higher alcohol level (15.5% upwards) by adding grape spirit during or after fermentation. Wines can be red, white or rosé, and still or sparkling - where the natural carbon dioxide from fermentation is trapped in the wine. They can be flavoured with herbs and spices - vermouth is an example. They can also be classified according to their sugar content, ie dry, medium or sweet. In dry wines, no sugar is left after fermentation.

Whites: light whites should be served cool but not cold, otherwise you cannot taste

the delicate flavours: 10-15°C is perfect. Full-bodied, sweet or sparkling wines can be drunk at a cooler temperature.

Reds: room temperature (15-20°C) is fine. Don't warm wine by placing it next to a radiator or open fire, as this will cause it to taste coarse. Open full-bodied reds about two hours in advance, and lighter ones about an hour beforehand. Letting a wine 'breathe' is not just part of its mystique - it allows oxygen to enter, which releases flavours and softens harsh edges so you can appreciate its flavour.

However, some reds - such as Beaujolais - can be chilled.

SAFETY AND ACCIDENTS

The joyous and festive feelings of the holiday season often are offset by accidents, injuries and medical emergencies. Holidays are stressful and, with the crush of activities, people become careless.



The biggest factor in accidents and medical emergencies is alcohol.

In order to stay healthy and accident-free, the following simple guidelines are recommended:

1. Stay sober. If you drink, don't drive.
2. Follow fire safety rules from cooking to heating.
3. Take care when using ladders or electrical apparatus.
4. Make sure that all toys for youngsters are safe and appropriate.
5. Dress appropriately for the weather. If travelling, include a blanket in the car.

Military Police statistics give us some enlightening information regarding accidents involving UNFICYP personnel.

TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

Classification	Jan-Dec 1993	Jan-Nov 1994
Fatalities	0	0
UN vehicles	135	108
Private vehicles	30	31
Hired vehicles	23	18

Let us aim at making this year's Christmas and 1995 an accident free year. Make this your challenge and your New Year's resolution.

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AN AUSTRALIAN CHRISTMAS DOWN UNDER STYLE

Many images come to mind when people recall Christmas in Australia. These vary from frantic shopping, congested roads, loads of drink and parties, pet minding for holidays, long queues in banks and shops to tinsel, mistletoe, wrapping presents, family, Santa photos, twinkling lights in parks, window displays and, of course, presents. Throughout all this chaos, people still recall images of Bethlehem, the Three Wise Men and the birth of Christ.

Contrary to an opinion held by our northern hemisphere friends, we, in Australia, do not celebrate Christmas in winter on 25 July - rather in the height of summer on 25 December!

Christmas Day starts early with children opening their presents in the

wee hours. Santa enjoys visiting Australia because there are no fires alight when he slides down the chimney to deliver the presents! Customarily, Santa is left a cool can of Fosters, a slice of homemade Christmas cake and a carrot for Rudolph!

A sleigh is rare indeed. Our country cousins have even sighted Santa riding a horse or often riding on the back of a bush fire brigade truck.



Traditionally, lunch is the main meal: seafood, salads and cold meats are popular, although some cling to the tradition of roast turkey with all the trimmings, including, of course, the Christmas pudding. Quite often, this feast is packed into an

esky, and the family head to the local beach for lunch. Lunch is then generally followed by a game of back-yard cricket and an afternoon sleep. When tea-time comes around, the 'left-overs' from lunch are consumed.

The holiday festivities do not end there. They continue into the next day (Boxing Day) with a day in front of the television to rest our sore bodies and heads... The largest yacht race in Australia commences on this day, with over 150 competitors vying for the coveted trophy. The Australia Cricket side also commences its test series on this day, with many country areas also holding major sporting events.

Boxing Day is also renowned for the annual migration of people from their homes to their favourite holiday destinations by the beaches. This is the main holiday period during the year for children, with six weeks off school.

The Christmas period in Australia, like the Christian world over, is a time of sharing with families and friends. So to all our friends in Cyprus, a Happy Christmas from the Australian Civilian Police Contingent, 1994.

