

# GOLAN

The UNDOF Journal



April - June 2008  
No. 115





# Dear Reader!



After three months I am happy to introduce to you our newest edition of the Golan Journal. Only a short blink of an eye and another three months are gone; so much happened in the last quarter. We had a change within our editorial team. Welcome to our new SSO M/PR&Welfare Maj Utz Kuras and the newly arrived Press Officers – welcome to Maj Manfred Meyer (MP), Capt Vishal Vikram Singh (INDCON), Capt Martin Malinowski (AUSBATT) and Capt Drazen Habek (HRVCON). I ask that you extend the same professional cooperation to the newly appointed Press Officers as you did to their predecessors.



Our team: Alexander, Gerry, Yozo and Utz

During the past three months we also said good bye to our Slovak friends and welcomed our new Croatian comrades. The incoming Director of AMED, Mr. Weisbrod-Weber, from the UN Headquarters New York visited UNDOF, the new light armored patrol vehicles RG32M were introduced, UNDOF conducted an Ambassador Day on A- and B-Side and so on...

You want to learn more about these and other most fascinating stories of UNDOF?

Just have a look inside!

*Alexander Unterweiger*

Yours sincerely,

Capt Alexander Unterweiger, SOPR

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Front (Page 1): RG32M at Command Patrol  
Photo by WOII Gernot Payer

Back (Page 24): Honouring 60 Years of United Nations Peacekeeping  
Photo by DPKO/Public Information

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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 Media, Public Relations & Welfare Office publishes the Golan Journal quarterly. 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!*

*The summer is now upon us in full force, uplifting our spirits with its warm and sunny days. Although it is important to take a moment and take advantage of the good weather in order to balance our life, it is critical never to forget the reason why we are here and always act with the mission in mind.*



*I would first like to congratulate everyone on all the success we have had to this date. We have been able to reach greater mobility and enhanced flexibility thanks to a change of mindset in our daily routine. This in itself is already a great achievement. Nevertheless, our work is not yet done and we need to proceed ahead and continue this journey in order to complete the transformation and optimize our operations.*

*Despite all the media attention on the peace talk in the region which would lead us to believe in a reduction of tension in the area, our military reports show a different picture. They show a raise in sensitivity from the Israeli side over civilian activity near the technical fence while Syria continues to build and farm as close as possible to the A line. Furthermore, Israel now has installations east of the technical fence which greatly elevate the risk of confrontations. On the other hand, we have the Syrian authorities that are now severely repressing smuggling activity in the Hadar region, using extraordinary force.*

*This is exactly why it is so important to continue in our efforts.*

*Facing the aforementioned threats, enhance flexibility and change of mindset are essential but only parts of the required measured response to our ever changing environment. We also need more manpower for the line units. In order to achieve this objective without having to raise the Manning levels, I intend to streamline the logistical structure by reducing redundant services and reorganizing its command structure, thus freeing resources to be assigned where they are the most needed. Finally, I will be looking at our leave policy and the way it is applied to ensure the proper available Manning strength is always available.*

*In the Service of Peace, to EVERYONE in UNDOF, I say...*

*Thank you, Dziękuję, Danke, Merci, Dziękuję,  
Arigato, Dhanyavad, Shukran, Toe Dah!*

Major General Wolfgang JILKE  
Force Commander UNDOF

## Chief of Staff Words

In this issue of the Golan Journal I would once again like to focus on operational issues which occupy most of my time as Chief of Staff UNDOF. I want to share with you UNDOF's efforts to improve upon its operational effectiveness. This is a multidimensional challenge, however, this time I will focus only on UNDOF's command and control system (C2).

As in all Armed Forces, as with UNDOF, the effectiveness of forces during daily routine and/or crisis depends, inter alia, on an efficient and effective C2 system with an Operational Centre (OC) as a focal point through which the Force Commander directs the conduct of an operation, ensuring unity of effort and the most effective use of resources supporting immediate and planned operations. Thus, proper coordination is vital for allowing the Force Commander a wide range of operational and tactical options that can be effectively and timely applied when required.

Recently, UNDOF has experienced a dynamic development in the security and operational situation within its assigned Area of Operation (AOO).

While UNDOF forces have still managed to perform its daily and routine operations at a level that meets the objectives of the mission, it was obvious that the C2 system was not effective enough with its limited ability to co-ordinate, monitor and to plan future operations. Because of this there was a lack of a properly designed and operationally focused OC. Thus, conduct of the UNDOF mission was impeded to some extent as the Chief Operations Officer did not have the operational tools to:

- properly fulfill his responsibilities to coordinate and monitor operations within UNDOF's components and with OGG's support as well as to rapidly react on violations as they occurred and the changing operational situation;
- Use on time a situational awareness and info analysis produced by UNDOF Liaison and Protocol Branch and OGG.
- Make recommendations to the Force Commander on Courses of Action (CoA) for the decision-making process, as well as,
- Plan future operations.

This shortfall in a properly designed and administered OC was the Force Commander's and my primary concern. As a result of a lot of aggressive planning, effort, and achievable results UNDOF now has a fully functional OC which is well suited to meet UNDOF's operational requirements for a C2 system and supporting decision-making process.

It should be mentioned that UNDOF's new OC was established according to the DPKO Policy Directive effective 1<sup>st</sup> Jul 2006 on Joint Operational Centers (JOC) and Joint Mission Analysis Centers (JMAC). The objective being to ensure that peacekeeping missions have in place integrated operations monitoring, reporting and information analysis hubs at mission headquarters to support the more effective



integration of mission wide situational awareness, security information and analysis for management decision-making.

