

GOLAN

The UNDOF Journal



October - December 2008
No. 117



Dear Reader!

As change of seasons goes on and changes the face of the environment in the mission area of UNDOF also the faces of many of our comrades change. By looking at this new faces one becomes aware of how fast time moves on and it's time for rotations again.



Our team: Gerry, Yozo, Alexander and Günther

So as the new SOPR let me welcome WO III Slaven Matuza from HRVCON in our dedicated cadre of Press Officers. There are big footsteps made by my predecessors I will have to follow but I feel confident that with all our efforts the editorial team will continue to provide you – the worshiped reader - with a high quality Golan Journal full of fascinating insights into the mission of UNDOF.

In this edition, for example, it gives me great pleasure to present articles about the extraordinary Christmas visit of the Croatian President, the challenging work of the Geographic Information Services in the Golan Heights, and the tasks of the Force Headquarters Coy - making you feel like being on patrol with one of its Platoons.

Dip in and find out!

Yours sincerely,
Capt Günther Kreiml, SOPR

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Front (Page 1): Stjepan Mesić, the President of Republic of Croatia with LtCol Vedran GRUBLJESIC, CO HRVCON
Photo by Ms Marija Kundek (Croatia), Official Presidential Photographer

Back (Page 24): Japanese Soldier during the Shooting Competition
Photo by Cpl Andreas Trabi (AUSBATT)

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The Golan Journal is the magazine of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and it is intended to provide information about the Force and events within it which are of interest to its members. The UNDOF Media, Public Relations & Welfare Office publishes the Golan Journal quarterly. While articles and photographs are welcomed from all members of the Force, the view and opinions expressed are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily coincide with those of the United Nations or the Force Commander.

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Force Commander's Message

Dear Fellow Peacekeepers!

Now that the festive season is firmly behind us, I hope you all had a chance to relax and unwind a little, and to spend some time with friends and/or family so that you are now ready to tackle the new year upon us which promises to be full of new challenges with a Middle-East that is not quite as stable and peaceful as we might have hoped.

Although the Gaza conflict is happening outside our area of responsibility, it affects the whole region and requires us to be ever more vigilant. I do not only mean in our travels in areas where demonstrations may happen, but also here in our every day work. We need to be extra cautious about everything that is happening around us. It is extremely important to stop any events that could lead to an escalation of tension between our two host nations. We need to prove to both sides, by our professionalism and dedication, that we are their answer for stability in the region and that fully collaborating with our efforts is the best way forward.

I happily look back at all our accomplishment over the past year, and eagerly look towards the future with confidence. My intents for this year were formulated formally in my Force Commander's guidance directive 2009 which was distributed in the past weeks and I request that all of you make yourself familiar with it. It gives a strategic guideline for the Force and sets the tone for all that needs to be accomplished this year. I know that there will be inertia against some of the changes that will so deeply modify the way we do business, but I am convinced that they are required in order for our mission to stay relevant in the future.

The largest of the changes is the manpower and organizational review I referred to in my last two messages. For this, I will repeat what I have told some of the section chiefs already: Don't be afraid to make mistakes! This process is a much needed one and we need to jump in head first and commit to its inception a 100%. Unavoidably, mistakes will be made, but this is better than doing nothing in fear of wrongdoing. We need to keep an open mind, but also a vigilant eye so that once we have truly tried to optimize the logistical structure we can objectively evaluate it to continue to make it better.

Once again, I urge you all to be vigilant and proactive. The reward for all our hard work is peace and stability in the region, something we all desire and hope for.

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

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



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

Major General Wolfgang JILKE
Force Commander UNDOF

Chief of Staff Words

It is a privilege to be part of the UN Peacekeeping effort in the Middle East once again. My previous tour here was in 2000 with the second Indian contingent in UNIFIL. Then I was witness to and in some way, involved in overseeing the end of the 22 year old occupation of South Lebanon. It could have been the capstone for a comprehensive peace in the region. However, the sheer complexity of the issues involved has belied those expectations.

So in that sense, I am seized of the nuances of UN peacekeeping effort in the Middle East, a knowledge that will surely facilitate functioning in my current assignment. It is this experience that I will attempt to share through ‘The Golan Journal’, the aim being to put forth my views on various tenets of our task here.

UNDOF is one of the oldest ongoing UN Peacekeeping Mission anywhere and certainly one of the more successful ones. Its success is owed much to the efforts of the Peacekeepers past and present. A measure of this success is the fact that involved actors in the conflict now have a valued stake in the continuance of peace across the ‘Area of Separation’, pending a holistic redress of the problem. Therefore, UNDOF should be justifiably proud of the fact that despite a trying operational environment, it has continuously enhanced the reposed trust of the UN Member States and respect of the Parties to the conflict. It is no mean achievement.

Given the intricacies of the prevailing environment, it would be unrealistic on part of the Leadership and Staff in the Mission to



expect each of our soldiers to have a total grasp of all the issues involved. Therefore, it is incumbent on us to simplify everything for them so that they are precisely aware of what needs to be done and what needs to be avoided. Although these are part of our SOPs, they need periodic reiteration.

Our Mandate is to maintain the ceasefire. This can only be accomplished if we can ensure that the involved parties scrupulously adhere to the terms of the ‘1974 Separation Agreement’ in both letter and spirit. This entails on each one of us to have an unambiguous understanding of the ‘Agreement’, that articulates the Areas of Separation and Limitation and the responsibilities of each one of the signatories towards these Areas. It is my view that our continued success is wholly dependent on our ability to persuade the ‘Parties’ towards our interpretation of the ‘Agreement’ and in cajoling them to respect it instinctively.

At the tactical level, it demands a continued effort towards unambig-

uous delineation of the Lines defining the Areas of Separation and Limitation. This has to be accompanied by a strict vigil in these areas to not only observe and report but to prevent any violation of the ‘Agreement’.

However, in all this, we need to appreciate and respect the sensitivities and sensibilities on both sides. It calls for an involved but totally impartial approach with a commitment only to our ‘Mandate’.

I will carry forward this dialogue in the succeeding issues. Meanwhile, let’s keep vigil. Who knows, like my previous tour, we may yet again be staring at a ‘defining moment’ in the region’s history.

