

GOLAN

The UNDOF Journal



April - June 2011
No. 127



DEAR READER!



Back in the Mission two years after my first assignment as Staff Officer Public Relations and chief editor of the Golan Journal I proudly present the new edition. I'm excited to face new challenges in working with new colleagues and comrades in order to compose an interesting and captivating lecture for our constant readers and novices alike. With all its efforts the editorial team again can provide a magazine full of insights into the mission of UNDOF. For these efforts I would like to thank the entire editorial team and the unit press officers and volunteer writers I would like to thank for their contributions.

In this edition it gives me great pleasure to present articles about the celebration of the Peacekeeper's Day in UNDOF, the organization of an UNDOF Ultimate Challenge skills competition, stories about events within the different units and contingents and much more.



Our team: Günther, Wolfgang, Reona and Stefan

Yours sincerely,
Capt Kreiml Günther, SOPR

SOPR	Editorial	2
FC UNDOF	Force Commander's Message	3
COS UNDOF	Chief of Staff Words	4
DMPIO	Visits to UNDOF	5
New People	New People in UNDOF	6
New People	New People in UNDOF	7
Training	UNDOF Ultimate challenge	8
Training	UNDOF Ultimate challenge	9
HQ	Field security in UNDOF	10
FCEO	UNDOF is Going Green	11
HQ	Peacekeepers Day	12
HQ	Peacekeepers Day	13
AUSBATT	A black day for the Austrian Battalion	14
AUSBATT	A black day for the Austrian Battalion	15
PHILBATT	The Filipino Spirit	16
PHILBATT	Independence Day	17
INDCON	Civil interaction with Majdal Shams	18
INDCON	INDCON defended MP C-Detachment	19
HVR-CON	Statehood Day / The new rifle	20
J-CON	Medal parade / Doctor in the Golan Heights	21
AUSBATT	Local kids in Faouar	22
AUSBATT	Humanitarian event	23

Front (Page 1): UNDOF Ultimatum challenge
Photo by WO I Wolfgang Grebien

Back (Page 24): The Baha'i Gardens on Mount Carmel in Haifa
Photo by WO I Wolfgang Grebien

Editorial Staff:

*Editor in Chief,
Proofreader & SOPR*
Capt Günther Kreiml

Editor & SSO M/PR
Maj Stefan Eder

Editor & DMPIO
Lt Cdr Reona Aso

Proofreader & SSO Pers
Maj Daniel Morrison

*Editor, Layout Designer
& Force Photographer*
WO I Wolfgang Grebien

Editorial Office:

UNDOF HQ
Camp FAOUAR
E-Mail: undof-sopr@un.org

Unit Press Officers:

AUSBATT - Maj Otmar Fasching
PHILBATT - Capt Celeste F. Sayson
INDCON - Maj Siddhendra Singh Panwar
HRVCON - Lt I Ivan Salopek
J-CON - Lt I Katsumasa Takaura
MP - Capt Roland Reinprecht
OGG - Capt Aki Harju

Visitors & Media:

UNDOF HQ
Camp FAOUAR
E-Mail: undof-ssso-media-pr@un.org

Online edition:
<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/undof/golan.shtml>

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 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. The copyright of all material in this journal is vested in United Nations Publications except where an acknowledgment is made to another holder. No articles or illustrations may be reproduced without the permission of the editorial staff.

Force Commander's Message

Dear Warrior Peacekeepers

The summer is now upon us in full force, uplifting our spirits with its warm and sunny days. I am just amazed to think that I have been here with you as your Force Commander for nearly eighteen months! The time has swiftly flown by. 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 urge all of you to consistently re-direct your dedication, professionalism, and discipline as warriors trained to wage war into becoming compassionate warrior peacekeepers in the Golan.



To those who have recently left the mission to return to your families and the new adventures that await you at home, I congratulate you on a successful tour and I wish you all the very best in your future careers. To those who have just arrived in the Mission, welcome and congratulations on being selected to serve in one of the best Missions in the world! I thank you for your contribution to peace in the Middle East and I wish you a safe and successful tour with UNDOF.

I would like to congratulate everyone on all the success we have had to this date. We have had an extremely interesting and active spring in the mission area. Spring 2011 has been a very challenging period for the Arab Nations in the Middle East. We have witnessed great changes in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, and Lebanon. We have weathered through increased tension along the Cease Fire Line during activities on Nakba Day and Naksa Day events and UNDOF provided a pivotal role in re-establishing stability during both of these events. Despite all the media attention on the current domestic situation within Syria, UNDOF operations have continued without major problems and I am most proud of the conduct of our warrior peacekeepers during this difficult time in the region.

I believe that the peace we experience here in the Golan is no accident. I believe this is the result of the hard work by everyone here in UNDOF. I wish to extend my personal thanks to the entire UNDOF Team; the national and international civilian staff, the Contingents, the Military Observers of the OGG and all of the Warrior Peacekeepers for your dedication and hard work. In particular I thank you for your efforts to improve the operational flexibility, mobility and capability of UNDOF so we may better meet the challenges of these challenging times. I also applaud your efforts to improve the living conditions in the camps, positions and observations posts within UNDOF. In all of these areas and efforts I say, "Well done," but I would also add that this is just a beginning. You have accomplished a great deal, but there is more still to be done. Keep up the good work!

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

Thank you, Danke, Dhanyavad, Salamata, Hvala, Arigato!!

Major General Natalio C. Ecarma III
Force Commander UNDOF

Chief of Staff Words

Fellow Peacekeepers

It is once again my pleasure and a privilege to address you, the UNDOF soldiers and civilian staff – but also our experts from OGG – with some lines in our Golan Journal, the unique voice of the peacekeepers on the Golan Heights.