The new Operations Center and integrated JMAC also ensures that UNDOF and OGG operations are better coordinated and information analysis is consulted with each other. Although, as previously mentioned UNDOF C2 was improved by establishing JOC and JMAC, I expect that additional improvements will be implemented on the basis of Lessons Learned from the trial period in a few weeks.

In closing I would like to take this opportunity to complement the following UNDOF personnel who contributed their effort to have the JOC/JMAC established:

*LtCol Borowski, Maj Wypijewski, WO I Fruhmenn, WO I Rupp, WO II Koplinski, MSgt Shulnig, Sgt Steffl and Mr. Masrian.*

*Keep up the good work*

Colonel Andrzej Ostrowski  
Chief of Staff UNDOF



# Visits to UNDOF by Capt Yozo Akiyama, DMPIO



*Mr. Wolfgang Weisbrod-Weber, Director Asia and Middle East Division in the Office of Operations, DPKO NY, on his first official visit in UNDOF (20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> Apr 2008)*



*Col Janusz Cieślak, Chief of the Coordination and Analysis team, Department of Inspection, MOD, conducted an inspection of implementing mandate tasks (5<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> May 2008)*



*Visit of the former FC to UNDOF, General Radauer accompanied by Rotary Club Austria (19<sup>th</sup> May 2008)*



*LtGen Akiyo Mimoto, Commanding General of 9<sup>th</sup> Division, Japan Ground Self Defense Forces (JGSDF), visited A- and B-side (19<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008)*



*H.E. Baska Jaroslav, MOD of Slovak Republic, H.E. Branko Vukelic, MOD of Croatia and Gen. Edmund Entacher, Chief of Defense of the Austrian Armed Force participated at handover from Slovak to Croatian Contingent (5<sup>th</sup> Jun - 6<sup>th</sup> Jun 2008)*

*H.E. Mr. Masaki Kunieda, Japanese Ambassador to Syria (2<sup>nd</sup> Apr and 10<sup>th</sup> May 2008)*

*Students, School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy of the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya (9<sup>th</sup> Apr 2008)*

*BGen P.G.L.E.M. Everts, Chief of Army Operations, Netherlands (15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Apr 2008)*

*MGen Franz Enzenhofer, Austrian Armed Force (19<sup>th</sup> Apr 2008)*

*Mr. Takeshi Sasagawa, Director, Secretariat of International Peace Cooperation Headquarters, Japan (2<sup>nd</sup> May)*

*Gen Yuji Kuno, Comptroller, JGSDF (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> May 2008)*

*Col Alojz Tomsevic, Croatian Armed Forces (12<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> May 2008)*

*H.E. Martin Aeschbacher, Swiss Ambassador (31<sup>st</sup> May 2008)*

*Ms. Karen Koning Abuyayd, Commissioner General, UNWRA (6<sup>th</sup> Jun 2008)*

*German Army Cadets (9<sup>th</sup> Jun 2008)*

## New People in UNDOF



### The new CCPTO

Mr. Amarendra Rao, an Indian national, joined UNDOF in March 2008 as the new Chief Civilian Personnel & Travel Officer. He is a double post-graduate (Masters in Social Work and Sociology) and also a diploma holder in Social Development from St. Francis Xavier University, Nova Scotia, Canada. He is married to Sushma Jaiswal, a gold medalist in Masters in Home Science and is blessed with two sons. Mr. Rao began his professional life with the United Nations as a UN volunteer in 1984 and has been serving the organization ever since, in various capacities in different countries in Africa, Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

Mr. Rao moved into human resources management in the early 1990s and continued to provide very valuable services to the UN in this field. He is one of the very highly experienced human resources specialists in the DPKO led field missions. Although he was associated with a number of peace operations since 1994, he has provided direct services in human resources, prior to joining UNDOF, to UNOSOM, UNMISSET/UNOTIL/UNMIT. Mr. Rao enjoys reading the novels of Tom Clancy and Robert Ludlum and watching movies in his mother tongue, Telugu.



### The new CO/LOGBATT

LtCol Gurpal Singh Sidhu was born in Jhansi, Central India. He is a Sikh and comes from a family which has been traditionally serving in the profession of arms. He has graduated in Bachelor of Arts (Honours) from Delhi University. Upon passing out from the Indian Military Academy he joined 'The Poona Horse', a highly decorated armored regiment which has to its credit the highest number of Battle Honors in the common wealth nations. His father had fought in the 1965 Indo-Pak war with the same regiment. LtCol Sidhu has served as a Troop leader, adjutant and Squadron Commander in his regiment. He was General Staff Officer Operations in an Armored Brigade during 'Operation Parakaram', which entailed the mobilization of Indian Armed Forces. LtCol Sidhu has served as Company Commander in the National Rifles in a

counter insurgency environment and has some successful counter terrorism operations to his credit.

LtCol Sidhu was awarded the commendation card during the tenure by the Army Commander. Apart from the mandatory armor courses, LtCol Sidhu's military courses include the joint air warfare course, the combat engineers course and the junior command course. He also has finished a two year post graduate diploma in computer application. LtCol Sidhu is married to Nimrit and has a daughter named Reet.



### The new CO/HRVCON

Maj Miroslav Vagner was born on 28<sup>th</sup> Oct 1963 in Slavonski Brod, Croatia. He joined the Croatian Armed Forces in 1991, when war started in Croatia. From his first unit in task force 'Frankopan' in 1993, Maj Vagner was transferred to 5<sup>th</sup> Guardian Brigade where he served for 13 years as a Platoon Leader, Deputy Company Commander, Company Commander, Deputy Battalion Commander and Battalion Commander. At present he is appointed as Chief of the Training Department in the Croatian Army Peace Support Operation Centre, Rakitje.

