

GOLAN

The UNDOF Journal



October - December 2005
No. 105



Dear Reader!

As always, this journal is the result of article contributions by those members of UNDOF, who took the effort to share some of their unique experiences with you. Peacekeeping is a way to help countries torn by conflict in order to create conditions for sustainable peace. UN peacekeepers here on the Golan Heights – soldiers, military officers and civilian personnel from many countries – don't vary much from their colleagues in other UN peacekeeping operations, when it comes to professional performance of their duties. There is one significant difference though, which can partially be attributed to the long duration of this mission. Within UNDOF you can find a large number of personnel, who already have served here several times and for many years. They love to be "GOLANIS" and almost feel



Golan Journal team: l-r: WOII Maresch, Mjr Hrubesch, Mjr Lindner, Capt Kobayashi

at home in the mission area. As they already have a very good understanding of the local communities, their problems and their needs, it isn't really surprising, that the humanitarian aspect of their presence increasingly is taking a prominent role. Each edition of this magazine is giving evidence of the great commitment and enthusiasm demonstrated by units and individuals, when it comes to humanitarian activities. This edition is good reading – thanks to all of you who already

have submitted an article and to those who plan to do so in the future! Having joined the editorial staff of the GOLAN Journal just a short while ago, I'm proud and honoured to be part of the UNDOF family and all those wonderful people. From all the staff of the MPIO office, we wish you a peaceful and prosperous year and a safe return to your beloved ones.

Maj Otmar Lindner

P.S. The implementation process of the new UNDOF-Military staff structure started on 20th December and has to be finalized by 17th February 2006. Consequently some changes will take place in MPIO, which will be transformed to Media/Public Relations & Welfare. We will inform you about details in the next edition. All the best to all of you.

Maj Friedrich Hrubesch

MPIO	Editorial	2
FC UNDOF	Force Commander's Message	3
COS UNDOF	COS Words	4
New People	New People in UNDOF	5
Visits	Visits to UNDOF	6
SLOVCON	Second "swallow" of SLOVCON	7
AUSBATT	Change of Command	8
AUSBATT	Centre for the Blind project	9
Miscellaneous	Increase your knowledge - Christmas	10
MP	MP AUT - Four Nation One Team	11
JCON	Rodeo Competition MTO's remark	12
CANCON	Say goodbye to GOLAN	13
POLBATT	Polish people in a Syrian land	14
HQ GSS	Annex Staff	15
Civilian Staff	International Day of Peace	16
Civilian Staff	GOING, GOING, GONE!	17

Front (Page 1): The three Magi serenade the staff at the pentagon building
Photo by Sgt Thomas Aigner

Back (Page 20): A member of AUSBATT 1Coy scanning the AOS at Hermon base
Photo by WO II Roland Maresch

Editorial Staff:

Editor:
Maj Friedrich Hrubesch
Managing Editor,
Layout Designer and
Force Photographer:
WO II Roland Maresch
Co-Editor:
Capt T. Kobayashi
Proofreader:
E. Lynn Elvaiah
Chinkie Ani

Unit Press Officers:

AUSBATT - **Capt W. Stiegler**
CANCON - **Capt M. Gendron**
J-CON - **Lt I K. Kumada**
POLBATT - **Capt J. Wojtanowski**
SLOVCON - **Lt I O. Murani**
OGG - **Maj V. Bardram**
MP - **Capt R. Point**

Editorial Office:

UNDOF HQ
Camp FAOUAR
Tel: 6130214-5203
E-Mail: undof-photo@un.org



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 Military Public Affairs Office publishes the Golan Journal every third month. While articles and photographs are welcomed from all members of the Force, the view and opinions expressed are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily coincide with those of the United Nations or the Force Commander.

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

Force Commander's Message

Dear colleagues and friends,

Dear fellow peacekeepers. First of all, I would like to express a very Happy New Year-2006 to all the readers. Also, wish that this year would bring much needed peace in the region.

We leave behind the year 2005. In UNDOF, 2005 was a year full of activities. The mandate was well executed even though we are working on updated but old maps. The modernization programme was completed. We have been able to enhance the security of our camps. Major chunk of arable land in the AOS were demined. The multi-gym in CF came into existence, which provides better facilities than the past one. All our positions have better IT facilities. UNDOF helped to transfer the apples from occupied Golan to Damascus, which was initiated under the auspices of the ICRC. Also, UNDOF and the contingents organized various charity activities and provided help to Tsunami victims in Sri Lanka, helped the blind school in Khan-Anabe, provided help to the physically handicapped children to their therapy in Dier Hanna and also helped the children suffering from autism. Also, both the military and civilian staffs enthusiastically collected and sent nearly a ton of stationeries to the less fortunate school going children

of Afghanistan. I would like to thank every one of you who have been involved in fulfilling the duty successfully and yet generously helping the unfortunate population of the society.

