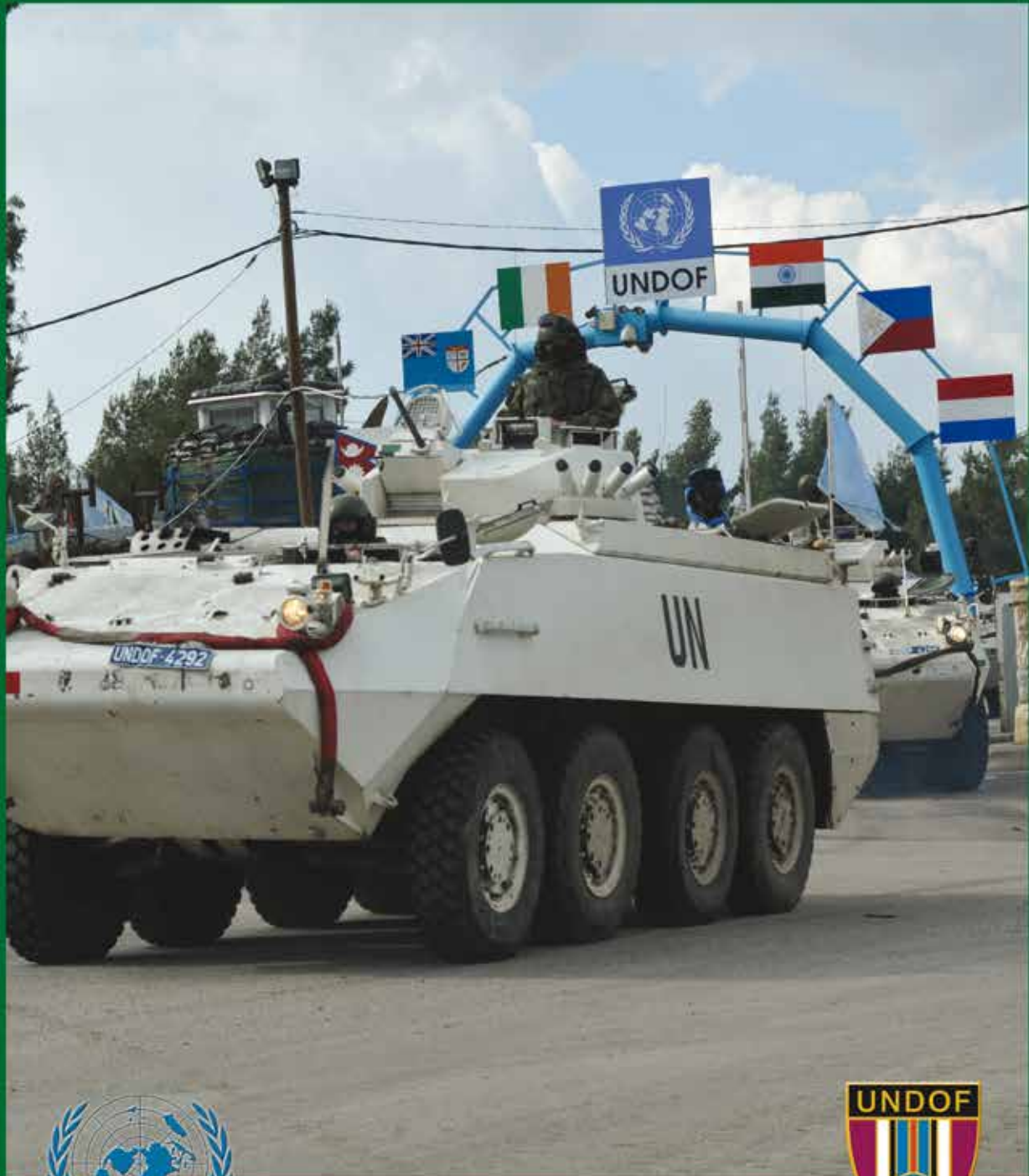


# GOLAN

The UNDOF Journal



January - March 2014  
No. 138



# DEAR READERS!

It is time to inspire change...

If 2013 did not go as well as you thought it would, then maybe it is time for a change! Being the theme for this years' International Womens Day, "Inspiring change" can be used in the context of identifying, accepting and implementing changes for yourself or your department so that the UNDOF mission can administratively and operationally function effectively.

Already, in recent weeks, departments within UNDOF have undergone changes in their management system; for the better, with UMOJA. You can read more on UMOJA in UNDOF in page 16 of this edition.

Also, contingents have hinted positive changes as well. IRECON has boosted its number of females to the UNDOF mission by almost fifty percent. Not only have the number of females increased in the Irish Camp but the number of UNDOF staff in general has also increased. And with these increases, development of camp sites are ongoing, further expanding and modernising the outlook of the camps.

All these changes in the mission area reflect the ability of UNDOF to adapt to the ever changing dynamics of the situation in Syria.

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Photo by Sgt Jese Sorovi

**Back (Page 24):** First 2014 sunrise from Herman Base

Photo by Sgt Capt Dr Karki Bibek



As much as we would like to see positive changes in this country, we cannot expect it to happen overnight. All we can do as UNDOF peacekeepers is to equip ourselves to ensure that our mission is successfully carried out now and in the years to come.

May God bless you with as much success this year!

Yours sincerely,

  
Maj Deborah Wise Tove  
SOPR



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# Force Commander's Message

*Fellow Peacekeepers!*

As we enter the fourth year of the internal strife in Syria, peace is still elusive. Geneva II talks have failed to bring a peaceful resolution of the problem. All contingents, old or new have shown resolute determination to evolve as per the changing environment and to stay on the top of the situation, while dedicating themselves to the fulfilment of the mandate.

The last three months have been very happening and eventful. There were moments that were extremely tense and potentially dangerous. The situation is dynamic and every day brings a new challenge with itself. However, due to the steadfast commitment, patience, professionalism and most importantly, innovative thinking exhibited by everyone in the mission, we were able to sail over the crisis. And all this was only possible due to the team effort of all international and national staff and uniformed peacekeepers.

The NEPCON on Mt Hermon has braved the first winter that was incident free and returned home safely. The rotations of IRECON and NEPCON have been smooth and the second rotations of troops are in process of getting into the groove. Fortunately, the delicate ceasefire in the northern and central sectors has ensured our freedom of movement between Camp Faouar and Camp Ziouani. PHILBATT continued its good work and the new rotation has quickly adapted to the dimensions of the mission. They faced almost warlike situations in the southern part of AOR and have honed their response. Being present in the most dangerous area, the contingent has quickly evolved gaining the respect of the locals and the parties.

