

GOLAN

The UNDOF Journal

Welcome PHILBATT



Goodbye POLBATT



October - December 2009
No. 121

Dear Reader!



As the new Staff Officer Public Relations I proudly present the new edition of the Golan Journal.

With all its efforts the editorial team again can provide you with a magazine full of insights into the mission of UNDOF. For these efforts I would like to thank all of the contingent Press Officers for their contribution.

As change of seasons goes on and the snow already covers the mountains, also the faces of many of our comrades change. By looking at these new faces one becomes aware of how fast time goes by and it's also time for rotations within the Media and Public Relations Section.

Sadly, we must say good bye to our outgoing Force Photographer WO II Gernot Payer and to the contingent Press Officers Capt Agnieszka Strzemiecka



Our team: Arnold, Karl, Taka and Alexander

and Lt I Jelena Srakic. At the same time I would like to warmly welcome the new Layout Designer & Force Photographer, WO II Arnold Felfer and the new Press Officers of PHILBATT, Capt Noli Kanashiro, and of HRVCON, Lt I Zlatko Nakic, to our team.

In this edition we sadly say good bye to the Polish Contingent but it also gives me great pleasure to present the newly arrived Philippine Contingent. We also cover the visit of the Finnish President, the Austrian Federal Chancellor and many other stories worth reading.

The editorial team wishes all UNDOF Golan Journal readers all the best for the year 2010!

Karl Curin
Yours sincerely,
Maj Karl Curin, SOPR

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Photos by WO II Gernot Payer, Force Photographer

Back (Page 24): Handover POLBATT-PHILBATT
Photos by WO II Gernot Payer, Force Photographer

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Force Commander's Message

Dear Fellow Peacekeepers!

With the holiday season behind us, I look back at the last months of 2009 and can see an amount of progress and accomplishments that are truly remarkable. With the assistance of Observer Group Golan we have inspected military positions and equipment in a level of detail that we have never done before. We have improved the level of cooperation and communication with the military leadership on both sides of the Area of Separation, which should result in a decrease of restrictions of movement and violations. An agreement was implemented to allow for farmers to access fields in the Area of Separation, and to work safely under the watchful eye of UNDOF soldiers.



There has also been a major change in UNDOF. After 35 years of service in UNDOF, Poland has chosen to focus its military commitments elsewhere. From the very beginning of UNDOF in 1974, Poland filled the vital role of logistics support to the mission for nineteen years before re-rolling into a line battalion in 1993. In two ceremonies, on 15 October on the B-Side and 22 October on the A-Side, UNDOF as well as representatives from the host nations and diplomatic community gathered to pay tribute to the outstanding work, commitment, and contributions of Poland in the service of peace on the Golan Heights. The soldiers of Poland have established a tradition of excellence, one that will not be forgotten in this region.

With the end of Poland's participation comes a new beginning. I warmly welcome the members of the first contingent from The Republic of the Philippines to UNDOF. You have the honour of representing your country in one of the most successful peacekeeping missions in the world. I challenge you to learn all you can about the mission, the region, and its people. You are well trained and led, and I have every confidence that you are prepared for the challenges that lie ahead. I look forward to working with you, and having the opportunity to get to know you better.

To all members of UNDOF, I thank you for your continued hard work and the dedication with which you complete your tasks every day. It is your effort and accomplishments at every level that ensure that UNDOF is a dependable, trustworthy and effective force in maintaining peace on the Golan Heights.

In the Service of Peace, to EVERYONE in UNDOF, I wish all the best for 2010 and say...

*Thank you, Hvala, Danke, Merci, Dziękuję, Arigato,
Salamat, Dhanyavad, Shukran, Toe Dab!*

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Wolfgang Jilke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Major General Wolfgang JILKE
Force Commander UNDOF

Acting Chief of Staff Words

The end of the year is usually an exceptional period. It is a time of reflecting on our yearlong effort as well as preparing for continued effort in the coming year. Therefore, it is also a period of intense planning focused on the challenges we are able to foresee.

I have the impression that sometimes time in UNDOF runs more quickly than in normal life. It feels like I arrived in the Mission Area so recently, and in this time I was witness to so many changes. No one can say that UNDOF is a fossilized mission because

it has lasted so long. Every year we face different challenges and the Mission itself must evolve. The surrounding environment seems to be friendly and well known to all of us, but sometimes it can change rapidly. Therefore we have to stay focused and react to any change in a well balanced way and firmly.

Being a peacekeeper is a demanding job, you know it already by the years of your experience. Very often we have to give up some of our expectations. We have to adapt quickly to the new environment and many other changes. It is a tremendous experience to observe the whole process and at the same time to be part of it. And it gives me satisfaction to observe that the Mission remains so stable.

There have been some other changes in the Area of Separation. After many weeks of strenu-



ous work farmer permissions were finally issued for Syrian farmers, which make the cultivation of fields west of the A-Line possible. This is an unquestionable success but it doesn't relieve us from our duties in this area. We have to be even more proactive and foresee any obstacles that could impact on the whole process.