Best Wishes

Colonel Ganesh Singh Bisht
Chief of Staff UNDOF

Visits to UNDOF by Capt Yozo Akiyama, DMPIO



H.E. Edgard Casciano, Ambassador of Brazil to Syria, visited Camp Faouar and AUSBATT Positions. (16th Oct 2008)



LtGen Othmar Commenda, Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Austrian Armed Forces, visited AUSBATT (here on Posn 27) and HRVCON (22nd-24th Oct 2008) see also on page 14



H.E. Dr. Andreas Reinicke, Ambassador of Germany to Syria, met with Force Commander and visited Camp Faouar and UNDOF Positions (10th Nov 2008)



Mr. Toshihisa Takata, Director General, International Peace Cooperation HQ, Cabinet Office, Japan, talked with Force Commander (11th-14th Nov 2008)



H.E. Stjepan Mesić, President of the Republic of Croatia, celebrated Christmas with Croatian soldiers in Camp Faouar (24th-25th Dec 2008) see also on page 12-13

- Mr. Alanko Reijo and 29 members of Finish National Defense Association visited former Base of FINBATT in Camp Ziouani (4th Oct 2008)
- H.E. Bonis Desire, Ambassador of Netherland to Syria, visited Observation Posts on B-side (9th Oct 2008).
- French Embassy Family had a tour to the Area of Separation (17th Oct 2008)
- Ms. Ellis Annette and eleven members of Australian Parliament visited the Area of Operation (2nd Nov 2008)
- MGen Ryszard Sorokosz, Chief of Training, Land Forces Command, met with Polish soldiers (9th-13th Nov 2008)
- MGen Vinay Bhatnagar, AVSM, VSM, ADGSD, Indian Army HQ, visited Camp Ziouani (17th-18th Nov 2008)
- Mr. Krzysztof Lisek and 8 members of Polish Parliament visited Posn80 and Quneitra (26th Nov 2008)
- Mr. Marc Otte, EU Diplomats, visited Camp Faouar, Posn10, OP71 and Quneitra. (20th Dec 2008)
- MGen Yasuhiro Minami, Vice Commanding General, 6th Division, Japan Ground Defense Force, visited A- and B-side of UNDOF and met with Japanese soldiers (22nd-25th Dec 2008)

New People in UNDOF



The new COS

Born on the 15th Aug 1962, Colonel Ganesh Singh Bisht is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy. He was commissioned into an Infantry Battalion (2nd MADRAS Regiment) on 18th Jun 1983 and went on to command the same Battalion from 2001 to 2004. In his military career spanning over 25 years, he has acquired rich operational experience in situations of War, No War No Peace, Low Intensity Conflicts and Counter Terrorism Operations in terrains varying from Extreme High Altitude Glaciers to Riverine Plains and from Tropical Jungles to the Deserts. Apart from the mandatory Courses of Instruction for Indian Army officers, he is also a graduate of the prestigious Defence Services Staff Course and the Higher Defence Management Course. He holds Master Degrees in Military Sciences and Management Sciences.

He has held numerous prestigious appointments on Staff including that of the General Staff Officers Grade 1 (Operations) and Colonel Foreign Assignments and Career Courses in the Integrated Headquarters of The Ministry of Defence (Army). He has also been an Instructor at the Infantry School, The Indian Military Training Team (Bhutan) and the College of Defence Management.

His international experience includes tenure each in Sri Lanka and UNIFIL as a peacekeeper and in Bhutan as an instructor. For his meritorious service, he has been bestowed with the Chief of the Army Staff and General Officer Commanding in Chief (Northern Command) Commendations. He is an 'Outdoor' person with a passion for reading.



The new CMPO

LtCol Johann Mauthner started his military career as a peacekeeper in Cyprus in 1974. After graduating from the Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt, Austria, he served as a Platoon leader and Company Commander in a Logistics Regiment. During that period of time he again joined UNFICYP in 1983 and UNDOF in 1989. Still dealing with logistics in the Austrian Army, he studied business administration at the University of Hagen in Germany.

By joining peace support operations in Bosnia in 1996 and in Kosovo in 2000 he gained experience in various staff functions. Then LtCol Mauthner decided to change to Budget & Finance and in 2006 he became Deputy J8 at the Austrian Armed Forces Command.

Living in Salzburg LtCol Mauthner is married to Claudia and has a twenty-year-old daughter, Isabelle.



The new a/CISS

LtCol Gottfried Hoinig was born 1953 in the Austrian capital city of Vienna and grew up in Knittelfeld in the province of Styria. After finishing the Technical High School for Foundry Engineering he joined the Austrian Armed Forces and graduated in 1981. Until 1983 he served as a Platoon Leader in an Anti-Tank Coy and later as Company Commander of a Maintenance Coy.

In 1983 he changed to the Bureau of Military Technology as a Liaison Officer to the development project for an electronic fire control system. Thereafter he completed a course for Logistics and was appointed as the leader of the Logistic Section in the Branch for military technology.

In 1994 LtCol Hoinig changed to the Military Academy as the Head for curriculum planning. Starting in 1982 he gathered experience in international missions like UNDOF, UNFICYP, and UNMOT in Tajikistan.



The new CO/LOGBATT

LtCol Gopal Kapoor is a third generation officer coming after his father serving in the Indian Army for four decades who had fought the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak wars. Gopal joined the National Defence Academy in 1990 and graduated in Bachelor of Arts from the Jawaharlal Nehru University. Upon passing out from the Indian Military Academy, he was commissioned into “The Poona Horse”, an elite and highly decorated Armored Regiment, which has to its credit the highest number of Battle Honors in the Commonwealth Nations.

LtCol Kapoor has served as a Troop Leader, Adjutant and Squadron Commander in his regiment. He was the General Staff Officer Operations in a Rashtriya Rifles Sector, actively involved in counter insurgency operations in the state of Kashmir. LtCol Kapoor has attended all the essential professional courses including the prestigious Technical Staff Officers Course, with distinguished grading. The officer is also a trained pilot on micro light aircrafts. He is married to Aarti, an attorney by profession and they have an eight-year-old son Rahul.