FIJIBATT has exploited relatively calm AOR by increasing their assertive presence by means of patrolling, opening new routes of maintenance and carrying out various quick reaction and casualty evacuation exercises. They have come of age and stamped their presence in UNDOF with zeal.

INDCON 15th rotation has set high benchmarks by fulfilling their logistic mandate and simultaneously carrying out a number of high profile visits. The maintenance teams of the LOGBATT have done yeoman service by in situ repairs of electric gadgets in all positions.

UNDOF continued to look for lighter movements in the form of sports competitions and welfare trips. I am so happy that our peacekeepers have been able to visit holy places in the close vicinity of the mission area of operations. It was heartening to see the enthusiasm with which our women peacekeepers celebrated the Women's Day.

The hard work and efforts put in by each and every member of UNDOF is commendable! We hope to maintain our operational focus in the heightened state of security and keep our peacekeepers out of harm's way. May God bring peace to the region.

Thank You, Danke, Salamat, Vinaka, Dhanyavad, Shukran, Toe Dah!



Lieutenant General Iqbal Singh Singha  
Head of Mission & Force Commander UNDOF

## Deputy Force Commander's Address



I would like to extend my heartiest congratulations to the peacekeepers of NEPCON and IRECON who have returned home safely after successfully accomplishing their mission. The representation of their professional ability and dedication to accomplish assigned tasks given the harsh climatic and operational challenges is applauded. I wish them all the best.

Also, let me take this opportunity to welcome the incoming Irish Force Reserve Company at Camp Faouar and the Nepalese Infantry Unit Peacekeepers deployed in Mount Hermon. You are now members of the UNDOF family and I am sure that as your predecessors had done, you will maintain or improve your performance within the mandates of UNDOF.

As the situation of UNDOF is unpredictable and the internal crisis remain tense, the contingent commanders and the troops on the ground need to be vigilant and be prepared for operational challenges. I urge you all to continue to work together at all times, because it is only through unity and cooperation that we can move this mission forward for the better.

Finally, I wish you all a prosperous “Happy New Year-2071” as a new sunshine has risen in my homeland.

Brigadier General Hari Bahadur Basnet  
Deputy Force Commander UNDOF

## Chief of Staff's Address

*Mabuhay!*

As your new Chief of Staff, it is a great privilege addressing the gallant members of UNDOF in this journal for the first time. I am grateful for the brilliance and guiding ways of the Force Commander and Deputy Force Commander, paving for my quick integration in the mission. I marveled at how professionalism exudes from everyone in this mission. Truly, I am working with professional Peacekeepers and real team players.

The perils peacekeepers in this mission face every day are enough to dampen the spirit of the faint hearted and shake the stance of those with weak resolve. Since my stay however, I neither see anyone intimidated by the dangers nor anybody relinquishing the degree of commitment in doing their job. What I see are peacekeepers who work every day with vigor and zeal. During my line tours and visits to the UNDOF positions, I was very pleased to see our personnel exhibiting high state of discipline and morale though assigned to stressful environs. One will be amazed to see our peacekeepers managing to sport a genuine welcoming smile despite the temporary curtailment of some privileges due to the continuing threat of prevailing situation. The intrepidity and resolve that radiates from each one of you is without question.

Lastly, let us continue to display a high degree of professionalism and efficiency expected to an UNDOF peacekeeper. Our advocacy for peace binds us together and brings us in this mission. It is by working together that will keep us in the right track as we pursue the mandate of UNDOF and hold on to our motto, “One Mission, One Team and One Goal.”



Colonel Ezra James Palomero  
Chief of Staff UNDOF

## Chief Mission Support Address



About 30 years ago when I was a student in the military academy, 5 years before my first UN operation and 16 years before I became a UN civilian, the instructor told me that the principles that should guide the support of a military force were; Planning; Efficiency; Simplicity; Cooperation and Flexibility. I have worked by those principles ever since and I want to ask you to help me apply them in UNDOF.

**Planning** – In order to have a successful support plan, we need every member of UNDOF to be thinking about future needs. Not just for you and your rotation but for your replacements as well.

**Efficiency** – I ask you to take care of the UNs property and resource as if they belonged to you, because they do belong to you, as a member of the UN.

**Simplicity** – Simply, the UN is required to provide rations, accommodation, transport and equipment to the best standard. If you are not being supported to that standard, simply tell us and we'll fix it.

**Cooperation** – The support division military and civilian alike, have no role but to support our front line peacekeepers. If there is a problem that your chain of command cannot fix, tell us and we will fix it.

**Flexibility** – Everybody in UNDOF has changed in the last year except the civilian staff, but it's our job to adapt to the requirements of each new contingent. Do remember, Flexibility is a support principle – but Surprise is not.

That reminds me of a joke I once heard- There was a Fijian, a Pilipino, an Indian, an Irishman, a Nepali and a Dutchman sitting on top of a hill.....continued on Page 94

Mr Bernard Lee  
Chief Mission Support UNDOF

## Force Commander conferred with Slovenian Medal for Multinational Cooperation



FC is presented with the Slovenian Medal for Multinational Cooperation by Brig Gen Milan Obreza, Slovenian Army.

honour Lt Gen I S Singha with Slovenian Medal For Multinational Cooperation Grade I on 20 Mar, 2014.

The award was bestowed upon him by Brigadier General Milan Obreza, Slovenian Army in presence of Her Excellency, Ms Alenka Suhadolnik, Ambassador of Slovenia to Israel for his dynamic leadership, ensuring high degree of intermission cooperation and excellent synergy achieved with the troop contributing countries.

Lt Gen Iqbal Singh Singha, VSM has been at the helm of the affairs since the situation in Syria started deteriorating in 2012; wherein the mission witnessed unprecedented and challenging occasions; like abductions of the peacekeepers, carjacking and vandalism of UN property. It is during these trying and unpredictable times, that the international community took notice of Lt Gen I S Singha's qualities of perseverance, dedication, planning acumen, excellent negotiating skills and zeal to achieve World Peace. FC prevailed to maintain the mandate in cooperation with UNTSO, while ensuring the safety and security of the peacekeepers who are under his operational command and control.