Due to the enormous work of GIS and both Battalions the project of supplementing barrels on the A-Line is already close to completion. The OGG Mobile Team was formed and it will reach its full capability soon, and in January we expect the arrival of the Civil Affairs Officer which will increase our ability to deal directly with civil affairs at lower levels. Also the new platoon position in PHILBATT area, for which construction should begin in March, gives the most measur-

able picture of implementation of the Task Force.

Finally we are about to face an essential period of change in the command of UNDOF. A new Force Commander as well as Chief of Staff at the same time will require additional effort from all of us to ensure continuity of the chain of command. Thinking back on challenges we have had to face in the past I am deeply convinced that we are able to meet this challenge.

Best Wishes,

Cdr Tadeusz BICZ
a/Chief of Staff UNDOF

Visits to UNDOF by Capt Takahisa Moriya, DMPIO



14 students of the Royal College of Defense Studies, United Kingdom, visited UNDOF HQ and UNDOF Positions 27 and 37 (5th October 2009)



H.E. Mr. Andreas Michaelis and H.E. Mr. Andreas Reinicke, German Ambassadors, visited Camp Faouar and UNDOF Positions (9th October 2009)



H.E. Mr. Eric Chevallier, French Ambassador, visited Camp Faouar, Outpost 60A and AUSBATT Positions (12th October 2009)



H.E. Mr. János Budai, Hungarian Ambassador, and H.E. Mrs. Christina Markus Lassen, Danish Ambassador, visited Camp Faouar and UNDOF Positions (10th November 2009)



H.E. Mr. Glenn Davidson, H.E. Mr. Jon Allen, H.E. Mr. Mark Bailey, H.E. Mr. Ferry de Kerckhove, H.E. Ms. Margaret Huber, H.E. Mr. Graeme McIntyre, H.E. Mr. Martial Pagé, Canadian Ambassadors, visited UNDOF HQ and the AOS (9th December 2009)

- H.E. Mr. Harri Mäki-Reinikka, Finnish Ambassador, visited UNDOF HQ and UNDOF Positions (2nd October 2009)
- MGen Jerzy Michałowski, Chief of Staff – Deputy Commander of the Polish Land Forces, visited Camp Faouar and POLBATT Positions (14th – 16th October 2009)
- H.E. Mr. Mario Zenari, Papal Nuncio, Vatican, visited Camp Faouar and UNDOF Positions (13th December 2009)
- MGen Yuki Imaura, Vice Commanding General of Central Readiness Force, Japan Ground Self Defense Force, supervised J-CON and evaluated its performance of mandated tasks (14th – 17th December 2009)
- H.E. Mr. Coenraad Hogewoning, Dutch Ambassador, visited Camp Faouar and OP 71 (22nd December 2009)
- H.E. Mr. James Cunningham, United States Ambassador, visited Camp Ziouani (23rd December 2009)

New People in UNDOF



The new CO/PHILBATT

LtCol Milfredo M. Melegrito was born on 5th Jul 1962 at Santiago City, Isabela, Philippines.

He is a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1986 and holds a Masters Degree in Public Administration. He also completed his Bachelor of Laws and Letters degree in 2004 and is a graduated from the Command and General Staff College in 2006.

His twenty year active military career has been spent mostly in the field as Commander and Staff Officer. He began as a Platoon Leader, followed by Company Executive Officer, Company Commander, Battalion and Brigade Staff Officer, and Acting Deputy Brigade Commander. He completed his tour of duty as Battalion Commander of the 57th Infantry Battalion, 6th Infantry Division, Philippine Army in Central Mindanao after more than two years. His numerous awards include the coveted Cavalier Award for Army Operation in 1995 given by the Philippine Military Academy Alumni Association.

LtCol Melegrito's latest assignment was Executive Officer of the Office of the Inspector General, Philippine Army. He is married to Filipina and has three children – Daphnee Aleli, Paul Angelo and Sean Cedric.



The new FPM

Maj Rajendra was born on 4th Aug 1975 at Allahabad, India. He graduated from Magadh University in 1997 with a Bachelors Degree in Physics (Honours) and then joined the Indian Military Academy and was commissioned to the Regiment of Artillery as a Lieutenant in 1999.

The various appointments held by Maj Rajendra during his professional career include Gun Position Officer, Battery Commander, Adjutant and Quartermaster in the Regiment. He also held the appointment of General Staff Officer, grade 2 in an Artillery Brigade before joining UNDOF as Deputy Force Provost Marshal in May 2009. In Oct 2009 he took over the command of the MP Platoon as Force Provost Marshal.

Maj Rajendra is married to Manjari Sinha and they have one son, Diyvansh Sinha, 2 years. He was an active volleyball player and used to lead his regimental team. He enjoys listening music and driving in his spare time.



The new CFO

Mr. Fahim Jan was born in Peshawar, Pakistan and he received his MBA degree from the University of Peshawar in September 1989. A few months later, in December 1989, he joined UNDP/OPS/APO in Peshawar as national staff.

In September 1993 he moved from Pakistan to join DPKO, and has since served in the Finance and Budget fields with UNOSOM (Mogadishu), UNPF (Zagreb), UNMIBH (Sarajevo), MINURCA (Bangui on TDY), UNMIK (Pristina), UNDOF (Damascus), UNMIN (Kathmandu on TDY) and UNOMIG (Sukhumi). After the closure of UNOMIG in October 2009 Mr. Jan returned to UNDOF as Chief Finance Officer.