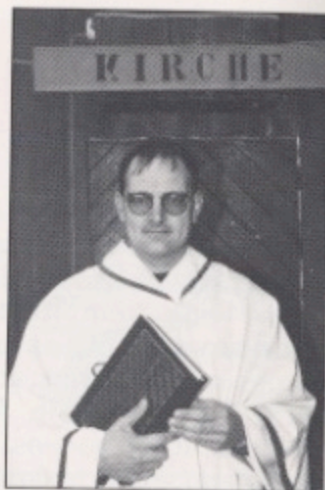


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Interview

AUSTRIAN CHAPLAIN

Chaplain Mag Gerhard Hatzmann was born on 11 August 1957 in Kapfenberg, Styria. Having finished school, he became a book salesman in Graz for 10 years (1972-1982). Then in 1982/83, he sat entrance examinations for the University in Graz, and between 1983-1989, he studied theology. During 1989-1991, he was the Chaplain in Bad Radkersburg, and between 1991-1994, he held the post of hospital chaplain in Graz. Chaplain Mag Hatzmann's hobbies are working with the Red Cross, reading, swimming and mountaineering.



Q. Christmas is supposed to be the time of love, joy, tolerance and peace. It is this last issue that the Blue Beret would like to take up with you, and ask you what your definition of peace is?

A. In its broadest meaning, peace is a state of freedom from war and civil disorder, or a situation where harmony between people and the absence of strife prevails. During this current century, we have witnessed two devastating world wars. The United Nations was founded in 1945 to help stabilize international relations and give peace a more secure foundation. Today, nearly 50 years after its establishment, the United Nations has evolved into an organisation in which the collective search for peace has become an overriding concern.

However, for me personally, peace is first to refrain from practising my own egoism and power, and second, the attempt to accept every human I meet

with the respect he or she deserves.

Q. How would you explain religion and peace-keeping to strangers who have never experienced such a combination?

A. Peace-keeping is one of the ways in which the United Nations helps to maintain international peace and security. In this context, peace-keeping has saved countless lives. In many cases, it has proved invaluable in creating the necessary conditions to settle disputes peacefully through negotiation.

On the other hand, peace, which Christ has brought to the human race, is a challenge and a task for all mankind. If we take religion and faith seriously, we have primarily to take care of creation and maintenance of peace, as the commandment of altruism tells us.

Q. We often talk about peace and security. Most of us think of security forces

as arms, armies, navies, air force and missiles. Do you think that these are a necessary evil?

A. This is particularly true for United Nations peace-keepers who rely on the consent of the parties in conflict and do not take the initiative in using force. It is only the last resort when self-defence is necessary. The effectiveness of peace-keeping forces derives from a combination of factors, such as the physical presence of armed soldiers who will return fire if they are fired upon, the moral authority of the UN and the pressure of world public opinion.

Q. How do you feel about the role of the family in today's society relative to 20-30 years ago?

A. With the importance of the family, the value of fidelity is inseparably linked. I think that there does exist a readiness to cut off the marital and intimate relations that

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existed 20-30 years ago. Nowadays, people hardly communicate with each other: the mass media has taken over the job of communication. Families tend to become smaller (especially in western Europe) and contact with relatives and friends is diminishing. However, this is a fact that can be changed.

Q. What is your stand on the issues of large families and of abortion?

A. I myself have a brother and a sister, but I consider that generally, the standard of living (ie general acceptance, social conditions, political support) for larger families has worsened. Due to the parents' professions/careers, the education of their offspring is often delegated to institutions. This is a typical Western European problem. From a world-wide point of view, a huge population explosion is hanging over us and, therefore, mass movement is likely to reoccur.

As regards abortion, I consider that this is tantamount to murder and is unlikely to become a legal means of birth control. However, to forbid all contraceptives - as the Roman Catholic Church does - is not realistic in today's world, especially in the developing countries. Instead of punishment and threats, real aid for the women concerned should be provided.

Q. Do you think that young people demand too much?

A. If you examine development over the last few years, you will find that the "old" values, which once seemed absurd, are now being "rediscovered" by the young, ie the family, safety and peace are gaining importance. This could possibly be because no realistic replacement has ever been found for them.

Q. Looking ahead, do you see the world becoming more tense and violent?

A. Yes I do. I consider there will be an increase in aggression and violence, even at school. At the same time, however, there is an increase of awareness and the readiness to put a stop to this situation. Unfortunately, positive attitudes are rare in the mass media.

Q. What changes or reforms in our society would you most like to see?

A. There would be space and food enough for all of us, if the dispensation of goods was more just. However, it appears that when one reaches a certain standard of living, he/she does not want to share it with others. This is the great problem of our society today.