The Slovenian UNMOs debriefing back home commended and appreciated the leadership qualities and measures taken to ensure high standards of safety and security while fostering a cheerful environment amidst the crisis. Hence to express their gratitude, the Slovenian Army decided to



Article by: LtCol S. Mahadick, MA FC



### **The new Chief of Staff (COS)**

Col Ezra James Palomero Enriquez was born on 25 July, 1964 at Cateel, Davao Oriental, Philippines. He graduated on 12 Mar, 1988 and commissioned as Second Lieutenant in the Armed Forces of the Philippines. He served as Platoon Leader, Company Commander and battalion Staff Officer where he experienced action fighting the insurgents in the Philippines. He has also held numerous appointments in field staff and command positions.

His major assignments include: Deputy APMC, PA; Battalion Commander, AABN, LAD; PROJ MGR, C41SR Helicopter, HQ PA; and Commander TF MINERVA among others. He completed various military career courses including Australian Command and Staff College. He is a qualified Aviator. He holds two Masters namely: Masters in Business Admin for Executives from South Western University, Cebu City, Philippines and Master of Management in Defence Studies from University of Canberra, Australia. He is a well decorated soldier. Among which are Military Merit Medal for combat accomplishment and a Distinguished Service Star. He is a biker and a badminton player and is married to Deneel P. Enriquez and is blessed with two sons.



### **The new Deputy Chief Integrated Support Services (DCISS)**

Lt Col Harinder Singh Billing was born on 21 May 1978 in Punjab, India. He is a fourth generation army officer, and all male siblings of his family in the last four generations have served in the armed forces.

An alumnus of Indian Military Academy, he was commissioned into the 'SURA-SOI' Regiment of the Corps of Engineers. He holds a degree in Mechanical Engineering from Army Institute of Technology, Pune and a Master's Degree in Defence Studies from Madras University. A graduate of the Prestigious Defence Services Staff College, Wellington he has tenanted the appointments of a Staff Officer to a three star General in the Army Headquarters and Brigade General Staff Officer Grade-1 of a Mountain Brigade. Besides Commanding his Company in Mountainous, Jungle, Deserts and Counter Insurgency Environment, the officer has been an Instructor Adjutant in the coveted 'Officer Cadets Training Wing' of the army. He has had a two year stint in Myanmar on a Ministry of External Affairs assignment. The officer is recipient of a Vice Chief of Army Staff Commendation, three Army Commander Commendations and two Director General Border Roads Commendations. He is married to Lt Col Poonam Rawat, who is presently posted in a Mountain Brigade and is a third generation army officer. They have two children - son 'Zorawar' and daughter 'Zenja'. His hobbies include golf, horse riding, music and writing.



### **The new Chief Security Officer (CSO)**

Alhaji Fanday Turay (Colonel RTD) was born in the Segbwema, Republic of Sierra Leone. He graduated from the prestigious Infantry Cadet School, Benguema Training Center, Freetown. As a young officer, he held several appointments while serving in Liberia as part of the ECOWAS intervention Force (ECOMOG).

Colonel Turay (RTD) successfully completed all his courses and training up to the rank of a COL. He passed Staff Course (Psc) at the Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College. He held all requisite Infantry posts up to Bde Commander of the Western Bde. Fanday, as he is popularly called, is also lawyer by profession. He graduated from the Thames Valley University, London, with a Bachelor of Laws Degree and a Masters in Law (LLM), specialized in International Transport and Maritime Law, at the London Metropolitan University, London. He has served both at the UN HQ and in the field, including United Nations Mission in Liberia as Deputy Chief Security Officer. While in Ethiopia with the UNOAU, he served and also conducted security planning and supported the African Union Missions in Somalia (AMISOM), Central African Republic (MISCA) and AFISMA in Mali. He won national accolade for gallantry while serving in Liberia. His hobbies include listening to music and playing sports. He is married and blessed with three children.



## The new Chief Liaison Protocol Officer (CLPO)

Lt Col Chris Brouns was born on February 7th 1966 in Maastricht, the Netherlands. He joined the Netherlands Armed Forces in 1987 and graduated from Officers Training in 1989. He started his military career as platoon commander in a mechanized artillery Bn and as launch officer in a rocket artillery Bn. After which he fulfilled postings as second in command of a M109 artillery battery and company commander within an initial training unit.

In 1997 he was assigned as intelligence officer to an artillery battalion and later on to a mechanized brigade. In 1996-1997 he was deployed to UNTAES as liaison officer to the NATO SFOR mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In 1999 he was deployed as intelligence officer to the Dutch KFOR battalion in Orahovac, Kosovo. From 2004 on he worked as senior trainer-coach for command teams on Coy, Bn and Bde level. In 2006-2007 he was deployed as commander of FOB Ripley in the Uruzgan province, Afghanistan. After completing the Advanced Comd and Staff Cse in 2009 he was assigned to postings within the Defence Staff. First within the Directorate for Operational Readiness and since 2011 as staff officer to the Inspector-general of the Armed Forces. LtCol Brouns holds an Executive Masters Degree in Security and Defence. He is married to Sylvia and has two adult daughters.



## The new Chief Operations Officer (COO)

Cmdr Marika Vosawale was born on 19 October, 1962 at the CWM Hospital, Suva. He was commissioned into the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) as a Lieutenant on 01 July, 1988 and was transferred to the Fiji Navy on 30 January, 1992.

Cdr Vosawale has completed numerous courses abroad including; UN Military Contingent Officers Cse in India; Navy Advanced Command and Staff Cse at the Naval Command College in China; Maritime Law and Security in Australia. He also completed Search and Rescue Air Directing Officer Cse in New Zealand. The Senior Officer's Command appointments include; CO RFNS Kula, RFNS Kikau, RFNS Stanley Brown, RFNS Kiro, RFNS Viti and Naval Training Officer. His Staff appointments include; Director Maritime Surveillance Centre; Maritime Commander, Fiji Navy; Support Commander and Deputy Commander Fiji Navy. Cdr Vosawale has served in two overseas missions including Multinational Force and Observer (MFO) mission in Sinai, and United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) as a Military Observer. He is decorated with the Commission Warrant by his Excellency, The President of Republic of Fiji Islands and Commander in Chief of the RFMF. He has also been awarded the Meritorious Service Decoration. Cmdr Vosawale is married.



