

GOLAN

The UNDOF Journal



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DEAR PEACEKEEPERS !



Welcoming the spring in Golan, the media team wishes everyone a "Happy Easter". The cold and chilling weather of winter, the snow covered roads and roofs of Camp Ziouani are now but a distant memory as the pleasant Spring weather begins to take hold. I thank all the members of UNDOF for their dedication, hard labour, teamwork and commitment to the mission.

As is tradition within UNDOF, each edition of the Golan Journal has a special focus, this one being specifically dedicated to the welcoming of the new Head of Mission/ Force Commander Maj Gen Purna Chandra Thapa, and new members of INDCON and IRE CON to the mission. We wish them all success in the days ahead. Similarly, we say goodbye to our outgoing IRECON Force Reserve Company, and INDCON Log Batt, and wish them the very best of luck in the future.

UNDOF Media Team is receiving a new Staff Officer (SO PR) from Nepal very soon. We humbly request all our members to provide him with your usual support and cooperation. UNDOF Media team once again hope you "Enjoy Reading".

DHANYABAD, VINAKA, SUKRIYA, THANK YOU, GO-RAIBH MAITH AGAT !!!

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Photos by Sgt Tomasi Delama

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MESSAGE FROM FORCE COMMANDER



It is a great honour for me and for my country Nepal to assume the leadership of UNDOF, a mission that served in Golan for the last 41 long years with distinction. The last few months were undisputedly the most critical chapter in UNDOF's history. Despite all, UNDOF has confirmed the implementation of its mandate as envisaged in the Disengagement Agreement between Israel and Syria 1974. I acknowledge the unflinching dedication, professionalism and commitments of all the staff and the troops. I must also pay my tribute to my predecessor Lieutenant General Iqbal Singh Singha for his resolute leadership during the most difficult times of the mission. I also take this opportunity to thank the Chief of Mission Support Mr Bernard Lee and Deputy Force Commander Brigadier General

Tony Hanlon for successfully leading UNDOF to consolidate the mission from the conditions of uncertainty and taking it to this point, from where I can see every possibility of redeployment to the AOS. Together you gave the mission a direction and made transition smooth. I must also acknowledge the contributions of the Observer Group Golan to UNDOF throughout all these years. The OGG remains a critical element of UNDOF's operation in the future as well.

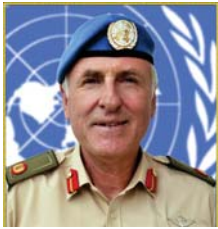
There is a considerable challenge ahead for all of us as we are together moving from reconfiguration to redeployment phase. The situation in our area of operation is fluid; therefore we need to be very observant, thoughtful and primed in carrying out our duties. This is why I am calling on all of you to apply 'One Mission, One Team, One Goal' motto to the implementation of the mandate, in observing the respect of the 1974 cease fire agreement by the parties.

UNDOF enjoys the support and acceptance from both parties; it is quintessential that we maintain this support. To do so, first and foremost we must continue to be impartial in our actions and behaviour. As United Nations personnel, our behavior must be of the highest standards and in line with the United Nations rules and regulations.

Since my arrival on 13 February, I have gathered plenty of confidence that UNDOF will be successful in the collaboration of diverse, experienced and committed civilian and military personnel in the mission. I am overwhelmed with the commitment and determination of each one of you. I would also like to assure you that your safety and security remains my priority consideration in all decisions about UNDOF's activities, and in particular when it comes to our return to the AOS.

It is also the time for me to convey my best wishes to the outgoing members of the Irish Force Reserve Company and to address a warm welcome to the incoming Irish contingent members to the Golan. I thank you all for the warm welcome to the UNDOF family and I look forward to working with you. May peace prevail on the Golan!
Thank You.

DFC ADDRESS



The New Year of 2015 arrived three months ago and yet it is only now we begin to emerge from an enduring and very harsh winter on Golan. The period from December to the end of March has been characterised by the significant challenges faced by our mission support branches in dealing with the daily pressures on our infrastructure and real life support services in all our posts and positions. They have done exceptional work in the most trying of circumstances. We have also been faced with the continued turbulence around the change and internal configuration of the Mission as we continue the process of aligning UNDOF and its resources to meet its primary task of Mandate Implementation. This has resulted in the redeployment out of UNDOF

of 146 members of our Fijian Battalion to UNIFIL. We are saddened by their departure and wish them well in their new environment where they will face new challenges and be exposed to different experiences in South Lebanon.

