

GOLAN

The UNDOF Journal



January - March 2005
No. 102



Dear Reader!

Spring has arrived once again to the Golan Heights. Such beautiful scenery surrounds us; colorful, wild flowers, valleys and mountains covered with green.

I am lucky enough to be welcoming spring for the second time since my mission has been a year long. Unfortunately, the time has come to leave this beautiful and exciting area. In the middle of March I will return to Japan and to my work at the Ground Staff Office of the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force.

Throughout this past year, I truly enjoyed my working environment, mostly because of the many good and professional people within UNDOF

and UNTSO. It has been an honor and a pleasure to work with all of you. I sincerely appreciate your friendship, cooperation and assistance.



l-r: Maj Perr, Capt Horiguchi, Capt

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce my successor: The new Deputy Military Public Information Officer (or D/MPIO) is Capt Takashi Kobayashi. I am sure he will enjoy the same hospitality and patronage as I have received from you. Recently we also bid farewell to Maj

Stefan May, former UNDOF MPIO. Since he has not yet been officially replaced, Maj Siegfried, the UNDOF FWO, has kindly stepped up to the task and his assistance has been of great importance.

I would like to thank him, he is indeed a most reliable and dependable friend and officer.

On behalf of the UNDOF MPIO office, I would like to say thank you and goodbye. I am sure that the new MPIO office staff will continue to serve UNDOF and provide the best of public affairs service.

Health and success to all.

*Sincerely, Capt Daisuke Horiguchi,
D/MPIO UNDOF*

D/MPIO	Editorial	2
FC UNDOF	Force Commander's Message	3
COS UNDOF	COS Words	4
New People	New People in UNDOF / Donation	5
Visits	Visits to UNDOF	6
Sport	International Sports Day	7
AUSBATT	Same, same but different	8
SLOVCON	Why we have to train	9
POLBATT	New Quality / Original Story	10
POLBATT	STS COOPERATION	11
Miscellaneous	The Apple Story	12
Miscellaneous	The Apple Story	13
CANCON	Visit of General R.R. Henault	14
CANCON	Dead Sea Half-Marathon and 10 km run	15
J-CON	COC / New Year Celebration	16
MP	Force Protection - VBIED	17
OGG	OGG HQ / New COGG-T	18
Civilian Staff	UNDOF - Finance Section	19
Memorial	In Memory	20
Miscellaneous	Int. Womans Day / Taxi Story	21
History	The Hidden Monastery	22
Recreation	Skiing in Lebanon	23

Front (Page 1): Capt Wöhrer, OPI of the apple transport
Photo and Graphic by WO II Gernot Payer

Back (Page 28): J-CON members show their skills
Photo by WO II Gernot Payer

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The Golan Journal is the magazine of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and it is intended to provide information about the Force and events within it which are of interest to its members. The UNDOF Military Public Affairs Office publishes the Golan Journal every third month. While articles and photographs are welcomed from all members of the Force, the view and opinions expressed are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily coincide with those of the United Nations or the Force Commander.

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Force Commander's Message

Dear Fellow Peacekeepers

It is with great pride and pleasure that I am able to address you all in our UNDOF Golan Journal. I would like to warmly welcome all the recently arrived Peacekeepers, both military and civilian, to UNDOF. I hope that every-one of you have a peaceful and enjoyable tour with us here on the Golan. I look forward to seeing as many of you as I possibly can on my visits, tours and duties around the Mission.

I wish to welcome the new rotation of OGG UNMO's from UNTSO to the UN Golan peace-keeping family. Have a successful and rewarding tour.

The seasons are now changing. The sun and heat are once again returning to Mt. Hermon, signaling the advance of the summer. Thankfully, since my last Golan message, the overall situation has remained relatively calm and stable.

There is an old saying that "peace can never be taken for granted"



and this is especially true in a region such as this where the situation can very easily and rapidly change. We must remain ever vigilant and continue to maintain our high standards when there is so much political tension and dialogue in the Middle East at the moment.

UNDOF continues to mature and go from strength to strength. I am delighted to see the progress of our modernization program and all the benefits that this will bring. We have also seen an historic event with the transfer of the apples; it has been a tremendous and rewarding effort by

all those involved – well done!

So, maintain the excellent standards and keep morale high. Stay safe, remain alert and enjoy your time with UNDOF. For those of you who are just about to return home, thank you, best wishes to your families and have a safe journey.

*Thank you
Danke
Arigato*

*Diakujem
Dziękuję
Merci*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'B. N. Sharma'.

Major General B. N. SHARMA
Force Commander UNDOF

Chief of Staff Words

Comrades of UNDOF!

Since the last Golan Journal issue, three months have passed by as if they were merely three days. Having been here for ten months, I am not surprised by this feeling anymore. I hope you feel the same because it would mean that you also are very busy and, thus, enjoying your time in UNDOF.

Let me tell you why I am so happy here. I see things improving. I see the hard work on the modernisation program. In this context, I want to express many thanks to LtCol Hussey and the members of his branch. The same goes for the improvement of the use of our Information Technology and the better understanding of the procedures.

One of the aspects of modernisation is the establishment of the HQ structure 2005, which is in the final stages, and for example, the establishment of the Ops centre and the improvement in the organisation within the UNDOF HQ. The Branch Heads and Commanding Officers gave their valuable input to this. Thanks!

I see good development of UNDOF's policies and standardisation. Sometimes, this work is not easy, but then the results reflect the high level



of cooperation and quality of work. I see a very good cooperation between the battalions. I congratulate the Commanding officers who contribute a lot to it. LOGBATT is delivering an impressive performance and I thank especially LtCol Myers for the immediate assistance and effective support that the Force always gets from them.

I see a high degree of flexibility and efficiency in the Force. During the apple transfer, many of you took on extra tasks and fulfilled them very professionally. I want to thank all involved and in particular Maj Kert. He made a very great effort to perform various functions at the same time. The same applies to Maj Jussel, who arrived in the Mission in somewhat tense times. Good job so far!