## The new Commanding Officer IRECON (CO IRECON)

LtCol Paul Kennedy joined the Defence Forces in October 1982 and following Cadet Training was commissioned into the Infantry Corps in April 1984. He is a graduate of the Senior Comd and Staff School of the Irish Defence Forces Military College (IDFMC), and holds a Master's Degree in Leadership Management and Defence Studies. He also holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Degree (Economics & Geography) from the National University of Ireland (Galway). He has held numerous command appointments throughout his career at Pl, Coy and Bn level. He has also served at both Bde and Defence Forces HQ level and was an instructor in the Cadet School, of the IDFMC. Prior to his present appointment he served as the OC the 3rd Infantry Bn. He has completed six (6) tours of duty to date – four (4) to UNIFIL (LEBANON) at Bn and FHQ level, one (1) to UNMIL (LIBERIA) as a Coy Commander, and one (1) tour of duty to MINURCAT (Chad) where he worked at the FHQ level. LtCol Kennedy is married to Liz and they have two children Nicholas and Rebecca. He has a keen interest in all sport including Gaelic Games (football and hurling), soccer, rugby, and golf. His hobbies also include reading, music and travelling.

# Change of Commands (CoC)



20 Mar 14 - Outgoing COGG-T, LtCol Ljubo Pajic hands over Command to Comdt Liam Kiely.



20 Mar 14 - Guests at OGG Change of Command.



25 Mar 14 - Outgoing CO NEPCON, Maj Dahal Rajan hands over Command to LtCol Mohan Chhetri.



25 Mar 14 - Outgoing CO NEPCON, Maj Dahal Rajan gives his farewell speech.



27 Mar 14 - Outgoing CO IRECON, LtCol Brendan Delaney hands over Command to LtCol Kennedy.



27 Mar 14 - Outgoing CO IRECON, LtCol Brendan Delaney receives Force Commanders Commendation from the FC and HoM, LtGen I.S. Singha.

# Visits to UNDOF



17-18 Jan 14 - Director AMEAD, DPKO Izumi Nakamitsu visited CZ. She was received by FC, LtGen I.S. Singha.



28 - 29 Jan 14 - Hon. Voltaire Gazmin, Cabinet Secretary, Department of National Defence, Philippines visited CZ.



09 Mar 14 - LtGen Alan Luga, Vice Chief of Staff Philippine Army visited CZ and was received by FC, LtGen Singha and COS, Col Enriquez.



31 Mar - 01 Apr 14 - Fiji's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Peter Thompson and Ambassador - at - Large, Maj Gen Ioane Naivalurua visited Camp Zioanni and Outposts in Alpha side.



## Fiji Contingents' first high level visit

On 02 April, 2014 Fiji's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Peter Thomson, and Ambassador-at-Large Major General Ioane Naivalurua completed a two-day visit to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in Golan Heights. The visit included meetings with UNDOF officials and the FIJICON serving with UNDOF.

The Fijian Ambassadors were welcomed and farewelled by Fiji's UNDOF contingent under the command of Lt Col Sitiveni Qiliho. They met with the officers and personnel to hear of their experience and register any points of concern. The Ambassadors were pleased to observe that the contingent's esprit de corps and morale were high, that the personnel were in good health, and that all concerned were proud of the solid contribution provided by Fiji to UNDOF.

LtCol Qiliho and UNDOF officers escorted the Fijian Ambassadors to OP 51 and POS 22 along the Alpha line of the AOS to overview the northern zone of the AOR covered by Fiji. They were able to inspect facilities in the OP's and assess the operating conditions of the FIJICON.

At UNDOF's Camp Ziouani, the Ambassadors received a mission operational brief, including details of the current security situation in Golan. The UNDOF Force Commander, Lieutenant General Iqbal Singha, attended the briefing and held separate talks with the Ambassadors in which he expressed his satisfaction with the high calibre of the Fiji contingent's contribution to UNDOF.

Ambassador Thomson also presented the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMS) medals to LtCol Qiliho and Cmdr Marika Vosawale for their participation in UNSMS in 2012.



Officers of FIJICON with Ambassador Peter Thomson and MajGen Naivalurua.



Cmdr Marika Vosawale receives the UNSMIS medal from Ambassador Peter Thomson.



Above: Quarter Guard at Posn 22



Right: Posn 22 Commander, Sgt Nasilivata with the Ambassadors.



MajGen Naivalurua observes FIJIBATT AO from Mt Bental.



Far Right: The Ambassadors meet troops from Posn 22

## PHILBATT medal parade

On 22 Mar 2014, the 7th Philippine Contingent to Golan Heights were presented with UNDOF medals. The FC, LtGen S. Singha praised the efforts and hard work of the men and wished them well during the parade. Immediately after the parade, a banner with the words "Let Peace Reign in Golan" was attached to balloons and released by FC and members of PHILBATT.



PHILBATT troops march past with new medals



LtGen Singha and PHILBATT troops release best wishes banner attached to blue and white balloons

## A visit by Secretary of National Defence



Hon. Gazmin and FC exchange gifts

On 29 Jan 2014, the Secretary of National Defense, Hon. Voltaire Gazmin visited the Philippine troops in Camp Ziouani. The CO PHILBATT, LtCol Ted Dumusmog led the 7th Philippine Contingent to Golan Heights (PCGH) in a ceremony that honoured the arrival of the Hon. Voltaire Gazmin. He was accompanied by Hon Calonge, Ambassador to Israel, together with the former FC UNDOF, MGen Natalio Ecarma (rtd) and other dignitaries from Israel working for the Philippines.

During his visit, Hon. Gazmin was warmly welcomed by FC, LtGen I.S. Singha and was briefed on the general situation in UNDOF AOR. A briefing highlighting the operational status and significant concerns of PHILBATT was also given to the Secretary.

During his address to the troops, Hon. Voltaire Gazmin reemphasised the virtues of bearing and grooming for soldiers in light of they working in an international environment representing Philippines. He reminded the troops to uphold dignity and morality of the mission. The outgoing COS UNDOF, Col Cirilito Sobejana, joined Hon. Gazmin in the unveiling of the 7thPCGH marker constructed at the mini-park.

## Force Commander visits 'Alamid Coy'

On 20 Jan 2014, the UNDOF FC, LtGen Iqbal S. Singha, was accorded with traditional honours when he visited the 1st "Alamid" Coy in position 60 and other UNDOF positions within its AO. He also visited positions 56 and 68. The heightened security alert on Bravo side did not deter the FC from successfully completing his visit. The purpose of his visits to the different positions was to assess the actual situation of the troops on the ground as well as to inspect the operational readiness of each unit. During his visit, LtGen Singha was briefed on the current situation within the AOR.

