

# GOLAN

The UNDOF Journal



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No. 122





# DEAR READER!

I proudly present to you the latest edition of the Golan Journal covering UNDOF's activities during the winter season. Trying to stay up-to-date with all the events in UNDOF and being relevant to our readers is our main effort. The editorial team has once again provided a magazine full of insights into the mission and I would like to thank the tireless support of the contingent Press Officers for their contributions.



*Our team: Karl, Arnold, Muneyuki and Alexander*

As many key positions in UNDOF have changed, many of our Press Officers have changed as well. I would like to welcome Capt Muneyuki Yatsuo as the new DMPIO, Capt Günther Voitic (AUSBATT), Capt Shunsuke Nohira (J-CON) and Maj Jörgen Savmark (OGG) and sadly say good bye to Capt Takahisa Moriya, Capt Rüdiger Von Gimborn, Lt I Hidekatsu Eiraku and Capt Kellie Robinson.

In this edition we cover the Change of Command of Force Commander UNDOF as well as the Changes of Command of LOGBATT, OGG, AUSBATT and J-CON. We also cover the daily efforts of the Transport Section to keep UNDOF moving as well as many other stories.

Have a look and enjoy it!

*Yours sincerely,  
Maj Karl Curin, SOPR*

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*Photos by WO II Arnold Felfer, Force Photographer*

**Back (Page 24):** Snow at UNDOF HQ, Camp Faouar  
*Photo by WO II Arnold Felfer, Force Photographer*

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# Force Commander's Message

## *To the Peacekeepers of UNDOF!*



*I am delighted to have been given the privilege and honor of commanding a mission as distinguished as UNDOF.*

*I have met many of you, and have been extremely impressed by your professionalism, knowledge of your duties and areas of responsibility, and your dedication to the mission. I am greatly reassured knowing the high calibre of professionals that are working in UNDOF. For those of you that I have not yet had the opportunity to meet, I look forward to doing so as soon as possible.*

*This mission has accomplished many great things in its over 35 year history, and I believe that UNDOF is a relevant and active organization in the region. I feel that we have the opportunity to do more than just enforce our mandate. Although that is our key function, while we are here we also have the opportunity to directly affect the lives of those who live and work on the Golan. Not only will we do our best to keep the peace, but we should help those in need because I believe that it is also our duty to do so as UN Peacekeepers.*

*I will ask many things of you as your Force Commander, the most important of which is the need to remember that we are a team. I have seen UNDOF's motto of "One Mission - One Team - One Goal" and I could not think of a better one. To be successful we must all be reading off of the same page and working towards the same objectives. I ask that you continue to work together as you have done in the past and I challenge you to improve in this regard. All of you, members of both international and national staff, military contingents and staff officers, bring different skills, perspectives and backgrounds to UNDOF. This diversity is our strength and when we all work together as a close-knit team, anything is possible.*

*I have learned much in my short time in the mission, and I will keep working hard to continue to learn. I challenge you to help me understand your job, responsibilities and points of view and I will do my utmost best in the service of the mission as your Force Commander.*

*In the Service of Peace, to everyone in UNDOF, I say to you God bless you and thank you!*

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Natalio Ecarma III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Major General Natalio C. Ecarma III  
Force Commander UNDOF

# Force Commander's Farewell Message

## *Dear Fellow Peacekeepers!*

As I look back on my time as your Force Commander, it is very difficult for me to summarize everything that we have accomplished over the past three years.

UNDOF today is more mobile and pro-active than it has ever been. Your application of the principle of prevention has had a direct impact on the number of violations and low level of tension in the AOS. The relationship between UNTSO, OGG, and UNDOF is exceptional and our relationship with the Host Nations is strong and characterized by a great spirit of cooperation. Your successes, achievements, and dedication to the mission have been second to none.

I do not exaggerate when I say that the experience of the past three years has been a highlight of my military career. Rarely does one get to work with such a wide range of soldiers, United Nations civilian staff, national staff from two countries, the militaries of the Host Nations, Defence Attachés, Ambassadors, Heads of State, and the list goes on. The issues that have crossed my desk have ranged from tactical decisions and human resource management all the way to international relations and diplomacy. The challenge has always been significant, but the rewards have been as well. While the achievement of long lasting peace is one for politicians to strive for, I know that we have done our job as Peacekeepers, and maintained order on the Golan Heights to allow for such negotiations to take place.

To all members of UNDOF, past and present, military and civilian, you are the reason that UNDOF has remained effective, successful, and relevant. It has truly been an honor and privilege to have been able to work with such talented, dedicated and resourceful people. While our mission has not always been an easy one, you complete your tasks and assignments as if it is.

I thank you all for your hard work and the dedication with which you approach your responsibilities every day. It is your effort and accomplishments at every level that ensure that UNDOF is a dependable, trustworthy and effective force in maintaining peace on the Golan Heights.

*In the Service of Peace, to everyone in UNDOF, I say to you for one last time...*

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



A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Wolfgang Jilke".

Major General Wolfgang Jilke  
Force Commander UNDOF



## Chief of Staff Words

Consider it an honor and a privilege to be an active member of UNDOF, one of the oldest and most stable UN Peacekeeping missions in the world. None the less, the complex web of interlinked issues does make the entire process not so simple and the nuances thereof are not too easy to comprehend for the greenhorn. At the very outset I do understand the enormity of the responsibility that my assignment bestows upon me and I hope that my earlier exposure in UNAVEM III in Angola holds me in good stead in discharging my duties.