We are on a good way to make sensible use of the budget granted to us by the United Nations. The Section Chiefs, as well as the military budget OPIs do a fine job under the guidance of Mr. Jerry Smith. I am not sure if we could find a more correct and supportive CAO than him anywhere.

Last but by far not least, I want to thank our Force Commander for his wise and strong leadership. For me it is a great pleasure to work with you, Sir.

Are these words somehow very personal? Yes. They just explain, why I deem myself lucky to serve here with you. Let us all continue on this path, please!

Col Andreas Safranmüller
COS UNDOF

New People in UNDOF



The new CO J-CON

Maj Kazuyuki Sato was born in the Kumamoto prefecture of south-western Japan on the 22nd of October 1968.

Maj Sato began his military career in 1992 after graduating from the National Defense Academy with a Bachelor Degree in International Relations.

Maj Sato successfully completed the Infantry Basic Officers Course in 1993, the Airborne Basic Course and Ranger Officer Course in 1994 and in 2001, he completed the Infantry Captains Career Course at the US Army Infantry School. In 2003, Maj Sato was promoted to his current rank and in the same year he also completed the Command and General Staff Course.

After his graduation, he was assigned to Command the 3rd Company of the 32nd Infantry Regiment. On March 2nd 2005, Maj Sato will take over command of the 19th Japanese Contingent of UNDOF on the Golan.

Maj Sato is married and is expecting his first child in July.

His hobbies include reading, Kendo and Iai-Do, a Japanese Samurai sword form of martial arts.



The new MA to the FC

Major David Brazier was born in London, United Kingdom, in 1969. He joined the British Army 'green beret' Commandos at the age of 17, specializing in mountain and arctic warfare. After serving for three years he became an officer in the British Army, graduating from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in Surrey, England, two years later. His first posting was to Germany where he lived for four years. Operational tours include Bosnia, Kosovo and the Middle East with 7th Armoured Brigade (the 'Desert Rats'). He transferred to the Australian Army in 2002 and served with 1st Armoured Brigade and then Headquarters Special Operations. He has come to UNDOF after being an UNMO with OGG-D. He has gained a BA (Hons) in International Relations from Staffordshire University, an MPhil in International Relations from Cambridge University and a teaching degree in secondary history from London University. Major Brazier has also spent time as a mountain leader and canoeing instructor in both Scotland and Bavaria. He is the first Australian ever to serve with UNDOF. Major Brazier is divorced.

Collecting for Operation

Ahmad Abedulkarim is a boy 4 years old and had water in his skull. Abdelrahman Elbujairami from the Procurement Section asked people from UNDOF to donate money for his operation. The donation was 77,680 SYP and the vital operation was successful.

On behalf of the child's family, and especially his mother, special thanks to UNDOF and as translated in his mother's note below:

"Thank you very much for your quick response and kind help for my son at such short notice. The operation would have been impossible without your kindness. God bless you all and spare you any such plight as my son and family went through. UNDOF's generosity has saved my son's life!"



Visits to UNDOF



Japanese Delegation Mr. Sumio Tarui, Japanese Executive Secretary, International Peace Cooperation, HQ, Cabinet Office (17th January)



Interview with FC by German TV (ARTE TV) reporter (8th February)



Mr. Luis Da Costa, Director of Logistics Support Division, DPKO and Mr. Philip Compte, Special Assistant Director with FC, COS, CAO and UNDOF



Mr. Luis Da Costa, Director of Logistics Support Division, DPKO and Mr. Philip Compte, Special Assistant Director with lokal staff committee (4th



Japanese Delegation Mr. Kokichi TOMITA, Deputy Director-General, Secretariat of International Peace Cooperation, HQ, Cabinet Office (27th March)

Further visits to UNDOF

22 members of Israel-Japan Parliamentary Friendship League visited J-CON (6th January)

12 members of Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited CZ for familiarization with UNDOF (31st January)

A delegation of American Embassy in Damascus participated in UNDOF Operational Briefing, OP71 Quneitra (2nd February)

2 Japanese Delegation of International Peace Cooperation obtained UNDOF Operational Briefing and visited AOS-tour (27th February)

Canadian Press came to CZ and interviewed

International Sports Day



UNDOF sportsmen with international colleagues

The annual IDF (Israel Defense Forces) Sports Day was conducted on Monday 04 April 2005 in Tel Aviv with competitors from IDF, UNTSO (Military Observers) MFO (Multinational Force and Observers on the Sinai), TIPH (Temporary International Presence in Hebron), UNDOF and Military Attachés.



J-CON member on the track

Competitions were held in Basketball, Soccer, Volleyball, Tug of War and Relay Race.

UNDOF participated with 35 competitors from AUSBATT, CANLOG, SLOVCON and J-CON and they represented the Force in an excellent man-

ner. (POLBATT had to cancel their participation on short notice unfortunately to attend a mourning service for their late Pope John Paul II).

The UNDOF team scored the overall third place (calculating all sport competitions in total). Since J-CON soldiers are well known as very good runners, they had been asked to make a running team for the relay race (4 times 500m). This was a good decision, because they took second place and are to be commended

for their performance. The AUSBATT soccer team also did very well, reaching the finals for the soccer cup. That game was really very tough and had to be decided in a penalty shoot out. AUSBATT lost unluckily.

On more of an ironic note I have to add, that the AUSBATT Welfare officer Lt I Groeppel was mistaken in announcing that this final was the ideal chance for revenge for the disastrous defeat of the Austrian national soccer team against Israel some years ago (5 : 0).

Now we are hoping for two revenges next year.

Text: Maj S. PERR, FWO



The successful J-CON team



The AUSBATT soccer team

Same, same, but different!