## A true soldier

**“I’ve had a great life and loved every minute of it and being in the Infantry for forty three years has kept me fit all these years. I’ve had to train hard to keep up with the younger guys...” SGT Tony Fitzgerald**



**W**ith 42 years of experience and ten peacekeeping missions in his hands, SGT Tony Fitzgerald is one of the few longest serving soldiers in the Golan Heights. He will finally hang up his uniform in April next year.

Recently, SGT Fitzgerald was recognized as the peacekeeper of the month in UNDOF due to his hard work and perseverance. It comes with no surprise if you look at his previous achievements on and off the field. In the 1970’s, he was mainly involved in internal security on his first tour with the Inf Gp in Sinai. Having completed his NCO Cse he was promoted to CPL. In the 1980’s the SNCO’s focus changed. He completed several Mortar and Anti -Tank Courses.

His career peaked in the 1990’s. He was promoted to SGT and was involved in the conduct of 3 Star Training Courses as well as other Training Courses with three different training Bde depots including 57Bn, 64 Bn and 66 Bn. As a competitive soldier and a fit sportsman, he partook in All Army Pl Attack Competition, All Army Cross Country, All Army Orienteering, and All Army Soccer competitions. He also competed three times in the Dublin marathon; once in the New York marathon; and once in the Amsterdam marathon.

Sgt Fitzgerald’s new area of focus switched to Logistics in 2000. As well as undergoing local Log Courses, he travelled to Bosnia for the 13 Component Log Cse. He served as a Logistician in the 89 Bn and 106 Bn Lebanon, the 91 Bn Liberia and now finally, the 43 Inf Gp Syria.

**On retiring next year, SGT Fitzgerald says ‘If you are a professional football player, you get to play the game you love maybe until you are 35years. I am a professional soldier and I got to play the game that I love until I am 60 years.’**



Sgt Tony Fitzgerald is congratulated by LtGen I. S. Singha during medal parade

## St Patrick's Day parade

**A**s it is customary to wear shamrocks on St Patricks Day, all those on parade as well as their guests wore shamrocks. The largest share of shamrocks went to the Force Commander and Head of Mission, LtGen I.S. Singha. He was presented with a pot of Shamrock by the Chief Military Information Cell and National Contingent Commander, LtCol John O’Neill before the parade.

In his speech, the guest of honor, LtGen Singha mentioned that the deployment of IRECON in September 2013 was an important landmark in the recent history of UNDOF. He mentioned that the capabilities brought by the Mechanized Infantry unit had enhanced the Force’s ability to conduct its mission, improved its self defence capability and also provided an asset willing and able to ensure the safety and security of UN personnel throughout the AOR.

LtGen Singha further expressed his gratitude towards the members of IRECON first rotation for their dedication and professionalism. “Your dedication and professionalism are admirable and on behalf of all peacekeepers of UNDOF, I express my gratitude to you for your unstinted support,” he said.

# Medal Parade on a National day

On Monday, 17 March 2014, the FRC, composed of 115 members of 43rd Infantry Group of the 2nd Brigade of the Irish Defence Forces stood tall and proud in a military parade in Camp Faour. The parade served two purposes; to honor St Patrick's Day and to receive UNDOF medals.



## Address by the CO IRECON, LtCol Brendan Delaney

Force Commander and HoM,  
LtGen Singha, Mr. Jim Phelan,  
distinguished guests, colleagues.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the first Irish Contingent Medal parade, on what is our National day.

Ireland became a member of the United Nations in 1955. Since 1958, the Defence Forces have a continuous presence on peace support operations, mainly in the Middle East. However, in recent years, following the end of the cold

war, Defence Forces personnel have also found themselves in many other parts of the globe as peacekeepers.

The Defence Forces have a proud tradition of successful participation in peace support operations.

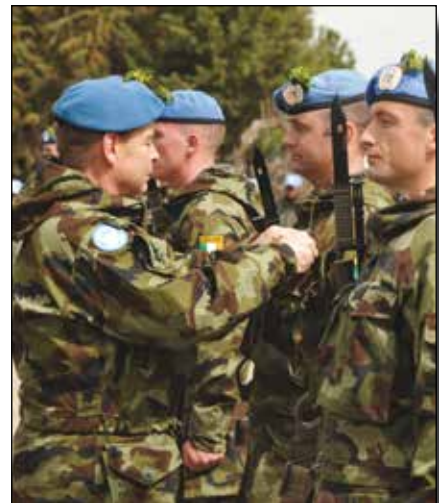
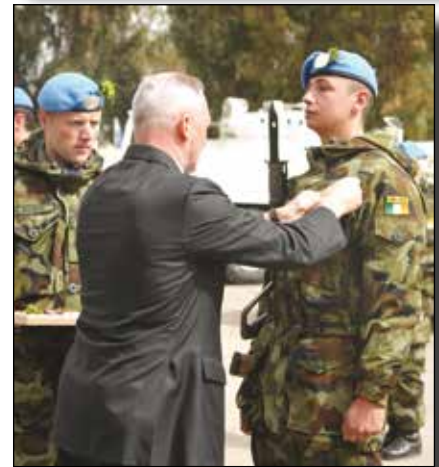
Assembled here in front of us we have 37 soldiers on their first deployment to an overseas mission. Within the remaining 78, there is a total of 238 missions, averaging at approx 3 tours each. These tours cover 10 mission areas, stretching from East Timor to the Congo, from the Sinai to Liberia to Afghanistan, from Chad to the Balkans to the Middle East.

To the men and women of the Irish Contingent, congratulations on a job very well done! When I spoke with you in the cookhouse in the Glen of Imaal, many months ago now, I told you that I intended the trip to be a positive one in your professional and personal development, but it depended on you approaching it with the correct attitude. That attitude has been displayed throughout the trip. You can be very proud of your contribution and the professionalism that you have displayed. You have displayed the requisite qualities that have been the trademark of the Defence Forces down the years; hard work, commitment, professionalism, camaraderie, fortitude and you have embodied the UNDOF theme of 'One Mission, one team, one goal.' I wish today to publicly acknowledge that hard work and commitment.

For the next 6 months you will be the only people in the Defence Forces wearing the UNDOF medal. Wear the medal proudly, you certainly earned it, give yourself a deserved pat on the back and enjoy the rest of the day.

Go raibh maith agaibh go leir.

Thank you.



IRECON soldiers receive UNDOF medals from LtGen Singha, Mr James Phelan and LtCol John O'Neill

## INDCON medal parade

A sense of exuberance and accomplishment descended over Camp Ziouani on 07 March 2014 as the 15th Rotation of INDCON prepared itself to receive the UNDOF medal. This ceremony marked the completion of 90 days of service, in which all members of LOGBATT qualified for the award of the UNDOF medal.