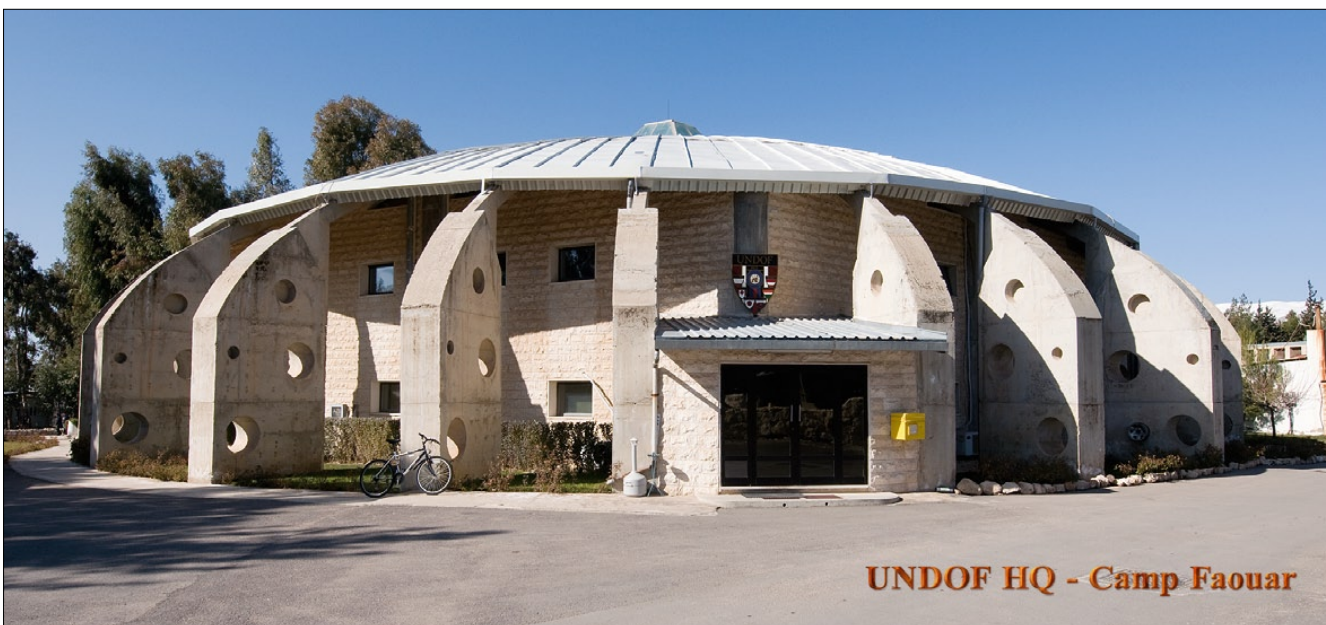


The new DCO/AUSBATT

LtCol Vedran Grublješić was born on 4th Jul 1966 in the Croatian city of Zagreb where he completed Primary and Secondary School. Then he attended the Faculty of Security and Safety Engineering and completed postgraduate specialist studies in Management and Quality and Safety of Work. His military education he finished at the Command and Staff College as well as at the Military-Diplomatic College.

LtCol Grublješić joined the Croatian Armed Forces in 1991 and served 5 years in the Homeland War until 1995 and additional 4 years at the famous professional 2nd Guardian Brigade „Thunder“. Thereafter he was Staff Officer at the HQ of the Guardian Brigade, Commander of the Logistic Battalion and Head of Section 4 in the HQ of the Guardian Brigade. His present duty is Head of Dept in G-4/8 Div in the HQ Army Command.

LtCol Grublješić is married and father of a daughter named Amadea and his hobbies are soccer, fishing, motorcycling.



UNDOF HQ - Camp Faouar

On the ride home

This article will be the last one in my two years and two months service in UNDOF as a Chief of Staff and Deputy Force Commander at the same time. I mentioned my second function intentionally as it forced me to perform outside responsibilities as well in addition to the Chief of Staff typical management of HQ and staff. Having achieved my end of assignment day I want this article to be a kind of brief summary of my achievements and observations and to say you farewell.

Over the past two years the Golan area has been generally quiet from the political-military point of view. However, I and my staff were extremely busy improving the UNDOF organization and enhancing overall operational effort due to the changing operational environment within the Area of Responsibility. This was necessary because of the fact that the Syrians had been dynamically developing agriculture and new construction projects within Area of Separation and along the A-line. New roads, reclaiming farm lands, building construction, demining, development of villages and a rise in the number of sheep and shepherds were witnessed during this time.

On the A- Side, the Israelis conducted an enormous number of exercises at all possible levels and scale on the occupied Golan Heights. In addition, the IDF renovated, rebuilt and constructed new defense lines and positions along the A-line.

Due to changing operational and security situation in the region there was a requirement to modify our military strategic concept of operation and to produce new oper-

ational documents. There was also requirement to enhance UNDOF C3 system (Command, Control and Communication) and improve coordination with - and integration of - the Observer Group Golan. It was a challenge for me and my subordinated staff but in my opinion this requirement was fulfilled in an excellent way and as quickly as possible. As a result, UNDOF Standing Operational Procedures,



Operational Order and Operational Plan were produced and introduced into force. UNDOF Joint Operation Center with integrated Joint Mission Analysis Center was established with overall aim to meet operational challenges through coordinated sharing and assessment of information. This means that the entity is able to ensure full situational awareness through accurate monitoring and reporting system and acts as a Command Center. At this point I have to mention that the UNDOF GIS unit supports and contributes to the operational situation awareness in an excellent way. All the mentioned projects had to

be followed up with the UNDOF Overall Manpower and Organizational Review.

In general, UNDOF changed its Operational Concept in a manner which can be briefly described as more mobile, more flexible with extended night patrolling and fewer static activities. This of course required new equipment like light armoured patrol vehicles and long-range night vision equipment. I do not have to remind you that UNDOF managed to obtain this vital equipment. Another big project I want to recall is our efforts to improve safety and security of our personnel. This was focused on physical improvement of all UNDOF positions and both camps as well as to improve security measures of the MEDEVAC by adopting two APC SISU to armoured ambulances. In conclusion, I want to say that I left the mission with a sense of work well done. However, this would not be possible without your dedication to the UNDOF mission and the excellent support you provided to me. Of course I would not be honest saying that all of you were outstanding. Some of you needed more supervision, others required certain period of time to be well suited on your positions to be fully capable. However, all in all, we created a good team which achieved a lot and met our FC's expectations. Having this opportunity I want to thank all who supported me both civilian personnel and military staff.

Please extend the same support to the new Chief of Staff.

I wish the mission all the best and to all a safe return to your homes.

*Article by Col Andrzej Ostrowski,
former Chief of Staff UNDOF*

The UNDOF Challenge Trophy

Military training often is associated with exhausting drill. To arrange a competition is a fascinating way to enhance motivation to improve the military core skills.