The summer has finally arrived and the local meteorologist is pretty bored now as he already knows the forecasts for the next days: Sunny and hot! However, spring is always a busy time, and also a time for change in UNDOF and not to forget in the Middle East. I already witnessed some of the first troop and staff rotations of my tenure here in UNDOF. To those who have just arrived in the mission: Welcome and be proud of being selected to serve in one of the most successful peacekeeping missions in the world! I thank you for your contributions to peace in the Middle East and I wish you a safe and successful tour with UNDOF.

Spring kept us busy indeed and in addition to our daily routine several events worth mentioning were conducted. I only want to highlight our UNDOF Ultimate Challenge, the AOS marches, our Peacekeepers Day, National Days, Medal Parades and a variety of sport competitions. At the end of the day this strongly underlines our teamwork and comradeship. Thank YOU!

As already mentioned we faced severe changes during spring. I do not need to remind anybody here that we are living in interesting times in the Middle East. Interesting they are indeed, but dangerous too. The waves of the so called “Arab Spring” swept over the Golan Heights into Syria and had and still have an impact on our daily work in fulfilling our mandate. The peace in the region is very fragile indeed, as recent events in Israel, Gaza, Lebanon and Syria have proven. UNDOF has been confronted with the most serious incidents on the Nakba and Naksa Day on the Golan Heights since its establishment in 1974. However, UNDOF faced these challenges with composure and continued to keep the peace, with all its expertise, ways and means available, and offered its good services in order to serve the people and peace on the Golan Heights. Nevertheless, we – UNDOF and UNTSO/OGG peacekeepers – operating either in the AOS or in the AOL have always bear in mind that all our actions taken must be based upon and in line with our mandate!



Our foremost responsibility is that we do everything to maintain the gained trust in our capabilities. That entails being proactive in performance of our tasks and reacting with requisite maturity and sensitivity to apprehensions of the parties. In sum, UNDOF's deployment on the Golan Heights might have gained even more strategic importance than ever since.

I thank you for your efforts during these challenging days and the utmost operational flexibility and mobility you have shown. We have accomplished a great deal, but keep in mind that there is more still to be done. We have to assess the lessons identified in those challenging days and we have to implement some lessons learned to even do better in the future. Keep up the good work!

Finally, we may not forget that in the first six months of 2011 too many peacekeepers lost their lives all over the world. I urge all of you, as you go about your work, to always keep in mind the importance and seriousness of what we do and to strive individually to do your very best for peace in the Golan Heights.

"On Mission - One Team - One Goal"

Colonel Martin Dorfer
Chief of Staff UNDOF

Visits to UNDOF

by LtCdr Reona Aso, DMPIO



H.E. Maria Kunz, Austrian Ambassador, visited Camp Faouar and attended UNDOF Ultimate Challenge (8th Apr 2011)



H.E. Norbert Darabos, Austrian Minister of Defense and Sport, visited Camp Faouar, met with FC UNDOF and attended AUSBATT Medal Parade (3rd May 2011)



MajGen Juba Kilpiä, Chief of Staff and Head of Mission UNTSO, visited Camp Faouar and met with FC UNDOF (20th May 2011)



H.E. Petronila P. Garcia, Philippine Ambassador, visited Camp Ziouani and attended Philippine Independence Day (14th Jun 2011)



H.E. Toshiro Suzuki, Japanese Ambassador, visited Camp Faouar and attended J-CON Medal Parade (18th Jun 2011)

- 34 members of the UNDP sponsored Group of Israeli citizens on Peace and Dialogue issues visited Camp Ziouani (30th Apr 2011)
- 40 students of the Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy visited Camp Ziouani (5th May 2011)
- H.E. Martin Aeschbacher, Swiss Ambassador, attended AUSBATT March (13th May 2011)
- H.E. Marcia Matkovic, Croatian Ambassador, visited Camp Ziouani (27th May 2011)
- 38 students of the German Federal College for Security Studies visited Camp Ziouani (29th May 2011)
- H.E. Rodrigo X. Carreras, Costa Rican Ambassador, and twelve staff members from the Nigerian, Belgium, Nepalese, Colombian, the Czech Republic and French Embassy, sponsored by the "Israel Project" visited Camp Ziouani (20th Jun 2011)



The new Chief Operations Officer (COO)

LtCol Generoso M. Ponio was born on 8th Jul 1966 in Floridablanca, Pampanga, Philippines. He joined the Philippine Army in 1988 after graduating from the Philippine Military Academy (PMA). He is a graduate of the Command and General Staff Course and attended various military schoolings and trainings such as the Specialized English Training in Lackland, Texas, USA, the United States Ranger Course in Fort Benning, Georgia, USA, and the 11th International Seminar on Military Sciences at the National Defense Academy in Japan among others. He commanded the 45th Infantry Battalion, the 11th Scout Ranger Company, Alpha Company, 70th Infantry Battalion, the Presidential Security Training School, and five Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Companies and headed the Department of Ground Warfare and Physical Education in PMA. He held various staff positions such as Personnel Intelligence Operations Officer of the Scout Ranger Training School, Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence (G2), First Scout Ranger Regiment, Special Operations Command, Chief Operations Officer of the Security Party of the Philippine President during official visits to the countries of Mexico, in 2001 and the APEC summit in Brunei in 2000 among others. He is married to Janet Tengco-Ponio and blessed with three children: Jetaime, Jethroe and Jethane.