In the last quarter of 2005, we organized the Force Commanders Conference in UNDOF. The shared views and the experiences in the conference has undoubtedly helped us to come closer and work better. We received many visitors from UNHQ and troops contributing countries. Their advice and suggestions had been valuable to us. Similarly, I am proud to state that our relation with both, the host countries have greatly improved. I look forward to have the same support from host nations.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to all the recently arrived peacekeepers to UNDOF. I wish you a successful, peaceful and enjoyable stay here. Furthermore, I would like to express my appreciation and thanks those who have departed mission recently. I wish you a very good career and prosperity in your life.

As you are aware, Canadian contingent is drawing down and India is taking over the job of logistics. I

would like to thank Canada for providing the support to this mission for just over three decades. The professional, social and personal contribution made by these officers and soldiers to UNDOF will be remembered forever. In the mean time, I would like to welcome the Indian contingent and wish every success in their new mandate in UNDOF.

To the soldiers of UNDOF: you are the backbone of the mission. Your work is the image of UNDOF. I am highly impressed from your professionalism and dedication to your work. Well done! Also, I would like to thank both, military and civilian staffs at Headquarters for their support and sincerity at work. You have collectively contributed in fulfilling our mandate.

Finally, I would like to thank the editor and staffs for their hard work in bringing this edition and those who contributed the articles for this edition of the Golan Journal.

*Thank you
Danke
Arigato*

*Diakujem
Dziękuję
Merci*



Lt. General B. N. SHARMA
Force Commander UNDOF

Chief of Staff Words

Comrades of UNDOF!

Autumn 2005 has seen a number of important decisions within UNDOF that I want to illustrate below. But first of all I wish to thank you all for the excellent cooperation in fulfilling your duties during the last months. The notion that we are only successful here in UNDOF acting as one team should also guide our future missions. The year 2006 is holding some challenges in store for us, but I am convinced that with this attitude of teamwork and cooperation we will cope with everything successfully. With that in mind I want to wish you all a very happy and prosperous New Year.

In October 2005 after a short phase of training we were able to start with the mapping project. It means that UNDOF will expect new maps in the foreseeable future. The maps which are up to now used within UNDOF are about 30 years old. An update was required because so many things have changed in our area of operation. The new digitalized map-system offers a variety of possibilities concerning scale, map-pictures and so on. All operational tasks of the battalions and units will be facilitated. The first part of the project was finished before Christmas. Therefore I want to thank the SSO OrgPlans, Maj Wöhrer, and his team consisting of members from STS AUSBATT and POLBATT for doing such a good job and call them on to



proceed in the same way for the second phase.

Secondly the decision was made to keep the position 17 and to activate outpost 32 A due to operational reasons. As mentioned above within the area of operation in the last thirty years there were a lot of changes, new roads were built and they have to be observed, as it is the case with 32 A. Hence, in fulfilling our tasks we have to be flexible and at times to react immediately when the situation is changing, that also means that in some cases we have to reevaluate previous plans. Concerning the construction of 32 A I want to thank the FCEO, Maj Zaller, and his engineering team for preparing the basic requirements so quickly.

In December the new Military HQ Structure of UNDOF has been approved by New York. Now we are in the phase of implementing this new structure. Within this process we have to adapt the staff-procedures and to describe the new positions. HQ-Staff has to be trained for this and therefore we have created a new section: the so

called Mission Training Cell/MTC which coordinates and realizes all training requirements. The new military structure is the first step into the realization of the integrated structure which is

the goal of UN New York. It means that especially in the area of logistics and administration the civilian and military structures should be amalgamated. This further emphasizes the point that we have to be one team for being successful, so therefore I am convinced that we will master these tasks up to summer.

The Canadian Contingent will leave the mission in the first quarter of 2006. Only two officers will stay on positions in HQ. I want to say thank you to all soldiers from the Canadian Contingent for your excellent cooperation and comradeship within UNDOF for the past 31 years. I wish you all the best in your careers. Our new contingent which is taking over LOGBATT comes from India. I may hope that the Indian soldiers will be soon familiarized with the mission and give us excellent logistics support.

When we consider now the task-list, it is easy to recognize that we have got a lot to do. Let us take the chance to make many things more effective. But don't forget the motto for us to succeed:

Viribus unitis!

Col Dr. A. Stupka

New People in UNDOF



The New CAO

Mr. Patrick Devaney was born in Sligo, Ireland in 1945. He spent approximately 20 years in the corporate sector prior to joining United Nations. He Held Senior Financial Management positions in multi national companies in Ireland, Canada and South Africa.