During his military carrier Maj Vagner served as a Military Observer in UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone from 1999 to 2000, in UNMOGIP in India and Pakistan from 2002 to 2003 and as Deputy Chief MTC G7 in UNMIL in Liberia from 2005 to 2007. Since the 12<sup>th</sup> Jun 2008 he is the DCO of AUSBATT and National Contingent Commander of the first Croatian Contingent (HRVCON) within UNDOF. Maj Vagner is married to Bozana and has two children, Petar and Iva.



## "Dovidenia"- Slovak Contingent Leaves UNDOF

On Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> Jun 2008, the celebratory farewell of the Slovak Contingent took place in Camp Faouar. It was time to say good bye to the Slovak Contingent (SLOVCON), which was deployed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Coy and staffed five positions (Posn 10, 16, 17, 30 and 31) in the AUSBATT area of responsibility. Slovak officers and soldiers, with a total strength of 95, worked in close cooperation with AUSBATT to successfully fulfill its peacekeeping commitments in the northern half of UNDOF's area of operations.

For a decade, from 1998 until 2008, not only AUSBATT but also the whole of UNDOF have experienced and benefitted from the dedication and professionalism of SLOVCON. After ten years of outstanding service to the peace process in the Middle-East, Slovakia closed its contribution to UNDOF.

At the beginning of the ceremony, the COO AUSBATT, Maj Thomas Stacher, reported to the Force Commander MGen Wolfgang Jilke. After the national anthem was played, General Jilke thanked the



*Folding the Slovak flag*

Soldiers of SLOVCON. He stated, *"I can truly say that you have carried out your duties in a commendable and honorable manner. For this, both the United Nations and the Republic of Slovakia can be very proud of you."*

The Force Commander's following farewell words and welcome address to the Slovak and Croatian soldiers in their mother tongues was admirable and applauded by all guests.

After his speech, the Slovak Minister of Defense, Mr. Jaroslav

Baška, awarded General Wolfgang Jilke and CO AUSBATT LtCol Hans-Peter Hohlweg together with nine other AUSBATT soldiers with the Slovak medal for peacekeeping.

Following the medal parade the protocols were signed. Finally the Slovak flag was lowered and replaced by the Croatian flag. Following the flag ceremony the Croatian Minister of Defense, Mr. Branko Vukelić, gave an address to all guests and Croatian soldiers. The importance of the event was emphasized by a huge number of representatives of all UNDOF contingents and Syrian authorities, which were all invited to a buffet after the official part of the ceremony.

Again a warm welcome to the Croatian soldiers to UNDOF and for the last time a fond farewell to the officers and soldiers of SLOVCON,

*"Dovidenia."*

*Article by Capt Alexander Unterweger,  
SOPR*

*Photos by WO II Gernot Payer,  
Force Photographer*



*Force Commander being decorated with Peace Medal*



## One Eye is Crying, Second One is Smiling

**It was not so long ago when the Slovak Contingent and its 3<sup>rd</sup> Company of the Austrian Battalion began to do work together in support of the UNDOF mission. It was the 19<sup>th</sup> May 1998.**



*The last Slovak crew of Position 10 - June 2008*

**N**ow after ten years, the Slovak Contingent is handing over its responsibilities to the Croatians and we are leaving our friends and comrades from the Golan Heights.

Please don't get me wrong, the soldiers of SLOVCON are looking forward to going home to their relatives, families and friends, who stayed at home while they served for the UN in this part of the world. But that delight is kind of bitter sweet, it's such a sad moment because we know that we will never come back to this mission at the same time we get to return home.

With the Slovak Contingent leaving this mission one can use the very popular and classic phrase "Never Say Never" as the government of the Slovak Republic now has a different priority for the Slovak Military other than the UNDOF mission. Where this will lead us - time will tell.

I am sure that our soldiers will miss all the good people that we have been working closely with such as

the UNDOF HQ staff, the colleagues of the Polish, Indian, Japanese contingents and mainly all our Austrian comrades. But I don't think that our farewell here at UNDOF will mean a final good bye.

The world is becoming a very small planet and Europe is no different so friendships can easily continue within our European family and throughout the world for that matter. Furthermore, we have to respect the fact that our planet, it's the only one which we have, is still full of violence, wars and conflicts.

So creating new peace keeping missions under the UN flag will be necessary in the future and we may find ourselves together once again in the service of peace.

At the end, with your permission, I don't use the obligatory 'Good Bye' but 'Thank You' and hopefully "See You Again".

*Article and Photo by LtCol Jozef Figura, DCO/AB*





## From 'Homeland War' to UNDOF

The Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia have grown into a respectable and well-organized armed force during the 'Homeland War of Independence'. Many military analyses consider that the defense of the Croatian territory was successful, resulting in a final military victory. Military tactics and strategy were carried out directly in practice and that has been unique in the world.

Croatian Armed Forces (CAF) carried out many successful mili-



*Croatian MOD taking the salute*

tary operations. Members of the CAF took part in several peace support operations that are defined by

resolutions and decisions of the UN Security Council.

Prior to the CAF arrival on the Golan Heights, the Republic of Croatia was participating in 13 UN peacekeeping missions with a total of 47 officers deployed in support of these missions.

The Republic of Croatia started its first UN peacekeeping mission in 1999, when 10 members of CAF in the capacity of military observers went to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).

Since their arrival on the Golan Heights on 12<sup>th</sup> Jun 2008 the number of deployed CAF personnel grew up to 140.