The new CO/PHILBATT

LtCol Cornelio H. Valencia Jr. was born on 15th Aug 1965 in Manila. He graduated from the Philippine Military Academy in 1987 with a Bachelor Degree. He holds Masters Degrees in Military Operational Art and in Public Administration and is Multinational Planning Augmentation Team qualified under the US PACOM Program. In 2006 he attended the Command and General Staff Course at the US Air University in Alabama, USA. He is a bemedalled officer who served in various field infantry staff and commander positions in his junior years. In 1995, he was designated as Chief Production Division and Assistant Chief of AC2, Southern Command. In 2001 he became the Group Commander of the Information Development Group of the Civil Relations Service. In 2002 he served as a Military Observer in the UN Mission in East Timor. In 2003 he served as Chief Policy Branch in the AFP General Headquarters and in 2008 as AC for Civil Military Operations. In 2010 he became the Battalion Commander of the 76th Infantry VICTRIX Battalion of the 2nd Infantry Division, which was chosen to form the core of the 4th Philippine Contingent to the Golan Heights.



The new DCO AUSBATT/NCC HRVCON

Maj Mario Maslov was born on 10 Oct 1971 in East Slavonia in Croatia. He finished primary and secondary school in Vinkovci where he lived until the beginning of the Homeland war. He joined the Army in early 1991 as a soldier and served as squad leader until October 1992 when he became commander of an infantry company. After the Homeland war he was involved in the demining process in East Slavonia during 1996. At this time Maj Maslov attended the EOD school in Rochester in England. He gained international experience as Commander of a Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team in the ISAF Mission in Afghanistan. Before his deployment in UNDOF he worked as a commander of a recon unit in a Guard Armored Mechanized Brigade. He is married to his wife Marija and has two children, Mihael and Mihaela.



The new Force Provost Marshal (FPM)

Maj Varun Chhabra was born on 30th July 1980 in the sandy desert state of Rajasthan, India. He graduated from the prestigious National Defense Academy with Bachelors in Science degree and was commissioned into the Indian Army on 08th June 2002. After a successful probation, he is now a member and a second generation officer of the elite Scorpions-Special Forces skilled in desert warfare. In addition to his mandatory military courses he is a skilled paratrooper and a qualified combat sea-diver. As part of his tour of duty in the special forces the officer has served in different terrains and operated as a squad and troop commander in active counter insurgency areas and as a team leader in the remote jungles of north eastern india. He also had the distinction of being the honor graduate at the International Special Forces Training in Fort Bragg, USA from amongst fifteen nations. As a complete contrast, Maj Chhabra also had the proud privilege to serve as the Aide-de-Camp to two Presidents of the Republic of India over a period of over three years. He is happily married to Sumita and his hobbies include diving and sightseeing.



The new Chief Observer Group Golan Damascus (OGG-D)

LtCol Risto Partel was born on 23rd June 1973 in the Republic of Estonia. His military career started in 1992 at the Military Academy of the Estonian Defense Forces. Thereafter he attended the Officer's Training School of the Canadian Forces in 1995 and the National Defense College of the Estonian Defense Forces in 2007. He gained lots of experience in his various services from infantry platoon leader to company commander of a CSS company to staff officer in the Weapons and Ammunition Support Group of the Estonian Defense Forces Logistic Center. He was deployed on mission abroad in Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo and the Middle East. In addition to Estonian, LtCol Partel also speaks English, Finnish and Russian. He is married and his Hobbies are football, traveling and firearms.



The new Chief Observer Group Golan Tiberias (OGG-T)

LtCol Jan Cesek was born on 5th July 1967 in Humenne, Slovakia. He joined the Slovak Armed Forces in 1987. In 1992 he successfully graduated from the Slovak Military Academy where he specialized in anti-aircraft systems and was posted to the Slovak Armed Forces Air Defense Branch. During the initial period of his military career from 1992 to 2005 LtCol Cesek served in a range of staff and unit appointments within the Air Defense Branch. These appointments incorporated periods of service with front line Air Defense Units, Antiaircraft Brigade Appointments, Specialist Technician Posts and a period of service in the Air Surveillance Centers. In 2005 LtCol Cesek assumed the position of Chief of Regional Recruitment Center with specific responsibility for recruitment for the Slovak Armed Forces. Since 2006 he was assigned to the Personal Department of the General Staff of the Slovak Armed Forces as the Senior Leadership Officer Specialist. In 2007 he successfully completed the Basic Officers Course, Adjutant Generals, Columbia SC, USA. He commenced his current role with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) as Chief of Observer Group Golan, Tiberias and Slovak Contingent Commander, in March 2011. LtCol Cesek's previous operational experience includes service in several missions with NATO and UN. From 2003 to 2004 he held the position of the Chief Clerk Ops in the HQ Sector 4 in UNFICYP, followed by assignment to KFOR in Kosovo where he served as a Watchkeeper in the TOC HQ Multinational Brigade Center. In 2008 he served in UNTSO as an UNMO in Observer Group Golan, Tiberias. LtCol Jan Cesek is married to Janette and they have one daughter. His hobbies include hiking, playing guitar, reading books and traveling. He has a keen interest in documentary productions and sightseeing.

UNDOF ULTIMATE CHALLENGE 2011

Challenges in team sport competitions can make or break a team. On 8th Apr 2011 the eleven participating teams of the UNDOF Ultimate Challenge learned all that is essential in making a team is leadership, discipline, esprit-de-corps, and an iron will to excel.