He joined United Nation in 1993 as Chief Finance Officer, UNRWA, Beirut. In 1996 he was transferred to United Nations department of Peacekeeping operations and was appointed CFO of Peacekeeping Missions in Western Sahara, Iraq, and Bosnia Herzegovina.

In March 1999 he was appointed CAO of peacekeeping Mission in Tajikistan. He was appointed CAO UNIFIL in April 2002, and CAO Peacekeeping Mission in Afghanistan in March 2005. He was appointed CAO UNDOF in November 2005. Mr. Devaney studied Accounting and Finance at Leeds University, England. He is a chartered Management Accountant (ACMA). He is married to Pauline and has one son. His hobbies include farming, reading and walking.



The New CMPO

LtCol Tassilo Pawlowski is since 19 Dec 2005 in charge of the CMPO in HQ UNDOF. Its his second tour of duty as CMPO/UNDOF. LtCol Pawlowski was born on the 16th of June 1957 in Salzburg, Austria. He graduated from

the Austrian Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt, in the south of Vienna in 1981. He started his military career as a platoon commander in a tank destroyer battalion in Salzburg. At the same time he started to study law at the university of Salzburg, and finished the study in 1985. After the study he moved to Vienna and held differnt functions in the MOD, Military district command of Vienna etc.. His current position is at the military district command of Salzburg, where he is a branchhead. In 1998 he was in the EU-led mission EUMM in Bosnia at the HQ as Chief of finance, and from 1999/2000 he was the commander of the Austrian NSE in KFOR 1. In the year 2002 he participated in the NATO/PfP Exercise "STRONG RESOLVE", which took place at STETTIN, Poland, as MA to the commanding General and Deputy Commander of the Austrian Contingent. LtCol Pawlowski is married and has three sons.



The New COGG

Lt Col Michael O'Sullivan was born in Cork, Ireland and entered the Cadet School, Military College on completion of his Secondary education. On graduation from the Cadet School he was commissioned as an Infantry Officer

and posted to 5 Infantry Battalion, 2 Brigade. During his career he has served in various unit appointments at command and staff levels. Prior to his joining UNTSO as the Senior Military Information Officer he commanded the 27 Infantry Battalion from 2002 to 2004. He completed his Command and Staff course in 1986 and worked in various staff appointments at Bde and Defence Force HQ levels. His previous service with the UN has been with UNEF II in 1975 as a Platoon Commander and with UNIFIL as a Company Commander and as Liaison Officer at UNIFIL HQ. He has previous service in UNTSO from 1987 to 1989, and with the EU in the Balkans in 1994. He is married to his wife Kay and has three children and one grandchild.



Visits to UNDOF



Visit of MajGen J. Yamaguchi, 12th Commanding General, Japan, met with FC, fact finding of UNDOF and J-CON's activities (24th October)



Visit of the members of French Embassy to Syria, got a briefing and visited POSN60 (26th October)



Visit of Mr. J. Biorn Lian, Norwegian Ambassador to Israeli, got a briefing and visited OP51 (2nd November)



Visit of Mr. O. Egberg Mikkelsen, Danish Ambassador to Syria, got a briefing and visited Quneitra (3rd November)



Visit of UNTSO Chief of Staff and UNIFIL Force Commander, met with FC for Force Commander's Conference (9th November)

Other visitors to UNDOF

Visit of MajGen G. Hoefler from Austria, met with FC, COS and visited AUSBATT 1st, 2nd and 3rd Coy (05-06 October)

Vist of General H. Tacik from Poland, met with FC and visited HQ POLBATT (21st -24 October)

Visit of K. Morishita, Director, Secretariat of International Peace Cooperation from Japan, fact finding UNDOF activities (07-10 November)

Visit of the members of Switzerland Embassy to Syria, visited CF, Quneitra, and OP57 (15 November)

Second “swallow” of SLOVCON in UNDOF

In the course of the December rotation the 2nd squad STS got their second “swallow” whose name is Cpl Sonia Durisova.

Her first two attempts registering at the university were unsuccessful. She wanted to study at the military academy, but the military academy did not invite her to the entrance examination. She still doesn't know the reason for this - whether it was the fault of a possibly badly filled in entry form or perhaps her entry was barred by someone.

So she decided in favor of the yearlong Warrant Officers' School, but unfortunately this school was closed.

One day her mother read the information in the city hall offices that the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic were searching for volunteers.

Sonia, from the village of Kostolna Nova Ves, immediately read up on it in the Trencin's mili-

tary office about the possibility to become a professional soldier and on May 2004 her official ceremony took place.