A major part of the progress in the reconfiguration process has been the establishment of our Temporary Headquarters in Damascus where the Office of the Force Commander and Head of Mission is now located. We wish all our staff and colleagues posted to the new Headquarters a safe and rewarding deployment. This period has also been marked by the arrival and handover by me as Acting Force Commander to our new Force Commander and Head of Mission, Major General Purna Chandra Thapa. We are blessed to have such an experienced and distinguished General as our new Leader. We wish our General the necessary wisdom, strength and health to successfully overcome the very many great challenges and tough decisions he will be faced with over the coming years. It is clear since his arrival and assumption of Command that we have a courageous and pragmatic Leader to guide us in meeting each and every challenge that awaits UNDOF in the future.

I would like to fondly remember those colleagues who have recently completed their Tour of Duty and to say goodbye and thanks for a marvellous contribution during the most difficult time in the history of UNDOF. I would also like to offer the warmest possible welcome to those who have recently arrived and to wish all a professionally rewarding deployment here on Golan. The UNDOF Mission continues its deployment in a dangerous and unpredictable operating environment. There has been major change in the Area of Separation with no reduction in the kinetic activity in all parts of the area. This presents considerable difficulty for all of us; we are faced on a daily basis with the threat of spillover fires into our posts and Ops, our personnel both civilian and military are continually in harm's way.

It is essential that we understand the risk we face and are at all times prepared to take the right actions. The safety and wellbeing of our mission family is of paramount importance to the Mission Leadership. You will be aware that we are engaged in a major effort to enhance and strengthen our force protection capabilities all across the UNDOF Area of Operations, you play your part by being aware of what to do and where to go when danger to life is threatened or imminent. Please know the shelter arrangement for you and also keep watch for all advisory notices and observe their recommendations. Thank you all, our Military Contingents, our Headquarters Staff, our International Staff and our National Staff members for their commitment, motivation and resolve as we continue our work in this turbulent, unpredictable and dangerous time for the Mission. Go raibh maith agaibh agus beir beannacht; thank you and stay strong.

COS ADDRESS

Bula Vinaka, it is indeed a great pleasure and honour for me as your new Chief of Staff to address you, members of the UNDOF Family for the first time in this edition of the Golan Journal. Upon my arrival into the Mission Area in early January 2015, I was greeted by an UNDOF team of dedicated professionals on the Bravo side, to which has left an impeccable impression on me. Even more impressive were the Nepalese elements on Mount Hermon displaying a high regard of unwavering commitment and selfless service towards their role in the midst of ever growing challenges. Similarly, I can gladly state that such professionalism is being reflected also on the Alpha side of the Area of Separation following the detailed and highly informative induction program accorded to my arrival. Visits to Position 80 and 22 has shown me the endless sacrifices, dedication and commitments required by the soldiers, in order for UNDOF to achieve its Mission and mandated tasks. Whilst soldiers are on the ground 24 hours a day 7 days a week, observing, reporting activities/violations observed within the AOS, I must also commend the continuous and endless assistance rendered from the Mission Support. Without proper administration and logistical assistance, the operational side of the Mission would not function successfully.



The initial stages of my tenure as Chief of Staff have been very demanding considering the challenges we were all faced with, after the relocation from the Bravo to the Alpha side. I can confidently say that my early days with UNDOF would not have been made possible without the outstanding leadership and guidance of the Deputy Force Commander, Brigadier General Anthony Hanlon who, also at the time was the Acting Force Commander. Through his continuous direction, advice coupled with his vast experience, I was able to quickly grasp and accept the extensive responsibility towards the Operational Readiness of troops and also on UNDOF's projected developments for 2015.