Q. How do you see the role of religion in a military environment?

A. Religion, particularly in a military environment, must have its place as a matter of principle. Every person and every soldier has the right to be taken seriously in respect of

his/her religious feelings. Consequently, I cannot imagine the military, including UNFICYP, without a chaplaincy.

Q. Did you always want to join the UN peace-keeping force?

A. At the International Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1991, I was asked to serve as a UN chaplain. I accepted, because this task meant a new challenge for me.

Q. Do you have some unforgettable experiences in your life with UNFICYP?

A. Yes I do. The common divine services in the Buffer Zone afford a great feeling of fellowship for me, and if these services take place at sunset, this is especially gratifying to me.

Q. Is there a certain message you wish to pass on to members of UNFICYP?

A. Peace begins with the little things in life. It begins with yourself, at home. I hope that all members of UNFICYP will, especially in this festive season, realise this spirit of fellowship, and that they will be blessed with lasting peace for the rest of their lives.

NB: The views expressed in this article reflect the personal opinion of the author, and are presented to stimulate thoughts on some controversial issues contained therein.

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CHRISTMAS IN ARGENTINA

by Lt (Navy) Alejandro Di Tella

Preparations for Christmas in Argentina usually start on 8 December, when the feast of the Immaculate Conception is celebrated. This is when most families set up the Christmas tree and decorate the rest of the house with holly, inside and out, on doors and window sills. Although in our country, it is summer on 25 December, with temperatures way up in the 30°Cs, a lot of effort is put into captivating the "snow" effect with families using snow sprays or cotton wool on the Christmas tree! Inside the house, anything that can be decorated in red and white - the colours of Santa Claus - for instance, table cloths and tea cloths, is changed.

One or two weeks before 25 Dec, parents go out on their Christmas shopping sprees for the rest of the family. This is, as in most parts of the Christian world, a very hectic time.

The Christmas festivities in Argentina actually start on the morning of Christmas Eve, 24 December. In the large cities, it is tradition that families living reasonably near each other join up and celebrate together, Christmas being a family affair with strong religious connections. First thing in the morning of Christmas Eve, the lady of the host family rushes round the house with last minute preparations. The family has a quick, simple lunch, and then children go for an afternoon sleep, since they have a long, hard afternoon ahead of them! During this time, final touches are put to the house and the preparations for the evening.

In the afternoon, everyone gets dressed up and in the evening, Mass is celebrated in the Roman Catholic church and most Argentinians attend the service. This is where the families meet up, and once Mass is over, they all return to the home of the host family. It is quite common for each family to prepare one special dish, so that when everyone sits down to eat, there is something new for everyone to taste, including the lady of the house!



The traditional Christmas meal in Argentina starts off with ham and various salads (for instance Waldorf or Russian), followed by turkey, chicken or red meat, usually served cold, seeing as it is very often still hot, even at this time of night! A good - and fattening - time is had by all. Dishes are then cleared, and the dessert, the traditional one being "pan dulce" (translation = sweet bread) is then served - outside in the garden, if you are lucky enough to have one. This is accompanied by champagne and all drinks suitable for the occasion.

At the stroke of midnight, we toast the birth of Christ and after this, presents are given, especially to children, and they are opened immediately. Usually, one of the family dresses up as Santa Claus and makes his appearance.

Partying goes on until all hours of the morning, depending on the numbers and ages of party-goers! Traffic congestion is at its peak at this time, since once one party is over, there is usually another one going on... For instance, with this occasion being generally a family-orientated one, if you attend a party organised by your parents, you may wish to continue on to a brother, sister, parents-in-law or whoever was not present at the gathering after Mass.

A week later, on New Year's Eve, similar gatherings take place, but on this occasion, friends are taken more into consideration. Once the meal of the evening is over, partying continues in other people's homes with visitors being welcomed, whatever time they turn up. The younger generation stay with their families until just past midnight, and then leave to join up with their own company.

The festive season in Argentina is a very big celebration, as it is in most parts of the world. It takes a long time and a lot of hard work to get ready for, but before you know it, it's over. Money has been spent, weight has been put on - however everyone looks forward to the same again next year!

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AUSTRIAN FESTIVE CUSTOMS

Each year, with the arrival of Christmas and the departure of the old year, most Austrians become shopping-crazy. Market places and shopping centres buzz with activity and people carry on buying until there is practically nothing left on the shelves, ending just about at Christmas Eve. However, tradition dictates that during the days leading to Christmas Eve, there is also a plethora of habits and customs which unfortunately these days are only practised by small groups of society. This short article attempts to give you a brief idea of these dying customs. Let's start with Advent.