“My father has always wanted a son”, Sonia said, “but he got five daughters instead. He himself has never served in the army and therefore was very proud of me on this day”.

On August 2004, after two months of training in Topolcany, she began her job in the Reconnaissance Coy in Levice. She thought a lot about her personal acceptance as the only woman in the Coy because plenty of the soldiers were thinking that having a woman among them could create hate and destroy comradeship due to jealousy but the opposite was found true and the working atmosphere has improved because of Sonia.



3rd Coy STS squad with their new “swallow”

There are four other soldiers in addition to Sonia in the 2nd squad STS: The three gunmen Cpl Richard Vanatka, Cpl Laszlo Letray and Cpl Fero Spanko as well as SqdLdr Sgt Roman Osadsky who is also part of this squad and they have known each other from their former Coy. The other members are the driver MCpl Tichomir Benko, who is now the FC's driver. WOI Renata Zhibova, she has been here since June 2005 and has experience gained during UNFYCIP mission. The last one is very a skillful member of STS: LCpl Benjamin Topor, who also has served at UNFYCIP. Now he is the driver of the 2nd squad. He has been serving in the artillery brigade, which is located in the city Jelsava, where he did his job as a driver of the heavy artillery system ZUZANA on the 8x8-chassis, which weighs more than 30 tons. Therefore he has never had problems during SISU-training; steering a SISU is very easy for him. Benjamin is called SISU baby.



Members of STS assemble for a group photo

Author: Capt Oliver Murani

AUSBATT - Change of Command

Having assumed command over the Austrian Battalion on 11th October 2004, LtCol Herbert Pracher has spent a total of 13 months on the Golan Heights. His excellent skills in leadership were characterized by his calm and competent approach, managing even the most challenging tasks and situations. The personal safety of all his subordinates remained his top priority at all times. His sense of humor was much appreciated by all personnel and was a great source of motivation. Finally, on 16th November 2005, the time had come to hand over his command to his successor.



LtCol Pracher (outgoing CO AUSBATT) addresses the parade



LtCol Friedhuber accepts command of AUSBATT from Col Stupka, COS UNDOF

The ceremony, attended by a large number of guests of honour, provided a good opportunity for LtCol Pracher to address his "Golanis" for the last time, to say thanks for all the support and achievements and to wish them well for their future. Both, the Austrian ambassador to Syria, Dr. Schramek, and Col MMag. Dr. Stupka, the UNDOF HQ COS, in their farewell speeches praised LtCol Pracher's great efforts and brilliant performance.

The incoming Battalion Commander, LtCol Christian Friedhuber, who already had spent 3 weeks

in the mission area alongside LtCol Pracher, was handed over the insignia of AUSBATT by Col Stupka, officially assuming command over the Austrian Battalion within UNDOF. Without doubt, the new commander will be experiencing a challenging and interesting period here as well. LtCol Friedhuber is a well trained officer, who already has sufficient mission experience to perfectly qualify for his new responsibilities.

Author: Mjr Ernst Strohmayr



New CO AUSBATT LtCol C. Friedhuber

AUSBATT - Centre for the Blind project

Humanitarian support on the Golan Heights

On 10th November 2005 the official opening of a classroom and a studio for musicians marked the highlight and the conclusion of an ambitious charitable project, which had seen 5 months of intense preparation. It all started, when LtCol Herbert Pracher, the CO AUSBATT, was informed about a possible donation of funds, raised at a charity event in December 2004 by the Austrian Embassy. In June 2005, following a suggestion by Dr. Hosam Doughouz, an employee of the Syrian Ministry for Public Health and coordinator for humanitarian affairs in the District of Qunaitra, it was decided to allocate most of the funds for the provision of musical instruments and acoustical learning tools for the children at the Centre for the Blind in Khan Arnabeh. In July 2005 all Austrian members of UNDOF were asked for private dona-



Equipment provided by UNDOF to the Centre for the Blind in Khan Arnabeh

tions to this project, which the soldiers offered generously. Once the fund raising had been accomplished by mid August, AUSBATT was able to contact the vendors in order to get the best offers and to start working on the interior of the school. Thanks to the battalion's own engineering platoon, of special mention Cpl Erwin Tchapeller and Cpl Bernhard Brunner, it

was possible to provide all of the furniture and to offer humanitarian assistance of such an impressive magnitude. Finally the time had come for the official handing over of the project. This was conducted in a festive ceremony and in attendance were such high level guests as the

Force Commander UNDOF, the Austrian Ambassador, the Governor of Qunaitra and many local dignitaries. In his emotional speech, which was covered and broadcasted by Syrian TV, the Governor of Qunaitra expressed his gratitude to all members of UNDOF involved and stated that they would always be welcome on the Golan Heights as friends.