The motto of “One Mission - One Team - One Goal” amply demonstrates the resolute manner in which UNDOF has charted its course over the past 35 years and in the process carved a niche for itself in the eyes of the global fraternity. The dynamics of this gradual yet steadfast progress made by UNDOF cannot be perceived by the common eye, yet it has contributed immensely towards maintaining peace and harmony in this part of the world where a small trigger can spiral out of control. To maintain a close supervision and watch on areas as diverse as the “Area of Separation” and “Area of Limitation” is no small achievement in any measure. To have done it successfully has tested and proved the actual mettle of the mission in real earnest.

For a single member of UNDOF to be able to come to grasp with the intricacies of the operational environment is not easy, and this can only be facilitated by the untiring efforts of the leadership and the Staff in the Mission. Towards that end we need to work in unison in



order to remove all hindrances and stumbling blocks if there be any. There is a constant need to evolve and refine procedures and processes to make them simplistic and user friendly. This implies that a larger share of this burden is vested with UNDOF HQ of which we all are a part. The rapid and regular pace at which turnover of the contingents and staff is being effected here implies that the time available to familiarize oneself with the current operational realities gets compressed and we need to rise up to the occasion in this respect. An inextricable component of the entire process is the constant and persistent “Liaison” with the two host nations which are the parties to the conflict. UNDOF has to be unwavering in its commitment towards this and work to improve and evolve the processes put into practice as part of the mandate.

The troops on the ground have to be ever active and vigilant to ensure that the mandate and the agreement thereof is not violated or impinged upon inadvertently or

otherwise. The tactical level is as significant a role player as are the larger issues being addressed at the strategic level. There is no scope for let up or relaxation in the effort to be in tune with the ground realities. I am sure that the contingents will persist with the good and sincere efforts being displayed by them.

Last but not the least we need to ensure that in all our activities and efforts the sensitivities and sensibilities of the host nations are respected unequivocally. This will call for unflinching dedication to our job and assignment, bridled with a complete impartial approach. We need to carry forward the legacy of UNDOF to greater heights and contribute in earnest towards long lasting peace in the area.

Best Wishes,

Col Gurvir Singh Kahlon  
Chief of Staff UNDOF

# Visits to UNDOF

by Capt Muneyuki Yatsuo, DMPIO



21 members of an American Congressional Delegation visited Camp Ziouani (6<sup>th</sup> January 2010)



MGen Shiro Matsukawa, Commanding General of 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade, Japan Ground Self Defense Force, visited UNDOF installations on A- and B-Side (25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010)



37 members of the Center for High Military Studies (CHEM), France, visited UNDOF HQ and UNDOF Positions (26<sup>th</sup> January 2010)



Mr. Michael Spindelegger, Austrian Foreign Minister, visited AUSBATT Positions (19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> February 2010)



H.E. Mr. Rolf Willy Hansen, Norwegian Ambassador and 34 members of the Norwegian University Defense College, visited Camp Faouar and UNDOF Positions (23<sup>rd</sup> February 2010)

- Mr. Robert Marcus, Mr. Daniel Harsha, Ms. Marissa Doran, Staff members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, United States, visited Camp Faouar (8<sup>th</sup> January 2010)

- 19 members of the Robert-Frank-School, Germany, visited Camp Ziouani (11<sup>th</sup> February 2010)

- Mr. Howard Diamond, Staff Director of the American House Foreign Affairs Committee, visited Camp Ziouani (13<sup>th</sup> February 2010)

- H.E. Mr. Eric Chevallier, French Ambassador, visited Camp Faouar and AUSBATT 1<sup>st</sup> Company (11<sup>th</sup> March 2010)

- 13 Journalists of the European Union visited UNDOF HQ (26<sup>th</sup> March 2010)



## New People in UNDOF



### The new FC

Major General Natalio C. Ecarma III was born in Manila, Philippines, on 3<sup>rd</sup> Jun 1955. He joined the military in 1977 and graduated from the Philippine Military Academy in 1981.

A member of the Philippine Marine Corps, Major General Ecarma has a strong background in special operations. He has held numerous commands, including Battalion Commander of the Marine Force Reconnaissance Battalion and the Presidential Guards Battalion, Presidential Security Group, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Brigade and the Combat and Service Support Brigade. He has held numerous staff appointments including Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence for the Philippine Marine Corps, Assistant Superintendent of the Marine Corps Training Center, and Chief of Staff of the Philippine Marine Corps.

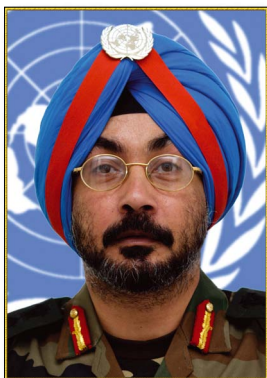
His most recent appointment was as the Deputy Commandant, Philippine Marine Corps and Concurrent Commander, Marine Forces Southern Philippines.

He is a qualified Scout Ranger, Close Quarter Battle, Special Forces, US Army Ranger and US Army Pathfinder. He has completed the Terrorism Counter Terrorism Course, Naval Staff Course, Special Anti-terrorism Course (Thunder), and the USMC Command and Staff Course at USMC University, Quantico, Virginia, USA.

He holds Masters Degrees in Military Studies from USMC University, Quantico, Virginia, USA, and in National Security Administration from the National Defense College of the Philippines. He is currently finishing his Doctorate Degree on Mainland China Studies at the National Sun Yat-sen University in Kaohsiung, Taiwan.