At first glance you may say that this was just another exercise. But, and this I want to underline twice, this was an exercise of special significance.



Starting with simple tasks, the Gopher Hole exercise was conducted by Major Abfalter (COO of AUSBATT) like a concert. First slowly and soft sounds were heard, like birds singing in the trees. But then, the tasks were building up to higher complexity. This was comparable to the mighty thunderstorm like in Beethoven's 5th symphony.

For example, there was suggested an airplane crash in the vicinity of Position 37 at the 2nd Coy. Unfortunately this plane was imagined to transport radioactive material. So what had to be done? First the information was given to the responsible officers and soldiers. After the NBC alert and individual NBC protection of each soldier, it was decided

to evacuate this area as soon as possible. The fire brigade assisted the NBC experts to decontaminate all soldiers and vehicles coming from the concerned positions. For this, they got rid off their clothes, probably contaminated with radioactive dust. And of course, they took a shower and were brushed as well as possible. Hence, the whole possible incident was executed from the beginning to the end. The capacity and equipment of AUSBATT was demonstrated and proven for use.

Another example to draw your attention to was an exercise demonstration in the POLBATT area at Observation Post 56. A heavily injured OGG soldier was presumed. The Commander of the 2nd coy conducted the operation.

He led his soldiers to OP 56 sitting on a Nyala vehicle like a knight on a big white horse. The demonstrators were shifted aside by the soldiers in accordance to the standard operation procedures. Further on, first aid was given to the very realistically prepared injured OGG soldier. Artificial blood was running out of his mouth and a terrible wound was placed on his head. The good message first, during the exercise he got professional medical care quick enough to survive.

At the end of each day, the most important lessons learned were put together in a smart power point presentation. All the incidents were discussed later on with the



involved soldiers to improve their experience for the future. And again it was shown to every participant, that there is a big difference between learning things in the classroom and doing it actively outside e.g. in a position.

*Text by Maj Hans Hutter
Photos by Sgt Thomas Aigner*

Why do we have to train?



Photo by Sgt Thomas

Is training really important? Is it necessary? Everybody is a soldier and has been already trained for the job, so why must we practice the same things all over again? Even though most soldiers are fed up of that it is our duty and responsibility. If we hesitate to carry out proper training we may underestimate a potentially hazardous situation.

3rd Company AUSBATT has taken its training assignment very seriously and initiated a thorough training for its soldiers as an important and integral part of the mission. Step by step we prepared our soldiers from basic training, shooting exercises and coy exercises, all training goals culminating in the Gopher Hole-Exercise.

What are these steps in

detail? Every new soldier coming to the mission has to participate in basic training in order to be prepared to respond to the different situations at UNDOF. On the theoretic foundation erected at the start of the training we build the practical training facing real life situations.

Even though the current security status at the Golan Heights does not require us to use the shelters due to shelling, every soldier must know how to react in the improbable event. Trained-in reactions through repeated training may make the difference in a life and death situation. The different potential emergencies are fires at the position, civilian demonstrations in the AOS/AOL, NBC attacks.

During training we evaluate the response of commanders

and soldiers allowing us to improve our performance. It is important to reveal any discrepancies between given orders and their executions and find out the reasons behind them. Every soldier works hand in hand being a valuable part of a functioning team.

During the last Gopher Hole-exercise we had the opportunity to implement our rigid training. We found ourselves in a wide variety of events proving that we are flexible, well prepared and professional.

My thanks go to all commanders and all soldiers of the 3rd Coy and I appreciate the contribution by all other parts of AUSBATT.

Text by Capt Martin SOMSKY

OIC 3rd Coy

NEW QUALITY

At the beginning of 2005 there come routine changes - J-CON, CANCON and POLBATT have accomplished their mission. For some this is a well-deserved ending of their service, for others it is time to commence their duties - all in all, the natural order of events at the Golan Heights.

Still, there is a difference - the soldiers who have just completed their mission have introduced great changes to our 'Golan venture'

Admittedly, the ideal is yet to be attained, but these several months have proved that the life of Camp Ziouani has

acquired a new quality. At the onset of my UNDOF service, the relations between the

Indeed, when we expressed more mutual trust, when we started to perceive one another as competent and professional soldiers, when we began to spend free time together, our service became more bearable, and the usual homesickness, as well as the longing for one's family, became somewhat less painful. We have parted as friends do, hoping to meet again in the future.

Having completed our mission here, at the Golan Heights, we depart enriched with new experience and acquaintances, and we leave the spirit of tolerance and respect, with the deepest belief that it will remain in this land forever.



Photo by WOII Gernot Payer

Canadians, the Japanese, and the Poles were by far official and formal. And all it took was to express more willingness to appreciate that our national features characterize us but do not divide, and that we had come to the Golan Heights with the same aim.

Original Story

They met on the Golan Heights.

The Woman and the Man. Polish and Austrian.

She was the medical laboratory employee, He was the AUSBATT STS Commander.

And against all odds, in human envy atmosphere of some and friendliness of others, day after day carrying out their missionary duties - they were wonderfully developing love between them. Two hearts, which found each other thousand of kilometers away from their countries. The time



Kinga and Patrik Kremer

Articles by Capt J. Barczewski

of mission reached to the end, He gone away first and she after. They returned to their fatherlands.

Such a seemingly banal story.

Not so long ago to Golan Heights arrived the message that still in love - Kinga and Patrik got married in Austria, on January 29, 2005.

On behalf of all our friends and fellows from UNDOF I wish You only sunny days, mutual respect and love.

God Bless You All !

STS COOPERATION

STS (Special Task Service) came into existence from AUSBATT and POLBATT
It is destined for:

- doing reconnaissance patrols in UNDOF AOR
- security of FORCE COMMAND VISIT (every two weeks)
- blocking roads and participating in TCP (temporary checkpoint)



AUSBATT and POLBATT STS performed their tasks separately in their AOR. But in summer 2004 the situation was changed. Commander AUSBATT STS Lt I Georg Pferschy made an offer for cooperation to the Commander POLBATT STS Lt I Marcin Matczak. At the beginning these were a few common patrols in POLBATT AOR. Friends from AUSBATT STS



cooperation was very important for Polish STS. We started to mix Force Command Visit crews.