Mr. Jan has two children, Goranka (18) and Goran (13). In his spare time he likes to watch movies and listen to music. He is seriously considering taking up regular exercise in 2010.



The new DCO/AUSBATT

Maj Marijan Madjerić was born on 14th Apr 1967 in Zadar, Croatia. He joined the Croatian Armed Forces in 1991 and served during the Homeland War.

Posted to 1st Infantry Battalion of the “112 Brigade”, there he began his career as a rifleman, before moving up to Squad Leader and Platoon Leader. From 1994 to 2004 he served in the 9th Guard Brigade “Wolves” as a Company and Battalion Commander. Afterwards he served in the 4th Brigade “Spiders” as a Staff Officer. Currently he holds the position as Deputy Commanding Officer of the Engineer Battalion in the Guard Mechanized Brigade.

He graduated from the Basic and High Officers School in Petar Zrinski in 1993. He has also completed basic parachute training and the school of foreign languages “Katarina Zrinska”. He is married to Snježana and has two children, Ivana (12) and Katarina (15). His hobbies are sports and fishing.



The new CMPO

LtCol Felimon Santos was born in Bulacan, Philippines on 3rd Aug 1964. He joined the Philippine Army as 2nd Lt after graduating from the Philippine Military Academy on 22nd Mar 1986. He was assigned to 39th Infantry Battalion, 6th Infantry Division, PA stationed in the southern part of the Philippines. There he served as Platoon Leader, Company Commander and Battalion Staff Officer.

LtCol Santos has held numerous command and staff positions including Branch Chief, OG2, PA; Commanding Officer, 11th Intelligence Security Unit, ISG; U3, Central Command; and Battalion Commander, 63rd Infantry Battalion, 8ID, PA.

He completed the Military Observer and Staff Course at the UN Training School, Ireland and is also a graduate of the Command and General Staff Course in his country.

LtCol Santos is married to Jen and has two daughters, Aiah (12) and Eia (7).

Austrian Field Post Office - 35 Years in UNDOF

The Austrian Field Post Office celebrated its 35th anniversary in Camp Faouar on 15th Nov 2009 and commemorated the event by releasing a special edition stamp limited to 500 pieces and anniversary envelope of which only 1000 were issued.



Presidential Visit from Finland

Her Excellency Ms. Tarja Halonen and delegation visited UNDOF.



President Halonen and FC inspecting the troops

The President of the Republic of Finland, Her Excellency Ms. Tarja Halonen and her life partner, Dr. Pentti Arajärvi, along with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alexander Stubb, and delegation visited UNDOF and the Golan Heights on 23rd Oct 2009.

The visit started in the morning when Force Commander, MGen Wolfgang Jilke welcomed President Halonen to Camp Faouar. This was followed by a splendidly executed inspection of the Honor Guard and troops and a wreath-laying ceremony, conducted by Maj Udo Hofer, COO AUSBATT. President Halonen laid a beautiful wreath with her two Aide de Camps in memory of fallen UNDOF peacekeepers.



Wreath laying to commemorate fallen soldiers

She also read out the names of the Finnish peacekeepers who have died in the service of peace while serving with UNDOF and UNTSO.

Following the wreath-laying ceremony the delegation continued to the UNDOF Headquarters for the FC's briefing. After some photos at the Pentagon building the group continued to Quneitra escorted by UNDOF military police and Syrian Protocol officials.

On the rooftop of the Quneitra

from UNTSO HQ, OGG-T and OGG-D, who received a small gift from the President.

The Finnish media was also well represented during the visit with the President being interviewed by Finnish TV channels and press while having coffee at Posn



Capt Huttunen with Finnish delegation



Maj Curin briefs about Quneitra's history

Hospital, Maj Karl Curin, Deputy Commander 2nd Coy, briefed the delegation about Quneitra's history and the surrounding terrain. This brief was followed by a short introduction about the Finnish Battalion's (FINNBATT) history by Capt Harri Huttunen, Liaison Officer, B-Side. FINNBATT was responsible for the southern half of the Area of Responsibility from 1979 – 1993. Fortunately, the ever astute Maj Curin and Capt Huttunen knew the answers to the questions posed by the Presidential delegation.

The delegation then continued on foot to UNDOF Posn 27 for a coffee with the Finnish Military Observers assigned to UNTSO

UNDOF and especially AUS-

27. The Finnish UNMOs are chuffed with their new celebrity status after hitting the front pages of major media publications and the evening news in Finland. Additionally, the visit received a lot of coverage in the Syrian newspapers.

BATT's efforts in hosting the visit enlightened President Halonen's understanding of the current situation in the Golan Heights. The Syrian welcome was also excellent with Finnish flags and the presence of Syrian policeman every 200 meters from Damascus to Camp Faour.

The positive feedback from the Finnish diplomatic corps indicates that President Halonen was enjoying the visit.