Highly decorated, Major General Ecarma has received two Distinguished Service Stars, two Bronze Cross Medals, 17 Military Merit Medals, six Military Commendation Medals, the Anti Dissidence Campaign Medal, the Luzon Campaign Medal, the Military Civic Action Medal, the Mindanao - Sulu Campaign Medal, the Commanding General, Philippine Army Award, the Combat Kagitingan Badge, the US Ranger Tab, US Army Honorary Parachutist Badge, US Army Pathfinder Badge, AFP Master Parachutist and numerous Letters of Commendations and Plaques of Appreciation.

Major General Ecarma is married to the former Dr. Beverly Antonio. They have two sons - Nathan Charles and Nathan Christopher.



### The new COS

Col Gurvir Singh Kahlon was born on 29<sup>th</sup> Apr 1965 at Meerut Cantonment, India.

He joined the National Defence Academy in 1981 and was commissioned into the Infantry Regiment in 1985 from the Indian Military Academy. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree, Master of Science degree in Defence Studies and Master of Management Studies degree.

His twenty five year service has been spent in a mix of peace and field assignments in various appointments. He has been an Intelligence Officer, Adjutant, Instructor at the Indian Military Academy, followed by Company Commander, Brigade Staff Officer, Battalion Second in Command and Battalion Commander. He has commanded an Infantry Battalion in High Altitude Area for two years. Prior to his appointment as COS UNDOF he was Directing Staff at India's Defense Services Staff College. He has served previously with the UN as part of the contingent in UNAVEM III in Angola in 1995-96.

He is married to Sarandeep and they have two sons - Tanveer and Manveer. He plays hockey, football and cricket and is fond of photography.



## The new CLPIO

LtCol Cristobal Cosape was born on 6<sup>th</sup> Mar 1968 in Baguio City, Philippines.

He graduated from Officer Candidate School in 1991 and completed his Undergraduate Pilot Training at the Philippine Air Force Flying School in 1993. He spent most of his time in the field as a line pilot in the

southern part of the Philippines.

His military career includes assignment to various staff and command positions such as Executive Office of 18<sup>th</sup> Assault Squadron, 15<sup>th</sup> SW; Squadron Commander, 594<sup>th</sup> APS, 15<sup>th</sup> SW; Deputy Group Commander, TOG 11, 3<sup>rd</sup> Air Division; Assistant to ACDSI, 3<sup>rd</sup> AD; and later as Deputy, OU1, Western Command and Executive Assistant to the Commander, WESCOM, AFP.

He received a Masters Degree in Public Administration in 2006 and completed United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Training in 2007.

He is married to Arlene, has four children and he likes sports, especially ball games.



## The new COGG

LtCol Kunibert Gasser was born on 13<sup>th</sup> Nov 1956 in Bregenz, Austria.

He graduated from Bregenz College in 1976 with a Bachelor's Degree in Electronics Engineering, joined the Austrian Army in 1976 and was commissioned to the rank of Lieutenant in 1980. During his

career he has held several Logistics staff appointments at Battalion, Regimental and Brigade Command levels.

LtCol Gasser has experience serving in both UN and NATO missions where he held various appointments: UNFICYP - Company Commander (Cyprus), UNAMIR - MILOB (Rwanda), DCO Austrian Contingent - SFOR (Bosnia), UNAMA - Military Advisor (Afghanistan) and MINURSO - Sector Commander (Western Sahara).

He has also worked in the private sector as an Electronics Engineering Consultant in more than 50 countries over the last 30 years.

LtCol Gasser has one daughter. He enjoys skiing, judo (3<sup>rd</sup> DAN) and speaks French fluently.



## The new COGG-T

LtCol Raghu Bhandary was born on the 29<sup>th</sup> Oct 1963 in Kathmandu, Nepal.

He joined the Nepalese Army as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant after graduating from the Nepalese Military Academy in 1986. He was assigned to "The Famous Mahindra Dal Infantry Battalion", 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade, stationed in

the Mid-Western part of Nepal. There he served as Platoon Commander, Company Commander and Battalion Staff Officer.

LtCol Bhandary has held numerous command, staff and instructor positions including Battalion Commander in "Devi Dal" Infantry Battalion, Infantry Brigade Operations Officer, G1 staff in Army Head Quarters and Chief Instructor in the Nepalese Military Academy.

He is a graduate of Command and Staff College and holds a Bachelor in Arts. LtCol Raghu is married to Shanta and has two children, Rakshya (18) and Sakar (7).



## The new FMO

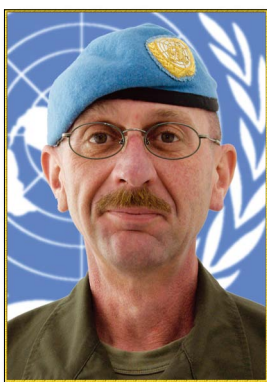
LtCol Samuel G. Atuan was born on 1<sup>st</sup> Apr 1959 in Manila, Philippines.

In 1986, he graduated from medical college and worked as a post graduate medical intern at Central Luzon Regional Hospital in Pampanga. He began his military career as a probationary medical officer in 1987

and was subsequently called to active duty on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1989. He spent his Residency training in Ophthalmology 1992-96 at Vluna General Hospital, AFP Medical Center. Most of his assignments were in Zamboanga in Mindanao supporting operating troops as well as their dependents. Prior to his deployment to UNDOF, he was the Commanding Officer of Camp Aguinaldo Medical facility in the Philippines.