The Indian contingent carried out a Medal Parade in perfect coordination that displayed the high level of integration, cooperation and coordination that the contingent enjoys as they carry out their operational tasks.

The parade was reviewed by Lt Gen IS Singha, VSM, Force Commander and Head of Mission UNDOF, and was commanded by Maj Rajesh Biswas, Deputy Commanding Officer of INDCON. The guest list comprised military and civilian staff members of UNDOF, host nation personnel and other officials. The parade consisted of six officers, 12 warrant officers and 72 lower ranks lined up in four squads that were commanded by Maj Devenderjeet Chauhan, Maj Rohit Bedi, Capt Sunil Kumar and Capt Pradeep Singh, SM respectively. The privilege of bringing the National Flag on parade was entrusted upon Capt R Vignesh. The Force Commander in his address lauded the troops of the LOGBATT for their display of military professionalism, discipline

and conduct. Lt Col Sanjeev Haryal, SC, CO LOGBATT, also expressed his gratitude to fellow members of UNDOF for their support and called upon the LOGBATT team to continue their excellent work.

The parade ended with a sumptuous lunch at the International Kitchen. On the menu was a host of dishes prepared by the Indian chefs including traditional Indian dishes. This day and its events will remain etched in the memory of each member of INDCON, for it was the day when they were formally recognized for the efforts as a 'Blue Beret' in Golan.



# Lohri celebrations

Lohri was celebrated with INDCON LOGBATT with great zeal and enthusiasm on 13 Jan 2014.

International staff, locals of Golan Heights, Israel and Indians in and around Golan were invited as guests. In the evening, with the setting of the sun, huge bonfire was lit in the ground beside the International Kitchen and all persons gathered around the rising flames, circled around (parikrama) the bonfire and threw puffed rice, popcorn and other munchies into the fire, as per tradition and sang popular folk songs. After the parikrama, persons met each other, exchanged greetings and gifts, and distributed prasad (offerings made to god). A cultural programme was organised which reflected the diverse culture of India and gave the visitors an insight into our rich culture to the people from different countries.



## INDCON Holi celebration

Holi is the festival of colors and is meant to welcome the spring and win the blessings of God for good harvests and fertility of the land. It is one of the most fun-filled and boisterous of Indian festivals.



Holi is an occasion that brings in unadulterated joy and mirth, fun and play and music and dance. The Indian contingent celebrated the festival of colors, Holi, on 23 March 2014 at Camp Ziouani. The occasion was marked by lots of colors and water mixed with a great deal of zeal and camaraderie. For the occasion a special water pit was prepared to welcome everyone. Lt Gen IS Singha, VSM, Force Commander and Head of Mission UNDOF was the chief guest on the occasion which saw the members of the various contingents in UNDOF participating with Indians in this festival with great enthusiasm. Despite belonging to a wide spectrum of cultures and traditions, members of UNDOF participate in each other's celebrations with unabated passion and fervor. It was a singular experience for everyone who had not previously witnessed the famed 'Festival of Colors'. The Indian contingent was elated on its part to play hosts to an incredible assembly of friends.

## UMOJA - A Change Management

As the UN signifies unity for the common causes for humanity, so does Umoja. It is one common, integrated technological solution replacing numerous legacy software systems including SUN, Mercury and IMIS. It brings the benefits of synergies and synchronization of different functions and streamlines them to increase output and minimizes lead and service delivery time.

At managerial level, with the implementation of UMOJA, there is better control and visibility of accounts and assets holding of the organization and brings the UN up to par with the corporate practices. It will assist the organization to generate IPSAS compliant reports, one of the key objectives of its implementation. As mentioned earlier, the system enhances the visibility all across the spectrum and it provides end user, the member states (provider) a real time view of the accounts and hence empowers everyone along the chain to make informed decisions.

The UMOJA system went online on 1 November 2013 in UNDOF along with many other mission of cluster-1. The Umoja Foundation solution includes modules for Finance, Procurement, Logistics and Supply Chain functionality and it is intended that HR module will be integrated in the next phase.

For the finance section, the new system facilitates and manages transactions in a more effective way.

The implementation of the new system was not without challenges as with any other change management. These challenges were addressed through continuous guidance and support from the colleagues at HQ Umoja Team. It was a true example of team work. The Mission went through a transitional "ramp up" phase during which users are all logging in to the solution, placing orders and transactions and learning how to integrate Umoja into the Missions' daily operations.

Training was a key element that resulted in the better know how and success of the UMOJA implementation.

Many congratulations to our colleagues in UNDOF and UNHQ for their extraordinary effort to implement Umoja, despite difficult challenges due to their complex political and geographic situations.



ROD Finance team - now using UMOJA



Camp Faour Finance team - UMOJA users



Human Resources Personnel also feel the benefit of UMOJA

## Development continues in UNDOF mission

Shelters continue to be constructed in Camp Faour in the midst of the war in Syria. In a span of six months, a total of forty four new shelters have been set up in the Camp. This new change is attributed to the increase in the number of troops and international Support Staff in the mission.



New accommodation blocks in Camp Faour for level 1+ medical team and additional support staff

With the deteriorating situation in Syria in 2013, the number of troops to the UNDOF mission has consequently been increased. This included a surgical team for the new level 1+ medical facility in Camp Faour. As in any organization, increasing manpower means additional work for the existing support staff. To maintain efficiency and effectiveness, UNDOF employed additional support staff in the areas of movement, transportation, human resources, finance and administration. The numbers of civilian staff continued to increase even further after a visit by the Security Assessment Team from New York HQ. The team identified the need to increase the number of personnel in the UNDOF Security Section so that comprehensive analysis on the situation in the mission area could be compiled and be disseminated.

Construction work is a common sight in Camp Faour. Old shelters are either being demolished or refurbished to accommodate the additional staff in UNDOF. So far, in addition to other projects, the Engineers section has been working around the clock to complete the accommodation units. With the help of national staff and sappers from contingents, they have been able to complete a total of forty four accommodation units, two transit accommodations and two office spaces within a period of six months. To sustain the residents of Camp Faour, the engineers' team have also built a newer and bigger Waste Water Treatment Plant to optimise the scarce water resource at Camp Faour. The focus of their attention is now on extending the dining hall and replacing the old cooler and freezer units.