*Article by Capt Harri Huttunen,
LO B-Side
Photos by WO II Gernot Payer*



President Halonen with Finnish UNMOs

The History of the Polish Contingent in UNDOF

The Polish Contingent has been participating in operations on the Golan Heights since UNDOF's inception 35 years ago.

Jun 1974 - Sep 1993

Originally part of UNEF II in Sinai, the Polish Contingent provided logistics support for UNDOF as POLLOG. The first commander was Maj Nowak followed by LtCol Piorun.

22nd Sep 1993

On request of the UN Secretary-General the Polish Contingent was asked to take over the operational tasks from the Finnish Battalion. After 19 years of dedicated service, POLLOG was disbanded after its final medal parade. A team stayed behind to pave the way for the arrival of the new line battalion which was commanded by LtCol Kwasnik.

09th Dec 1993

FINBATT handed over its operational duties in the southern area of UNDOF to the new Polish Battalion (POLBATT) which came from Krakow Military district and was commanded by LtCol Włodzimierz Potasinski, the former POLLOG's Chief of Staff.

22nd Oct 2009

The last Polish Contingent in UNDOF was the XXXI rotation of POLBATT, commanded by LtCol Mariusz Jurek, comprised approximately 340 soldiers from the 20th Mechanized Brigade in Bartoszyce. On 22nd Oct 2009 LtCol Jurek handed over the southern part of the Area of Separation to the newly arrived Philippines Battalion.

Until Mar 2010

Two Polish officers will remain in UNDOF HQ until the end of their tour: Cdr Tadeusz BICZ as COO/UNDOF and ITO CZ, Capt Michal Kiermacz.

During these 35 years Poland had the positions of

Force Commander
Sep 1991 - Nov 1994



MGen Roman Misztal

Force Commander
Aug 2003 - Jan 2004



MGen Franciszek Gagor

Chief of Staff

Aug 1994 - Dec 1995
Col Jan Kempara

Dec 1998 - Jun 2001
Col Jozef Kowalczyk

Sep 2006 - Oct 2008
Col Andrzej Ostrowski

POLBATT's Farewell Ceremony

On the 15th Oct 2009 UNDOF held a Polish Farewell Ceremony in Camp Faouar. After over 35 years of distinguished service in UNDOF the Polish Contingent was about to withdraw. The decision of the Polish government to leave UNDOF took everyone by surprise, and came shortly after the 31st rotation arrived in the Golan Heights in March 2009.



Polish peacekeepers at the ceremony

The 15th of October was a sunny day when the Polish Battalion assembled on the Parade Square in Camp Faouar together with flag bearer parties representing all the contingents of UNDOF.

The ceremony began with Force Commander MGen Wolfgang Jilke inspecting the troops, followed by the playing of the Polish National Anthem. After the guests were seated, the last Commanding Officer of the Polish Battalion, LtCol Mariusz Jurek, made a speech and thanked everyone for being present at this event.

A speech was delivered by the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate, BGen Abdul-Aziz Darwish, who expressed on behalf of the citizens of Syria the sadness that is felt in saying goodbye to the Polish soldiers, with whom they have always had good relationships and close

contact. As a farewell gift BGen Darwish presented a sword to LtCol Jurek.

The Polish Ambassador to Syria, H. E. Mr. Michal Murkocinski thanked the soldiers for their dedicated service in UNDOF. He also expressed his gratitude for the UNDOF command under which

POLBATT operated as well as the support provided by the other contingents of UNDOF. Finally he paid tribute to all soldiers who paid the ultimate price in the service of peace in the region.

MGen Jilke thanked his Polish soldiers for their remarkable duty, high standards of professionalism

and dedication to the peacekeeping mission. He described the history of the Polish contingent as well as the challenge of operating successfully in the demanding environment of the southern part of the Golan Heights. He also expressed his sadness caused by the withdrawal of Polish troops from Golan Heights.

After the speeches the parade of the soldiers began, with all major units of the Contingent represented on the final Polish parade in Camp Faouar.

On completion of the parade a memorial stone was unveiled in memory of the presence of Polish troops on Golan Heights.

*Article by Cdr Tadeusz Bicz,
a/COS UNDOF
Photos by WO II Gernot Payer*



FC inspects the troops

The Polish Contingent handed over to the first Philippine Contingent on the Golan Heights

The first Philippine Contingent in UNDOF assumed responsibility in the southern part of UNDOF's Area of Separation from the final Polish Contingent.

In June 1974, the first Polish Peacekeepers arrived on the Golan Heights together with contingents from Austria, Peru and Canada from UNEF II in Sinai. Covering logistical tasks in the beginning, they later took over the responsibility in the southern Area of Separation with a full battalion. After 35 years of tireless serving for peace on

the Golan Heights, the Polish contribution in UNDOF with a full battalion ended with an imposing Change of Command Ceremony in Camp Ziouani on 22nd Oct 2009. In sight of high ranking guests and chaired by the Force Commander, MGen Wolfgang Jilke, the CO POLBATT, LtCol Mariusz Jurek, handed over the responsibility to the

first CO PHILBATT, LtCol Milfredo M. Melegrito. After signing the documents, they released three doves of peace into the blue sky.