In addition to the foreign peacekeeping missions with the UN, the Republic of Croatia participated for the first time in the NATO mission ISAF in Afghanistan by sending a Military

police platoon in February 2003. At present 350 members of CAF are serving in ISAF.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Croatian Contingent (HRVCON) at UNDOF is comprised of 95 soldiers and commanded by Maj Miroslav Vagner. It will perform its duties as part of the Austrian Battalion within the UNDOF Command. This is the first time Croatia has sent a company to a UN peacekeeping mission. The Croa-



*Croatian Contingent arrived in UNDOF*

tian Contingent came to the Golan Heights at UN's invitation after an agreement between Israel and Syria to accept the CAF as a Troop Contributing Country in support of the UNDOF mission.

The HRVCON Infantry Company with his commander Capt Drazen Habek is part of the former 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade 'PUME'.

All soldiers of HRVCON are professional ones, most of them were participating in the 'Homeland War' in Croatia and in many international exercises, as well as in some UN and NATO missions.



*Article by Maj Miroslav Vagner,  
DCO/AB and CO/HRVCON  
Photos by WO II Gernot Payer,  
Force Photographer*



*Croatian Colors marching out at the Change of Contingent Ceremony*



## Ambassadors and Military Attachés visited UNDOF

25<sup>th</sup> Jun 2008

The day dawned bright and clear, as it always does on the Golan during this time of the year. At these early hours and even days before, throughout many locations of the UNDOF theatre, there was preparation under way for the day to come. The common goal of so many was the visit of 26 high-ranking visitors to Camp Ziouani. With still mercifully long shadows, providing shelter from the already blazing sun, everyone anticipated an exciting day.



*Force Commander briefing B-Side visitors*

Initiated by the Force Commander MGen Wolfgang Jilke and coordinated jointly with the Chief of Staff Col Andrzej Ostrowski, UNDOF Branches, Sections, Force HQ-Coy, Military Police and the LOGBATT, the Ambassador's Day was designed with a view to equipping the diplomatic corps with important information on the UNDOF Mission. It aimed to bring cohesion and to demonstrate how effective UNDOF placed itself to cope with the changing strategic and operational environment seven years after the trigger was pulled for modernization – all in the spirit of its Mandate 'to do its best efforts'.

The schedule was tight that day and after a short welcome under the INDBATT

tent, placed in a very colorful reception area, the MA to the FC Maj Dwayne Lovegrove, pushed for the group picture to be taken and sub-

sequently move on to the Khetarpol hall for the address and official welcome by the Force Commander. General Jilke also did not compromise on time and seized the opportunity to deliver several details on the current and future issues of the mission and how UNDOF intends to cope with them.

During the following line tour the FC and COS personally led their distinguished guests to OP 51 and OP 54 of the Observer Group

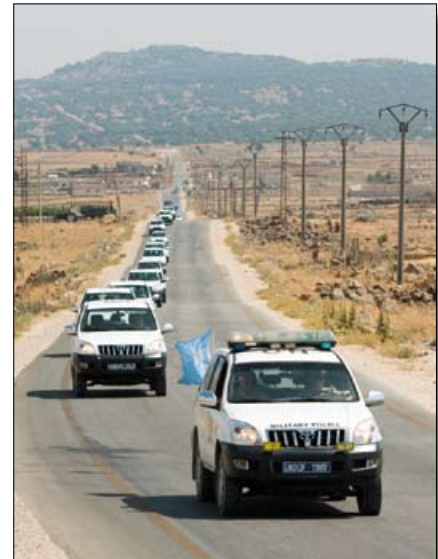


*Weapon display*



*The distinguished guests from A-Side in Camp Ziouani*

Golan. Back from the tour, the Ambassadors and Attachés went straight into the next and final



*Visitors' Convoy*

event. At POLBATT Headquarters, neighboring the location where this day started off, the diplomats could see some of the equipment being used by UNDOF patrols in a static display. In the dynamic part of the display the recently established UNDOF HQ-Coy highlighted some of their operational techniques. All activities were packed with non-stop action.

Baked by the sun, the day ended in a brief chill-out and many appeared to have





*Dynamic Demonstration by the Force HQ-Coy*

been slightly struck by the effects of the soaring sun of the Golan. Concluding on the 25<sup>th</sup> Jun 2008, UNDOF was extremely gratified at the response of the diplomats. Its



*Static display*

interaction, liveliness and commitment made the Ambassador's Day a success.

## 26<sup>th</sup> Jun 2008

**F**or UNDOF this was all but the end of it, because the next day, the 26<sup>th</sup> Jun 2008, would even surpass the previous day's number of

participants, when B-Side Ambassadors and Attachés from Damascus, were invited by MGen Jilke to experience a very long and intensive day. At 09:00hrs guests arrived at Camp Faouar, ready to tackle whatever lay ahead. The program started with a line tour which consisted of a convoy of 18 jeeps winding its way down to the Wadi Al Raqa in the southern POL-BATT area. The Force Commander took 38 diplomats on a tour to UNDOF's "centre of gravity" at the operations level, the Oscar 5 area, in Saladin South and the Al Adnaniah village project. Much like the previous day, the

ambassadors and attachés, appreciated all the efforts made for the planning, development and execution of this informative tour.

On a more personal level I was surprised by the physical condition



*"Say again - over!"*

of our guests, who courageously hung on even when the outside temperature reached 42 °C. Thanks to everybody involved for their hard work, endurance and commitment resulted in two very successful visits of the UNDOF area of operations.

*Article by Maj Utz-Heinrich Kuras,  
SSO M/PR&W  
Photos by WO II Gernot Payer,  
Force Photographer*



*The distinguished guests from B-Side in Camp Faouar*





20<sup>th</sup> April - Visit to Damascus



21<sup>st</sup> April - Visit to POLBATT



## First official visit of Mr. W

The newly appointed Director of the Asia & Middle East Division (AMED) in the Office of Operations at the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPO) visited the UNDOF mission in the Golan Heights. The main role of the Office of Operations is to provide political, strategic and operational guidance and support to the UNDOF mission, current situation and challenges of UNDOF. He also met with CMS, COS, COGG and SSAD. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> April, Mr. Weber was given an operational tour of POLBATT on the second and an operational tour of AUSBATT.