The first quarter of 2015 has seen the successful redeployment of 146 peacekeepers from the Fiji Battalion into UNIFIL, we have also managed to host some very prominent delegations, conducted Medal Parades and Change of Command Parades to name a few. The pinnacle of the first quarter of 2015, was the arrival of the Force Commander/Head of Mission on February 15 which ultimately raised the work tempo and morale of the UNDOF family to another level; as such the challenge to raise our individual bars of excellence and commitment was placed on each and every one within UNDOF commencing with the planning and preparation stages for the right operational conditions that would allow the subsequent redeployment of UNDOF back into the Bravo side.

I wish to remind us all that UN Peace operations, in particular UNDOF continues to be threatened by the growing frictions and clashes within the AOS not forgetting the greater Syrian region. These changes in the nature of conflict and its associated operating environment within UNDOF's AOR have multiplied extensively ever since its temporary relocation to the A side in late 2014. As professional Peacekeepers of the United Nations, it is our duty to remain steadfast at all times, maintain a high level of professionalism and at the same time train and prepare ourselves for any contingencies ahead of us. I take this opportunity to thank each and every member of the UNDOF family for the continued hard work and dedication, in effectively carrying out your respective roles. Let me remind us all that it is through our combined effort and teamwork at all levels both in the Military and the Civilian component of the mission, which ensures UNDOF's impartiality, success and efficiency in maintaining peace on the Golan Heights. I now look forward to working with you all as we progress into the second quarter of 2015, meeting the required outputs expected of us bearing in mind "One Mission, One Team, and One Goal" Vinaka Vakalevu (Thank you very much) and May God Bless Us All.

The New Head Of Mission / Force Commander



Major General Purna Chandra Thapa of Nepal was appointed by the United Nations Secretary General as the Head of Mission and Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) effective 8 February 2015. He brings with him an extensive command experience and knowledge of Peacekeeping attained through national and international service. Prior to this appointment, Major General Thapa was Master General of Ordnance in Nepalese Army Headquarters since 2013. Between 2012 and 2013, he was General Officer Commanding Infantry Division and Adjutant General in the Nepalese Army Headquarters. He also served as Director of Army Welfare Planning from 2009 to 2012 and Military Secretary of the Chief of the Army Staff from 2007 to 2008. He has commanded an infantry brigade from 2006 to 2007 with distinction. As regards to his peacekeeping experience, he has served in UNIFIL, Lebanon twice in 1986 and 1989, and in UNPROFOR, former Yugoslavia in 1994-1995.

Notably, he was entrusted to lead the team of the Government of Nepal as Vice President in Joint Monitoring and Coordination Committee (JMCC) in United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) in 2009. Major General Thapa holds a degree of Masters of Philosophy in Defense and Strategic Studies from the University of Madras, India. He is also a graduate of National Defense College, New Delhi, India and Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, Hawaii, USA. He is married to Deepa and blessed with a daughter and a son.

The New Chief of Staff



Col Jone Kalouniwei Logavatu was born on 07 July 1968 at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital, Suva Fiji. He enlisted into the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) on 23rd October 1987 and later Commissioned into the Officers Corp on 10 May 1992. Prior to being a commissioned officer Col Logavatu served as an enlisted soldier serving as a Section Commander in Lebanon and an NCO Instructor at the RFMF Training School. After successfully graduating from officer cadet training, he started his officer career with the RFMF as the Quick Reaction Force Platoon Commander with the Multinational Forces and Observers (MFO) in Sinai, Egypt. Col Logavatu has held several Command appointments within the RFMF for peacekeeping missions with MFO, UNIFIL, UNMISSET, and UNAMI from 1989 to 2010. Col Logavatu has also successfully completed several Military courses and some of which included Political Warfare Course (Taiwan), Regimental Officers Intelligence Course (NZ), Grade 3 Staff and Tactics Course (Fiji), UN Junior Officers Course (Sweden), Grade 2 Staff and Tactics Course (Fiji), Combined Defense Intelligence Research & Analysis Course (Aust), International Peace Support Program Course (UK), Defence Services Staff College (India).

Col Logavatu has also attended the Senior Defence Officers for the Caribbean and Pacific, Proliferation Security Initiative (China) and the UN Contingent Owned Equipment Working Group (NY). Col Logavatu has also held various senior appointments within the RFMF.