LtCol Atuan is happily married with three children. He enjoys playing badminton and jogging/running together with his children.





## The new CO/AUSBATT

LtCol Karl Wolf, Master of Security and Defense Management (MSD), was born on 28<sup>th</sup> Oct 1965 in St. Georgen/Stiefing, Austria.

From 1985 to 1988 he attended the Military Academy after which he served as an Armoured Engineer Platoon Commander and then as an Armoured Engineer Company Commander.

He has served as a Company Commander in UNFICYP, as Military Observer in South Lebanon and as Chief Liaison Officer within HQ EUFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore he was Engineering Officer within the NATO Albanian Force in Albania and Kosovo. For several years he was a permanent member of the NATO Training and Education Working Group (TEPSO), Partnership for Peace Training Center Working Group (PTC WG) and the UN Working Group for Training and Education. Currently, he is the Chief of Staff and Deputy Commanding Officer of the Austrian Partnership for Peace Training Centre.

Lt Col Karl Wolf is married, has two children, likes sports and his big passion is riding his Enduro motorcycle.



## The new CO/LOGBATT

LtCol Tarak Mazumdar was born on 20<sup>th</sup> Nov 1968 in Barrackpore, West Bengal, India.

Upon completion of training at the Officers Training Academy in Chennai, LtCol Mazumdar was commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery. He has completed the Artillery Young Officer Course and the Advanced Gunnery Course at the School of Artillery. He is also a graduate of the Junior Command Course at the Army War College.

LtCol Mazumdar has served as a Gun Position Officer, Observation Post Officer, Battery Commander, Adjutant and Second-in-Command at various operational and peace areas while with 169 Field Regiment (OP HILL). In addition to the numerous regimental appointments, he has served as an Adjutant and Quartermaster General in a formation headquarters deployed in High Altitude Area and has commanded a Field Regiment of the Regiment of Artillery both in Peace and Field Area. He holds a Bachelor of Science from the University of Pune and is a Postgraduate Diploma holder in Weapon Systems and Technology from University of Pune.

LtCol Mazumdar is married to Meena and they are blessed with an eight year old son named Tanush.



## The new CO/J-CON

Maj Shinji Sato was born on 12<sup>th</sup> Jul 1974 in Hiroshima, Japan.

Maj Sato graduated from the National Defense Academy in 1997 with a Bachelor's Degree in Management. He then joined the Officer Candidate Course and was promoted to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in 1998.

Maj Sato's military career posts include Rifle Platoon Leader, Intelligence Officer in 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment from 1998 to 2005 and Security Section Leader in the 1<sup>st</sup> Japanese Contingent of UMISSET in 1996. He also attended the Captain Career Course in the United States Army Infantry School in 2005. Between the years 2006 and 2008, Maj Sato attended the Command and General Staff Course and was then assigned as Commander of 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Company in 43<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment. Prior to his present deployment as Commanding Officer of the 29<sup>th</sup> Rotation of J-CON, Maj Sato was assigned as G-3 staff of 8<sup>th</sup> Division.

Maj Sato is married to Naomi. They have a son and a daughter and Maj Sato enjoys driving with his family on his holidays.

# Force Commander's Change of Command

**On the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2010 UNDOF held ceremonies to mark its Change of Force Commander.**



*MGen Gilke and MGen Ecarma III are inspecting the UNDOF troops*

After a weekend of rain and heavy winds, the sun rose and the skies were clear for the day's parade. Under the command of Major Udo Hofer of AUS-BATT, UNDOF soldiers and color parties from all the major contingents of the force were on parade and put on a fine spectacle for the large number of guests in attendance.

The outgoing Force Commander, Major General Wolfgang Gilke of Austria, leaves the mission after three years of dedicated and demanding service. In his speech he praised the wide range of individuals that have made a difference in UNDOF under his command, and all those that have played

some role in enabling its success. He thanked the Ambassadors who speak highly of UNDOF in their

home nations and within the United Nations, the fellow peacekeeping missions of the region, the



*Outgoing and incoming Force Commander signing the handover documents*





*MGen Jilke gives his best wishes to his successor*

make a difference for the better in the lives of the people of the Golan.

The sheer number of distinguished guests from the international community, United Nations organizations, Host Nation, represented by Brigadier General Abdul Aziz Darwish, and other visitors that attended the parade is a testament to the support that exists for UNDOF and the high regard for its mission and accomplishments. Briga-

dier General Darwish presented a spectacular sword to MGen Jilke as a departure gift, to commemorate the strong relationship that existed between UNDOF and their Syrian hosts.

Host Nation officials, and all those who have in some way cooperated or helped UNDOF during his tenure as Force Commander. He saved the most appreciative words for the men and women of UNDOF, military, civilian, international and national, who are the key element that make UNDOF successful. As his last official act as Force Commander, Major General Jilke laid a wreath in memory of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice while serving with UNDOF.

Major General Natalio C. Ecarma III, of the Philippines took command as the 17<sup>th</sup> Force Commander of UNDOF. He spoke of his pride in being selected for such a prestigious appointment, and how much he is looking forward to getting to know the region and its people. He also made the point of how he will challenge all the members of UNDOF to work together and to do more than just enforce the mandate, but to live up to the spirit and ideal of the United Nations to

the message that UNDOF is a modern and mobile force that is much more than a series of static positions.