Once again, lots of thanks to all of you, who made your valuable contribution or actively participated in this project, which certainly brought some light into the life of children who normally have to live in the dark. In addition, the Centre for the Blind in Khan Arnabeh already has become a role model for future similar centres all over Syria - this is what I call really good news!



Children enjoying the benefits of the UNDOF donations

Author: Mjr Ernst Strohmayer

Increase your knowledge – Christmas

Christmas: A.D. 337, Rome
As a holy day and a holiday, Christmas is an amalgam of the traditions from a half-dozen cultures, accumulated over centuries. A turkey dinner and a decorated tree, Christmas' cards and Santa Claus, yule logs, mistletoe, bells, and carols originated with different peoples to become integral parts of December 25, a day on which no one is certain Jesus Christ was born.

Mistletoe:

2nd Century B.C., British Isles
The custom of embracing under a sprig of mistletoe, if not actually kissing under it, originated in ancient Britain around the second century B.C., among the Druids, the learned class of the Celts. Two hundred years before Christ's birth, the Druids celebrated the start of winter by gathering mistletoe and burning it as a sacrifice to their gods.

Christmas Tree:

8th Century, Germany

The custom of a Christmas tree, undecorated, is believed to have begun in Germany, in the first half of the 700s. The earliest story relates how British monk and missionary St. Boniface (born Winfrid in A.D. 680) was preaching a sermon on the Nativity to a tribe of Germanic Druids outside the town of Geismar. Xmas. The familiar abbreviation for Christmas originated with the Greeks. X is the first letter of the Greek word for Christ, Xristos. By the

sixteenth century, "Xmas" was popular throughout Europe.

Christmas Cards: 1843, England

A relatively recent phenomenon, the sending of commercially printed Christmas cards originated in London in 1843. Previously, people had exchanged handwritten holiday greetings

Santa Claus:

Post-4th Century

The original Santa Claus, St. Nicholas, was born in the ancient southeastern Turkish town of Lycia early in the fourth century. To show his piety as a child, he adopted a self-imposed twice weekly fast (on Wednesdays and Fridays). Then, upon the early death of his parents, he fully dedicated his life to Christ, entering a Lycian seminary.

**Impressions from
FC season greetings tour
20 december 2005**



FC plays Santa Claus to the soldiers of Posn 10



Mjr Hofer 2nd Coy accept gifts for his soldiers



Fun speaking to the soldiers at position 80

UNDOF MP AUT – Four Nations One Team

As a multinational unit of 28 members coming from four countries, the UNDOF Military Police are providing full time police support to the UNDOF mission on the Golan Heights.

Eight Austrian MPs are part of the UNDOF MP Platoon and the FPM position is shared among Austria, Canada and Poland. In June 2005, Capt E. Walla was appointed Force Provost Marshal of UNDOF and Commanding Officer of the MP Platoon. Also located at the MP HQ is the position of the MP Administration WO, which is also held by an Austrian who supports all daily administrative requirements of the MP Platoon.

Three Austrian MPs are presently overloaded with work at Bravo Detachment (Camp Faouar), one is the Detachment 2I/C and two are Patrolmen. There is hope, that in the future B Detachment will receive one additional Austrian Patrolman, giving the MP Platoon the former strength of 29 members.



The Military Police Platoon

At Alpha Detachment (Camp Ziouani) you will find two Austrian MP's, one being the Detachment Commander and the other a Patrolman and finally at Charlie Detachment, which is located between Alpha and Bravo Gate, one Austrian serving as the 2I/C.

In Austria, the so called Militärstreife is responsible for conducting security checks of the Camp guards, vehicle escorts and traffic control, however,

they have no police functions and thus are not responsible for traffic accident investigations or vehicle checks. All Austrian MP's, wishing to join a mission abroad, have to attend an international MP course. During this course they learn how to deal with traffic accidents, conduct vehicle or security checks and other police tasks. Furthermore, MPs learn basic interview skills, house searching and close protection, all of which are required in Kosovo. The course is given in English and only the best make it through and finally receive their MP badge.

Within the next three years and according to the new Austrian Force structure a new MP Battalion which will be comprised of three Coys with a complete strength of 450 MPs will be disbanding the now Militärstreife which has a strength of approximately 180 soldiers.



Polish soldiers of the Military Police Platoon

Author: Capt Renee Point

Rodeo Competition J-CON MTO's remark

The recent Rodeo Competition was held again on 7 and 8 Nov 2005. This competition was held in order to maintain and provide safety driving techniques and safety awareness for UNDOF soldiers in recent circumstances.