The UNDOF Ultimate Challenge (UUC) was originally a competition among the different contingents primarily aimed to test the military skills that are basic to all soldiers and foster camaraderie among participants. The specific guidance of the Force Commander MGen Natalio Ecarma III regarding the team composition for UUC 2011, however, gave a new dimension of challenge to the competition. In addition to the physical hurdles of the competition, the Force Commander envisioned all teams struggling through and overcoming barriers of language, culture, military traditions, and other peculiarities. To achieve this he directed that each UUC team be composed of soldiers from different contingents. The UNDOF Chief of Staff Col Martin Dorfer, in turn, made sure that said directive was implemented to the letter through the UUC Control Committee headed by the then UNDOF Chief Operations Officer LtCol Volkmar Ertl.

The UUC Control Committee had to be creative in devising a method to achieve the desired mix of team members. And so a stratified random selection of team members was employed using contingents and ranks as strata. All teams were to be composed of 6 members with the following minimum rank requirement: One Officer, one Warrant Officer, one Sergeant, and three other ranks (any rank). Each of the ten officers (excluding OGG team leader), who

were the default team leaders, was given his turn to draw the names of his would-be team members from the three groups of non-officer ranks. What resulted were teams with members belonging to three to four different contingents.



With only two weeks to practice as a team, the teams wasted no time and the leaders struggled through and overcame the first challenge even before the actual competition - marshaling the will to excel of their respective team members despite their different camp locations, schedules, and official duties. Worthy of note is the OGG team's willingness to participate in the competition even though they knew that their different locations and assignments would make it impossible for them to train as a group.

On the actual UUC day the teams fiercely competed in nine events, namely: grenade throwing, rifle shooting, endurance run, land navigation, incident management, rodeo

driving, weapons proficiency, raft, and obstacle course. Overcoming all barriers, both physical and non-physical, all teams completed all the events with a remarkable display of physical strength, grit, and teamwork.

At the awards ceremony, though dusty, sweaty, and exhausted, the teams held their heads up high having proven to themselves that no challenge was too difficult to overcome with an indomitable team spirit. This year's spring UUC champion is Team One composed of two Indians, two Filipinos, one Japanese, and one Croatian under the leadership of Cpt Paulo Baylon. The second place went to Team Six composed of two Austrians, two Filipinos, one Japanese, and one Indian under the leadership of Cpt Lino Araya while the third place went to Team Three composed of two Japanese, two Austrians, one Indian, and one Filipino under the leadership of Lt I Shinji Nakagawa.

Looking at the contingent profile of the winning teams, no contingent lost in the competition. This was the vision of the Force Commander - for each participant and each contingent to feel a winner, not so much because of the awards as the pride in having been able to compete successfully side by side with team mates from other contingents.

Article by
Maj Willester Robles, SO Plans
Photos by WO I Wolfgang Grebien



Field Security in UNDOF

The security situation has become more tense in the past months in the Middle East and also in the Area of Operations (AOO) of UNDOF. Thus the security of UNDOF personnel, premises and property became a main issue of focus.

Although observing closely the development in the Arab World, UNDOF did not expect the violent incidents as occurred in the Area of Operation. It used to be relatively stable for the past 37 years and so far incidents always could be de-escalated by UNDOF. When the situation developed rapidly, our

and B-Side. However UNDOF so far is not believed to be under any direct threat. Relations with the authorities of the host nations and the professional approach to fulfill the UNDOF Mission continue on all levels.

In each country the responsibility for basic security and protection of UN staff members and dependants is given over to the host governments.

This is a cornerstone of the United Nations security management system. Additionally UNDOF has its own resources to care for a safe and secure environment for all personnel. One UNDOF HQ office competent in security issues is the Field Security Advisor (FSA).

The FSA team's responsibility is to permanently advise on security matters and to improve the safety and security of UNDOF's civilian and mili-

tary personnel, visitors and dependents in the Mission Area. They provide information about the situational development based on open media sources, cooperate closely with the UNDOF Joint Operation Center / Joint Mission Analysis Center, analyze and assess all avail-



Explosive detector search

able information and advise the Force Commander and the Chief Mission Support based on their risk and threat assessment.

In order to ensure continuous safety for all UNDOF members preventive measures were taken. These measures are such as to increase the camp and position security with additional surveillance cameras, crash barriers and reinforced security walls. Also the vehicle movement of UNDOF personnel is adjusted according to the situational developments on a daily basis. Irrespective of the mission's security support measures the primary responsibility for safety and security of UNDOF personnel rests with the individual who has to be vigilant and act accordingly to changing situations.

Article by

Capt Günther Kreiml, SOPR

Photos by WO I Wolfgang Grebier



Sniffer dog Dasso checks vehicles at the Camp entrance

peacekeepers had to cope with critical events close to UNDOF facilities at Posn 16 and the gates between A-

manently advise on security matters and to improve the safety and security of UNDOF's civilian and mili-

UNDOF is Going Green

Recently three UNDOF facilities, Posn 10, 30 and 62, have been hooked up to the local Syrian power grid. The United Nations Environmental Guidelines, and in particular the intent of Going Green, provided the substantial basis for this UNDOF engineering project.

Based on accomplishment of these projects, UNDOF will benefit commercially in following the UN policy. UNDOF troops will gain the most out of it, being enabled to live in an environmentally beneficial surrounding. They will not face any air pollution anymore and will be provided with noise control in their direct surroundings at the positions. Outlining the commercial side of these engineering projects the return of investment will be measurable after the first heating season. That fact certainly justifies the investment of roughly USD 68.000.

The test run has been currently undertaken. Once successfully accomplished, the generators will be relocated to Camp Faouar, and a backup generator system will remain permanently at each of the positions.