*MGen Ecarma III gives his first speech as FC UNDOF*

Overall it was an excellent day where the members of UNDOF showed their professionalism and skill on parade to an appreciative audience, and marked the occasion of Change of Force Commander in a fitting



*Roll-past of a variety of UNDOF vehicles*

The parade ended with an impressive roll-past of the varied and numerous vehicles being operated by UNDOF. You could not miss

*Article by Maj Christopher Renahan,  
MA/FC  
Photos by WO II Arnold Felfer*





22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2007

*Taking over FC UNDOF*



22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2007

*FC UNIFIL and COS UNTSO*



24<sup>th</sup> Apr 2007

*UN Secretary - General*



4<sup>th</sup> Nov 2007

*Austrian CGS*



17<sup>th</sup> Dec 2007

*Austrian President*



18<sup>th</sup> Dec 2007

*Slovak President*



6<sup>th</sup> Jun 2008

*Slovak & Croatian MOD*



25<sup>th</sup> Jun 2008

*Ambassadors Day A-Side*



*Ambassadors Day B-Side*



24<sup>th</sup> Mar 2009

*Ambassadors Day B-Side*



7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> May 2009

*USG DPKO*



28<sup>th</sup> May 2009

*UNDOF 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*



1<sup>st</sup> Jun 2009

*Polish MOD*



12<sup>th</sup> Jun 2009

*Ambassadors Day A-Side*



24<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> Jul 2009

*Military Advisor DPKO*



*Finnish*





Ambassadors Day B-Side



Ambassadors Day A-Side

# Looking back on three years as Force Commander



DPKO Director AMED



Slovak Peace Medal



B-Side



Croatian President



President



Austrian Chancellor & MOD



Austrian MOFA



Handing over FC UNDOF



## Change of Command LOGBATT



*MGen Gilke with LtCol Mazumdar (left) and LtCol Ashri*

event a memorable one for the guests in attendance. The immaculately turned out soldiers were reviewed by the Force Commander and the National Anthem was played.

The handover documents were then signed in the presence of the FC UNDOF. In keeping with the traditions of the Regiment the baton was handed over to the new Commanding Officer, highlighting the importance of the responsibilities and challenges placed on him. MGen Gilke then addressed the parade and expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the outgoing contingent during their tour in UNDOF, and he welcomed the 8<sup>th</sup> Rotation.

The Indian Contingent held a Change of Command ceremony in Camp Ziouani on 8<sup>th</sup> Jan 2010. The members of 169 Field Regiment (OP HILL), the most decorated artillery unit of the Indian Army, gathered to mark the handover between the 8<sup>th</sup> INDCON Commanding Officer LtCol Tarak Mazumdar and the outgoing Commanding Officer LtCol Amit Ashri.

UNDOF Force Commander, MGen Wolfgang Gilke, presided over the ceremony that was attended by the honorable guests of UNDOF and representatives from the IDF. The Contingent was marched in before the arrival of Force Commander and the Indian soldiers proved their mettle by jolting the parade ground with their best skills to make the

## Change of Command OGG

Since 21<sup>st</sup> Jan 2010 OGG has a new Chief, with LtCol Kunibert Gasser from Austria replacing Cdr Matti Vainionpää from Finland after twelve months of service.

This was the first time for this ceremony to be held in Camp Faouar, and this signifies the close cooperation between OGG and UNDOF. UNDOF provided an Honor Guard which was reviewed by MGen Robert Mood, COS/HOM UNTSO.

Whilst overseeing the handover of command, MGen Mood also took the opportunity to award Cdr Vainionpää with a commendation for his outstanding achievement as Chief OGG in maintaining excellent relations with UNDOF and the host nations. MGen Mood made particular mention to the audience about MGen Wolfgang Gilke, FC UNDOF, and his troops whom UNTSO Military Observers serve alongside on a daily basis and he praised their highest standards of support and comradeship. He further stated that everyone should be proud of what UNTSO and UNDOF has accomplished. MGen Gilke paid compliments to the excellent work of OGG and the close cooperation.

The outgoing Chief, Cdr Vainionpää is a well known and respected personality within the Camp who will be sorely missed. His personality continued to shine during the ceremony and it was evident that he felt pride in the achievements of OGG during his tenure. LtCol Gasser comes with a wealth of experience in UN missions, which will no doubt place him in good stead for liaising between the many and varied stakeholders within the mission.



*MGen Mood with LtCol Gasser (left) and Cdr Vainionpää*



## Change of Command AUSBATT

Under a sunny blue sky an impressive ceremony by the Austrian and Croatian soldiers of AUSBATT took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> Feb 2010 in Camp Faouar for the Battalion Change of Command. Many distinguished guests traveled to the camp to attend the farewell of LtCol Armin Lehner and the inauguration of LtCol Karl Wolf.



*MGen Jilke hands over the Colors to the new CO*

In his speech LtCol Lehner gave a summary of the highlights of his deployment and emphasized his principles of command. He pointed out the importance of taking over Position 22, the only Position west of the Alpha Line, and the improvement of the infrastructure of AUSBATT facilities. However his main goal was to return all the soldiers under his command safely after their deployment.

His successor, LtCol Wolf, stated how proud he was to take over such a highly skilled and qualified battalion. He promised to guarantee correct, challenging and fair leadership. AUSBATT will execute military operations and tactical procedures precisely and be an instrument for good relations with the international and multinational staff and offices in keeping the slogan of UNDOF: "One Mission - One Team - One Goal".