He was posted as the Battalion Commander for 2nd Battalion Fiji Infantry Regiment with the MFO in Sinai, the Battalion Commander for 3rd Battalion Fiji Infantry Regiment in Suva, Fiji, acted as the Chief Staff Officer for Operations, Planning, Intelligence & Training for the RFMF, Chief of Staff for the RFMF Land Force component, Commander of the RFMF Land Force Component before taking up the post of UNDOF Chief of Staff in early 2015. Apart from his military courses qualifications, Col Logavatu holds an Executive Certificate in Management from the Australian Maritime College, Graduate Diploma in Management (Central Queensland University), Masters in Business Administration (Central Queensland University), Masters of Science in Defence and Strategic Studies – Madras University, India. Col Logavatu is married to Mrs. Folaokitoga Pareti and is blessed with five children.

The New Deputy Chief Integrated Service Support



Lt Col Harim Thakur, an Indian Army Officer took over the responsibility of the Deputy Chief Integrated Support Services (DCISS) of the mission with effect from 19 Mar 2015. Born at Pune, India on the 07th Sep 1980, the officer graduated from the premier tri-services organization of National Defence Academy, Pune and Indian Military Academy, Dehradun and was commissioned into the Corps of Engineers in Dec 2001. The officer pursued his second graduate degree as Bachelor of Tech (BTech) in Electrical engineering in the year 2009 from College of Military Engineering, Pune. The officer is an alumnus of the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, India where he also qualified for a Masters degree in Defence Strategic Studies. The officer has represented India in the Multinational Cooperation Asia Pacific Forum in Tokyo held in the year 2014 for formulation of a multinational Standing Operational Procedure (SOP) for conduct of foreign countries in event of Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The officer having served as a General Staff Officer in the Operational Logistics Directorate of Army Headquarters in New Delhi for the past two years is suitably poised for sound administration of the mission. The officer has also been nominated as the Best Practices Officer and the focal point for best practices of the mission. Lt Col Harim Thakur is married to Ms Yogita and is keenly interested in hobbies such as mountaineering, cycling, writing and designing technological innovations.

The New Chief Liaison Officer



Lieutenant Colonel Markus Petrus Wilhelmus van den Heuvel was born on 12 March 1970, in Tilburg, the Netherlands. He joined the Netherlands Armed Forces in 1988 and passed the Royal Military Academy in 1992 and started as a cavalry officer. In the first 8 years of his career he fulfilled several operational positions in a mechanized brigade (platoon, squadron and battalion level) and was staff officer Operations during the mission SFOR-4 (former Yugoslavia). From 1999 till 2009 he worked in the recruiting training and personnel branch as staff officer and senior staff officer. In 2009 he was Chief J1 ISAF HQ (Kandahar, Afghanistan). From 2010 till 2011 he was project manager and responsible for building up a new training organisation to support pre-recruitment. In September 2011 he was assigned as Head Selection and responsible for the selection of new military personnel for the Army, Navy, Air force and Military Police. Lt Col van den Heuvel holds a Scientific Masters Degree in Organizational Psychology. He likes sports such as running, hockey and golf. Lt Col van den Heuvel is married and has a son and a daughter.

FORCE COMMANDER'S ARRIVAL

The UNDOF mission after facing numerous changes in leadership and challenges during the forty years at the Bravo side of the AOS, anticipated the arrival of the new Force Commander and Head Of Mission, Major General Purna Chandra Thapa from Nepal on 18 February 2015 at Camp Ziouani on the Alpha Side of the AOS. The new FC was accorded a full guard of honor, commanded by LCDr S. Tokalauvere of FijiBatt upon his arrival.



The official handing over of command from the then Acting FC and current Deputy Force Commander, Brigadier General Anthony Hanlon to the new FC was held at Khetapal Hall whereby members of UNDOF (military and civilian), Branch Heads and Staff Officers were present to witness this auspicious occasion.