Coming up next

UNDOF's Integrated Support Service Branch will continue the path of Going Green and is now in the phase of negotiations with the Syrian Authorities to hook up more UNDOF positions to the Syrian pub-

lic power grid. Based on respective agreements the UNDOF HQ Engineering Section will again take action to green Posn 31, 32, 68 and 69. The ambitious goal is to accomplish this objective in 2011. On this occasion

trical Unit, the UNDOF Generator Unit, the J-CON Detachment for Heavy Equipment and the Engineering Units of AUSBATT and PHIL-BATT. Job well done!

*Article by
Maj Eng. Roman Zaller, FCEO
Photos by WO I Wolfgang Grebien*



Maj Zaller with proud colleagues

the Force Construction Engineering Officer would like to express his gratitude to all the parties that contributed to the success of these comprehensive and complex projects. These are the HQ Engineers, the UNDOF Elec-

Key UNDOF benefits

- Reduced fuel consumption for power and heat generation*
- Reduced fuel transportation*
- Reduced amount of operated generators by three*
- Economy of funds*
- Noise control and cleaner environment*

PEACEKEEPERS DAY 2011

UNDOF celebrated the International Day of



Commemoration service in front of the St. Paul's Chapel



Military and civilian staff observe a minute of commemoration



Padre Markus Vormayr consecrates the wreath

The International Day of the United Nations Peacekeepers was established by the General Assembly in 2002 to pay tribute to the men and women serving in UN peacekeeping operations for their high level of professionalism, dedication and courage and to honor the memory of those who lost their lives in the cause of peace. This date was selected as 68 years ago on that day of 1948, the first UN-peacekeeping mission - UNTSO - began operations in the Palestine.

Commemoration

On the evening of 29th of May UNDOF civilian and military staff gathered at the Camp Faouar parade square to attend an inter-faith mass in commemoration of the comrades who sacrificed their lives in the service of peace. After a beautiful sunset, the place in front of St Paul's Chapel was lit with torches. The chaplains of the Austrian and Philippine Contingent, Padre Markus Vormayr and Father Fernando Gaila, celebrated the mass.

During the ceremony the names of our 53 fallen comrades were read aloud. A minute of commemoration was observed and a wreath was consecrated. Many thoughtful faces were to be seen when soldiers and civilians recalled comrades and friends whose names are now engraved on the memorial stone in front of Camp Faouar's Chapel, or remembered friends who lost their lives in peacekeeping activities only known to them.

All UNDOF contingents contributed to the event, and the melodies from Austria, the Philippines and Croatia left no mind untouched. The evening concluded with an "Agape" - food and drinks provided to the participants of the ceremony – and not before 10 o'clock, after the musicians finished with a last song, did the parade square empty.

Peacekeepers Day

The next morning delegations of all contingents formed up at the Parade Square again. The buglers

ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

UN Peacekeepers 2011 on 29th and 30th May.

announced the arrival of the Force Commander, MGen Natalio C. Ecarma III, and dignitaries of UNDOF, led by Mr. Gerard Buckley, acting Chief Mission Support. All UNDOF personnel gathered under a perfect “Golan” morning sun. The Chief Operations Officer, LtCol Generosio Ponio, reported the parade ready to commence the ceremony. MGen Ecarma then proceeded with placing the wreath consecrated the previous evening on the UNDOF Memorial. Whilst the sirens wailed, again a minute of commemoration for our fallen comrades was observed.

Afterwards the Force Commander read out the message by the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki Moon. In his address the Secretary General remarked that peacekeeping has grown in size and scope. The traditional role of monitoring a ceasefire agreement and borders between sovereign states has evolved to carrying out large scale multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations, addressing intrastate conflicts. Promotion of national dialog, and reconciliation, protection of civilians, assistance in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants, protection and promotion of human rights and restoration of the “rule of law” are today also the mission of 85.000 military, 14.000 police, 5.700 international civilians and 13.700 national staff serving in 15 peacekeeping operations under the blue flag.

When the parade was dismissed, lunch was served with local delicacies provided by our colleagues from the civilian staff and niblets from the national kitchens of all UNDOF contingents. Now it was the time to look forward, strengthening the links within the UNDOF community and preparing for the tasks ahead. But the message to the loved ones of our comrades who gave their life in the service for peace, is: “Never will UNDOF forget their sacrifice and the peacekeeping community will always remember their example in leading the way towards a better future”.

Article by Maj Stephan Eder, SSO M/PR
Photos by WO I Wolfgang Grebien



FC MGen Ecarma lays the consecrated wreath



The UNDOF memorial for their fallen comrades



Female Philippine soldiers enjoy some sweets after the ceremony

A black day for the Austrian Battalion

On 25th Jun 1974 the First Company received the order to search for a missing IAF-pilot who crashed with his plane close to Mount Hermon. But the noble mission ended in catastrophe.



In the first week of June 1974 the Austrian Contingent of the UN Emergency Force II moved from the area of Suez to the Golan Heights. At that time, the soldiers of the Austrian Battalion "Golan" had little time for reconnaissance to assess the new mission area including all risks and dangers. MCpl Hans Hofer and four other soldiers of the First Company were ordered to form a search team and drove up to Mt. Hermon. On the mountain road, close to the Reporting Point 211, the group hit a mine with their Landrover vehicle. As a consequence of the explosion four soldiers died immediately in this mine accident, the driver of the Landrover survived due to the

fast medical transport by helicopter to Damascus provided by the Syrian Forces. A false situation report about the mine fields on Mount Hermon led to this disaster, which cost four Austrian comrades their life.