When the new CO STS POLBATT Lt Dariusz Demski took over his duties on September 2004, the cooperation developed continuously. Both platoons have patrols together along B-Line. Soldiers meet each other more often also after duty.

New acquaintances and friendships "made in UNDOF" may go on in Austria, Slovakia and Poland? Soldiers' meetings after patrols and trainings make our job easier and build trust for each other.

were helping POLBATT STS soldiers in difficult situations in dangerous zones many times. In August 2004 we had a lot of work with mine accidents. This

The last shooting training (01 - 04 03 2005) proved that in spite of many differences among soldiers from Vienna, Bratislava and Warsaw, that we could work together like "brothers in arms". We could follow the same orders and shoot together at the same targets.

We hope that it is not the end of our friendship and that our successors will be proud to do the same and maybe even more. Maybe they will make the friendship between pla-



toons even closer?

It is necessary to mention, that some officers from J-CON and HQ sometimes take part in STS patrols. It has been evidentially proven that we all are the same soldiers with the Blue Berets.

Article by Capt J. Barczewski

The APPLE STORY



Four million kilograms of apples were reloaded onto ICRC trucks on A-

For some human beings an apple is just a fruit. For others, especially on the Golan Heights, apples have gained additional meaning. There is certainly an economic reason to trade apples. Normally this reason would not be worth noticing, in the case of two countries tied up closely with trading issues.

But this order is completely different. For more than 31 years there has not been any trading activities between Israel and Syria. The origin often mentioned is the lack of a peace treaty between these countries since then.

That is why there is also a political reason bound to this topic. It may be talks, which bring persons of different cultures together. Prejudices and fears may be reduced in this process. Well, talks had been conducted between businessmen, humanitarian organisations and politicians in Damascus, Tel Aviv and the UN in New York.

The positive result of this inter agency (UNDOF, ICRC) cooperation and mediation between both sides is that finally some 4000 tons of apples, grown by Druse farmers on the A-side, have been





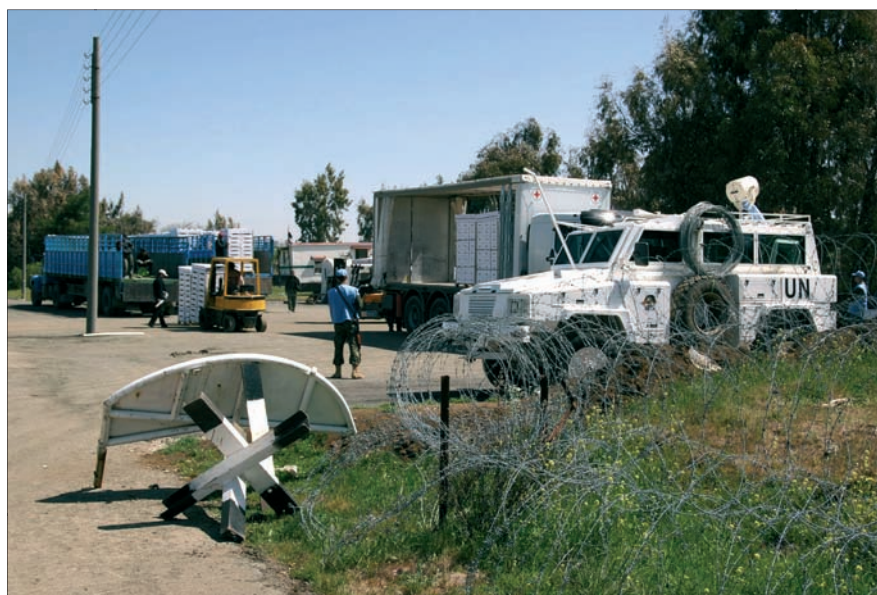
ICRC lorry crossing from A-side to B-side, passing UN Checkpoint "Charly"

transferred to the B-side of the fence. With the professional ICRC transporter teams

After a check, the apples were reloaded onto Syrian trucks. And then their trip continued

cerning the apple transfer between Israel and Syria. Moreover UNDOF secured the handling of the apples at the A and B-gates in the early phase of realization. For about one month the UNDOF Special Task Service group were observing the procedure of unloading and reloading the trucks of the Red Cross. There had been no incident and therefore the whole issue can be viewed as a big success.

It is not known, if all these precious apples will stay in Syria, or if they will be sold to other countries like Saudi Arabia, but what all the involved soldiers know now is, that four million kilograms of apples is a very large amount.



STS observe the right handling of the precious apples on B-side

made the task run smoothly and quickly. Some hundreds of truck loads were transferred from A-gate to B-gate.

on to Damascus.

From the onset of this task, UNDOF was involved in the process of negotiations con-

*Text by Maj Hans Hutter
Photos by Maj Kert and WOll Payer*

VISIT OF GENERAL R. R. HENAULT, CMM, CD

As the Christmas festive season drew to a close, and focus was turned toward the upcoming year of 2005, Canadian soldiers in the Golan Heights, members of LOGBATT received a very important visitor. From 30 December 2004 until noon



Inspecting the Quarter Guard in his honour, General Henault (in blue jacket) smiling at the response to a question. Seen with Pte Tammy Stevenson, Sup Tech from LOGBATT

on New Years day, the Chief of Defence Staff, General R.R. Henault, CMM, CD visited the Canadian Contingent. Accompanying him on his trip to the Middle-East region were the Canadian Forces Chief Warrant Officer, CWO Daniel Gilbert and the ADC to the CDS, Major Tom Bradley.