RE-DEPLOYMENT OF UNDOF PERSONNEL

The eve of Wednesday, 11 February 2015 saw the departure of 146 UNDOF personnel from Camp Ziouani for Rosh Hanikra border, marking the re-deployment of these troops to the United Nations Interim Forces In Lebanon. These 146 brave men, all of whom were from FIJBATT, were part of UNDOF's execution of tasks by the United Nations.

Fiji was part of the UNIFIL mission from 1978 until their withdrawal in 2002 (24 years later). This gave them excellent development of their peacekeeping capabilities. This has thus significantly contributed to the decision for the redeployment of a company from its Battalion within the UNDOF mission to UNIFIL.



The company was led by Major Atunaisa Vakatale whose Second In Command is Captain Mafi Kolinisau. The two officers were given the honour to lead this team of dedicated individuals and were entrusted with the task of maintaining not only their country's pride in peacekeeping, but to also set the standard that has been bred in them from serving within the UNDOF mission.



The FIJBATT handover of command from its Commanding Officer, Colonel I. Loanakadavu to Major Vakatale was a solemn occasion. The troops were made aware of the daunting task that lay ahead of them and as such Colonel Loanakadavu reiterated the importance of responsible leadership to his two officers leading the first batch of Fiji soldiers to Lebanon.

IRECON St Patrick's Day Medal Parade and Celebrations

Every year, throughout the world Irish men and women gather together to celebrate the feast day of the patron Saint of Ireland, Saint Patrick on the 17th of March. This celebration of Irish culture, tradition and heritage was also a significant milestone in the life of the Irish contingent as on that day in 2015 they received their UNDOF medals from the Force Commander. St. Patrick's Day began in Camp Ziouani at first light with the raising of the Irish national flag in Camp Ziouani. In the afternoon the full Irish contingent were on parade attended by H.E. Ambassador Eamonn McKee, the Irish Ambassador to Israel and the Deputy Chief of Staff Operations of the Irish Defence Forces, Major General Ralph James who presented shamrock to members of the Irish contingent. The Deputy Force Commander of UNDOF, Brig Gen Anthony Hanlon addressed the parade and outlined some of the history and traditions that the audience would experience during the course of the day.



Shortly there after the Force Commander, Maj Gen Purna Chandra Thapa arrived on parade and was met by the DFC who presented him with shamrock. Maj Gen Thapa then received military honours from the Irish Contingent before presenting the UNDOF medal to the DFC, Irish members of the UNDOF FHQ and then members of the Irish Contingent led on parade by their Commanding Officer Lt Col Denis Harrington. The programme continued with the Force Commander delivering a speech where he thanked the Irish contingent for their hard work since their arrival and concluded with some words in Irish which was warmly received by the Irish guests and UNDOF soldiers. The large group of civilian and military guests were invited to enjoy a toast to the Irish in the newly inaugurated GPO Recreation area which was recently taken over and renovated by the Irish contingent. The GPO is named after the General Post Office in Dublin, the scene of the 1916 Easter Rising, an important event in Irish modern history which will have its centenary celebrations next year.



—10—UNDOF

To conclude the evening, guests and Irish troops were treated to Irish food, music and some excellent Irish food on what was a great day enjoyed by the youngest soldier in the contingent right up to the most senior officers and guests present.



—11—UNDOF



UNDOF CELEBRATES WOMEN'S DAY 2015

This year's theme for the United Nations Women's Day celebration focused on the empowerment of females: **"Empowering Women: Empowering Humanity."** This theme was the driving force for the UNDOF women 2015, calling on them to present a united front in the conduct of their roles within the mission, that is, being the minority, all must look out for each other and ensure that where ever they are involved in, excel and be recognized. The celebration held a day after the official Women's day, on 09 March 2015 at Camp Ziouani, was opened by the Deputy Force Commander, BrigGen Anthony HANLON, who addressed the audience with insights on the achievements of women around the world specifically focusing on Malala Yousafzai, age 20, who was a recipient of the noble peace prize at the age of 17. Known for her dedication and commitment (activist) in the education of women with particular reference to her country, Pakistan; Malala portrays a standard with which women in general are capable of achieving if they are empowered accordingly.