Traditionally on 25th Jun 2011 the First Company AUSBATT holds a commemoration service to remember these comrades who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of peace. The presence of the Austrian National Contingent Commander and UNDOF Chief of Staff, Col Martin Dorfer, the CO AUSBATT, LtCol Andreas Schiffbänker, and approx. 40 comrades of the AUTCON, reflected the dignified commemoration and showed impressively, that

we have not forgotten these four comrades.

Both Col Dorfer and OiC 1st Coy/AB Maj Primeßnig pointed out that the soldiers at the Golan Heights are still confronted with dangers and risks which can harm their health and life during their mission service. It is the obligation of every commander in charge to take care of all soldiers and bring them home safely after completing their tour.

The commemoration service was closed by an invitation for having a snack at Posn 12, where this event was continued in comradeship.

*Article by May Klaus Primeßnig
OiC 1st Coy/AB
Photos by WO I Wolfgang Grebien*



The Filipino Spirit - Promoting peace beyond Philippine borders

The Filipino Nation is built on an edifice of a people with a strong character towards the value and aspiration of genuine peace and freedom. This Filipino Spirit, a continuing drive and burning fervor, goes on even beyond the Philippine borders and binds its professional Armed Forces to pursue neutrality in maintaining and keeping the peace in the highly contested region of the Golan Heights.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) trained, equipped, and sent the 76th Infantry “Victrix” Battalion to form part of UNDOF as the 4th Philippine Contingent to the Golan Heights (4th PCGH). The AFP selected the unit for being one of the best performers among its battalions.

The 4th PCGH assumed the Philippine Battalion’s Area of Responsibility (AOR) in the southern part of UNDOF’s Area of Separation during historical extraordinary time, witnessing very unusual civil protest and demonstrations on the Syrian side after 37 years of quiet.

The changing security situation in the first two months of the 4th PCGH in the mission area has been challenging. The handed over security plans and systems had to be adjusted to address the emerging situation. Nonetheless, troops adapted fast, each Filipino warrior peacekeeper had put into their hearts the catchphrase: “Mission first, service above self, and do your best in the service of peace”. In these tense times PHILBATT enhanced its patrolling system for increased

coverage in terms of time and space. The Filipino Victrix warrior peacekeepers, like the other contingents, are doing extra miles to monitor and observe the AOR.



Sgt Carlos Engcoy detects mines in vicinity of Camp Ziouani



Maj Edward Samin and Maj Arnold Lubang on board a SISU

In the aftermath of the two main demonstrations held close to UNDOF, premises required mine clearing operations. The PHILBATT EOD troopers cleared the stretch

where protesters staged their rallies and the critical areas were landmines exploded during a grassfire.

An EOD team led by Sgt Engcoy bravely cleared these areas. Inch by inch they tried to detect unexploded ordnance. SSgt Ancino said: “It is a dangerous area to roam around with undetected unexploded mines where UNDOF personnel frequently pass these crossing gates. It is not an easy doing this job. Every step you make, everything you touch can lead to a dangerous situation because we are dealing with old mines that could explode anytime.” The EOD team was able to recover four pieces of unidentified empty shells of hazardous materials.

The 4th PCGH has much in store for the remaining four months in the mission area. Surely, with its first successful salvo, it will live to its high standards of doing things, something that it had already proven.

*Article by Capt Celeste Frank L. Sayson,
PIO/PhB*

Photos by Cpl Alejandro Narrido

The anual Philippine Independence Day celebrated on the Golan Heights

Filipinos all over the world celebrated the 113th Philippine Independence Day in 2011 as the Filipino warrior peacekeepers did in the Golan Heights on 14th of June.

Our ancestors gained independence for the Filipino Nation on 12th Jun 1898. The brave Katipuneros shed their blood in the pursuit of this cause against overwhelming invading foreign forces in the height of World War II. Again, in the late 1980's, the peace loving Filipinos deposed a dictator in a bloodless revolution, an event etched in the history of the world's geopolitics.



Guard of honor for the FC



Guests enjoy the performances

The 4th PCGH celebrated the Philippine Independence Day in Camp Ziouani on the Golan Heights. The Philippine Ambassador to Israel, H.E. Petronila P. Garcia, the UNDOF Force Commander MGen Natalio C. Ecarma III, visiting staff and commanders of UNDOF, and

guests from the Filipino communities equally shared the cold and heavily pouring rain during the activity. It was a heartwarming scene when the troops marched in cadence and the peacekeepers from other contingents executed a proud return of salute to the passing Filipino Victrix warrior peacekeepers under the mist of rain as it epitomizes the boldness in honoring a time treasured event in the Philippine history.

The celebration continued as the sun started to peek from the dark clouds. The 4th PCGH Cultural Dancers ensemble performed colorful Filipino Dances depicting the Filipino culture from its three major islands - Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Victrix warrior peacekeepers clad in the traditional clothes Jusi, Piña Barong Tagalog and Filipiniana gowns impressed UNDOF guests and visitors. To most of them, it is their first time to see these colorful Filipino costumes.

The booth of native delicacies with chandeliers of *Kiping* - leaf-shaped wafers made of rice - was a delicious and filling extravaganza; while the booth on tourism displayed a virtual sightseeing tour of the Philippine natural wonders. All these brought much pride to every Filipino present as all the visitors marveled at the great cultural display and presentation.

*Article by Capt Celeste Sayson, PIO/PhB
Photo by Günther Kreiml, SOPR
Photos by Sgt Markus Weiss*



Philippine dancers perform...



... the Singkil Dance



Karatong Dancers symbolize...