In addition to meeting with the Force Commander for dialogue regarding the future participation of Canada in UNDOF, the CDS found time to inspect a Quarter Guard in his honour, to brief all Canadian Soldiers about what is going to be happening in our



After starting the fire, General Henault, third from left line is seen dancing with members of the LOGBATT duty Fire Crew during Camp Ziouani's New Year's Eve celebration Bon Fire.

future and to attend the New Years Eve bonfire. As part of the New Years celebrations, the CDS made some opening remarks to start the LOGBATT Polar Bear Dip in the Camp Ziouani water reservoir which was attended by not less than



General Henault wearing Japanese traditional New Year's jacket making rice cakes while a courageous member of J-Con turns the rice after each hit by the mallet.

25 hardy soldiers who braved the cold – 5 degrees Celsius temperatures to jump into the water. Later, Gen Henault participated in a traditional Japanese ceremony, the making of rice cakes. Afterward, he attended the annual New Years Levee in the Camp Ziouani Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess, where he met and talked with several Officers, Warrant Officers and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers from the Canadian and other UNDOF contingents.

Although brief, the visit by the CDS was memorable for the amount of activities that he participated in while in Camp Ziouani. It goes without saying that we will miss his outgoing and friendly personality now that he is leaving the Canadian Forces to become NATO's Senior Military Representative.

Article by Capt P.A. Kallaghan

Dead Sea Half-Marathon and 10 km run

The 23rd Dead Sea Half-Marathon and 10 km run was held this year on 19 February 05. The Traditional Ein Gedi race is in memory of Giora and Tomer Ron. This year's theme was „Running for Peace“ and we were part of approximately 1.600 runners from all over the world, includ-

ing 28 UNDOF members. The UNDOF delegation was composed of fifteen Canadians and thirteen Austrians. For some participants, this was their first time to compete in such an event.

The start point for both the Half-Marathon and 10 km run was at the Ein Gedi Spa. The route for the 10 km was from the Ein Gedi Spa up the road toward Masada for 5 km and then return. The Half-Marathon route was all the way to Masada and back.

They say that “this is the lowest place on the earth” and the only way to go is up! The first kilometre was a gradual climb up a hill, then it flattened out for about another two kilometres until another gradual climb up, and then the rest was relatively flat. That was really appreciated by most of the runners!

The 10 Km run started at 0915 hrs. As everybody was



Start line for the 10 km race

approaching the start line before the start signal, it was total chaos. There were people everywhere, including the 10 Km runners, people doing a two kilometre competitive race and a 10 Km speed-walking race. When the gun went off, the start was very slow, as we had to manoeuvre through groups of people walking, speed walking and even people on roller blades.

The temperature was a hot 24°C and it very dry with no wind. It seemed like we were running in a sauna.

When we hit the five-kilometer mark, the temperature soared to 32°C, which drained the energy right out some of the runners.

The top Austrian runner for the Half-Marathon was Cpl Franz Lindschinger with a time of 1h27 and the top Canadian was Sgt Danny Lagace with a time of 1h41. Congratulations to both of you.

The top runner for the 10 Km from

the UN participants was Cpl Travis Saccucci with a time of 48 minutes. Congratulations Travis. I would like to thank all the runners for making this



The team at the sign “Lowest Place on Earth”

an enjoyable event and I hope all have many more runs to come. I am sure that we will never forget the experience of participating in such a distance run, especially in such hot temperatures!

Written by MCpl Mike Swinimer

J-CON Change of Command

On March 2, 2005, J-CON held their Change of Command ceremony at Camp Ziouani. The outgoing CO, Maj Katsuhiko Tokunaga handed over the command of J-CON to the incoming CO, Maj Kazuyuki Sato. In honor of this ceremony, Col Andreas Safranmüller, COS UNDOF; Col Ei-ichiro Fukazawa, the Japanese Air Attaché to Israel as the representative of the Japanese

Defense Agency; LtCol Herbert Pracher, CO AUSBATT; LtCol Rajmund Andrzejczak, CO POLBATT; LtCol Shawn Myers, CO LOGBATT; Maj

Tomanek, CO SLOVCON and many special guests arrived to celebrate this great and



solemn event. The outgoing and incoming COs and distinguished guests presented their addresses. Col Safranmüller pronounced special thanks to

Maj Katsuhiko Tokunaga for the excellent job that he and his men provided, and appreciation for his support to the UNDOF mission. The COS also gave an encouraging welcome to the new CO, Maj Kazuyuki Sato. Following the official part of the ceremony, all honorable guests, J-CON officers and soldiers were invited to a very nice Japanese styled lunch. The COC reception was held at the Golan

Club in a pleasant atmosphere and all guests enjoyed themselves.

*Article by Cpt N. Matsuguma,
Photo by MSG K. Miyagawa*

J-CON New Year Celebration



Photo by WOII Gernot Payer

J-CON held New Year celebrations on 11 Jan in Camp Faouar. I was happy to see many UNDOF soldiers and guests enjoying themselves, watching our exhibits, tasting

what is the Japanese spirit?

You may be able to find the answer on the J-CON t-shirts sold at the event. A famous Japanese saying is printed on them and I will try to translate

Japanese food and drinking Japanese sake.

However, the purpose of the event was not only to entertain, but also to introduce our many guests to some aspects of Japanese culture and spirit. So then,

it into English: "If someone asks me what is the Japanese spirit, I will answer that it is kind and of moderate mind such as the scent of a mountain cherry blossom at dawn."

We often refer to our country as "the country of wa" which means "the country of harmony". Harmony is an important element in the Japanese conscience. We believe that harmony leads to peace. As I prepare to return to Japan, I wish this region harmony that will lead to peace in the near future and for many generations to come.