Until this competition, J-CON had enjoyed four consecutive overall wins since VI Rodeo Competition. This time, J-CON was aiming for a new record – “five consecutive overall wins” in X Rodeo Competition.

Although there was not enough time for competition preparation, all J-CON competitors grappled with lots of obstacles placed on the driving courses, lots of defects to be checked and lots of questions in the UNDOF driver's handbook test. And at last, we got not only overall win but also first places on TOYOTA 4-Runner (small car) and Truck driving competitions as well. Furthermore, J-CON competitors individually came in first and second place in both driving contests.



Driver SSgt Kikuchi

This consequence brought good results – solidarity, self-confidence, a feeling of achievement, and especially, awareness of safety driving to J-CON members.

As a part of LOGBATT, J-CON is mainly responsible for second-line transport to augment contingents' resources, and we usually do our tasks using large trucks

or trailers. In transport, cargos should be conveyed “on time and in place”, and that's why we always run bearing the words, or “on time and in place” in our minds.

Needless to say, “on time and in place” requires safety driving techniques and safety awareness allowing us to arrive at destinations faultlessly. I believe that our daily safety driving skills and safety knowledge were shown fully in the competition and brought positive results.

Safety driving is indispensable for each one of us, including other UNDOF members, to fulfill each task. We should not be racing drivers, but should be good drivers with discretion.

Through this competition, I hope all UNDOF peacekeepers will take an interest in safety driving, and will be “traffic safety keepers”.



Members of J-CON proudly showing off their awards

Author: Capt Kanji Nagare

Say goodbye to GOLAN

The winds of change have been blowing steadily for some time now through the LOGBATT lines and with these winds has come a certain tension in the air; at some times subtle, at other times palpable. The catalyst for this “wind” has been the much-anticipated handover of UNDOF Task Force Golan (TFG) LOGBATT responsibilities from Canada to India.

After thirty-two years of continuous service to peace support operations in the Syria-Israeli Area of Separation (AOS) the Canadian Contingent is preparing to end its stay in the Golan Heights and head home. Thirty-two years is a long time by any measure, indeed some of the troops that are presently serving in theatre were not even born when this Mission began; others have had previous tours in this theatre dating back some twenty-plus years!

Of course with thirty-two years of committed service comes thirty-two years of experience, infrastructure, equipment, administration and reputation that have to be passed on. With the arrival of the India Advance Party, the Canadian contribution to UNDOF has taken on the added task of training our Indian counter-parts as “Train-the-Trainers” (for the main body of the Indian Force expected in February/March 2006) to a high standard. We also have to take stock of the UN equipment staying in theatre and all of the Canadian owned equipment that must be prepared for shipment back to Canada. And of

course, we must maintain the obligations of the UNDOF Mission at the same high standard that has become the hallmark of Canadian contributions to the United Nations around the world.

To maintain the current operational tempo, and adjust to the addition burden of transition, a great deal of planning had to be put in place.

Due to the scope of the task, all members of TFG have a part to play in the transition, plus maintain their current assignments as well; no easy task for certain! To accomplish this TFG has been subdivided into specialized teams, (Operations, Training, Protocol, HQ and Mission Closeout Team (MCT)) to be employ members concurrently with their regular duties.

At the moment the Indian Advance Party has just arrived and are getting acclimatized to the area, meeting their Canadian counterparts and reviewing the

Mission. The initial meeting has gone as well as expected and it has been found that we have many similarities between our two Forces. An excellent example of this can be found between our Canadian EME Branch and the Indian EME. Not only do they share the same name, there are also close parallels in their corps flag, emblem and trade structure. So too, do they share the esprit de corps and tradition of remembrance, and it was with great appreciation that IEME agreed to keep alive the memory of a Canadian EME soldier, Cpl Greg LaRose, who died in UNDOF in 1993, and had a park and a monument (Rosy” the wrecker) erected in his memory.

It is with confidence as we start packing our bags and checking our kit one final time that the Canadian contingent leaves our old home in very good hands.

Author: Capt Mario Gendron



Canadian and Indian EME platoon at the LaRose park monument in Camp ZOUANI

Polish people in a Syrian land

The land of Syria is not only the mission area of Polish soldiers, but also became a homeland for a Polish Minority composed mainly of women who are located primarily in Damascus, Aleppo and Homms. There is diversity of reasons for them to leave the country of their ancestors and settle thousands of miles from Poland. However a marriage of a Polish woman and a Syrian man in most cases explains such a brave decision – a decision about a total life rearrangement. Realities of existence in Poland and Syria in most aspects radically differ. It is not only the matter of climate and geographical location, but primarily it is based on different cultural backgrounds, history and approach of common people towards life and everyday issues. No wonder then that marital and family relations between two persons coming from two different “planets” are very specific and worth being explored.