The opening address was soon followed by lectures and discussions by the females of UNDOF regarding the history of Women's Day and events leading up to the commemoration of this event. A number of stations which revolved around team building activities followed suit. Prior to this, participants were handed a women's day t-shirt which was worn during the team building activities. All who were involved had the opportunity to mingle and familiarize themselves with their team members. By the end of the team building exercises, the participants were well acquainted with each other. UNDOF Women's Day 2015 was completed with an evening event of cocktails and karaoke night. Ladies wore dresses symbolic to their national heritage and invited guests were also present to enjoy the program with the women of the mission. Overall this was a fun filled day that was enjoyed by all, in particular the women at UNDOF.



The day could not have been successful were it not for the brave and strong men of UNDOF who have endlessly shown their support and continuously empowered the minority. Gratitude thus goes to the FC, DFC, Contingent Officers and Branch Heads who gave the all clear for females within their command to enjoy the entire day with their counterparts, in particular CO FIJBATT who also allowed the use of the FIJBATT training team (led by WO1 Tuiono) and use of the Bula Bar for the evening occasion. A big "Vinaka Vakalevu" to you all and may God continue to richly bless you and the UNDOF mission as a whole.



NEW TEAM OF INDCON LOGBATT

New members of the Indian contingent have joined the UNDOF team from 8 January 2015. The family of UNDOF has open heartedly welcomed us into its folds, in doing so also helping the new team understand the dynamics related to the changing scenario of UNDOF. The LOGBATT has started working relentlessly from day one to provide a formidable logistic back up to support the mission cause. The contingent is bound to live by the mission statement of "One Mission, One Team and One Goal".



The specialized platoons of the contingent have started contributing in their respective arenas towards building the mission to its full glory. The LOGBATT Team under the leadership of CO LOGBATT, Lt Col R S Sakarwar is working hand in hand with the Leadership of the Mission to raise the standards of Camp Ziouani in all facets involving Logbatt. The Logbatt is also building various infrastructures as and when required by the mission in CZ as well as other Positons/OPs.

Besides the above the Logbatt is also training hard to achieve high standards in both Military as well as various Technical fields. The members of Indian Contingent also vibrantly celebrated the REPUBLIC DAY and festival of colors "HOLI".



—16— UNDOF

Republic Day honours the date on which the constitution of India came into force on 26 Jan 1950. The main Republic Day celebration is held at National Capital, New Delhi at the Rajpath before the President of India. On this day, ceremonious parades take place at the Rajpath, which are performed as a tribute to India. On 26th Jan 2015, 17th Rot, INDCON LOGBATT, celebrated 66th Republic Day at Camp Ziouani, Golan Heights, Israel with patriotic fervor. Celebration commenced with the flag hoisting by Lt Col RS Sakarwar, CO, INDCON LOGBATT. This was followed by a presentation short movie which showcased the various colours and facets of rich Indian Culture which included history, geography, modern India and mil might. The celebrations were followed by sumptuous light refreshments at the INDCON LOGBATT Offs Mess.



Holi is a spring festival, also known as the festival of colours or the festival of love. Holi celebration starts with a Holika bonfire on the night before Holi where people gather, sing and dance. The next morning is a free for all carnival of colours, where, participants play, chase and colour each other with dry powder and coloured water. Anyone and everyone is fair game, friend or stranger, rich or poor, man or woman, children and elders. The frolic and fight with colours, occurs in the open streets, open parts and almost everywhere. On 6th of Mar 2015, INDCON LOGBATT celebrated the festival of colours and joy "Holi" In Camp Ziouani. Troops enjoyed the auspicious occasion with colours of unadulterated joy and mirth, fun and play, music and dance. The atmosphere was filled with excitement, fun and joy among international staff, host nation representatives and staff officers. Many other senior personnel made a spirited appearance for the event and took part enthusiastically in the festivities. The day was an ideal example of bonhomie and camaraderie among personnel who despite coming from a wide spectrum of culture and traditions, indulged in celebrations with passion and fervor. The Indian contingent, as host, played its part in an incredible manner and made all guests to look forward to the same celebration next year.