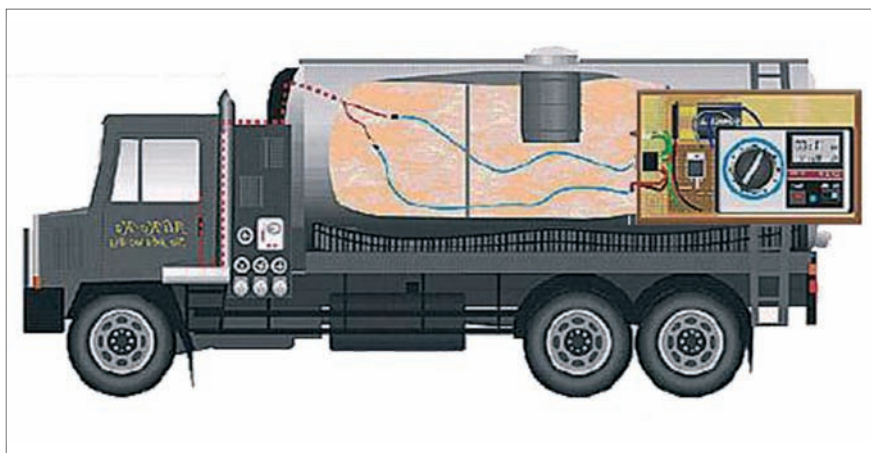
J-CON MTO Lt I T. Endo

Force Protection - VBIED

What is the biggest threat to the security of UNDOF personnel?

Probably it is the challenging traffic combined with bad road conditions and therefore the risk of being involved in a traffic accident. However, the past has proven that there is always the potential for terrorist attacks on UN facilities, such as on UN HQ Baghdad. The weapon of choice for terrorists is explosives – typically in very large quantities, and often in the form of vehicular bombs, suicide bombers or package bombs. The most likely form of explosives is the Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED). IED stands for ‘...any device, incorporating any chemical (explosive) which is designed to kill, injure, destroy or damage.’ Used together with cars, trucks, buses, bikes, boats or other vehicles it becomes a VBIED.

VBIED incidents are increasing and used by virtually all terrorist organisations, almost 33% are directed against police and military targets, 61% of which are against static installations. The preferred attack modus against installations is bringing the VBIED close to the target and using a timer or command initiated VBIED. 75% are likely to involve sedan type vehicles - explosive loads concealed in the trunk (80%) – and larger VBIEDs are deployed in trucks and vans. Nearly 50% of all VBIEDs are timer initiated with the time



delay unlikely to exceed 45 minutes, however, a large percentage of recent VBIED incidents have been suicide initi-

accessible by road, fusing & initiation systems and can be easily hidden components of the vehicle that would enhance

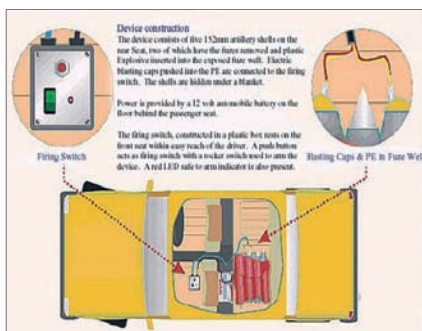


ated. Why VBIED? Because of inconspicuous movement without attracting much attention, most potential targets are

fragmentation and the fuel in the vehicle enhances the blast.

What can UNDOF personnel do? Be vigilant at all times, report any suspicious vehicle immediately to your superiors or guards, prevent vehicles from parking next to UN installations and control approach to UN facilities.

Author: Capt E. Walla, DFPM



OGG HQ

Observer Group Golan HQ is strategically located on the right hand side inside the gate of Camp Faouar, close to the Austrian Officers Mess. The OGG HQ is under the operational command of FC UNDOF, responsible for co-ordination and liaison between HQ UNDOF and the OGG outstations located in Tiberias and Damascus. The everyday tasks include:

- ◆ Compilation of the inspection statistics and results from both outstations and briefing of the FC UNDOF with regard



l-r: Capt D. McKeivitt (IRL), Maj P. Vindheim (NOR), LtCol W. Stejlen (NED), Capt R. Bushby (AUST), Maj K. Bring

to the inspection results.

- ◆ Facilitate all UNTSO crossings through the Alpha/Bravo gates.

- ◆ Liaison with UNDOF HQ Operations through the OGG Duty Officer Golan

(DO G), who maintains a close working relationship with the UNDOF HQ Duty Officer on a 24/7 basis.

- ◆ Co-ordination of training with UNDOF, particularly with regard to Medical and Fire fighting training.

Throughout the conduct of its functions OGG maintains particularly close links

with UNDOF HQ Operations, OPSINFO and the UNDOF Crossing Management Center. Many thanks to all for your continued support and cooperation!

Article by Maj Kristina Bring

The new Chief OGG-T

LtCol Armin Lehner assumed the appointment of Chief Observer Group Golan Tiberias (COGG-T) on 18th March 2005.



Born on 31st March 1962 in Austria, he joined the Army on 30th September 1980 after completing his High School examinations. From 1981 until 1984 he attended the Military Academy in Wr. Neustadt. On 23rd September 1984 he graduated from the Military Academy as an Infantry Officer.

LtCol Lehner was posted

to the 42nd Infantry Regiment to Freistadt. Following this in 1986 he was posted to the 41st Infantry Regiment in Enns.

In 1994 he was posted to the Austrian NCO Academy. LtCol Lehner held several appointments in various command and staff positions.

Currently he holds the appointment of Commander of the Training Division at the Austrian NCO Academy.

He has wide and diverse overseas experience having served in several UN, OSCE and NATO missions.

From February 1988 - February 1989 he was the Company Commander of 2nd Coy AUSBATT. From September 1992 - March 1994 he was the SSO-Ops in UNDOF HQ.

From August 1997 - August 1998 he served with UNTSO, including 6 months in OGG-D and 6 months in OGL, Team Sierra. From November 1998 - March 1999 he served within OSCE in the KVM (Kosovo Verification Mission) in Kosovo. From April - October 2000 he served in KFOR 2 in the MNB S.