On 4 December, St Barbara's Day, it is a custom for people to break sprigs off a cherry tree. These sprigs are then placed in water in the hope that they will blossom. They are a symbol of human life, and if they bloom on Christmas Eve, you can expect fortune and good health for the coming year. For unmarried people, a blossom means a prospective marriage.



Two days later, on 6 December, Saint Nicholas travels throughout the country. Children in particular look forward to the well-informed St Nicholas, who knows all about their good deeds - and bad. Shoes, socks and plates are made ready because St Nicholas will place his "goo-

dies" there, according to the behaviour of each child. He is accompanied by his groom, who carries either a basket full of presents or the punitive rod: he wears the mask of the devil and is called the "Krampus", "Klabaut" or "Barti".

St Nicholas and the Krampus appear in different regions of Austria in various manners. In Styria (the south eastern province), he is accompanied by noisy and shouting "Niklo'n". Bundled up in straw, these "Schabmänner" are really fantastic looking figures.

In some villages in the Tyrol (the western province of Austria), St Nicholas gives his presents only to the boys. However, on 13 December, St Lucia's Day (Lucia meaning light), the "Luzelfrau" visits the girls and that is when they receive their presents.



The origin of this custom derives from the Bishop of Myra in Asia Minor, who died in the year 350 AD. Many stories are centred around this person. Legend tells us that once he saved innocent officers from the death sentence, another says he revived three dead pupils, and yet another says he saved the honorable weddings of three poor girls. He is also venerated as a patron of marines.

On 21 December, the shortest day of the year, Austrians celebrate the feast of St Thomas. To rid the farm of evil spirits, the farmer, together

with his groom or his eldest son, walks through the living rooms and the stable and around the farmhouse to the utmost edge of the fields. During their round, they sprinkle Holy Water and incense in the fields. In the meantime, the other inhabitants of the farm pray for the blessing of the Holy Mary.

There are countless other customs, for example in the Tyrol, where country lads walk from farm to farm, wearing different masks (Gstamp and Glöcklnächte) or the frightening "schiachen Perchten". They parade around shouting, with the intention of banishing evil and paving the way for the good.

A characteristic feature of Advent is a wreath, made of fir sprigs, with four candles on the top. On each of the four Sundays before Christmas, people light one candle.

The peak of Advent, Christmas Eve, is represented by cribs of various shapes which will be set up at this time in most households and churches. Cattle, especially horses, are given blessed water and salt on St Stephen's Day, 26 December.

During the festive period, the last celebration takes place on 6 January. Children, dressed as the Three Wise Men - Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar - walk through the villages and write the initial letters C+M+B on the street doors in blessed chalk. This custom signifies help in the fight against invisible demons.

This is only a short summary of some of the old Austrian customs, which are sadly falling more and more into oblivion.

"Customs are linked to men and nature. With the loss of this connection, customs too are more and more neglected". (Statement of a German ethnologist).

AUSTRIAN ACTIVITIES IN HQ UNFICYP

by Maj G Pauschenwein

On 6 December every year, the Austrians celebrate the feast of St Nicholas, a Bishop, who represents the good in the world. While he awards people for their good deeds, his antagonist, the Krampus (or Lucifer), punishes them for their bad ones. This is, of course, just for fun - but with a pinch of salt.

In contrast to previous occasions, this year's festivities, much to the disappointment of the fans of this event, were organised at the tiny United Austrians' Club and not at the traditional venue at HQ UNFICYP's International Mess.

However, on 3 Dec 94, at least 80 people showed up for the event, even though the Club was cramped for space. After undergoing initial corporal punishment at the entrance, visitors were rewarded with good entertainment, including an air gun shooting competition, and mouth-watering Austrian goodies like



The Krampus makes the UNFICYP Spokesman repent for his sins... "gulasch" and "linzertorte". This was an opportunity for everyone to share in the spirit of St Nicholas.

ST BARBARA'S DAY AT SECTOR TWO



Joseph Loveday (see left) Before the service, the Force Commander took the opportunity to thank the soldiers for their contribution to the mission during their six-month tour. The Officers then entertained Brig Gen and Mrs Vertiainen to dinner.