22<sup>nd</sup> April - Visit to AUSBATT



22<sup>nd</sup> April - Visit to AUSBATT







## Weisbrod-Weber at UNDOF

of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), New York, Mr. Wolfgang Weisbrod-Weber, visited UNDOF from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> Apr 2008. During his visit, Mr. Weisbrod-Weber was briefed by Force Commander MGen Wolfgang Jilke about the first day HQ UNDOF organized a short guided tour for Mr. Weisbrod-Weber through the old town of Damascus. On the third day of his visit in order to familiarize him with UNDOF's responsibilities within the Area of Operation.





## RG32M – a new FHQ-Coy member!

**New operational concepts and tasks need new operational equipment. Finally after 20 months of intensive preparation and planning, three new RG32M arrived in the UNDOF mission area.**



To increase the mobility and flexibility of UNDOF, the Force HQ-Coy was equipped with three new RG32M. With these light armored personnel vehicles (LAPV) we are able to fulfill our wide spectrum of operational duties on a higher level. Now we can move faster from one spot to another and we are capable of getting over higher differences in altitude, especially in the mountainous area. In addition, this mine hardened patrol vehicle with its all-steel, welded armored, monologue hull protects our soldiers better than the SISU against anti-personnel mines and land mine detonations under any wheel. Better against small arms fire and grenades, too. *“Firstly, to drive the RG32M is really no problem. Secondly because of its smaller dimension in comparison to the SISU it’s easier to conduct our*

*patrols in open terrain and in villages, especially in small and narrow streets,”* Deputy Platoon Leader WO I Siegfried Bacher stated.

The armored protected personal carrier provides seats for five soldiers – the driver, co-driver and three crew members. Unfortunately it’s only possible to observe from the inside of the car. Based on the current configuration it is prohibited to use the hutch of the co-driver while the vehi-

cle is in motion because of the missing cable cutter. The second possible ‘observation-hutch’, located in the middle of the roof, is welded closed.

It’s planned to buy three additional RG32M. Hopefully they will be equipped with nightspots in order to increase our night observation capability as well.

The first weeks operating with the RG32M exceeded all our expectations in spite of some minor maintenance challenges. Not only we are really satisfied by our new ‘beloved’ FHQ-Coy member but also the line battalions are eager for getting them in the future.

Article by Capt Stefan Oman,  
CO/FHQ-Coy

Photos by WO II Gernot Payer,  
Force Photographer







## RG32M

Name of the vehicle:	RG32M UN 4x4 station wagon
Country of manufacture:	South Africa
Company:	BAE SYSTEMS/ Land Systems OMC
Dimensions (l/w/h):	5,3 m / 2,14m / 2,18m
Weight:	7.4 tons
Power to mass ratio:	135 kw @ 7.4 tons
Maximum speed (road):	120 km/h
Gradient:	60%
Engine:	Steyr M16TCA Turbo charged intercooled
Type:	4 stroke diesel
Configuration:	6 cylinders
Wheels:	Michelin 335/80 R20 XZL
Crew:	5 soldiers
Costs:	\$ 180.000





# Stick Together and You will Win

**On 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May the traditional and most challenging AUSBATT-March under the supervision of CO AUSBATT, Maj Thomas Stacher, and with the generous support from all coys of the Austrian Battalion was conducted.**

**151** participants from Austria, Germany, India, Ireland, Japan, Slovakia and Poland accepted

Gogl completed the first part of the march, about 21 km, in only three hours and 29 minutes. That team was also the fastest one overall and finished the march in an almost unbelievable time of 9 hours and 41 minutes.

The objective of the march is not only to build physical endurance but also to strengthen the team spirit among the soldiers. At the finish the AUSBATT Chief Engineering Officer, Maj Walter Lidy, said



*CO AUSBATT and the winner team*

the challenge and marched in 33 groups within the AUSBATT area of responsibility. Carrying rucksacks and assault rifles, the participants had to accomplish a distance of 45 km and a height difference of 1900m on two consecutive days. The march followed the foot patrol E2A from Posn 10 along the 'Ostgrad' in the direction of Posn Hermon South, then on the patrol tracks of the 1<sup>st</sup> Coy to finally reach the highest manned UN-Position in the world, Posn Hermon Hotel.

The first, second and third place went to the Austrian Contingent. WO I Hermann Lederer, WO I August Wienerroither, Sgt Markus Linsberger and Sgt Armin

out of breath, "Most important for us was that we stuck together and for sure this was the key reason for the success of our team." The participants were able to enjoy the beautiful landscape during the march but moreover they had to fight all the physical stress and strain involved in completing such a demanding march.

The CO AUSBATT, LtCol Hans-Peter Hohlweg, congratulated all participants at the finish for their extraordinary performance. All heroes, who survived this challenge, received the highly coveted AUSBATT-March badge as well as an AUSBATT-March certificate and an AUSBATT-March T-shirt.



*Take care of your feet!*



The event was summarized nicely by one of the participants, BGen Gerhard Sladek, who was delighted and who praised AUSBATT at the finish by stating, "I have been on many marches but I have rarely participated on such a perfectly organized event. AUSBATT - well done!"