In his affecting speech the CO POLBATT thanked all Polish peacekeepers for their efforts and service for peace on the Golan Heights and expressed his gratitude to all the peacekeepers of the other



Polish Colour Party marches on to their last parade



troop contributing nations for the excellent cooperation and comradery in the past 35 years.

Proud and aware of this historical moment Philippine peacekeepers run up the Philippine flag for the first time on the Golan Heights accompanied by the national anthem. The Philippines are members of the United Nations since 1945 and its presence in the Golan Heights with 337 peacekeepers is the country's biggest overseas deployment since it supported UN operations in East Timor in 2000 and is also

considered the most challenging of all the UN peacekeeping missions the Philippines is currently participating in.

The CO PHILBATT thanked in his speech LtCol Jurek and his peacekeepers for the well organized handover /



Polish Contingent lowers the flag for the last time

takeover process and introduction into all the tasks of the battalion and gave best wishes for their future back home. He promised that he and his Philippine peacekeepers will give their best in succeeding the Polish battalion because only the best is good enough.

The ceremony was concluded with the traditional planting of olive trees by the commanding officers beside the parade square followed by a reception for all distinguished guests.

*Article by Capt Günther Kreiml, DFPM
Photos by WO II Gernot Payer*



MGen Gilke watches LtCol Melegrito and LtCol Jurek shaking hands



PHILBATT, the first time on the Golan Heights

The 1st Philippine Contingent

The 1st Philippine Contingent is a composite of 337 Filipino soldiers from the three major services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).



Pre-deployment training at Clark Air Base, Pampanga

The Philippine Army sent 31 officers and 184 enlisted personnel, the Philippine Navy deployed nine officers and 57 enlisted personnel and the Philippine Air Force with five officers and 42 enlisted personnel. The Medical and Nurse Corps from the Technical and Administrative Services has nine officers for a Contingent total strength of 54 officers out of the aggregate total of 337, twelve of which are female soldiers.

The National Contingent was organized into formed military units which include a 288-man Philippine Battalion (PHILBATT) with two Companies, a 28-man Quick Reaction Platoon and a 10-man Military Police Section. Additionally, four officers and six enlisted personnel joined the UNDOF Force Headquarters which includes the position of Force Headquarters Company Commander

The Philippine Contingent (PHILCON) is an organization of diverse military disciplines ranging

from the Infantry, Armor, Artillery, Engineer units and from the air ground to naval components. Military doctors, nurses, reservists and a chaplain are integral part of PHILCON.

Pre-deployment training was conducted specifically to prepare the members for peacekeeping operations. The training was held at the AFP Peacekeeping Operation Center, Clark Air Base Pampanga from 17th Aug to 29th Sep 2009 and included common modules and specialization subjects such as Stress Management, Cross Cultural Communication and Understanding, VIP Security, Military Police, Food Preparation, Medical and EOD.

Two UN chartered flights were arranged to airlift troops and logistics, excluding the twelve man quartering party who went ahead to the mission area via commercial flight on 28th Sep 2009. The first rotation, composed of 161 officers and enlisted personnel,

left Diosdado Macapagal International Airport, Angeles Pampanga on 10th Oct 2009. The second rotation composed of 160 officers and enlisted personnel was airlifted from the same point of origin and arrived in Damascus on 29th Oct 2009, thus completing the first Philippine Contingent.

PHILCON endeavors to continue and nurture the seeds of peace passed on by the Polish Contingent.

PHILCON is likewise committed to the pursuit and attainment of UNDOF's high performance in maintaining peace and stability in Golan Heights, an expression of the sincere commitment of the Filipino people to promote world peace.



Before departure at the airport

*Article by Capt Noli Kanashiro, PIO
Photos by PHILBATT*



Philippines - The Fiesta Island

Philippines is the second largest archipelago on the planet with 7,107 islands located in Southeast Asia. It covers a total land area of 300,000 square kilometers and is surrounded by four bodies of water: the Philippine Sea, the South China Sea, the Pacific Ocean, and the Celebes Sea.

The Republic of the Philippines is a constitutional democracy with the President as the head of state. The Philippine constitution is the fundamental basis of laws of the

mates, the dry season from November to April and the wet season from May to October. It sits astride the typhoon belt where it suffers an onslaught of typhoons particularly within the July to October time-frame.

Philippine society is a diverse blend of people with a total population of 92 million and is subdivided into major-ethnic groups: Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Bisaya, Hiligaynon, Bikol and Waray. There

are 5% Muslim, and 11% additional Christians from various denominations while other religions account for the remaining 3%.

Filipinos traditionally eat three main meals a day - agahan (breakfast), tanghalían (lunch), and hapunan (dinner) plus an afternoon snack called merienda. Popular dishes are lechón (whole roasted pig), longanisa (Philippine sausage), tapa (cured beef), torta (omelette), adobo (chicken and/or pork braised in garlic).

There are many dances performed in the Philippine Islands such as the popular "Tinikling" - imitating "tikling birds" hopping over trees, grass stems over bamboo traps set by farmers; "Maglalatik" - a mock war dance over a prize called "Latik" or coconut meat; "Salamat" - a peculiar broad-brimmed conical headgear mostly worn by Filipinos as they work in the fields and fishing; "Singkil" - a bell worn in the ankles of the Muslim princess, recounts the epic legend of the "Darangan" of the Maranao people of Mindanao.