These developments and capacity building efforts in the mission have generated positive vibes and confidence of the TCC's. And with a sound administrative foundation and logistic base, we are operationally more effective. But it goes without saying that although we are better prepared, we still need to be mindful of our safety and security. The derivative of this is the ongoing challenge to strengthen the positions in this volatile environment.



New Observation Posts in Camp Faour

# International Women's Day in Golan

It was an air of festivity as UNDOF women peacekeepers gathered to mark the widely celebrated International Women's Day. With the theme "Inspiring Change", FC and HoM Lt Gen I.S. Singha highlighted the transition of women from traditional roles to modern roles and the need to continue to empower women.



It was also an opportunity for the women of this multi cultured mission to showcase a portion of their culture through their traditional attire and dances. The women further made a statement of their commitment to supporting advocacy for women's advancement everywhere in every way by marching to the beats of drums through Camp Zioanni. The Force Commander (FC) and Head of Mission (HoM), Lt Gen Iqbal S. Singha was the guest of honor and thanked all the women peacekeepers for their contribution to the running of the mission.

In his speech, LtGen Singha mentioned that the role of women in society was constantly questioned and for centuries women have struggled to find their place in a world that is predominantly male oriented. He said that now the twenty first century brought on its trail a new hope for women. "Dramatic changes have happened in the role, ambitions and attitude of women in the last few decades of twentieth century.

Women have departed from their traditional role of mothers and wives alone. From a non-entity they have become women of substance and have been able to establish an individuality of their own in the modern society," he said.

Being a supporter of women's rights himself, the FC said that ever since he took over as HoM, his endeavor has been to enhance the number of women peacekeepers in the mission. "It is no mean achievement to say that four out of six posts that I interviewed last year have gone to women. Unfortunately, we have been losing women to other missions at a faster rate. I have observed that the mobility factor is more prevalent amongst ladies due to various factors," he added.



LtGen Singha continued to highlight how vital the role of women in UN missions can be at times especially in troubled areas where most of the atrocities are suffered by women and children. "It is women peacekeepers who can best communicate with them and realize and alleviate actual problems. In this way give a humane touch to any peacekeeping mission, as well as inspire not only their colleagues or comrades, but all the women out there who want to have equal rights and opportunities. He concluded his inspiring speech by calling on the ladies to continue to aspire and work for equal opportunities while reaffirming commitment of moving forward," he said.



# All work and no play...NEPCON soldiers finally take a break

Floating on sea was a dreamlike experience... an experience of a lifetime. Since their arrival into the UNDOF mission on 19 Jul 2013, NEPCON soldiers finally take leave off Mt Hermon for a visit to the Alpha Side.

Don't know if 'all work and no play made Jack a dull boy' or not... but working inside the same premises for more than seven months surely does make peacekeepers dull. Nepalese contingent have been on duty at four positions on Mt Hermon for last seven months, most of them not having any opportunity whatsoever to take time off from Hermon due to security reasons and movement restrictions. So a break was well deserved.

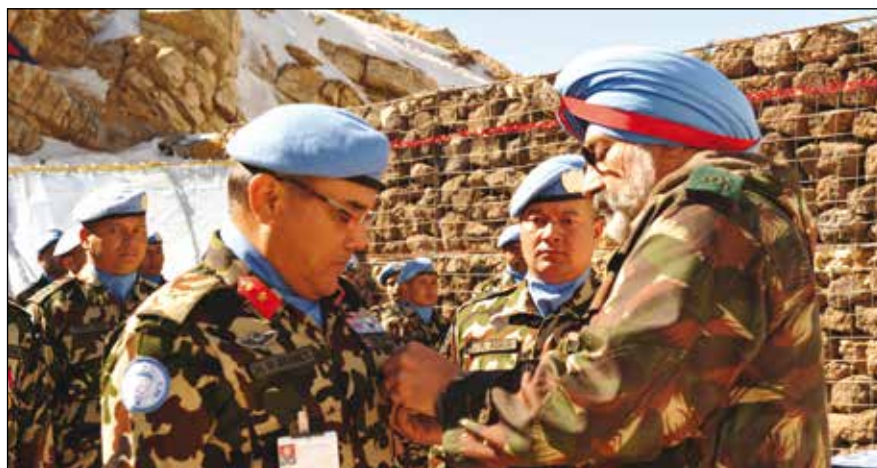
Bearing in mind that not all could go on leave, the 62 NEPCON personnel were divided into three groups so that each group at a time would go on a trip to the Alpha Side commencing on the 22 Feb, 2014. This arrangement ensured that the Operational Strength at Mt Hermon positions did not fall below 75 per cent. Each group reached Camp Zioanni (CZ) a day before to spend a night. This in itself was the first for most of us. On the early morning of the first day of the trip we boarded bus to Haifa and enjoyed the roadside view until we reached Haifa World Bahai Gardens. The beauty of the garden and serenity of the Shrine was a pleasing and mind relaxing experience. We also stopped by the sea side and the port for pictures before climbing Mt. Carmel for the panoramic view. We even spotted Golan from up there! We visited the Tank Museum and continued our excursion through Tel Aviv centre toward Old Jaffa. After 45 minutes of walk about and meeting the local people and street vendors, it was time for some action at Tel Aviv beach. Being from the landlocked country of Nepal, it was quite an excitement for us. We enjoyed the sand, sea and setting sun with a sense of total freedom.

The second day was as busy as the first day. We visited Bethlehem and the old city before heading for the Dead Sea. Floating on sea was a dream like experience...an experience of a life time. The mud bath and the sea experience were amazing. As the sun began to set in the horizon of the Dead Sea our breathtaking tour had to come to an end. The tour was an experience of a life time. We thank the FIJI BATT for organizing the trip and providing us with experienced drivers. We also thank LOGBATT for the logistic support. We must say it was AWESOME trip!

Article and Photograph by: Capt Karkik Bibek, MO NEPCON



## NEPCON receive UNDOF medals



On 11 Feb 2014, members of NEPCON, including the Deputy Force Commander BrigGen Hari B. Basnet received UNDOF medals from the FC, LtGen I.S. Singha at Posn 12. The FC thanked the NEPCON troops for their contribution toward the mission; especially in occupying the high altitudes of Golan during winter.

The DFC receives the UNDOF medal from FC.

## Wheelers and Dirt Movers on the move

After J-CON withdrew from the UNDOF mission on 13th Jan 2013, all work involving heavy machineries came to a standstill. Seven months later, 31 experienced operators and drivers from FIJICON arrived into the mission and brought life to LOGBATT Transport/ Heavy Equipment Pl.