*Article and Photos by  
Sgt Thomas Hatzl, Photographer/AB*



## In the Shining Eyes of Children

**The AUSBATT Warrant Officers' 'Feitclub' invited the SOS Children's Village in Damascus to Camp Faouar on 26<sup>th</sup> Apr 2008 - a charitable tradition since 25 Years!**



personnel carrier SISU in the camp and the second one had the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities in playing games conducted by the fire brigade like hitting a target with a water jet out of a fire hose. Finally the third group blew up balloons with the support of the Medical Team. Each group rotated through the offered activities giving all children the chance to have a lot of fun and enjoy the day.

The COO/AUSBATT, Maj Thomas Stacher, gave a brief speech to the kids and then it was time for lunch. The kitchen staff prepared grilled chicken with side dishes of ice-cream and pancakes for the already starving kids.

After lunch the children again had a lot of fun; they were beating drums, singing songs and playing games together.

At the same time the director of the SOS Children's Village was invited to Radio Gecko. In a live interview he described the organizational structure of this meaningful institution and gave some interest-

ing information about the daily life in the Children's Village.

Too bad that this beautiful day has to come to an end. This day was for the children and ended with every child given a little farewell present before they jumped in the buses leaving the camp in the direction of Damascus. In the shining and sparkling eyes of the children one could see that this day was a unique and happy experience for them. Only the soldiers, very proud of bringing great joy to the kids and providing them with a memorable day, stayed back in the camp.

*Article by Maj Thomas Stacher,  
COO/AB*

*Photos by WO II Gernot Payer,  
Force Photographer*

**79** children from the age of two to thirteen years accompanied by 18 adults arrived in the camp on this Saturday morning. They were welcomed by all the military persons present. After that, all kids performed a song for the hosts.

Following a group picture taken at the parade square, French fries and ice-cream were awaiting the cheerful children. After this light snack the children were divided into three groups. One group had the opportunity to ride in the armored



*Trying to hit the target*



## Between Red Stones

### Remain between the red stones when patrolling in the Area of Operations (AOO)

This main rule when moving in the UNDOF AOO sounds simple and is repeated again and again. It's a basic rule for the safety of all UNDOF soldiers who patrol in the AOO. How much time is needed that it's possible for patrols to reach their paths? How much time is needed to build a new watchtower?

The Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Team of POLBATT conducts tasks of checking, marking and certifying patrol paths and terrain. They are identified to build infrastructure in order to fulfil mandatory tasks properly as safe areas for UNDOF soldiers.

The redeployment of forces in POLBATT 2<sup>nd</sup> Coy led to the requirement that they had to re-check and re-mark foot patrol paths and adapt them for vehicle use. The EOD Team also tracked new patrol paths. This led to six additional kilometers of paths to check from time to time. It was difficult work to check and clear terrain for the new watchtowers near the barrels Oscar



BLU 26 'Guava' mines

III and Oscar V. During their work they found three anti-personnel mines type BLU 26 'Guava' and three anti-personnel mines NO-4.

Since the beginning of the mission, March 2008, the Polish EOD



The Polish EOD-Team

Team has destroyed five casings of anti-tank mines TM-46, one casing of an M-15 mine and a mortar grenade. Even if you think the amount of destroyed dangerous items is not impressive, it's still a life-threatening and extremely challenging job.

The EOD Team also provides training according to the UNDOF training plans for all contingents.

The first two weeks of each month the EOD Team conducts stand-by duty. They must react to every request. Such as in May 2008, when a suspicious and threatening letter was found on a pile of stones near Posn 85 in POLBATT area 2<sup>nd</sup> Coy. The EOD Team had to check immediately the whole area – luckily, there were no explosives found. The POLBATT EOD Team

Leader WO III Robert Śladkowski stated that, *"A huge influence to fulfil our tasks properly is the experience and practice we gained at home and in other foreign missions."*

The POLBATT EOD Team is comprised of experienced engineers



CO EOD Team WO Śladkowski is going to mine

– so all UNDOF soldiers can count on them when they conduct their duties between red stones.

Article and Photos by  
Capt Dariusz Osowski, PressO/PB



## A Record was Beaten

**In the first month after taking over the responsibility by the 29<sup>th</sup> Polish Military Contingent the UNDOF duty officers recorded a new daily record in the number of violations.**

In the color red, 100 was written next to the date - 26<sup>th</sup> Apr 2008 - on the Duty Officer's board. UNDOF HQ reacted decisively and quickly on such an unusually large amount of violations. Most of them occurred in the southern part of the POLBATT AOR.

On 15<sup>th</sup> Apr, Force Commander MGen Wolfgang Jilke ordered a redeployment of the POLBATT



*Operating with heavy vehicles*

forces. On the basis of the situation analysis it was decided to change the structure and the number of patrols as well as the requirements of building new observation posts.

The initial action taken was increasing the amount of patrols from 30 to 40. To conduct these tasks POLBATT 2<sup>nd</sup> Coy was reinforced by a guard squad from Camp

Ziouani. In fact, the 'machine' of cooperation comprising many branches and sub-units from all contingents was initiated. Without this cooperation it wouldn't have been possible to build the new watch towers next to area OSCAR III and area OSCAR V.

First off the expansion of the accommodations on Posn 85 was necessary in order to accommodate a larger number of soldiers than it was originally constructed for. The infrastructure on Posn 85 was expanded with five additional accommodation containers and one extra sanitary container. Now only the roofs of the accommodations are left to construct and this will be done with the support of a local contractor within the coming days.

Secondly, POLBATT EOD Team has to clear new patrol paths and the locations for the new watchtowers. The Indian soldiers will be the major builders of the watchtowers; the Japanese soldiers will be responsible for carriage and earthwork.

As of 1<sup>st</sup> Jul 2008 the road culvert has been completed on patrol path 2P34 by soldiers from J-CON. Currently the planning and



*The international construction team*

construction of the watchtowers are being coordinated by UNDOF HQ. If everything goes according to plan we expect the first soldiers deployed to this new watchtower in the very near future.