The Philippines is called "Fiesta Island" because Filipinos are cheerful and fun-loving people. UNDOF personnel had the pleasure to observe Philippine culture on the first Philippine "Happy Hour" in Camp Faouar on 4th Dec 2009.

*Article by Capt Noli Kanashiro, PIO
Photos by WO II Arnold Felfer*



"Tikling birds" hopping over bamboo traps

land. The national government has three co-equal branches; the executive, legislative and judiciary that exercise a system of checks and balances. Manila is the capital city.

Philippines has only two cli-

are eight major dialects being used depending on the regional orientation, but the official language is called Filipino which is derived from Tagalog. English is the language of instruction for Science, Mathematics and Information Technology. Philippines have a high literacy rate of about 93.4%. Primary education is compulsory for six years while four-year secondary education is free but optional.

The Filipinos also have a diversity of religion: 81% Roman Cath-



"PHILBATT princess" dances the Singkil

A Historic Moment

It was the first time in history that UNDOF had the honor to welcome an Austrian Federal Chancellor to the mission. Shortly before Christmas we were eagerly awaiting the arrival of the delegation at Damascus airport.

Chancellor Werner Faymann, accompanied by the Minister of Defense, Norbert Darabos, and the Chief of General Staff, Gen Edmund Entacher, landed on 22nd Dec 2009 at 19:00 hrs in Damascus. It is worth mentioning that this was the first time that this group travelled together, which underlines the importance of this visit.

After the ride to the Four Seasons hotel under the lead of Syrian protocol the Force Commander, MGen Wolfgang Jilke, briefed the delegation on our mission and tasks on the Golan Heights and willingly answered the questions of the Aus-

trian press representatives, also involved in the visit.

On the next day we started out early, picking up the delegation at 08:00 hrs at the hotel. The first site to visit was the Golani Hospital in Qunaitra. Upon arrival the Company Commander, Major Alexander Petschnig, familiarized the delegation with the historical background on the destroyed city and perfectly conveyed an idea of the soldiers' tasks in the area of 2nd



Discussion with soldiers at Posn 27

Company.

After that we moved to Posn 27 where the Chancellor took the opportunity to talk with the Austrian soldiers to hear their points



Chancellor Faymann (center) and delegation briefed by FC in Quneitra



Guard of Honour in Camp Faouar



Christmas gifts handed over to CO AUSBATT

of view and learn more about their experiences within the mission.

After driving to Camp Faouar the delegation was welcomed according to military protocol. In their speeches our noble guests expressed gratitude and appreciation for the duties performed in the services of peace and emphasized the importance of contributing to peace and stability in the region.

At lunch Mr. Faymann pre-

toric visit to UNDOF.

In the afternoon the delegation held a meeting with Syrian President Bashar Assad and then proceeded on a tour of old Damascus before returning home for Christmas.

The delegation had the opportunity to see for itself the high level of motivation and the professional work

of the Austrian soldiers who serve here. Mr. Faymann also took the opportunity to convey this to the Austrian Contingent Commander, LtCol Armin Lehner. Afterwards we moved to the Austrian Officers Club and, according to an old tradition, the Federal Chancellor nailed a shingle in remembrance of the his-

of the Austrian soldiers who serve here. Mr. Faymann also took the opportunity to convey this to the Austrian Contingent Commander, LtCol Armin Lehner.

We, the Austrian Contingent would like to express our pride and gratitude for this visit and we hope that this was not the last visit of a Federal Chancellor to UNDOF.

*Article by Capt Rüdiger Von Gimborn,
OpsInfo*

Photos by WO II Arnold Felfer



Shingle nailing in the Austrian Officers Club

Medal Parade & Austrian National Day

A better date could not have been chosen as the 26th of October is the Austrian National Day commemorating the day that the last foreign soldier left Austrian territory after World War II as well as the day to be thankful for the freedom of our home country.

Everybody carries pride and remembrance of fulfilled duties in his heart. But who will remember and cherish this if the duties fulfilled in the name of peace are not dignified in public? Thus soldiers of the Austrian Battalion were awarded with the UNDOF medal on the 26th of October.

It was, though having taken place many times previously, an overwhelming scene to see the pride and gratification in the soldiers' eyes when they received their medal. Force Commander, MGen Wolfgang Jilke, the Austrian Battalion and National Contingent Commander, LtCol Armin Lehner, and the Deputy Battalion Commander and Croatian Contingent Commander, LtCol Antun Šaf, inspected their soldiers to begin the ceremony.

In their speeches they all referred

to the high level of motivation and the discipline shown by those engaged in the service of peace. With a handshake the soldiers were awarded with the UNDOF medal, pinned to everyone's chest as a visible sign for their efforts here in mission.

It was a special honour to have the Austrian ambassador H.E. Dr. Maria Kunz among the high ranking dignitaries. In her address she perfectly combined the two events, referring to the soldiers' duties and responsibilities here in the service of peace as well as the tasks fulfilled for their home countries.