... the blossoming mango tree

LOGBATT sportive civil interaction with people in Majdal Shams

In a first of its kind, LOGBATT personnel participated in a very cordial interaction with the local populace of the Golan Heights town of Majdal Shams during an organized sports event.

The idea initiated by CO LOGBATT, took form after approval of the Force Commander, the overall aim being to increase good relations with the local population UNDOF frequently has to deal with.

On 17th Jun 2011, LOGBATT personnel were invited by the representatives of Majdal Shams to play a volleyball match against the Golan Heights team. Amidst a much hyped yet a very friendly atmosphere, the teams gathered in the town indoor volleyball court. A huge gathering of local populace descended on the venue due to the widespread event publicity over the internet. A sizeable number of Indian and Japanese personnel were also present to lend support to the visiting team.

The match was preceded by a Karate display by the town children. The enthusiasm shown by the youngsters was contagious enough for the two opponent teams to start

the match with full gusto. The match started at 18:00hrs with loud cheers for both teams reverberating through the hall.

The five set match started with the

a 27-25 win in the second set. The LOGBATT team again unleashed a spectacular assault on the Golan team in the third set and won it at 25-21, thus sensing victory near. But victory

remained elusive for LOGBATT with the Golan team making another comeback to clinch the fourth set at 25-20 and then press home the advantage to win the final set too at 25-23. The continuously oscillating scores had ensured that the adrenaline levels of the teams, as well as that of the spectators, remained at its peak throughout.

The event was culminated with an exchange of mementos between LOGBATT and the townsfolk wherein residents of Golan expressed strong desire to have more such interactions with personnel of the force. The rather

memorable evening is a sure indicator of the socially viable environment that is borne out of such activities on behalf of the UN.

*Article by Maj S.S. Panwar, SigO LB
Photo by Pte Sunil Patole, Sigs PI/LB*



Karate display by children of Majdal Shams



Group picture of the teams

LOGBATT team taking the initial lead, and then the first set at 25-14 after an unending string of high velocity spikes. But the home team, not to be undone, made a high pressure and well fought comeback with

INDCON defended UNDOF Military Police Detachment against a grassfire

In a display of thorough professionalism and soldierly grit, the INDCON firefighting team nicknamed “Smokey” battled a raging fire at the MP’s C-Detachment and prevented it from getting destroyed.

The 05th Jun 2011 was marked by widespread protests and incidents along the Area of Separation (AOS). The crossing gates were especially vulnerable because of the highly volatile situation that had emerged. INDCON being responsible for overall security of Camp Ziouani had ensured that the observation towers of the camp were manned and the Rapid Reaction Group (RRG) and Smokey were in a high state of readiness.

Though the deteriorating situation indicated that the RRG may have some task coming its way, the hour came unexpectedly for the Smokey team at 16:30hrs. The grass in the AOS had caught fire which rapidly advanced towards C-Det of the UNDOF MP situated in the middle of the two gates. The dryness of the vegetation and the high wind fac-

tor made an ideal combination and the fire soon reached the C-Det location. The COS was informed of the situation and about the direct threat to C-Det. Sanction was granted for the Smokey team of LOGBATT to take proactive steps to control the fire and prevent destruction of the UN asset.

The Smokey team led by CO/LB got deployed in the area fraught with fire. As if the fire was not enough, anti-tank mines were blowing up randomly all around the team due to the high heat being generated. The CEO/LB Capt R.K. Sharma, directed the team to break up into two. The first sub-unit used the water cannon and tried to stop the bush fire from advancing while the other moved into the C-Det campus and used fire extinguishers to control the spread. The task had now become

more precarious since the fire had reached hazardously close to the generator room’s diesel tank. Notwithstanding, the Smokey personnel undertook this challenge undauntedly and managed to subdue the fire within half an hour.

The precision in the drills and seamless coordination between various elements involved had ensured that the operation was a sure success. The task achieved had saved an operationally important UNDOF position and its elaborate infrastructure. LOGBATT personnel had reaffirmed the ethos of the Indian Army with their valiant and selfless act on that fateful day.

*Article by Maj S.S. Panwar, SigO/LB
Photo by Maj Tamino Eder, LO A-Side*



The Statehood Day celebration at Posn10

The *dan državnosti* (Statehood Day) as an official Croatian holiday is a day off work in Croatia celebrated annually on 25th of June in order to commemorate the country's declaration of independence from Yugoslavia in 1991.

For the peacekeepers of the HRVCON deployed in the Company of AUSBATT far from home it is a workday full of important tasks and obligations. Nevertheless no member of the Croatian Contingent wanted to miss out on celebrating this significant day for Croatia. On this occasion military and civilian friends were invited to Posn 10 in order to join the celebration after duty hours.

After the formal ceremony presentations of the new Croatian arms,

the VHS assault rifle and the HS pistol, as well as the culture and land-



FC and DCO/AB inspect the troops

scape of Croatia were given by members of the contingent and aroused

great interest amongst all guests. That fascination could only be topped by Croatian music and the gastronomic specialties including traditional sweets offered to the visitors.

At the end of the day everyone went home with many nice impressions and the Croatian Contingent was happy having deepened friendship with their multinational comrades on the Golan Heights.

*Article by Lt I Ivan Salopek
Photos by Sgt Markus Weiss*

The new rifle of the Croatian Contingent

After only 17 days of their deployment in the mission area the Croatian Contingent eagerly received their new VHS rifle being proud to become the first contingent to be equipped with these brand new arms.