The last official act of the ceremony was carried out on the parade square when LtCol Lehner returned the Austrian Colors to the Force Commander MGen Jilke from whom LtCol Wolf received it as the symbol of responsibility and leadership of AUSBATT.

Afterwards AUSBATT performed an excellent marching out.

## Change of Command J-CON

The J-CON Change of Command Ceremony was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> Mar 2010, on the Parade Square in Camp Ziouani. The weather on the Golan was foggy, but the fog seemed appropriate, adding solemnity to the ceremony.

First, Maj Naonobu Koyama, the outgoing commander of the 28<sup>th</sup> Rotation, delivered his address. He thanked the FC, CISS, commanders, branch heads, hosting nations and all members of UNDOF for their kind and sincere cooperation during the period of the 28<sup>th</sup> Rotation's mission. Maj Koyama also expressed his gratitude to his soldiers for a job well done, in Japanese.

After the signing ceremony, Maj Shinji Sato, the new Commanding Officer of J-CON's 29<sup>th</sup> Rotation, delivered his address where he declared J-CON's ongoing commitment to the UNDOF mission.

Maj Sato also emphasized that this Change of Command was a significant occasion for J-CON, because it marks the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary since Japan became part of the UNDOF family. Maj Sato said: "It is an honor to serve as a peacekeeper of UNDOF".

The incoming Japanese soldiers, who attended the ceremony, looked optimistic and dependable. We can assure you that they will surely do their best, and accomplish the UN mission as a contributing member of the UNDOF family, just as Maj Sato promised.



*MGen Ecarma with Maj Sato (left) and Maj Koyama*

## Keeping UNDOF Moving

**Transport Section is responsible for the administration and technical management of all transport operations of UNDOF. It is also responsible for maintenance of all vehicles including light passenger vehicles, medium buses, heavy duty trucks, APCs and other equipment.**



*Mr. Eric Roswall (center), OiC Transport Section, and his team in Camp Faouar*

UNDOF and its many positions are spread from the icy peaks of Mt. Hermon in the North to the hot Wadi area in the South, and to cover the AOS requires millions of kilometers of patrolling every year. Personnel and supplies are moved with

UNDOF's 389 vehicle fleet which includes 14 SISU APCs, four M113 and three RG32M valued at approx \$14M. Four workshops are needed to maintain and repair this fleet. This is all efficiently managed by 27 national staff, four international members and four military personnel.

The biggest challenge is high maintenance demands as a result of the tough terrain and extreme weather of the Golan. These contribute to enhanced wear and tear on the vehicles thus demanding greater maintenance and innovative techniques to keep the fleet moving at all times.

The wide variety of vehicles held by UNDOF is also a challenge that demands a multitude of different spare parts, rigorous maintenance



*Mr. Al-Jazzar, the "tire man"*



*Mr. Ibrahim is adjusting the car log*





*Mr. Mesto (right), foreman, working with his mechanics*

schedules and the necessary skills to cater to the diverse fleet components. First and second line maintenance is reinforced by contracts with civilian workshops and vendors and close liaison with UNIFIL for the SISU APCs. The Section also co-ordinates service controls and supply of spares through local representatives.

Driver training and the regulation of Driver Permits is also an



*The dozer in the body shop in Camp Faouar*

monitoring. The investment in the car and fuel log systems and their use in all vehicles have resulted in moderate and safer driving, reduced unau-

important task, and the various nationalities of drivers must be acquainted to the standards of the host countries. Our emphasis and efforts in driver training, driving advisories especially in inclement weather, familiarization with local driving and traffic regulations, and strict enforcement of dangerous and drunken driving regulations in co-ordination with the UNDOF Military Police have resulted in a significant reduction in accidents and violations.

Efficient fleet management demands a review of the usage of fleet and sustained

thorized use, and improved fuel consumption by enforcing speed limits.

The Transport Section is able to provide an efficient and road worthy vehicle fleet to UNDOF that is necessary to maintain operational effectiveness of the mission. This is achieved by commendable harmony



*Spare parts stores in Camp Faouar*

between military and civilian staff, under the leadership of the Chief Transport Officer where all strive to achieve its motto

**“Excellence is our aim”.**

*Article by Maj Mangal Khanna,  
SO Maintenance  
Photos by WO II Arnold Felfer*



*Mr. Gerd Daners (fourth from left), I/C Workshop, and the Transport staff in ROD Damascus*



# AUSBATT's Gopher Hole Exercise

**Exercise – Exercise – Exercise! These were the loudspeaker announcements regarding practice alarms or orders via radio communication as AUSBATT started its three day exercise on Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> Mar 2010.**



*Transportation of a casualty*

The scenarios practiced were designed to make the cooperation and involvement of forces on a battalion level necessary, and they included the different stages of alert status for AUSBATT elements.

The variety of simulated incidents included a fire at a Position with injured personnel, mine incidents, and a car bomb threat against Camp Faouar. Shelter alerts were also given in order to test both how fast all soldiers will reach their allocated shelters as well as if the battalion command is able to operate and coordinate all its elements from the secure operational center in the com-

mand bunker. Some of the scenarios required quick cooperation of several companies in the Area of Separation when a violation was going to happen, for example, and AUSBATT had to concentrate mobile teams in different spots in order to prevent or stop the violation. The battalion's NBC capabilities were tested on the second day.