UNDOF - Finance Section

It is a pleasure to be given the opportunity to introduce the Finance Section through this magazine.

You may recognize the faces in the photo since most of these staff members have been with UNDOF for quite some time. The Finance Section has 11 staff composed of 3 international and 8 national staff members. We pride ourselves in having a well-

balanced gender composition, each staff member whether male or female, exhibits admirable knowledge and skills necessary to our profession.

The Chief Finance Officer (CFO), Mr. Fahim Jan, heads the section assisted by the Deputy Chief Finance Officer (DCFO), Mr. Adang Sanusi, who supervises the day-to-day financial transactions. Ms. Amal Zeidan provides administrative assistance and secretarial support to the CFO. There are four main units in the section, namely Vendors' Unit; Payroll and Claims Unit for National staff, Military and International personnel; Accounts Unit and Cashiers Unit. The Vendors' Unit, as the title indicates, is responsible for processing payments to vendors, composed of Mr. Adnan Tailouny, Ms. Fourat Al-Sheikh and Ms. Kinana Khalili. The Payroll and Claims Unit ensures that

salaries for national staff and claims related to travel, daily recreation and other military



allowances are processed and paid out on time. Mr. Rajae Nasser and Ms. Amalia Carpio have this responsibility. The Accounts Unit is responsible for maintaining account records and producing periodic financial statements, manned by Mr. Gerious Samaan.

The Cashier Unit, one of the more demanding occupations, liaises with banks and issues cash, cheques and bank transfers payments. The responsible staff for this unit are Mr. Hassan Abbas and Ms. Susanne Said. (Ms. Said has now left the mission for further education). All payments are handled through six bank accounts that are maintained in the currencies of USD, Israeli Shekels and Syrian Pounds in order to facilitate payments to vendors and clients on both sides of the mission area.

The overall responsibility

of the Finance Section is the management and administration of the mission's accounts under authority delegated by the United Nations Controller and fully responsible to provide financial services for the mission. All processes and procedures are governed by the UN Financial Rules and Regulations. The approved budget for Financial Year

2004/2005 amounted to \$40.9 million. The current mandate of UNDOF is extended up to 30 June 2005 renewable on a six-month-period basis subject to the General Assembly approval.

Financial transactions are processed and records are maintained in four electronic systems - the Sun System for accounting and payments, ProGen for payroll, Mercury for the monitoring/approval of requisitions and Funds Monitoring Tool (FMT) for budget monitoring and reporting.

The section is promoting a client-oriented environment and therefore, in order to serve you better, we encourage you to come and visit us if you have any queries or suggestions. We are located on the second (Finance) and third (Cashier office) floors of the Pentagon building.

Article by Finance Section

In Memory by E.Lynn Elvaiah



Hugs to remember (Bernie with son and

On 07 Feb 2005, on a cold and rainy day, members of UNDOF, civilian and military alike, gathered together to pay

office. Many of us remember Doug and Bernie fondly as hard working fun-filled team players that could be relied upon in good times and in bad. Special thanks to the UNDOF team members who were able to attend this dedication ceremony in the pouring rain especially to the UNDOF CAO who provided much needed translation, the CO LOGBATT for the gathering of services



Dedication ceremony as Padres bestow their blessings

tribute to the lives and service of two former UNDOF HQ military staff members. Canadian, Capt Doug Barker and Austrian, WOII Bernie Hurmann had worked together in previous years in the SO SUP

and AUSBATT who provided moral support. And of course, we cannot forget to mention the Force Photographer who captured many memorable photos of this occasion despite the downpour.

On behalf of Capt Barker's widow Ann and their two children Amanda and Scott, WO II Hurmann's widow Aviv, who was present at the ceremony with their son Dominique, brought trees to plant in memory of both Doug and Bernie. The tree planting ceremony was officiated by the



Capt Doug Barker, a man to remem-



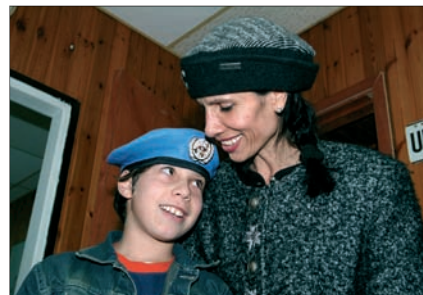
Ms Hurmann presenting flowers to CAO, Jerry Smith

Canadian Padres and the feeling that emanated from within the group were summarized in words from the dedication: "... as these trees draw life from the soil and the sun, may they be living testimony to the



OIC Admin, CZ, Lynn Elvaiah; OIC Scunasar, Gerhard Beiskammer and Dominique listen as CAO, Jerry Smith

life force that was in Bernie and Doug. May their families and friends see in these trees real symbols of all that these men were for all the people



Proud to wear the blue beret!

they cared for and who cared for them."

May we all be at peace with one another as we remain:

"In the Service of Peace".

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



CMPO LtCol Tracz presenting flowers to his female team



International Women's Day (8th March) is an occasion to mark a celebration of the economic, social, cultural and political achievements for women. It is the story of ordinary women as makers of history and it is rooted in the centuries-old struggle of women to participate in society on an equal footing with men.

The idea of an International Women's Day first arose at the turn of the 20th century, which in the industrialized world was a period of expansion and turbulence, booming population growth and radical ideologies. In 1911 International Women's Day was marked

for the first time in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland, where more than one million women and men attended rallies. In addition to the right to vote and to hold public office, they demanded the right to work and to an end to discrimination on the job.

As for the role of the United Nations we can say, that few causes promoted by the United Nations have generated more intense and widespread support than the campaign to promote and protect the equal rights of women. The Charter of the United Nations, signed in San Francisco in 1945, was the first international agree-

ment to proclaim gender equality as a fundamental human right.