After the ceremony we proceeded to the celebration of our National Day including the visit

of a band from back home. Every Austrian province sent goods and national specialties and the soldiers did their very best to represent their province, acting as ambassa-



Goodies from Austria

dors of their home country. Spirits were high and everybody definitely enjoyed the party.

Especially when you are serving abroad, far from your loved ones it is very important to honour your homeland and to remember the ones left behind, even if it is only for a brief period of time.

More importantly it should be a reminder of what it is to live in peace and enjoy freedom. This is a given for everyone and it is what should motivate us to fulfill our duties in the service of peace with all effort we are able to contribute.

Article by

*Capt Rüdiger Von Gimborn, OpsInfo
Photos by WO II Gernot Payer*



Medals ready to be presented to the troops

Change of Command of the Croatian Contingent (HRVCON)

A handover/takeover ceremony between the Commanding Officers of the 3rd and 4th HRVCON was conducted in Camp Faouar on 4th Dec 2009.



Croatian honour guard

LtCol Antun Šaf, CO of 3rd HRVCON, handed over command to his successor Maj Marijan Madjerić. The ceremony was conducted in the presence of the UNDOF Force Commander, MGen Wolfgang Jilke.

The inspection of the honour guard and the soldiers of HRVCON and AUCON on parade was fol-

lowed by the playing of the Croatian national anthem. CO AUSBATT, LtCol Armin Lehner addressed the parade and honoured guests and expressed his high level of satisfaction with the professionalism of all members of HRVCON.

LtCol Šaf, in his address, expressed his gratitude for the support of AUSBATT and UNDOF and emphasized the special honour he felt to have had the opportunity to be a contingent commander. This

pointed out that the continued professionalism and discipline of HRVCON will be his priorities.

The Croatian Honorary Consul, Mr. Nissan, expressed his great satisfaction with the Croatian soldiers in UNDOF and said that they are very well received by the host country.

In his address at the end of the ceremony MGen Jilke emphasized his pleasure with the contributions of HRVCON in their execution of



Signing the handover documents



New CO HRVCON addresses the parade

was followed by the handover of the flag and formal signing of the handover of command.

In his speech Maj Madjerić thanked his predecessor for the results achieved and

the challenging tasks of the mission. He thanked LtCol Šaf for his efforts and achievements and wished Maj Madjerić similar success for the new rotation.

After the official ceremony all participants were invited to a reception in the Austrian Officers Club.

*Article by Maj Šime Kevrić, MD
and Capt Vito Sabađija, SUPO
Photos by MSgt Vedran Poljak
and WO II Arnold Felfer*

The New LOGBATT Medical Center

In the Spring of 2008 the Force Medical Officer had the idea of combining the two separate medical centres in Camp Ziouani. During the handover from POLBATT to PHILBATT the idea was realized.



Patient treatment at the new medical center

UNDOF is constantly changing and evolving to meet new challenges and improve its efficiency. One example of this change was the merger of the Medical Centres in Camp Ziouani. LOGBATT had one Medical Centre operating from the medical shelter and POLBATT operated its own Medical Centre from Building No. 208.

to Building No. 208 when the POLBATT Medical ceased to exist.

The Polish Contingent's departure was already upon us, and there was significant pressure to take over the facility in a very short time. With the cooperation of the Polish Contingent and Mr. Srilal Valappil, the PCIO, the change of facil-

ity was completed. Shifting of network computers and telephones was not without its difficulties, but all has now been successfully moved. The LOGBATT Medical Centre is now fully operational in Building

ity was completed. Shifting of network computers and telephones was not without its difficulties, but all has now been successfully moved. The LOGBATT Medical Centre is now fully operational in Building



Medical stores

No. 208, with medical personnel from the three contingents in Camp Ziouani, namely India, Japan and Philippines all working together. The medical shelter continues to serve as storage for medicines, stores and other medical equipment.

The new Medical Centre has a treatment/resuscitation room, a general ward for four patients and an isolation ward for one patient. There is also a reception area, administrative office and stores.

While there used to be a dental section as well, with the departure of the Polish Contingent anyone with dental problems are referred to local civilian doctors.



Integrated medical team in Camp Ziouani

*Article by LtCol Kartik Singh, SMO
Photos by WO II Arnold Felfer
and LOGBATT*

Training Activities in LOGBATT

Training is a very important aspect of UNDOF. LOGBATT, consisting of INDCON and J-CON, has the specialized task of providing logistic support to UNDOF without neglecting basic soldier skills. LOGBATT is also responsible for the overall safety and security of Camp Ziouani.

Extensive training is conducted upon arrival to the mission area and thereafter on a weekly basis.

Training includes Rapid Reaction



Firing practice

Group (RRG) training with firing of small arms and perimeter patrolling of the Camp, firefighting, bunker occupation, casualty evacuation and vehicle recovery.

Training activities are conducted within the mission area and closely supervised by the LOGBATT



Casualty evacuation training

Training Officer and Staff Officer Training.

The RRG is a group consisting of one Warrant Officer and eight soldiers who are nominated on a weekly basis to react in event of any kind of security breach. Their training aims to improve their reaction time, firing accuracy, and their ability to deal with breaching of the fence by intruders. The RRG

remains alert in the “Zero Bunker” 24 hours a day.