When asked about the challenges that he faced as the Commander of the Transport/ Heavy Equipment Pl, Capt Eminioni Nabogobogi's greatest challenge was his greatest strength... in having to lead highly qualified and experienced SNCO's who are technical experts in their respective fields; each of whom with an average of 15 – 25 years' service and experience and having served up to an average of five missions with the UN in the Middle East.

Being under OPCON to LOGBATT, the primary role of the Transport/ Heavy Equipment Pl is to provide second line transportation support which include; troops' inbound and outbound rotations, fuel and gas run to ROD and Beirut, and transportation of UN Goods and Equipment from Alpha to Bravo side and vice versa. The Heavy equipment component of the Pl executes tasks directed by the Force Engineers which includes patrol route maintenance within the AOS, snow clearing and other tasks directed by the Force Engineers.

The wheelers and dirt movers have been on the move since the day they took over. Under the direct supervision of Cpl Etimodi Rusiate, the drivers and operators have conducted patrol route maintenance in the PHILBATT AO from POS 80 to POS 85. Also, they have participated in the INDCON and PHILBATT inbound and outbound rotation of troops in Nov and Dec 2013. Moreover, despite the tense situation in the AO, they have assisted PHILBATT in delivering rations to the four POS's in the South in February this year.

With experience as the key factor, the Tpt/Hvy Eqpt Pl from FIJIBATT have easily stepped into the shoes that J-CON stepped out off.



# Joint Operations Centre - Always on call

The situation has changed drastically due to the Syrian conflict and we are constantly adapting ourselves to the ever-changing dynamics in the UNDOF Area of Operations. The situation is very unique, every day is a learning experience in itself and we have to keep ourselves updated and continually review our own functioning and procedures to tackle the situation. It is the kind of job which makes every day a new day.



Team members of the Joint Operations Centre

It is 0500hrs in the morning, I got a call, “There is no water supply in the washroom!” I explain that it must be a temporary problem and could be fixed if they call the engineering section. Then in the next half an hour, I get five more calls from different people, complaining of the same problem. My response is the same. I ask myself, why are they calling me for something that doesn’t concern the JOC. Then I realize that it is due to the faith that they repose in us. They believe that we will help them out 24X7 and that we will efficiently fix emergency situations or mobilize those who would do so. I man the radio sets of ZERO (JOC signaler) and send him to the engineering officer’s accommodation and I tell him to pass on the message. Finally when the message was conveyed, the engineers fixed the problem in no time.

This was just one of the many calls that we get, sometimes asking about phone numbers, convoy timings, how to access blue pages etc. All these ensure that when on duty you have your hands full. The reason that we always help out is that even if it is not our job, but it is an opportunity to help a person in need. An opportunity to help a fellow peacekeeper. It’s the concept of ONE MISSION, ONE TEAM, ONE GOAL. It is all these events which make the time pass by so quickly that it feels like I came to the mission just a couple of days ago and now it is just about two months left to go. Working with a very cohesive and tight knit team has been a great learning experience.

The JOC is headed by the COO, who is assisted by the SSO-OPS. Under him he has four duty officers who work on 24 hour shifts and five signalers who work 12 hour shifts. We also have two warrant officers and the SSO- ORG PLANS to assist us. Our team keeps a watch 24X7, which is all the more necessary in the dynamic situation that prevails. We are responsible for maintaining real time situation awareness and to synergize the efforts of the mission to perform the tasks with utmost efficiency and cohesiveness. We are the nerve center of the mission, but without the help and cooperation of all the elements of the mission we would not be able to perform our task.

Article by: Capt Sunil Kumar, OPSO

# UNDOF Sports Festival - 'Uniting UNDOF in Passion and Excellence'

**Without passion there is no team. And without a team, there is no unity. The UNDOF Sports Festival was introduced to promote teamwork and excellence in the mission.**

Everyone has some form of passion in their lives; be it singing, dancing, reading, etcetra. For some of us, sport is the ultimate passion. We have all witnessed and experienced how the outcome of any sport has a rippled effect on its players, team-mates, families and fans. In a closed environment like the UNDOF AO, contingents turn toward sports for inspiration. It is a way to break the monotony of routine; and to overcome stress and boredom. It encourages esprit-de-corp and team cohesiveness which can be applied outside of the playing field is well.

Playing sports also promotes self-development and excellence. All teams have the capacity to be winners, but it is the team that makes the least errors that wins the match. Further, to be winners a team has to capitalize on the opposing teams' mistakes and score points out of it. The beauty of any sport is when a game is lost and the loosing team uses it for self-development; by identifying the mistakes that were made and not repeat it in the next match.

One of the most important components of sports is to train. Of course we have to train as a team to understand each other's strengths and weaknesses; and to fill the best combination for any competition. But more importantly as a famous quote goes, "as we train, so shall we fight".

## Launch of UNDOF Sports Festival

**With lots of anticipation in the air, teams from contingents represented in UNDOF were present to witness the launching of the UNDOF festival.**

On Friday, 07 Feb 2014, the CO LOGBATT, LtCol S. Haryal officially launched the UNDOF sports competition at Camp Zioanni on behalf of the Force Commander with the theme "Uniting UNDOF in Passion and Excellence". Teams which were represented included; HQ UNDOF, PHILBATT, LOGBATT, FIJIBATT and IRECON.

The day was eventful, as each contingent dressed in their PT kits prepared for minor games which included tug-of-war, obstacle course, one-man carry and bus push. The competition proper between contingents was held at the end of each month commencing with basketball at the end February and volleyball at the end of March.

Meanwhile, each contingent proved that they would be a 'Force to reckon with' as each of them won a game each in the minor games with INDCON winning the tug of war, PHILBATT winning the Army Wrestling; FIJIBATT winning the 25 Seater Bus Push and UNDOF HQ/IRECON winning the Obstacle Course.

## PHILBATT and FIJICON prove too strong for UNDOF HQ / IRECON in first and second round of games

**UNDOF HQ/IRECON played the finals against PHILBATT and FIJIBATT in the Basketball and Women's Volleyball...but the Contingents were too strong.**

The PHILBATT basketball team were too good for their opponents as they made a clean sweep in the Basketball competition which was held in CZ on 24 - 25 Feb 2014.

On the other hand, FIJIBATT were too good in the volleyball competition which was held in CF on 24-25 Mar 2014.

# UNDOF Sports in action



# 2014: A RESURGENT UNDOF