*Rebuilt patrol path on 2P34*

After the Polish redeployment and the change of the POLBATT patrolling system, the amount of violations was reduced from the above mentioned record to an average of 5 to 10 per day. We hope that the implementation of all the FC's intentions will keep the number of violations to historic lows instead of historic highs.

*Article and Photos by  
Capt Dariusz Osowski, PressO/PB*



*New habitable container complex at Posn 85*

# Change of Command LOGBATT

**On 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008 the change of command ceremony in the form of Take Over of Command Authority (TOCA) took place between the incoming Commanding Officer LtCol Gurpal Singh Sidhu and the outgoing Commanding Officer LtCol Vijay Vir Singh, both from 'The Poona Horse' of the Armoured Corps.**

On a bright sunny day the INDCON organized the TOCA parade to commemorate the change of command between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> rotation in Camp Ziouani, where the outgoing CO 4<sup>th</sup> rotation LtCol Vijay Vir handed over his command to the incoming CO 5<sup>th</sup> rotation LtCol Sidhu.

The Chief of Staff Col Andrzej Ostrowski presided over the ceremony which was attended by senior Military and Civilian staff of UNDOF, UNTSO, representatives of the Israeli Defense Force and local civil employees of Camp Ziouani.

parade ground and were welcomed by the guests with quite applause. The Regimental Colors surmounted on the regimental standards 'The hand of Allah' was then brought on parade. The guards then gave a salute of honor to the colors.

wished the new rotation all the very best for their mission.

The parade ended with the marching out of the troops and the final salute by Guest of Honour, which was followed by a reception in the international kitchen.

ing over command LtCol Sidhu thanked his predecessor for his good advice and assured that his team will continue doing a good job and keep the Indian standards high.

The COS expressed his praise to the outgoing rotation for providing efficient logistics support to UNDOF and



*Change of Command LOGBATT Signing Ceremony*



*Chief of Staff inspecting the parade*



*LtCol Gurpal Singh Sidhu - the new CO/LOGBATT*

The proud and smartly turned out Indian soldiers along with officers were then marched in by parade commander Maj P. K. Tiwari to the

LtCol Vijay Vir on relinquishing the command thanked all who supported his team in accomplishing his tasks successfully. On tak-

*Article by Capt Vishal Vikram Singh,  
SMO/LOGBATT  
Photos by Pte Jagveer Singh,  
Signaler/LOGBATT*



# Sprinkling 'SAKE' on the Ground in Prayer

**After almost eight months, the 25<sup>th</sup> rotation of J-CON has completed the maintenance of 2P31 Patrol Track, thanks in part to the excellent cooperation of all UNDOF contingents. The completion of this project was one of the main accomplishments of the 25<sup>th</sup> Japanese Contingent of UNDOF.**



*Japanese soldiers sprinkling 'SAKE'*

On 17<sup>th</sup> Jun 2008, J-CON completed the maintenance of the 2P31 Patrol Track. Soldiers of the Detachment section gathered at the site and celebrated their accomplishment. The CO J-CON, Maj Kentaro Yushita, awarded them with certificates of merit and together they sprinkled Japanese 'SAKE' on the ground and prayed that there will be no accidents on this road.

The 2P31 Patrol Track is located between the inter-barrel and Posn 85 and is very important to the patrols in this area. The total distance of this maintenance project is about 8.5 km long and it has taken about eight months to complete.

At the maintenance site, the soldiers of the J-CON Detachment mainly operated heavy equipment to upgrade this patrol path. They upgraded the patrol track with gravel and leveled the ground with a front-end-loader and a motor grader day after day until the job was done. According to the soldiers of the Transportation Section of J-CON,

they had to transport gravel to the site every day. Thankfully, the soldiers of AUS-BATT and POL-BATT cooperated with us in transporting the gravel and the soldiers of LOGBATT for maintaining the heavy equipment that J-CON was using at the site.

The following interview was conducted with the Leader of the Japanese Detachment in Camp Faouar, Lt I Yuichiro Jin:

**What was your toughest problem at the site?**

*To remove huge rocks was very challenging. And another problem was that it took about one hour to carry gravel*

*from the gravel pit to the site and we shuttled truck loads about two or three times per day.*

**What special attention did you pay to the soldier's health?**

*It is very sunny and extremely hot at the site. Water was always available and I instructed them to go to bed early every night to ensure adequate rest for the long hot day ahead.*

**How do you feel at the completion of the maintenance of the 2P31 Patrol Track?**

*We are feeling very pleased because the 2P31 patrol track will remain for years to come. We are very glad that no serious accident has occurred. We feel pride about our contribution to the UNDOF mission and the peace keeping efforts in this area.*