The task of the UNDOF Mission Training Cell (MTC) is to establish a lasting and motivating way to encourage UNDOF peacekeepers to achieve the best results they can with the following assets:

- Design training so that it becomes more attractive (goal setting)
- Contingents will share the responsibility by conducting and awarding the single competitions (enhance responsibility for training)
- Contingents will make sure that their best staff will be trained and sent to the competition (staff motivation to training)

The UNDOF Challenge Trophy is awarded two times a year to the winning teams of the contingents AUCON, HRVCON, J-CON, INDCON, and POLBATT after three competitions in **Ground Orientation, Car Driving** and **Shooting**. Before the final ceremony awarding the winning teams for their combined results each contingent was separately conducting its special competition.

THE TROPHY

The UNDOF Trophy was made by AUSBATT 1st Coy composed by an arrangement of shrapnels put on an engraved crystal glass socket.

Achieving the GOLD trophy is all contingent's goal. The trophy is a challenge and stays with UNDOF. In the next competition all contingents have the chance to win the trophy. Is one contingent winning the trophy 3 times in sequence it shall go to the contingent for good.



The overall winning team of INDCON

AWARD CEREMONY

On 7th Nov the Force Commander awarded the winning contingents with the UNDOF CHALLENGE TROPHY for their combined results achieved with their best teams. The national Contingent Commanders were personally awarding the best.

*Article by Kurt Findeis,
SSO/Training
Photos by Cpl Andreas Trabi,
Radio Techn/AB*



Going for the best

Ranking Table of the October 2008 Challenge Trophy			
Ground Orientation	Shooting	Car Driving	Final overall ranking
Gold INDCON	Gold AUSBATT	Gold AUSBATT	Gold - INDCON
Silver J-CON	Silver INDCON	Silver INDCON	Silver - AUSBATT
Bronze POLBATT	Bronze POLBATT	Bronze HRVCON	Bronze - J-CON
4 th rank AUSBATT	4 th rank HRVCON	4 th rank J-CON	4th - POLBATT
5 th rank HRVCON	5 th rank J-CON	5 th rank POLBATT	5th - HRVCON

Geographic Information Services in the Golan

Background of UNDOF Mapping Project and main services provided by GIS unit

GIS unit in UNDOF was established in May 2006 under the framework of UNDOF Mapping Project with the assistance of the UN DPKO/DFS Cartographic Section and has been providing topographic maps and geographic services of the Golan to UNDOF and UNTSO - OGG since Sep 2006. The main objectives were to replace outdated operational paper maps that have been used by UNDOF battalions and UNTSO-OGG military observers for more than 30 years but no longer accurately reflected the realities on ground, and to build geospatial capacity in the mission area. On average, 3,000 map sheets per year have been printed and at least one GPS training session per quarter was conducted to the military personnel in order to fortify their operational capabilities.

The unit has also assisted in numerous fieldworks in the context of re-barrelling projects and estimation of field violations along the A-line.



GIS officer working on UNDOF maps

Main challenges

In areas of contention around the world, territories often become No Man's Land, but in the case of Golan, the Area of Separation (AOS) continued to be inhabited by Syrian civilians. This has resulted in continuous land use change, and in recent years at an accelerated rate, thus creating more challenges to monitor the activities in accordance with the agreement and the mandate. Development of road networks and new agricultural fields are just two examples where change is very apparent.

Many colleagues assume cartography is about pressing the button "print". Even in today's abundance of savvy technological applications of Geographical Information System and Remote Sensing technology, map production involves

the three phases of data collection, data processing and data visualization. As mentioned earlier, the rate of land use change is accentuating in the Golan - a road could appear suddenly one day, and two weeks later it could be asphalted. These changes cannot be reflected automatically in the map database with-



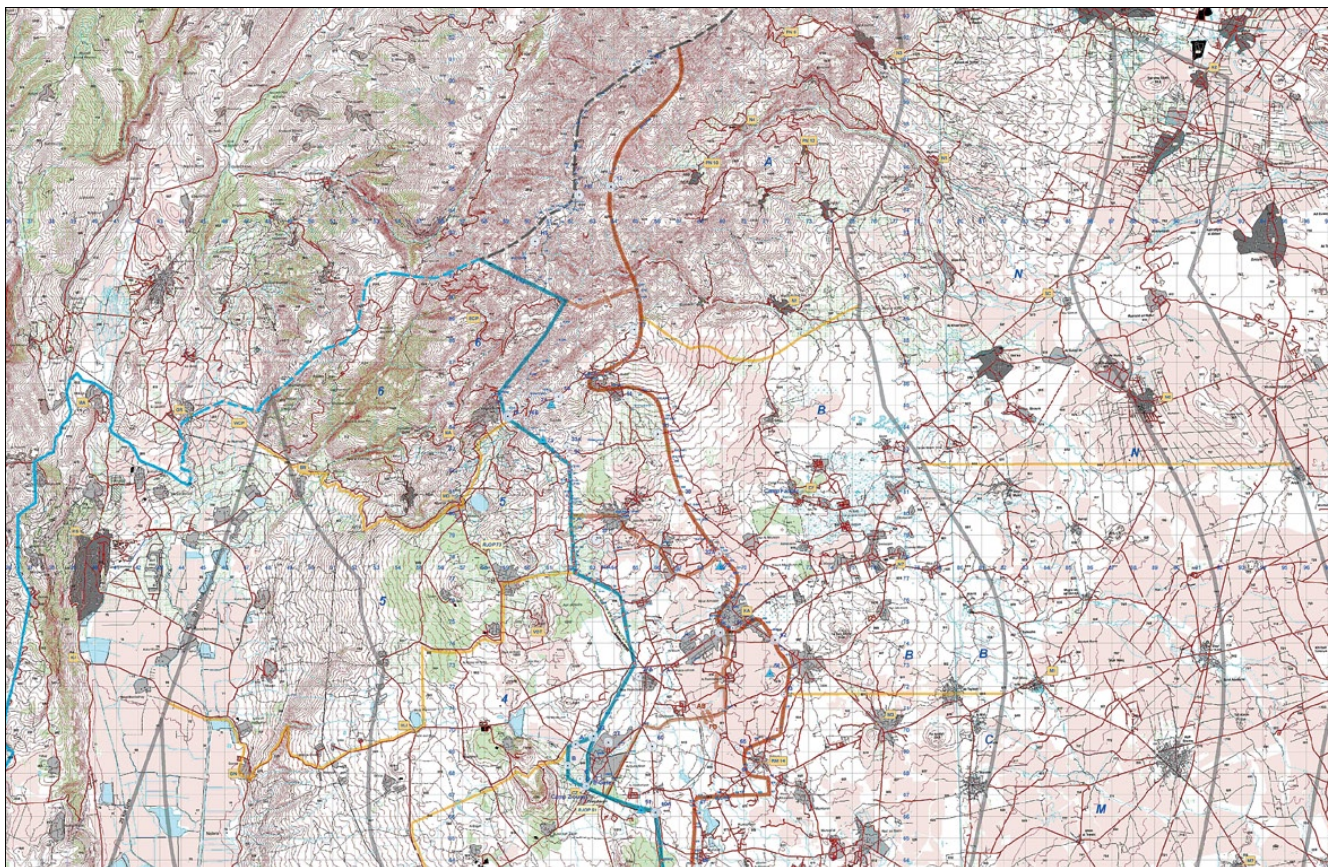
Original treaty map (1974) in FC Office

out correct reporting by the military personnel on ground, careful input of the data and fine tuning of cartographic visualization which satisfies the requirement of the users.