In most cases they met in Poland. Typically he was studying in one of the Polish universities, so they had enough time to learn a lot about each other and to take the decision about their future life, which was not always accepted by relatives and friends. Children coming from such marriages also grow up in a very specific multicultural reality. Usually parents take adequate care of cultivating both Polish and Syrian national traditions that make children fully aware of the origins. They attend Arabic schools, but also special Polish ones, established and run by the Polish Minority Association in Syria. In those early years youths learn to speak Polish and Syrian as well as English and French. No matter what they will do and who they will be in the future, it facilitates them to become a member of the modern worldwide multinational society. Growing up in such an atmosphere and supported by parents, they

take up studies in Syria and Poland as well all over the world. According to the statistics, after graduating some of them return to Syria, some decide to live in Poland and finally a significant part settle beyond the homelands of their parents. It proves the ideological freedom and respect of individual aspirations of Polish-Syrian families living in Syria.

It also needs to be mentioned about outstanding relations between the UNDOF Polish Military Contingent and the Polish Minority Association in Damascus. Its representatives are warmly invited to the mission area to participate in all events crucial to POLBATT. Their presence add splendour to many UNDOF ceremonies, like Medal Parades or Change of Commands. Polish national holidays are also celebrated together. For each Polish soldier it is very unique to experience Christmas or Easter faraway from Poland, accompanied by compatriots living here. The



Representatives of Polish Minority and students at Polish Independence Day celebration, Camp Faouar 11th November 2005

Polish people in a Syrian land

Polish Military Contingent also does its best to contribute to glorious charity events performed by the Polish Minority Association in Syria. The money raised in this way supports Syrian hospitals and helps to provide medical assistance in the poorest of Syrian regions. After such a long time of living here, members of the Polish Minority are well acquainted both with the history and geography of beautiful Syria. By joining POLBATT trips, they make them more interesting and outstanding. All such events are exceptional and will remain in the memories of both

Polish peacekeepers serving here and Polish people living here.

There is also a group of Poles coming to Syria for one year, like POLBATT soldiers, but not related to the UN directly who are Polish students. Being more precise, they study the Arabic culture and language in Poland and arrive to Syria to confront the theory with reality, practice the Arabic language and experience the real Arabic environment. All of them live in Damascus and attend special lectures at the Arabic Institute for Foreigners. They devote their lives to this part of the world. It

is a great honour and pleasure to welcome the students to the events organized by POLBATT and to attend those arranged by them in Damascus. Arabic countries, people and culture are their passion. The time spent with them enables us to find out much more about the area in which we are serving. It is particularly vital, because all of us should treat our presence in this land not only in terms of our jobs, but more like a mission - after all, we leave a part of ourselves here when we depart.

Author: Capt J. Wojtanowski

HQ GSS - Annex Staff

In Camp Ziouani, UNDOF HQ Annex staff is comprised of 1 International, 8 national and 1 SSA contractor.

Gerhard Beiszkammer as AO, CZ represents UNDOF HQ Administrative on the "A" side along with the duties of OIC R&I CZ and heads up this CZ team.

Lynn Elvaiah as Senior Procurement Assistant deals with all Procurement related issues for A side vendors, contractors and international shipments that arrive to any ports in Israel.

Gerald Sach as IT Assistant takes care of UN Owned Computer Equipment, Lotus Notes, Galileo, Mercury and Network/Internet Access.

Merav Simana as R&I clerk takes care of Receiving and Inspecting and required entries into Mercury and Galileo systems in R&I CZ.

The 5 kitchen helpers - Natalie Alul, Sylvia Bitton, Shulamit Fhima, Gila Malka and Ariella Segal give assist to cleaning detail in both the LOGBATT and POLBATT kitchens.

The SSA contractor, Lydia Bielen assures that all UNDOF offices

are clean and tidy.

This small group of 10 people represent UNDOF HQ, or the "A" team as coined by many and proof that bigger is not necessarily better

Author: Gerhard Beiszkammer



The General Services Section team on B-side

International Day of Peace

They say, "Peace is more than just the absence of war." Peace is the presence of justice, equality, and the chance to enjoy the basic necessities of life. For many peacekeepers, it's a tenuous kind of peace. Every year, this day takes on a new meaning, as every bit of progress towards a tentative peace—in whichever country they serve—becomes a significant achievement.