The so called VHS rifle which is completely designed and made in Croatia and produced by the company HS Produkt, the same company that produces the HS2000 Springfield XD pistols for the Croatian Armed Forces.

CO HRVCON, Maj Mario Maslov said: "After testing in Croatia and in real combat conditions by soldiers stationed in Afghanistan, we are very proud and honored to be the first Croatian Contingent equipped with the VHS rifle". The rifle has a completely new construction and in comparison to similar weapons it has the longest barrel, lowest weight and is easy to disassemble.

The pistol grip is placed in the weap-



Maj Maslov hands over first rifle



First live shooting at the range

on's center point, making it possible to fire with one hand. Under the barrel in front of the pistol grip a flash light, a laser pointer, an IC light or a 40mm grenade launcher can be mounted optionally.

Any kind of optical sight can be mounted on top of a carry handle, which is also equipped with an iron sight as standard.

Features of the VHS rifle

<i>Caliber:</i>	<i>5,56x45mm NATO</i>
<i>Rate of fire:</i>	<i>750rpm</i>
<i>Weight:</i>	<i>3,5kg</i>
<i>Length:</i>	<i>665mm or 765mm</i>

*Article by Lt I Ivan Salopek,
2IC 3rd Coy/AB*

Photos by Günther Kreiml, SOPR

Medal Parade and J-CON Day

The J-CON Medal Parade in combination with the J-CON Day celebration was held in Camp Faouar on 18th Jun 2011.

The Chief of Staff Col Martin Dorfer, the Japanese Ambassador to Syria H.E. Toshiro Suzuki and many distinguished guests graced the Japanese Contingent with their presence at the celebration of these considerable events. All J-CON members were conferred with the UNDOF Medals by Col Dorfer after 90 days of dedicated service within the UNDOF mission. In his address the Chief of Staff expressed special thanks to all J-CON members for their excellent job done as well as appreciation for their indispensable support to the UNDOF mission.

Following the Medal Parade ceremony, all honorable guests were invited to enjoy the J-CON Day ceremony at the Parade Square and the Austrian Officer's Club.

J-CON members exhibited Shaolin Kung Fu, Karate, Japanese archery and a Samurai warrior show. The audience cheered in wild enthusiasm over the compelling martial arts and the amusing show provided by Japanese peacekeepers of all ranks. Many guests were fascinated by the displayed Origami and Japanese calligraphy arts and used the rare opportunity to have their names written in Japanese letters as a souvenir. To top it all J-CON cooks performed a never seen before variation of culinary specialties served in most artful styles. These most appreciated events once again made it possible to enhance the relationships within the peacekeepers and civilian guests of many different nations.



COS awards UNDOF medal



Archer focused on his target

Article by Lt I Katsumasa Takaura, PIO

Photo by Sgt Takuva Uetani

J-CON Doctor in the Golan Heights

I am Capt Hiroki Saito, Senior Medical Officer of J-CON and my specialty is gastroenterological surgery. My duties are health care and public health of J-CON. In addition, as a member of LOGBATT, I am in charge of the Logistics Sections sanitation.

The sunlight is much stronger and accordingly the temperatures are higher in our Mission area than in Japan. Therefore I advise our members to be cautious and prevent heat stroke and dehydration by drinking enough water, take in salt and wear sunglasses in

the summer season.

Additionally the region involves



Capt Saito with colleagues in the medical center

other dangers for UNDOF peacekeepers. The Palestinian Viper for example is the most dangerous snake

in our Mission Area. Last month, J-CON members found and caught a snake in our building luckily without being bitten. Since Japanese peacekeepers joined UNDOF about 15 years ago the most serious medical cases were a case of acute brain bleeding and a brain tumor. Fortunately the current rotation had no serious injuries or illness since we arrived here. I wish everyone an enjoyable and safe summer season.

Article by

Capt Hiroki Saito, SMO/J-CON

Photo by Sgt Takuva Uetani



Humanitarian event held by AUSBATT

Numerous high ranking guests were invited on the 28th Jun 2011 to visit Camp Faouar in order to attend a donation ceremony when a considerable amount of funds were handed over for children's education purpose.

For the first time in the history of AUSBATT, donations under the auspices of the Austrian Ambassador to Syria, Dr. Maria Kunz, were given to the Red Crescent and their representatives. The host for this notable event was the CO AUSBATT LtCol Andreas Schiffbänker. In his speech, LtCol Schiffbänker particularly highlighted the decades of cooperation between AUSBATT and civilian aid agencies responsible for the social environment in the AUSBATT Area of Responsibility (AOR).



H.E. Dr Maria Kunz, Dr Hosam Doughouz and LtCol Andreas Schiffbänker



Kids performed Arabic chants

The handover ceremony of the donation was held in the children holiday camp in the vicinity of Camp Faouar presided over by the UNDOF Chief of Staff, Col Martin Dorfer, and the Governor

of Quneitra, and witnessed by many local and UNDOF guests.

The project, for which the donated 5.000,- USD will be used, is a mine awareness garden for children. This idea is a novel concept to

teach children proper behavior when confronted with mines or minefields, which happens quite often since most of the kids' families are farmers working close to mined areas and not yet cleared minefields. Numerous mine accidents occur every year in the AOR of the Austrian battalion. "Every single one of these incidents is one too many", emphasized Lt I Ekkehard Gröppel, the organizer of the event.

"The Austrian soldiers can be proud of the great cooperation," concluded LtCol Schiffbänker. The event ended with an impressive Arabic chant from the numerous children attending the ceremony.

*Article by Lt I Ekkehard Gröppel,
Welfare O/AB*

Photos by Sgt Markus Weiss