One of the greatest challenges the unit still faces is profiling and convincing what GIS can do for the mission. Not only it is able to produce analogue maps but carry out spatial analysis, simulation and visualization to increase operational efficiency and effectiveness.

Vision ahead

The unit foresees developing web-based mapping services alongside established services. Through inter-mission cooperation with UNIFIL GIS unit, a prototype project of DPKO Middle East Google Earth where satellite imag-



AOS map used by UNDOF and UNTSO-OGG



Just press button "print"? Laminating maps in order to extend their longevity

ery can be observed, combined with a digital elevation model, vector and

raster data are under way. Whilst applications for incident reporting, operational and security related planning and analysis can be anticipated, it is up to the users to define and request what kind of spatial data and information needs are developed in the future. After all, the GIS unit is a unit dedicated to "servicing" the mission area.

It has been an honour and a privilege to work for UNDOF. The services the unit provides would have not been possible without the generous understanding and support of the management and colleagues, as well as the willingness of the contingent

and military observers to share and report data and information on the ground. I had the luxury of working harmoniously in an integrated civilian and military environment, but also with generous neighboring UNIFIL and UNTSO to realize the regional approach of inter-mission cooperation. Whilst I left with a heavy heart since I thoroughly enjoyed my days in the Golan, I look forward to continue supporting the peace-keeping activities in the region in another capacity as GIS Desk Officer to the region of Asia and the Middle East.

Article and Photos by Ayako Kagawa, former Geographic Information Officer UNDOF (Jan 2007 - Nov 2008)

Geographic Information Officer, Cartographic Section, SSS/LSD/DFS, UN-HQ

Christmas with the Supreme Commander at the Golan Heights

Croatian peace keepers at Golan Heights, while doing their everyday to them still new tasks, awaited Christmas alongside Stjepan Mesić, the President of Republic of Croatia.



In their desire to uphold the standards set by their predecessors in this mission, with their personalities, professional skills and knowledge are bringing “fresh blood” to UNDOF mission and family. Although the Christmas holidays went by in working atmosphere, they will be very memorable, not just due to Christmas but also due to the visit of the President Stjepan Mesić. *“We thought that this will be just the first Christmas in UNDOF mission, but jet for us this is the first Christmas in company of the President of the Republic of Croatia”* said DCO AUSBATT LtCol Vedran Grublješić before wishing the president all the best for his birthday. This was the dinner for Christmas Eve, but also on this occasion President Mesić celebrated his 74th birthday with the soldiers. Force Commander MGen Wolfgang

Jilke welcomed the highly honored guest at the gate of Camp Faouar, and then followed trooping of colors and honor guard given by all contingents in UNDOF. After formal reception and introduction briefing President Mesić spent the rest of the day in Camp Faouar. Christmas Eve dinner the President had with Croatian soldiers in the dining hall and then they attended evening mass celebrated by Monsignor Josip Šantić accompanied by Padre Remo Longin. On the Christmas day the President visited 3rd Company Area of Responsibility (AOR). At Posn 10 the 3rd Coy Commander Capt Zdenko Fiala reported to the president, and after a short company brief president conducted a line tour. On his own request president was taken to visit one Posn in 2nd Coy AOR. After the line tour president had Christmas lunch at Posn 10 in the

company of Croatian Joint Chiefs of Staff delegation.

The president was pleased with what he saw, and as he said that the company seems a very good crew. The new 3rd company is a mix of experienced men from the Homeland war, and the mission in Afghanistan and young soldiers who are fresh blood in Croatian Army. Members of the 3rd Coy were able to, alongside their daily duties, put some effort in improvement of positions, so the Posn 10 got new expansion to the living room popularly called Cro Caffe. It is a place where soldiers can relax alongside a decorated Christmas tree which is not just a symbol of warm home but also a symbol of peace in the world.

*Article by WO III Matuza Slaven,
PersNCO/HRVCON
Photos by Sgt Helm and others,
Photographer AUSBATT*



Medal Parade and Austrian National Day



UN-soldiers in their typical national costume

On 24th Oct two contingents, the HRVCON and the AUCON assembled on the parade square of Camp Faouar. The Croatians, who are the youngest contin-

one of those 95 Croatian soldiers was proud to stand in line together with their Austrian comrades to receive after four months of duty the UNDOF medal.



A nice companiable evening

gent in the UNDOF mission and the Austrians, who are serving here since the beginning in 1974, were doing their duty in one battalion as they had done this for ever. Every

One third of the nearly 300 Austrian soldiers was glad to receive the medal for its first time on this special day. All the other Austrians had been awarded another time for their

additional service in the mission as for example one soldier received the medal for the 16th time honoring a real live for peace. For the Austrian soldiers it made the award even more valuable to receive the medal out of the hand of the Deputy Chief of the Austrian General Staff LtGen Othmar Commenda who expressed his pride und credit to the service of the AUSBATT.



Awarding of the UNDOF medal by LtGen Commenda

As the medal parade isn't enough, later that day the Austrians were celebrating their national day too. The AUSBATT-Soldiers invited the accredited ambassadors in Syria, the employees of UNDOF, the liaison officers and all other friends of the Austrians to celebrate with them. Everybody could try and convince himself of the fineness and quality of Austrian typical dishes from each federal state. Cheeseboards, snacks, wines, beers and a fine selection of liquors were offered and in great demand by all guests.

Furthermore there were performances by a magician, the show band "Uptown Monotones" and the new founded camp band "The Daltons".

*Article by Capt Martin Malinowski,
OpsInfo/AUSBATT
Photos by MSgt Martin Austerhuber,
OpsInfoAss/AUSBATT*

In the Service of Peace Keepers

The Faouar Institute (FI) is one out of three Service Institutes run by UNDOF. Located in Camp Faouar, operated by the Austrian UNDOF battalion, it provides a wide range of major consumer durables.