On the occasion of this very special day, Lt Col A. Tracz, the UNDOF Chief Military Personnel Officer invited his female staff members to his office to commemorate the event with their male comrades in general and to honor the good work of his female HQ team, made of medical and hygienic personnel, in particular.

The invitees were definitely taken by surprise about this nice gesture, the kind words and, above all, the flowers they received.

Article by Maj S. Perr, FWO



Here is a quick story that I thought I should tell you:

Last weekend in march, my wife and I, with some friends went out for a dinner in Damascus. After dinner, we took a taxi home.

Unfortunately, we left our camera in the taxi, without even realising it. The next

morning, a knock came to the door and I found my good neighbour Mohamad, (who has a supermarket on our street) standing there with the taxi driver. In his hand, he had my digital camera (worth several hundred \$'s) and returned it to me. I hadn't even realised that it was missing yet!!

The taxi driver had gone up and down the street that morning looking for someone

who might know us until he met Mohamad. The taxi man remembered our street, but had no idea which apartment we lived in.

Of course, I gave the taxi driver a handsome reward, which he thoroughly deserved. These incidents say something significant about the honest character of the 'much-maligned' Damascus taxi drivers.

by Comdt P. Doherty

The Hidden Monastery

At the beginning of the Syrian Desert, 80 kilometres from Damascus to the northeast, the monastery of St. Moses the Abyssinian (which is Deir Mar Musa el-Habashi in Arabic) hides in the rocks behind the town Nebek.



Photo: WO I Manfred Völkl

It is told that St. Moses, an Ethiopian prince, became a monk and then a hermit in that valley. But he was martyred by Byzantine soldiers. Following the local tradition a miracle separated his thumb, when his family took his body. This thumb is conserved as a relic in the church of Nebek today.

The small building at the end of a valley is strategically well situated: At the edge where the valley falls down to a deep glen, surrounded by some small hermitages adhering to the rocks around. At its bottom it is not easy to realize between the stones in the same colour. From there hundreds of steps lead up to the monastery, 1320 metres above sea level, with a spectacular view over the wide and quiet stony desert beneath. It is nearly 1000 years old, founded in 1058. Already the Romans or Palmiriens

have built a watchtower at this place. The later Christian hermits used the cave for the first monastery. Archaeological evidence tells us, that the beginning of monastic life began in the middle of the 6th century and it belonged to the Syrian Antiochian Rite.



Photo: Sgt Armin Gogl

One realizes the fact that it is a very old building immediately when coming to the church: You have to bend to enter, as the door is very small.

Inside the room measures 10 to 10 metres and is rich with impressive frescoes of the 11th and 12th centuries around, some of them dating back even to the 5th and 6th centuries. There for instance the visitor can see a presentation of paradise and hell. In hell also bishops are shown, suffering from the tortures of the fire. The interior of the church has no chairs, visitors must sit on carpets in front of the altar which is in a separate area from the believers.

During the first half of the 19th century the monastery was abandoned, but the Syrian-Catholic believers from the surroundings tried to keep the sanctuary. For decades the old church had no roof, the frescoes were exposed to wind and weather.

In 1984 the Syrian state and some volunteers began with the restoration of the church, mainly with a new roof for the church. Ten years later Deir Mar Musa was completed thanks to the cooperation of the states of Syria and Italy.

A new monastic community started in 1991, when a Jesuit from Italy arrived and began to work as a Syrian-Catholic priest. Meanwhile it has become an international community of nuns and monks and laymen, who are also very eager to have religious dialog between Christians and Moslems.

Text by Maj Stefan May

Skiing in Lebanon

A group of UNDOF soldiers and civilian staff made a skiing welfare trip last January to Lebanon. Even for those advanced in skiing and familiar with nice skiing areas in Europe it was a great experience and something to remember. We were lucky in many ways. As the snow conditions been quite poor in December, it improved greatly early this year. As for the weather, it was perfect at least for the first day. After days of snowfall the skiing area presented itself covered with fresh powder snow and with blue sky. I must say I liked the amazing view from the highest elevation 2500 meters above sea level to the nearby Mediterranean Sea with its glittering water surface in the sunshine. And Après-ski is something you can enjoy up in the mountains and even in Beirut, since

however the whole area is better known under the name of Faraya Mzaar Kfardebian or simply again, Faraya, which may be the best-equipped and most popular resort of Lebanon.

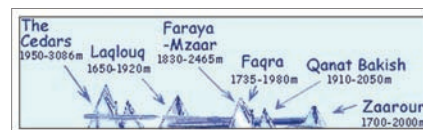
The resort has 42 slopes and 80 kilometers of ski tracks. The skiing season in Lebanon is similar in length to that of the Alps stretching over a period of four months. Skiers, snowboarders, snowmobile addicts, cross-country lovers and para gliders come to the resort from all parts of the country. Starting at 1850m, you may reach the 2465m top of Mzaar and enjoy the breathtaking view over the colorful Bekaa valley, Mount Hermon of the Anti-Lebanon and other peaks like Laqlouq and the Cedars. Coastal towns and even Beirut the capital can be seen on a clear day.

At Faraya, if you are an advanced skier, you will need



A great day to ski

some time to ski the best of the resort and start searching for new tracks. An option here, if looking for a more challenging day, is to hire a guide from the ski school to show you other exciting areas. Intermediates will have a lot of fun as well, and it is also an ideal resort for beginners as the lower slopes are wide and gentle.



Lebanon has all together six ski resorts with groomed slopes, catering to skiers and snowboarders of all levels. So there is even more to discover, maybe next winter.

Text by Maj S. Perr, FWO

Photos by Maj T. Abfalter, COO-AB



Ready for the first run

it's only a one-hour drive back from the Faraya skiing resort to the downtown area.

Faraya is the name of the village just below the actual slopes in Ouyoune El-Simane;