Firefighting training is done by all the soldiers in the camp on Mondays and Fridays. A specific area is chosen and a small fire is lit (only for demonstration) and then the fire alarm is sounded. Reaction time of the Smokey team and the rest of the soldiers is noted and there is a briefing on firefighting equipment and how to fight a fire.

Every Friday at 13:00 hrs the bunker occupation alarm is sounded and all LOGBATT personnel occupy their nominated bunkers. This time is also used for checking the contents of the bunker, cleaning the



Captured intruders

bunker and verifying the serviceability of the communication equipment. Casualty evacuation is also practiced during bunker occupation when the Unit Training Officer reports a casualty at a particular location via radio and notes the reaction time of stretcher bearers to reach the casualty, give first aid and carry him to the Medical Bunker.

The Training Officer will also go to any location in the mission area and pass information via radio about a vehicle breakdown. The recovery team responds by reaching the place, doing minor repairs, lifting the vehicle by recovery truck, and returning to the Maintenance Platoon for major repairs.

Training is important for each and every soldier to maintain the high standards and ensure the constant state of readiness that is required by LOGBATT.

*Article by LtCol Kartik Singh, SMO
Photos by LOGBATT*

Recovery Standby 24/7

The J-CON Detachment in Camp Faouar has the responsibility for all recovery tasks on B-Side. On standby 24/7, two soldiers with heavy and medium wrecker vehicles remain ready to respond to all recovery tasks.

On the evening of 3rd Nov 2009 the duty staff of the J-CON Detachment received an emergency recovery request from the UNDOF Duty Officer. The recovery standby was informed immediately and they were dressed and ready to go within minutes.

“The recovery site is near Position 80A”, was the only information the J-CON duty officer was able to obtain – no further details, no coordinates, and no significant landmarks.

This kind of thing sometimes happens, however, this was compounded by the problem that the recovery team designated on this day was a stranger to the area at the time. But even if the recovery site is somewhere we have never been, we have to go, we are responsible for all of the B-Side!

In cases like this, radio communication with the drivers who need recovery is very important and the

fuel truck, selected the position of the wrecker vehicle and started pulling it up by the winch cable. That series of actions went very well, and they finished the recovery successfully.

The vehicle was inspected by the driver and as there were no damages to the fuel truck, the driver was able to proceed with his duties. After four and a half hours the recovery team was back in Camp Faouar – tired but satisfied

with a job well done.

All J-CON Detachment soldiers are well trained, and are always ready to go for recovery tasks, at any time and in any situation.



J-CON's Camp Faouar Detachment

final approach to the site will need to be under their guidance. So in this way we were able to find the large fuel truck that had got stuck in the mud at a location which was only two kilometers south of UNTSO OP 58.

Once our team arrived, our well prepared soldiers were able to start the recovery immediately. They investigated the condition of the

*Article by Capt Masayoshi Oikawa,
Detachment Commander
Photos by Sgt Daisuke Mizukami
and WO II Arnold Felfer*



One Year as Chief of Observer Group Golan within UNDOF

For the past twelve months I have had the pleasure of being the Chief OGG. As I reflect on my tenure, I fondly remember the initial days and the challenges that have been faced by me and my staff. Although twelve months seems like a long time, especially when deployed from family and friends, I can assure you that it has passed in the blink of an eye.

From the outset, I had little information on what to expect in the mission. My understanding and knowledge of UNDOF was severely lacking and rumours of the difficulties faced working with UNDOF were never realised. However, it did not take long to establish the requisite knowledge and understanding required of my position with the main task being to provide OGG UNMOs to assist UNDOF in inspecting, observing, patrolling and reporting within the area of responsibility.

In order to improve our effectiveness and achieve this task there were a number of challenges faced and major achievements in 2009. Close interaction with our IDF and SAAF colleagues saw improvements in Technical Fence gate procedures on the A-Side, the implementation of new inspection procedures on both sides of the AOL, numerous VIP visits including the Finnish President and the formation of the OGG Mobile Team. All

were achieved due to the dedication of the outstations and staff officers in OGG HQ, and assistance from UNDOF staff. There are of course ongoing challenges to be faced, after all the peace process between Israel and Syria continues. It is hoped

tural diversity of working with people from so many different nations. As I will not have the opportunity to personally thank many of you, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude for your assistance and friendship. This extends to all UNDOF military and civilian staff, and of course the OGG UNMOs.

For the OGG personnel, your hard work and dedication to the mission was regularly complimented by FC UNDOF and is a testament to your contribution to the mission.

UNDOF is a great peace keeping force because of the people. Being under operational control of UNDOF has definitely been the most rewarding assignment I have experienced. I wish you all every success for the future.

*Article by Cdr Matti Vainionpää,
Chief OGG*

Photo by WO II Gernot Payer



Cdr Matti Vainionpää (center) and his team in OGG HQ

that our close relations with both sides will see a reduction in violations of the Agreement during 2010, and eventually a peace agreement between both countries. While this is in the hands of politicians, our contribution remains an important one, and as long as the area between both countries remains quiet then we are achieving our mission.

The most enjoyable aspect of this mission is without question the cul-