The Faouar Institute

Basically tasked to guarantee the supply of “all days non-duty stuff” to all inhabitants of the UNDOF village Camp Faouar, the crew of the Institute is aimed to cover all demands made on them in a fast and proper way. Toiletries, an extended variety of all kind of drinks, tobaccos, snacks & sweets as well as UNDOF souvenirs and many more types of goods are to be sold as standards. But even requests for luxury goods like extraordinary watches, exquisite sunglasses, clothes or selected knives for example are dealt with in the Faouar Institute.

In former times known and regarded as AUSBATT PX, the present-days designation Faouar

Institute is considered as a challenge by its management. The today's efforts are heading in the direction of internationality. As the origin of its customers is as wide as the num-



ber of troop contributing countries in UNDOF and UNTSO, a cross-cultural factor needs to be respected in the business policy.

Therefore the purchase of goods has to be organized in an international environment to supply all the wants arising in Faouar Institutes Area of Responsibility. Currently the FI offers goods produced and dealt all over the Middle East and in the whole world. What the customers really like best is that all commodities disposed in the Faouar Institute are sold free of all kind of taxes.

*Article by Lt I Helmut Gigelleitner,
PX Officer/AUSBATT
Photos by WO II Gernot Payer
Force Photographer*

The Polbatt's Marches

Two times every year there is the rare opportunity to patrol the whole Area of Separation by foot. Three of the marches are in the area of POLBATT.

Through the Wadi

The series of marches which are organized in POLBATT's Area of Responsibility (AOR) was initiated with the so called Wadi March on 11th Oct 2008. On the start of the most difficult and the most exhausting Polish march, emerged over 100 competitors representing all military contingents executing tasks under auspices of UNDOF.



Steep route in the Wadi Raqqah

The route of the march with a length about 19 km ran on the paths which usually soldiers from 2nd company patrol doing their duty. Because of mine fields existing still in this region, all participants of the march had to keep in mind the basic rule - to walk between the red marked stones! Mines were not the only threat on the route of the march. The path runs on the steep slopes of the canyon and participants of the march had then to approve oneself large cleverness and nimbleness. Faces of these who finished the march portrayed the magnitude of the effort which was put in the conquest of the march route but one could also perceive joy and satisfaction in them.

„It was more demanding than I thought but I feel a huge satisfaction

now”, LCpl Sylwester Misiuk said at the finish line continuing: “I reached one of the goals which I set myself already at home in Poland. Conquest of the whole route of the march was my intention, even on my knees. This march was for me the fight with my weaknesses and the real test of my character.”



CO POLBATT welcomes competitors

On the finish line CO POLBATT LtCol Dariusz Adamczyk greeted teams finishing the march and expressed his acknowledgement for their determination and persistence.

Walking with the scorpions

The Scorpion March on 18th Oct 2008 was the next Polish march, which similarly like the Wadi March attracted on its start over 100 competitors. One can notice among the participants of this march there were many persons who struggled with the Canyon Wadi one week earlier. The route of the march with the length of



Polish soldiers on the Scorpion March

19 km ran across quite flat terrain different to the march one week before meaning meters in altitude did not inflict additional problems to competitors. The most challenging difficulty marching there was staying on track because lots of sections were running in-between mined areas. Competitors, who achieved the finish line, similarly as while beginning the march, were greeted with loud sounds of the SISU's horn. At the finish line Force Commander of UNDOF MGen Wolfgang Jilke congratulated the finishers of the march and did not spare words of acknowledgement for their efforts.

Dancing with the coyote



On the long, long Coyote March

The Coyote March on 8th Nov 2008 was the last march organized in POLBATT's AOR. The route of the march ran again in very flat terrain, yet during this march participants had to get over the longest distance of about 28 km. Participation in marches like this for many soldiers is like narcotic. They do not avoid any opportunity to take such a test of their psychical and physical endurance.

*Article and Photos by
Capt Damian Zebzda, PressO/PB*

Polish Independence Day

On the 11th Nov 2008 punctually at 11.00hrs CO POLBATT LtCol Dariusz Adamczyk reported to LtCol Rainer Winter the readiness for the ceremony on



LtCol Dariusz Adamczyk reports to LtCol Rainer Winter

the occasion of Polish Independence Day. Soldiers from the 30th Rotation of the Polish Contingent were celebrating during solemn review on the Parade Square in Camp Ziouani the 90th anniversary of the independence recovery by Poland.

After troop inspection and salutation to soldiers, the occasional order was read. CO POLBATT honored soldiers for excellence during their duties. Also best wishes mailed from the Commander of Polish Land Forces and from Operational Commander of Polish Armed Forces were read out. LtCol Adamczyk in his speech reminded about the traditions of independence fights and expressed thanks for the conscientious and full devotion for duty to all soldiers and also for the effort putted in executing mandatory tasks.

"We are celebrating that important national holiday far from our homes executing extremely vital and responsible tasks under the blue flag of UN", said LtCol Adamczyk. "Here and in other parts of the world many thousand of Polish members of military units are maintaining peace in many regions of

the world where the presence of forces is required".

The solemn parade of soldiers from Polish battalion finished the ceremony and the CO POLBATT invited the guests and soldiers for a very special lunch.

For every Pole the 11th Nov is a very special day. It is extraordinary because on that day Poland after 123 years of slavery regained its independence. The change to be marked on the map of Europe had been created as the result of the end of the First World War and special thanks to military efforts of thousands Polish patriots and soldiers fighting on all fronts of the war. On the 11th Nov 1918 the Polish Regency Council, being the informal authority, handed over the whole power in the

an easy period of time for Poland due to the fact that during the next two years we had to fight again defending the country against the Bolshevik expansion from the East. It was not only fight for new democracy for Poland but for democratic Europe as well. The idea of independence has been cultivated and has been an object of the wishes and aspirations of many generations. The prosperity of the homeland has always been their highest goal during the period of twenty years between the two wars had been for the baby-young country the time of hard work to rebuild the economy and to catch up with other well-developed countries. After breaking out of the Second World War Poland once again became to be the theatre of inten-



The solemn parade of Polish soldiers

hands of outstanding Polish commander and patriot Józef Piłsudski, who started the process of building the foundations of young democracy. Finally the hour of freedom had come for the Polish nation after a long period of bloody insurrections, uprisings and wars. It was not

sive war activities and lost its independence again. It resulted with the material ruin of our country and millions of killed and wounded citizens.