—17— UNDOF

MIDDLE EAST BOWL

Since its last outing in 2002, the Middle East Bowl Rugby match for the Middle East deployed Fijian troops was revived on 21 Feb 2015. The annual rugby match was usually played between the UNIFIL deployed troops and the MFO troops, based out of Sinai, Egypt, and would always turn out to be a very gruesome encounter, every time.

Such was the case for the game on 21 Feb 2015 – bone crunching tackles, hard knocks, bruised faces, and bleeding noses decorated the rugby game, under beautiful, sunny conditions at the Sportek Multipurpose Facility in Tel Aviv. In attendance at this important rugby game for the Fijians were the FC MFO, the DFC UNDOF, the Fiji Senior National Officer (SNO) and Israeli Rugby Union officials, who welcomed the opportunity to support such an attractive rugby event in support of the growing rugby interest in Israel. The UNDOF Fijibatt team came out victors over their counterparts from the MFO, with a close score of 17 points to 12.

Both teams came out well prepared for the resurrection of the annual rugby match, but it seemed that the snow training on the Golan Heights took to the latter over the desert training in the Sinai Peninsula. Supporters and spectators from both Fijian Battalions flooded the grounds at Tel Aviv to witness the spectacular game of rugby and as expected, the crowd was treated to an exceptional game of Fijian rugby at its best, in Israel. The two senior leadership icons from UNDOF and MFO complemented both teams for a very entertaining rugby game and acknowledged both Fijian Battalions in inviting, organizing, and resurrecting an important rugby match in Fijian military history in the Middle East, in the Middle East Bowl Rugby Challenge.

The Fiji SNO added that this was the beginning of the continuation of this annual rugby match, given that there was now a permanent Fijian presence in UNDOF and now, UNIFIL.



MONTHLY CHOIR COMPETITION

On the first Sundays of every month, Fijibatt hosts the monthly Battalion Choir competition during the afternoon church service. Depending on the operational situation, the choir competition is either Company based or barracks based. During the month, choir practice would normally follow the evening devotions, and choirs would take desperate measures to prepare themselves for the monthly event.

The Bn Chaplain, Capt Tikowale, has often had to face difficult moments in trying to establish a winner, so in certain months has opted to select three individuals from the Bn to serve as judges at these spiritual outings. Sometimes laughter from the congregation would override the harmony of choral voices as choir masters strut their stuff respectively in trying to modulate flow, balance and rhythm in their selection of hymns. When the choir competition is barracks based, the female barracks would obviously add a unique touch to the male dominated competition, echoing angelic female voices, challenging their male counterparts for a shot at the major prize. As always, there would be stiff competition from everyone to come out winners, and progressively the Bn would always see new winners every month.

The Bn Chaplain continued to compliment Bn members for their efforts in ensuring this spiritual program is continued monthly, where possible, to assist in the spiritual development of individuals and more importantly as the bigger Fijibatt family.



OGG & UNDOF Ski-Doo Training

During the snow period of January 2015, members of UNTSO and UNDOF conjunctionally conducted Ski-Doo training in the Golan Heights. OGG Captains Alf and Topi provided training to NEPCON on driving and maintaining Ski-Doos. Nature helped a lot with providing heaps of snow on Mount Hermon. Despite the inclement weather and challenging situation both the trainees and the trainers managed to produce the desired output, building the capability of UNDOF and empowering NEP CON to fulfill the UNDOF mandate in MT Hermon Complex.



MEMOIR FROM GOLAN

Fresh from the pre deployment training, golden colour of festivities and impending nervousness of thought-provoking terrain, the Nepalese contingent NEPCON III bade adieu to motherland Nepal on Nov 1st 2014. Huff and puff of security clearance at Lebanon passed with no time.

On arrival to the Syrian border on 2nd Nov 2014 and the ordeal one has to go through simply reflected the job we were here to perform. The gloomy Sunday with mist all around the mountainous terrain and rocky cliffs on shouldering roads made our journey a memorable one. At Hermon Base windy gusts at speeds of 100 km per hour greeted us with shudders and chills.

Days of ordeal began and winter preparations started after a swift handover from the outgoing company. Winter preparations took its full swing by putting up poles from Hermon base to ZULU 6 along with the painting of poles.