The final scenario on Friday involved cooperation between UNTSO Observers and AUSBATT when an Observation Post (OP) had to be evacuated by AUSBATT forces. The AUSBATT soldiers first had

to make a show of force and prevent an angry crowd of people from overrunning the OP. This was followed by the evacuation of an injured UNTSO member, who was secured and brought to the medical center in Camp Faouar where further treatment was given. By lunchtime the AUSBATT soldiers had returned to Camp Faouar and their posi-

tions, tired but satisfied.

The several weeks of training during mission preparation in addition to training conducted after arriving in the mission had finally paid off. The cooperation between the different units had worked perfectly and each movement had been done extremely well.

Following an after action review of the exercise with the directing staff and exercising unit commanders, the official end of the exercise was declared. The experiences gained



*AUSBATT show of force*



*RRG investigates an unauthorized vehicle*

will be evaluated and used for the next mission preparation as well as for AUSBATT's plan of action.

In the early evening everybody met for the "Manoeuvre-Beer" in the Men's Mess. On this evening relaxed faces could be seen everywhere as the soldiers celebrated the end of this exciting week.

*Article by Capt Günther Voitic,  
Press Officer*

*Photos by MSgt Martin Austerhuber*



# Filipino Peacekeepers' First Experiences

**Seeing snow for the first time in your life and the first Philippine Medal Parade under the first Philippine Force Commander in UNDOF.**

Little by little, the Filipinos are getting used to the climate of the Golan, but the 4<sup>th</sup> Feb 2010 was different as snowflakes were softly falling all over the Golan. It was a wonderful experience for Filipinos to see and feel snow for the first time in their lives.

As dawn broke, the trees, shrubs and the ground in the camp were covered in up to four inches of snow. A low of -4°C was the coldest temperature we had ever experienced since we had set foot on the Golan. It was



the experience of a lifetime for all of us who come from a tropical part of the world having only wet and dry seasons. Despite the chilly weather, we enjoyed chatting with fellow soldiers and took souvenir photos.

Snowmen and making snowballs were common activities early that morning, with the front of every one of the Pinoy peacekeepers' bar-



racks in Camp Ziouani occupied by a snowman on duty in front of it. Some brave soldiers even removed their shirts to show their ability to withstand the freezing weather.

It was in these biting cold moments that the soldiers missed home more than ever, and how they wished they could share these experiences with their loved ones.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Philippine Contingent to the Golan Heights was awarded the UNDOF Medal on the 5<sup>th</sup> Mar 2010 at Camp Faouar, a first in the history of Philippine Peacekeeping. We have had to experience unimaginable intricacies and adjust everything ranging from weather to cul-

tural diversities in the mission area but we have looked at this challenge as a great opportunity to improve our experience in social dealings.

PHILCON was proud to report to MGen Natalio C. Ecarma III, the first Filipino Force Commander in the history of UNDOF, and the presence of our distinguished guest the Honorable Alberto Romulo, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Republic of the Philippines and the most senior cabinet member of the Philippine government.

But being the first is not easy. We have exerted all our efforts to make sure that the utmost degree of impar-



*CO PHILBATT presents the UNDOF medal*

tiality is observed and maintained to enhance UNDOF's legitimacy in the mission area. Finally, the UN medal that now hangs on our chests signifies that we have passed the test of time in performing our peacekeeping duties on the Golan Heights.

*Article by Capt Noli Kanashiro,  
Press Officer*

*Photos by PHILBATT and WO II Felfer*



*FC, DCO PHILBATT and Hon. Romulo inspect the parade*



# HOLI, the Festival of Colors

**The colorful festival of Holi is celebrated all over India on Phalgun Purnima (day of the full moon in the month of Phalgun) which comes at the end of February or early March.**

**H**oli marks the end of the winter gloom and rejoices in the bloom of the spring time. It is the best time and season to celebrate and Holi provides this opportunity. On this day, colors fill the



*FC UNDOF celebrates Holi with INDCON*

atmosphere as people throw gulal (dry colored powder) in the air and smear people's faces with great joy and mirth. Children and adults alike play mischief on others in trying to color them in various ways, hug, wish each other "Happy Holi" and exchange sweets. The colorful festival bridges the social gap and renews sweet relationships.

The Holi festival has an ancient origin and celebrates the triumph of "good" over "bad". As per one legend, the demon king Hirankashyap tries to kill his son Prahalad because his son worships Lord Vishnu and not him. When he fails in his attempts to kill Prahalad by various means, the king orders his sister to sit with him in fire. The King's sister, Holika, has a special shawl gifted by gods which would save her from the fire. But when she takes Prahalad in her lap and enters the fire, Lord Vishnu orders the

wind to blow in such a way that this shawl blows from Holika to Prahalad thus rescuing Prahalad and killing her. On the eve of Holi, therefore, "Holika Dahan" (bonfire) takes place when an Effigy of Holika is burnt to signify the victory of good over evil.

This year, Holi was celebrated on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February by INDCON in the traditional way. All the soldiers gathered in front of the international kitchen and started the festivities by smearing everyone with gulal, singing, dancing and making merry. Although the weather was a little unfavorable, it could not dampen the spirit of Holi. All the guests



*CO LOGBATT celebrates with the FPM*  
from other contingents also participated in the celebrations including the Force Commander and Rain God.