St Barbara was the daughter of a third century pagan king. He was so jealous of her beauty and so incensed when she converted to Christianity, that he locked her in a tower until she renounced her faith. Her refusal to do so caused him to report her to the authorities who condemned her to execution. Long afterwards, God sent down a bolt of lightning which killed the king instantly. This early use of indirect fire is the inspiration for the adoption of St Barbara for the Artillery. Interestingly, despite the advance of technology and the array of modern aids for the current generation of artillerymen, it is still impossible to reproduce that degree of accuracy!

St Barbara is the Patron Saint of the Artillery and, therefore, it was only proper for the Officers and Soldiers of Sector Two to celebrate that fact with a service on St Barbara's Day, 4 December. This was the last service conducted for the Regiment by Padre

REMEMBRANCE DAY AT SECTOR TWO

Sector Two held a Service of Remembrance for BRITCON and guests on Sunday 13 November at the Ledra Palace Hotel. The Service followed the traditional format of wreath laying and the observance of two minutes silence. The Band of the Royal Irish Regiment provided the music, and a particularly poignant moment by the playing of an Irish lament immediately before the silence.

Among those organisations represented were the Royal British Legion, the RAF Association and the former Cyprus Regiment, which provided a bearer from each community who jointly carried the wreath. Wreaths were also laid by representatives of all the participating nations within the Mission. Following the Service, the Officers' Mess of Sector Two hosted a traditional curry lunch.



Two generations of paratroopers

AUSCON MEDAL PARADE



The Othello Tower in all its splendour

On 14 October 1994, the medal "in the service of peace" was awarded to 191 Austrian soldiers of UNFICYP at an impressive ceremony. The parade itself took place in an historic place indeed, namely the Salamis amphitheatre, which was built under Roman rule and which made very suitable surroundings for such a solemn occasion.

The medal presentations were conducted by the CM, Mr Gustave Feissel, the FC, Brig Gen Ahti Toimi Paavali Vartiainen, the COS, Col John Powell and Col Alfons Kloss. Col Alfons Kloss is the father of Lt Col Andreas Kloss, the previous CO of Sector Four. He was also the first CO of AUSCON in Cyprus from April 1972 to April 1973.

Background music was provided by 10 soldiers from a military band from the Tyrol region in Austria. Mr Feissel, who delivered the opening address, praised Austria for its contribution to United Nations missions and stressed that this Contingent has been part of UNFICYP for the last 30 years.

A reception was held at the Othello Tower, where many fine examples of Austrian culinary art were on display, accompanied by a very professional performance by the band. Undoubtedly, this Medal Parade will be remembered by many - yet another successful AUSCON event.



WO1 Geiselmaier is awarded his UN medal by Mr Feissel.



The ancient theatre of Salamis, a dignified location for a Medal Parade.

MEDAL PARADE: AUSTRALIAN CIVILIAN POLICE 41ST CONTINGENT

On 19 October 1994, AUST-CIVPOL held a United Nations Medal Parade for the 41st Contingent at Australia House. Present among the guests were the Chief of Mission, Mr Feissel, the Force Commander, Brigadier-General Vartiainen, and the Australian High Commissioner, His Excellency Mr Stevens.

This day was especially significant to all members of AUST-CIVPOL as it represented 15 years since the formation of the Australian Federal Police.

After Mr Feissel presented the UN medal to each of the recipients, a large birthday party was held in traditional style at the Aussie Mess.



From the left: Sgt Tony Prior, Sgt Des O'Dwyer, Stn Sgt Lindsay Griffith, Sgt Damian Reeves, Supt Bob Gray, Sgt Kathy Roach, Stn Sgt Rod West and Stn Sgt Brian McGehey.

As with most birthday parties, it continued into the wee hours and was enjoyed by all.



AUSCON IN POSSESSION OF ALL UNFICYP TROPHIES



The last UNFICYP Shooting Competition took place on 5 October in Nicosia. Although we don't like to boast, it is a fact that the Austrians did exceedingly well - yet again! The participating teams won the rifle and pistol matches, as well as the Falling Plate Competition. The Austrians are, therefore, entitled to call themselves the overall winners.

However, it was always the aim of the Austrians to win the trophy of the Military Skills Competition, considered as the most important of all trophies. Until this year, this had always been a British domain, and the fact that AUSCON had never won it before provided the motivation for very hard training!