The GURUHA's smile and the unyielding desire to succeed helped to unfold the task with ease.

—20— UNDOF

For winter preparation, the alpine training was of paramount importance, so a short period of training on KAISING rock, as we say, breezed off in no time. Rappelling, rock climbing, casualty evacuation provided us with much impetus and a time to cherish in inhospitable terrain. Acclimatization and a bird's eye view of the job were required through it.

No toil, no sweats and routine without task makes a soldier's life a lame one, thus mountain training gave us confidence to make the best of the worst situation one may face. Piston Bully skidoo on the first day was very foreign to us but with personnel being trained in camp ZIOUANI, our soldiers learned the tricks of trade in no time.

First week of December bestowed us with the first snowfall. The volume of snowfall and the plunge in of mercury to minus 20 degree made the best use of the heating system and the generators that were maintained beforehand. The snowfall might be the heaviest Mount Hermon has ever seen in a couple of decades and for years to come.

A ride in the Piston Bully Skidoo in zero visibility with due guard clearing routes in adverse weather was an achievement in itself. The clearance of the way to Zulu 6 tested our patience and perseverance.

SKIING resulted in a new found love of sports in favorable climate which rushed endorphins and adrenaline to make us upbeat about life here. Soldiers honed their skills in the art of photography with scenic beauty and of mesmerizing views the Golan has to offer. Adaptation is the most essential process of Golan.

The mind-numbing job performed by NEPCON III has been achieved through hard work and feisty mantra of one mission, one team and one goal.

The vantage point, the eye of the middle east challenges us with adverse conditions, however we strive hard as a well jelled unit in performing our tasks.

Life on the mountain is tough, but spirited will and endeavors lead us to attain the goal of peace keeping.

—21— UNDOF



EXERCISE GOLAN DAYS FORCE RESERVE COY UNDOF

The 46 Infantry Group under the command of Lt Col Denis Harrington deployed to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights in October 2014 following a substantial period of political and military uncertainty regarding the future of the mission.

One of the first tasks assigned to the 46 Inf Gp Force Reserve Company (FRC) on deployment to UNDOF was the occupation of UNP 80, one of only six posts which remained occupied inside the AOS following the relocation from Camp Faouar in September 2014. The purpose of this task was to ensure that a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) capability was maintained within the AOS at all times.



Having executed the task and completed the pertinent contingency planning, Commandant Owen McNally, Deputy Commanding Officer & Coy Commander of the Mechanised Company directed training to focus on likely future taskings, the most probable and highest tempo of which would be the reoccupation of posts inside the AOS.

From the temporary relocation from more than a dozen posts in the AOS came the impetus for Exercise Golan Days. The purpose of Golan Days was to evaluate members of the FRC in the tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) involved in the securing, clearance and re-occupation of previously vacated U.N. posts located within the Area of Separation.

What resulted was a collaboration of efforts between the Mechanised Company, Ordnance Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) detachment, Engineer Specialist Search and Clearance Team (ESSCT) as well as Communications and Information Systems (CIS) and Medical detachments in a comprehensive exercise which heralded the new training focus for the Irish FRC in UNDOF.

MASS CASUALTY TRAINING

UNDOF Medical unit and JOC conducted a joint Mass casualty Medevac Exercise on 24 Mar 2015. With the aim of assessing, familiarising the UNDOF members and empowering the procedures of Medevac, the exercise was conducted within a 4 km periphery of Camp Ziouani.

The exercise opened with the report sent by the incident commander involved in a UN vehicle accident to the JOC. Thereafter, the training followed its normal procedures set for this type of medevac exercise. The medical unit, MP and JOC were actively involved to quickly medevac the casualty.

AAR of the exercise was conducted in due time with the recommendation of improving radio communications, voice procedures, set a standard for the reaction team, use of a - line CASEVAC REPORTS distinction selection of correct radio channels. The exercise achieved its purpose and appreciated the response and positive contribution of all units/ branches and individuals towards saving UNDOF personnel from more harm and danger. The exercise will continue in the not too distant future.





"When we unleash the power of women we can secure the future for all"

UNSG: Ban Ki Moon