Article and Photos by Capt Damian Zebzda, PressO/PB

Club A-line is “Friday’s Oasis” in Camp Ziouani



The A-line club in Camp Ziouani

Located by the main gate, the A-line club in CZ is known as “Friday’s Oasis” to those living in the Camp. The opening hours are 19:30-22:30hrs every Friday. The A-line club provides the opportunity to communicate with people from many different nations. In addition, one can become familiar with Japanese unique culture and after-work hours traditions.

Among others Club A-line serves Sake, the traditional Japanese

drink, which has become very popular among the UN peace keepers! Because there are two ways to drink sake, depending on the preference of the guests it is served hot or cold. On cold winter days, there’s nothing like hot sake, to warm both body and soul. On warmer days, cold sake brings a cool relief to the heat of summer. Sake is a kind of rice schnaps and distilleries are located throughout Japan from Hokkaido to Okinawa. There are about 2,000 distilleries nationwide, and each makes several different kinds of sake. People can enjoy unique tastes from each area and brewer.

For those who drink, and for those who don’t, Club A-line also provides fun entertainment like billiard, darts, table tennis and Karaoke! After the first karaoke machine was invented in Japan, Karaoke

became very popular not only in Japan and you can sing along to western-style music in English like the Beatles, Queen and Bon-Jovi!

Fascinated by the warm traditional atmosphere many guests put on a Kimono, the traditional costume of Japan, and have their photo taken posing with the traditional sword called Nihontou. Further there is always a professional Kanji calligraphy artist around to write out your name in the famous Japanese symbols so you may take it home as a souvenir and memoir.

So if this is the first time you’ve heard about Friday’s Oasis in CZ, come on over! Cheers... Kanpai... and peaceful wishes throughout the world.

*Article and Photos by
Sgt Takahiro Sato*



Enjoy the sake in the A-line club

Roads under Construction

One of the most important jobs of J-CON Detachment section is to construct and/or maintain the roads by use of heavy equipment.



Congratulations on completion of the work!

From time to time, the nature of this area provides us with challenges too severe for us to overcome. So we have to struggle in order to meet these challenges and overcome the difficulties. And when we finally do succeed, we feel a great sense of achievement. The harder we work, the more we feel satisfaction. Lately, it seemed as also the roads try to express their gratitude to us as well. Rough roads turned into flat roads. Gravel covered roads are stretching out and becoming longer day by day.

We are fully aware that we are indebted to the hard working UNDOF members who are alongside us for this success. When planning the work, we are reliant to the EOD team who has to check the area before we can start our work. In many cases we must

park our heavy equipment at the site outside of the base camp and during the days we frequently refuel at one of the UNDOF positions in the area of separation and have our meals there.



Dumping the gravel

On the occasion we have trouble with our equipment the members of LOGBATT are there to help out. As it was in November when despite very bad weather conditions LOG-

BATT mechanics rushed to our Mt HERMON site after hearing that we had a breakdown! We were really impressed by their devotion to this mission.

This example is one of many heartfelt efforts on our behalf which allow us to concentrate on our work and reach our best performance, safely and successfully. We are deeply appreciative for this assistance therefore a mere "thank you" may not convey all our feelings.

At times this help may seem invisible, but it is exactly this contribution which brings about the necessary, visible results and fulfillment in our work.

Thanks to you all!

*Article by Capt Kenshin Ito
Photos by WOII Yasuhiro Arai*

INDCON VI Gallops to Golan!



Handover/Takeover of the CO-LOGBATT in December 2008

It was a cold, rainy night on 27th Nov 2008 when the first flight of the Sixth Contingent of INDCON landed at Ben Gurion Airport. The four hour ride to Camp Ziouani was full of questions and anticipation. The warm welcome from soldiers of all contingents lined up at the Camp Ziouani Gate more than made up for the cold of the Golan. The men were quickly led away to enjoy a hot meal and a warm bed.

The next fifteen days were a flurry of activity which involved handing over of duties without disturbing the routine functioning of the LOGBATT. There were a few sad moments too, when soldiers bid farewell to friends from other contingents. While it has one of the largest standing armies in the world, India remains committed to peace. Nothing could prove this more than the enormous troop contribution India makes to the UN despite heavy

commitments at home. The soldiers of INDCON are mostly from the combat arms, yet have mastered the art of logistics very well.

With the second flight landing on 13th Dec 2008, the balance of the sixth rotation was inducted and INDCON was ready to face all challenges. It requires training to



GPS Training in the field

convert the mindset of a soldier into that of a peacekeeper, and the first month was well utilized to achieve this aim. Lectures on a variety of subjects including UNDOF History, Mine Awareness, HIV, Traffic

Rules and Human Rights were conducted for the officers and men of the newly inducted contingent.

Training was conducted on a plethora of subjects including First Aid, GPS, Driving, Radio Telephony and IT. Regular fire fighting practices were conducted along with bunker occupation drills to hone responses in any contingency. Weekly firing practices were conducted to maintain levels of individual skills.

To familiarize the officers and select appointments with the situation on ground, reconnaissance of the Area of Responsibility was conducted for INDCON, including the Blue Line tour. All this was done seamlessly without disturbing the LOGBATT routine. The sixth rotation is now ready to do justice to the mandate given by UNDOF.

*Article and Photos by
Maj Rohit Prasad, SigO/LOGBATT*

Duty in the Force HQ-Coy

At midnight the 59ers, how the commander of Force HQ Coy (FHQ) Capt Stefan Oman calls his patrolling soldiers affectionately because of their call sign, are still on Patrol and report to ZERO, the signal NCO in the Joint Operations Center, the start of a night patrol in the 2nd Coy area of POLBATT. This patrol will last till 05:00hrs in the morning when another squad prepares to start with patrol duty in the Area of Operation (AOO).



FHQ-Squad on night patrol

A patrol like this will last 5½ to 6 hours and ensures that there is always one of the FHQ squads on patrol for almost 24 hours a day. During these periods three additional squads must be able to leave the camp within 30 minutes and during this ready reaction time there is a lot to do for the soldiers like checking emergency cars and equipment. Further practicing their tasks to do as a Force Reaction Unit or during shelter alerts and increasing their abilities in reading maps as well as using GPS systems and many other tasks keep the soldiers busy. Another task is the guard duty, which is conducted by one of our squads every 2nd day from 12:00hrs to 12:00hrs the next day, or in other words for 24 hours.

Not at a scheduled basis we have special tasks like to conduct non noticed exercises from platoon to

coy level, dynamic and static displays for visitors of UNDOF, to build road blocks for special visits, and to support student-, pilgrim-, and bride-crossings between A-Side and B-Side.