*Article by LtCol Kartik Singh,  
SMO  
Photos by INDCON*



*Dancing, singing and making merry while celebrating Holi*



# The Battle against Invisible Enemies

**Did you ever ask if what you eat and drink here every day is safe? Have you ever wondered if it is healthy to jump into the fire-fighting pool?**

**D**on't worry. A team of experts takes care of the water and food-safety of everything you eat and drink, and even swim in. The UNDOF Laboratory has the experts



responsible and is part of the Medical Branch in UNDOF HQ.

There is one Laboratory Technician and the Chief Laboratory Officer, all from Austria, who sit behind their microscopes and keep an eye out for harmful germs. Perhaps you have already seen one of us with a huge cooling box collecting water



*Chief Laboratory analysing blood samples*

from the water dispensers. Our weapons are pipettes, blood tubes and Petri dishes. We conduct approximately 500 analyses every month. In addition to water and food, the examination of blood, urine and stool is also part of our daily business. Not to forget that now and again we even have to perform surgery on dogs and cats, as we are both veterinarians.

Whether it is bacteria or parasites, which can often disturb a foreigner's life in the Middle East,

nothing escapes our eagle eyes. And rest assured, no cook will prepare your meals as long as he doesn't pass the laboratory health check every two months.

Nevertheless, to keep the highest scientific standards and to be on the safe side for your personal health, if we need a second opinion in a delicate



*Water examination*

medical case we cooperate with the ISO-certified Biocenter-Laboratory in Damascus.

Maybe our work is not always very visible to the members of UNDOF; however the laboratory provides security to the entire mission. At the end of May 2010, the Laboratory Chief will hand over a very well equipped medical-facility in good conscience to a Philippine officer while the duties of the Laboratory Assistant will remain in Austrian hands.



*The Laboratory Team: Dr. Stefanie Reitter and Maj Dr. Frederic Fürschuss*

*Article by Maj Frederic Fürschuss,  
Chief Laboratory*

*Photos by WO II Arnold Felfer*



# How to Become a Woman in a Ninja Skit

**The 28<sup>th</sup> Japanese Contingent held the J-CON Day in Camp Ziouani on 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan 2010.**

*"I was so surprised when I saw the plan of J-CON Day in the beginning of January, because my name was in the plan as a character in a skit, without any pre-notification. Actually, every J-CON rotation had prepared various performances such as martial arts and so on before their arrival to the UNDOF mission area; however it was just my first time to realize that our rotation would have a skit. And it had to be a comedy!"*

We were proud to host the Force Commander MGen Wolfgang Jilke, His Excellency Mr. Takeuchi, Ambassador of Japan to Israel and many other distinguished guests including Defense Attachés from various countries and representatives of the IDF. This J-CON Day included three parts; traditional demonstrations, Japanese food and culture, and Tug of War. The comedy skit was the last of the demonstrations.

*"After discussing possibilities for several days, we got an idea which was a story based on Japanese Ninja. Our problem was "how to make the audience laugh". Joking was one of the ideas. But English was a more serious problem for us. So, we decided not to try to make people laugh with words, but by appearance. Do you remember that a man in women's clothes appeared on the stage at first? It was me. Beautiful? No kidding! Preparations? Umm, I think it might not have been longer than one week. You know, since we are a small contingent, we could not afford to over concentrate on preparations of J-CON Day events."*

The demonstrations were followed by Japanese food and cultural activities such as calligraphy, wearing of the traditional Kimono and so on. The Japanese food including Sushi prepared by J-CON cooks was highly praised. There

was a long line of people waiting for the chance to dress up in the Kimono and Samurai costumes who must have been inspired by the skit.

*"Next J-CON Day? Well, I don't know when it will be held and what it will be like. Only one thing I can say is that the next rotation will fulfill your expectation as well as past rotations have done."*

WO III Shigeo Ikeda  
in women's clothing

Article by LT I Taishi Sambomgi,  
Transportation Section Leader  
Photos by WO II Arnold Felfer



Performing the Ninja skit



UNDOF members enjoying Japanese culture





# Escorting - A Special Task of the UNDOF Military Police

**Within UNDOF the Military Police (MP) carry out a total of six different kinds of escort tasks. These are performed for VIP visitors, military rotations, prisoners, sensitive classified materials, cash and weapon/ammunition transport.**

**D**ue to their characteristics, each of these escort tasks bring along very different demands to the patrolmen effecting both the preparation for the task and the conduct of the escort itself.

When carrying out cash escorts, for example, a marked MP vehicle will not be used. A regular UNDOF vehicle will be used in its place to maintain a low profile and avoid drawing unwanted attention.



*MP channels the convoy through congested traffic*

have to brief the drivers on the special demands of convoy driving as well as verifying their sobriety before the convoy starts to ensure maximum safety for the peacekeepers being transported.

Heavy protection is of course standard for the transport of weapons and ammunition. The various nations of UNDOF periodically request escorts for this purpose which are prepared and carried out carefully by the MP as there is a special focus on the route reconnaissance that is required.

Whatever assistance is needed in the matter of escort, the MP can provide with the appropriate efforts and tailored tactics.

*Article by Capt Günther Kreiml,  
DFPM*

*Photos by WO II Arnold Felfer*



*Issue of orders at the MP Detachment*

Completely different and even more demanding are the escorts of larger convoys in such cases as military rotations or VIP visitors to the mission. Although the MP is not charged with close protection tasks in UNDOF, their presence enhances the security of the VIP with a visible armed escort.

A periodical task of MP is to provide rotation escort for outgoing and incoming contingents. After the issue of orders at the Detachment the MPs



*Sobriety check*



*Convoy on the road*





**UNDOF HQ  
Camp Faouar**