On the great day, 19 October, all teams started full of optimism and self confidence. AUSCON entered three teams, all competing with the others in the recognition



Perfect mastering of the obstacle course was one step towards victory.

test, the obstacle course, the tunnel dig, the first-aid station, hand grenade throwing and shooting techniques. After all these tortures, they had to wait a while until all teams had finished the course and the marks were added up.

The Austrian Contingent ended with one team in 1st place, one in 3rd place and the last in 5th place, and are justifiably proud that this year, they have won all UNFICYP trophies. Congratulations!

WO I Pinezits, the 45-year-old veteran of the winning team, need not feel shy of his age!



All winners and their trophies

En passant... Changes within AUSCON's Command



New CO
Lt Col
Ernst Eder

Lt Col Ernst Eder, our "old" DCO, has changed to his new appointment of CO Sector Four. In previous UN tours, he served with UNDOF in the Golan Heights (1985/86) and with UNTSO in Lebanon (1987/88).



New DCO
Maj Heinz
Hufner

Maj Heinz Hufner is the new DCO of AUSCON. His previous appointment was SOO since July 1994. His UN experience is based on two UNDOF missions in the Golan Heights and one UNAFHIR mission in IRAN.



New SOO
Maj Edgar
Wallig

Maj Edgar Wallig, who was CO 2nd Coy for one year, has commenced his new appointment as SOO AUSCON. As this is his third tour on the island of Aphrodite, he knows almost all the secrets of UNFICYP!

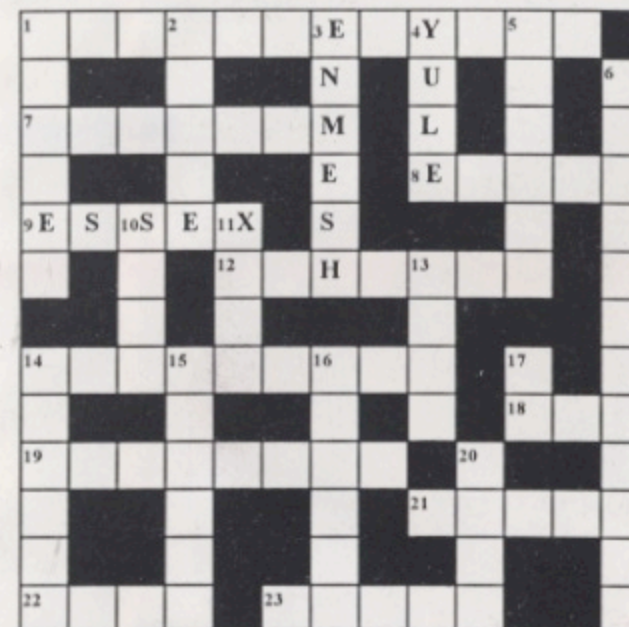


THE BLUE BERET FUN AND TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE PAGE

CROSSWORD PUZZLE: BB No 05

Well, readers, this time you have really excelled yourselves! So many entries have arrived this month that the Editor's helmet was overflowing! This is very encouraging, so the competition will continue. The lucky winner of BB No 04 was **Miss Doreen Karamanoukian**, who is invited to collect her prize from the Spokesman's Office.

For the next puzzle, yet another bottle of transparent liquid will be won by the lucky person whose name will be drawn from the Editor's blue helmet on **15 January 1995**. The festive season is upon us, but don't forget to submit your replies quickly.



Clues:

Across:

- Seasonal wish (5, 3, 4)
- Biblical person
- Powerful anaesthetic gas
- County of south east England
- First name of late charismatic leader of modern India
- Holy place for Jews, Christians and Moslems
- Historical period
- Directing
- Rescued
- Man of outstanding qualities
- Major South American mountains

Down:

- Place or state of spiritual joy
- Absence of war
- Entangle
- Festival of Christmas
- Attacks of difficult breathing
- When Christ was born (9, 3)
- Celestial object
- Short for Christmas
- Grave, vault
- Husband of Mary
- UN agency based in Paris
- Capital of England
- Force Engineer
- Celebrated in church



BLUE BERET TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

- What is the approximate length of the Buffer Zone?
 - 180 km
 - 180 miles
 - 120 km
- What is the highest number of all ranks ever to serve in UNFICYP?
 - Over 15,000
 - Over 10,000
 - Over 7,000

ANSWERS TO BB 04



CHANGE OF COMMAND IN SECTOR FOUR