*Article by Capt Yusuke Yamamoto,  
Adj/PressO/J-CON*

*Photos by SSgt Kenichi Osanai,  
Signal Sgt/J-CON*



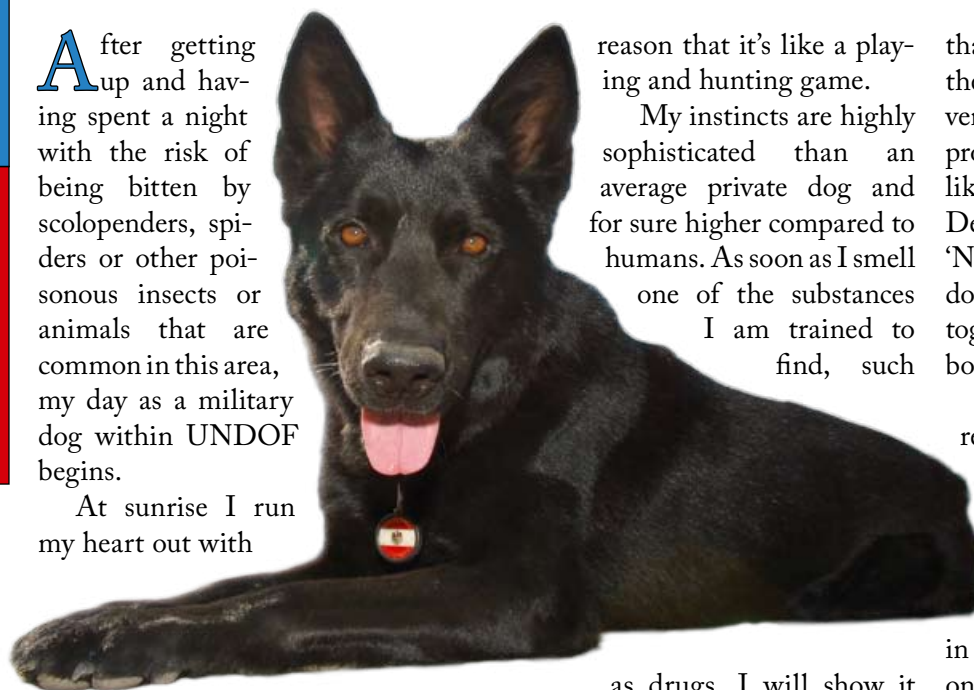
*CO J-CON and Detachment soldiers celebrating at the site*



## Born to sniff - Fanta and Nero on duty!

After getting up and having spent a night with the risk of being bitten by scolopenders, spiders or other poisonous insects or animals that are common in this area, my day as a military dog within UNDOF begins.

At sunrise I run my heart out with



my personal trainer, who calls himself dog handler, who was successfully trained by his dog in a four month training session on my home base, the military armed forces training center for sniffer dogs in Austria.

After my personal physical exercise my work day begins; what the humans call their 'duty'. For the very few hours they have to spend in uniform during a day, it seems to me that sometimes they don't like it. My duty is sniffer work. And for me sniffer work is 150 % fun due to the

reason that it's like a playing and hunting game.

My instincts are highly sophisticated than an average private dog and for sure higher compared to humans. As soon as I smell one of the substances I am trained to find, such

as drugs, I will show it immediately to my playing buddy - the dog handler - by laying or sitting down. When this happens the dog handler will reward me with my favorite toy, a red rubber ball.

Please bear in mind that a drug-sniffing dog is definitely not addicted to drugs! Or do you think that an explosive-sniffing dog is addicted to explosives?!

One of my jobs is to cooperate with the Military Police, also important members of our team, in the AOS because they are the ones who stop the cars I want to check.

The working conditions here can't be compared with the working conditions back at home in Austria. The sea level and especially the climatic factors like ground temperatures above 80 °C are a real challenge for us here and don't forget

that dogs don't wear shoes. Nevertheless, both in emergency and preventative situations we do our job properly and successfully - and we like it. We are based at the MP 'C' Detachment, where my comrade, 'Nero', the explosives searching dog, is mainly in charge. We work together with the Military Police on both A- and on B-Side.

The end of this day for me is more relaxing. I take my dog handler out for a walk, who afterwards has to change his job and work as my personal waiter because it's mealtime and I'm starving.

Once again another day in the mission is gone but the next one for sure will come - at the latest tomorrow. So tomorrow I may check one of the outgoing rotations. Or it could happen that I poke my nose



*Sniffing always and everywhere*

into your accommodation. That's why, my dear soldiers, you should never forget: sniffer dogs are sniffing always and everywhere!

Do you want a good cooperation with us? That's very easy; just stick to the rules and sometimes try to see things from a dog's perspective!

*Woof!*

*Article by Fanta, Sniffer Dog/AB  
and MSgt Wolfgang Glabutschnig,  
Dog Handler/AB*

*Photos by WO II Wolfgang Friedl,  
Dog Handler/AB*



*Fanta and Nero with their dog handlers*



## Another View of the Golan

*In the spring morning, the sky is clearing earlier on the Golan Heights, the curves of the hills in the countryside appear again to hide the tracks of the past and the horizon of the future in that small and symbolic part of what was used to be called 'Le Levant'. As with everyday the shepherds take their flocks for a walk across the fields enjoying the coolness of the early hours while the farmers are gathering the teams for the seasonal harvest.*

*Far away from those local concerns, UN Observers in their posts are preparing for a new day. A routine one unless something new would happen today and make their time pass a little bit faster.*

*Two different communities, one military and international, the other one civilian and local, sharing space within that area, will look at each other once more, living their own way of life in a sort of passive indifference...*

*On both sides of that area, two peoples will continue to face their own reality of life, ignoring each other, while the international observers mounting their vehicle, probably looking in the civilian eyes like the cowboys in the far west used to do in another time and in another place, looked on. The ballet of the white vehicles around seems to be normal, as part of the background for most of the young women and men who grew up with 'the guardian angels'. As for the elders, that presence is probably like a link to a painful past for both sides and probably reminds them of some unfinished dreams...*

*End of the day... all the habitants of the long shape strip enjoy the mildness of the evening, the pastel colours on the fields and the crescent moon which lightens the top of the hills.*

*In the accommodation the radio is silent now. The UN Observers found once again the quietness in a kind of shared loneliness as if they were living within a deserted savannah. Some pictures of the world in the small screen or some pages of a novel will probably end the day...*

*Outside, Majdal Shams shines again as a jewel in the darkness of that scar in the collective memory of two peoples...*

Novel by Capt Ronald Oliver, MIO/OGG







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