On patrol with Sgt Ottmann

We conduct our 1st day patrol today. Destination: Area of Responsibility (AOR) of 2nd Coy AUS-BATT. Time is 12:30hrs. The sun is shining, no wind, approximately 5 degrees Celsius, in contrast to the night patrol we had two days before when it was minus 5 degrees. So we shouldn't underestimate the wind chill, especially during winter time.

Our tasks don't differ from the Coy's tasks deployed in the Area of Separation (AOS). We observe, stop and report violations. For that reason, we always have to know the latest news and regulations to act according to the Force Commander's intent.

Well prepared and updated by our Platoon Leader we start our patrol at Camp Faouar. Our 12-ton-heavy Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) from the type "SISU" is the vehicle, that brings us reliably everywhere in the AOS.

Today, our first destination is Watchtower 37B near the A-line which marks with far visible numbered barrels the maximum western area for Syrians to approach Israeli occupied territory. Two soldiers stay in the APC, me and the rest of my patrol team climb up the watchtower. From there, we always have a perfect view over the current main focus of the mission, the so-called "Grazing Area". It's an exemption allowing the Syrian shepherds to

cross the A-line of the AOS in this specific part with their flocks for grazing.

Going on with our patrol an old man gives us a sign. At first we think that he might need our help. But as we stop I get to know that the man knows my driver from former times in this mission. They greet each other and then we have to carry on with our patrol, which has to follow the weekly duty roster that is planned by our coy commander.

Our next stop is at Barrel 30A where a shepherd crossed unjustly the A-line which represents a violation of the agreement. Friendly but forcefully we try to get him back to the eastern side of the A-line. Although he follows our instructions we have to fill out our report forms anyway. Furthermore we have to inform the 2nd Coy and report to the Operation Center via radio.



FHQ-Coy in the "Grazing Area"

After 5 hours of patrolling and observing we return to Camp Faouar. In the meanwhile it has become dark and cold, a foretaste for tomorrow's night patrol that will endure 6 hours.

*Article by Capt Stefan Oman,
CoyCdr/FHQ-Coy
and Lt I Alexander Sandor,
PltLdr/FHQ-Coy
Photos by WOII Gernot Payer,
Force Photographer*



New fellows – new challenges

The time of the last rotation in December was not easy for our multinational MP family, as almost 70% of the detachment personnel and 60% of the MP HQ personnel were rotated. Despite the abundance of work with the handover/takeover, we still found some time to say goodbye to our friends returning home. During a solemn farewell party there were emotions, even tears. We exchanged souvenirs and e-mail addresses, we shot some commemorative photos, and each comrade was given a CD containing a presentation of our MP family.

Introduction and training

It required a lot of effort and commitment on the part of the introducing officers to acquaint newcomers with the complexities of MP UNDOF service. Already the first reconnaissance gave them thrills,

and yet it is not just Damascus, but the entire Area of Responsibility, that they need to know like the back of their hand. After all, this is the only way for them to get to the scene as soon as possible especially when the caller who needs MP assistance after a traffic accident does not exactly know where he or she is.

Due to the different countries the MP soldiers coming from have different focal points in their national training we conduct periodic shooting exercises. Also the weapons and equipment being used are particularly very different. As some comrades in their home country mostly use automatic weapons during their duty, they have to adjust to the pistol used in the mission in UNDOF. The firing training on distances from 10 to 25 meters is to equalize the MP soldiers skills in shooting and safe handling of the weapon.

Traffic control training

However, we now have ahead of us a period of hard work due to the winter time. As our experience shows, bad weather, precipitation, slippery roads and most of all failure to adjust speed to road and weather conditions, as well as drivers' recklessness, are main causes of a rising number of accidents in winter. The Military Police Officers will do their best to provide the quickest help to those in need, although we all hope our assistance is not needed very often because this would mean that drivers apply particular caution on the road and observe safety regulations when parking their vehicles.

*Article and Photo by
Maj Piotr Wladzimiruk,
DFPM*

OGG - Who are they and what do they do?

Under operational control of the Force Commander UNDOF, the Observer Group Golan observes the Agreement on Disengagement by inspecting, observing, patrolling and reporting activities that are or could lead to a violation of the agreement.

The time is 06:00hrs at Observation Post 51 (OP). That means another day of observation and reporting for the Norwegian Major Svein Heim. The morning starts with reporting of the weather conditions to the Duty Officer and the first observation from the platform. This is a clear morning, some breeze and 3.8°C degrees. So far, no violation observed from the watch tower. There are always two observers, from two different nationalities, at the eleven OPs at the A- and B-side 24/7. Daytime one of the officers is patrolling the area together with another colleague from another team, while the observer who is left in the OP is responsible for observations into the AOS regularly during the day. At the platform Major Heim now observes a shepherd crossing the A-line in the vicinity of barrel “Kilo”. “Zero this is OP51. I request log-in-time for my URF/PV 01/OP51: shepherd crossed the A-line”, Major Svein Heim reports over the radio to Joint Operation Center (JOC) of UNDOF. He also requests a Rapid Reaction Patrol and continues to observe until the patrol arrives at the spot.

The OP team of two is living at the OP for seven days in a row. And the six OPs at the A-side and five OPs at the B-side are all tasked to observe, inspect, patrol and report violations or activities that could lead to a violation to the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement. That means that the total numbers of 22 observers are the eyes and ears to report back up the line what’s going on at the Golan Heights. These observations, in addition to UNDOF’s reports, give the higher leadership level a good picture and situational awareness to base their decisions on.

“Every day in the afternoon all the OPs sends a Daily Situation Report (DSR), a summary of the day, which goes to the Duty Officer of the JOC. The report contains an operational update and if there is any relevant operational observations during the day, it will be found in the DSR”, Major Heim says before he responds to the final radio check of the day with Zero.

Recently some OPs have also been tasked to conduct night observations from the platform into the AOS using SOPHIE NVE, a sophisticated piece of night vision technology.

“It is all quiet tonight with nothing observed apart from an UNDOF armored vehicle making its way along on the patrol path near UN Posn 60A”, Major Heim concludes. The time is now 23:30hrs and it’s time to hit the bed and prepare for another day at OP51.

Article by Capt Andrew Bailey,

TL Hermon OGG-T and prepared by Maj Hanne Olafsen, MIO OGG

Photos by Capt Andrew Bailey



Maj Svein Heim, OGG-T, UNMO outside OP 51



Maj Svein Heim observing into AOS from OP51 platform



Maj Svein Heim reporting a violation