UN staff worldwide commemorated this day by honoring its heroes, those whose lives were taken in the service of peace. UNDOF staff planted trees of peace on both sides of the Area of Separation, to signify the purpose of its presence here, to promote its ideals and dream of reconciliation for the opposing parties and to be one with our colleagues, irrespective of our race, background and religious beliefs.

To celebrate "Peace Day", we invited staff and their families to join us for a sumptuous

catered lunch, an afternoon of games and entertainment and raffled off 65 donated prizes, ranging from pens to beautiful ethnic products to airline tickets! But as 23 September drew near, and in the midst of

all the frenzied preparations, the real meaning of "Peace Day" dawned on me. As people were tasked, resources were requested, assistance and support were asked for and provided by all sides, barriers were breached and I marveled at the efficiency of each staff member involved, whether civilian or military. The amount and level of cooperation was amazing. It brought out the best in everyone and each person could be credited for this project's success. At the end



FC and former CAO Jerry Smith plant a tree of Peace

of the day, it was simply a matter of being able to work harmoniously with each other towards a common goal.

I have no room for more words so I will let the pictures taken during "Peace Day" speak for themselves. I would rather acknowl-

edge the various establishments/friends and staff of UNDOF, who donated gifts so generously for the raffle. Thanks to all of you! I'd like to thank Ms. Rasha Al-Abed, National Staff Committee Chair-person for her tireless efforts, Ms. Amalia Carpio, our accounting genius who handled all the expenses, Mr. Bashar Al-Midani and Ms. Hazar Al-Khatib. We are grateful to J-CON, AUSBATT, POLBATT and LOGBATT for logistics support, donations of food and raffle prizes. Special thanks to Capt. T. Kobayashi (DMPIO) and Maj. David Brazier (MA to FC) for being the civilians' links to our military colleagues; Radio Gecko and our appreciation to the martial arts crew composed of Capt. K. Nagare, SGT. S. Watanabe, SFC. S. Tagami, LPT. R. Nishikawa, MSG. M. Igarashi and MSG. M. Odaira. Thanks to everyone who made this day an inimitable success!



Our own Capt Kobayashi displays his mental strenght

Author: Chinkie Ani

GOING, GOING, GONE!

On 19 May 05 all military and civilian members of UNDOF were invited to participate in an auction that was held in Maple Hall, Camp Ziouani. A general request was made to all personnel to “jump on board” and produce some handcrafted items that could be auctioned to benefit charity. All proceeds from this auction were donated to two such institutions for children on the “A” side.

One week before the auction, all items were on view and what an assortment of creativity and talent were on display! All items were captured on film and copied to disk that is circulating about since that time. The items ranged from photographs, paintings, ceramics, origami, t-shirts, scorpion boxes, jewelry, mirrors and plaques to name just a few. Even “helicopters” were auctioned off that we later found out were spinning flying toys. And who will ever forget the old autographed flag! One lady performed oriental dancing and all contributions went into the collection box.

The bidding was wild and some items garnered upwards from 200 (the old flag) to 300 US\$ (a beautiful framed painting). It was an amazing experience where people showed off their talents by contributing their handmade items and then watched as all tried to outbid each other. In the end ALL items were sold! The final reward was knowing that all proceeds would benefit children in Israel. Hats off to all participants for your creativity and your generosity -

we were successful beyond our wildest dreams as 3,600 US Dollars were collected.

Great fun was had by those who were able to participate. And the consensus was that we should do it again. Special thanks to the Flog-master, Jerry Smith, then CAO; LOGBATT CO; soldiers/civilian support and to Gerald Sack who organized all the committees.

The money collected was equally divided and donated to two charitable organizations. The first presentation was made by the FC and CAO to the Association for the Advancement of the Community in the village of Deir Hanna and their project for handicapped and retarded children. A buffet lunch followed the ceremony with most of the food having been provided by the families of the children who take part in this program.

The second presentation was made to the “Mifne” Centre for the treatment of juvenile autism.



The Mifne Centre group

Funded primarily by contributions from Israeli and overseas donors and operational for about 18 years, Mifne’s major area of operation is the treatment of autism in children below the age of 3 years concentrating on the identification and prevention of autism. Both Israeli and foreign children are treated at the centre. The centre claims that after treatment, 73% of the children enter the normal school system at age 6.

Farewell to the Flog-Master

To the disappointment of all and since that time our Flog-master (and CAO) Jerry Smith has taken early retirement. A luncheon was held in Tiberias and to set that day apart from all others a thunder and lightning show (some say a good luck omen) ensued followed by a rainbow. We search for a new auctioneer who could fill this position with such great aplomb!



Jerry with Lynn & Gerhard

Author: E.Lynn Elvaiah

