



**QUARANTINE**  
How UNDOF dealt with an outbreak of Covid-19 and ensured operational continuity



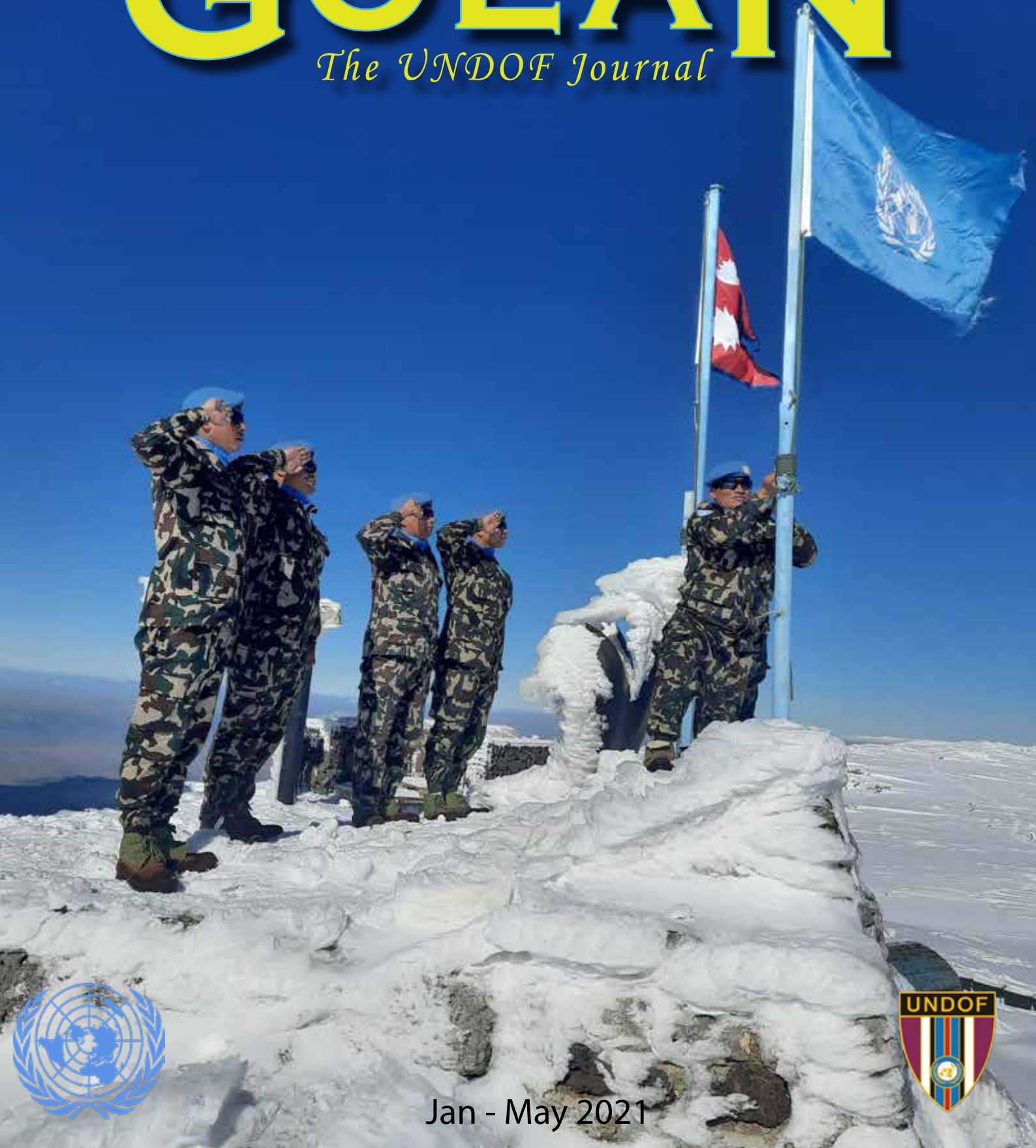
**FRC PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING** How UNDOF's Force Reserve plan and prepare for all scenarios



**INTERVIEW WITH NEPCON'S TRAINER** Sgt Narayan gives an insight into training his unit on Mount Hermon

# GOLAN

*The UNDOF Journal*



Jan - May 2021

# Head of Mission and Force Commander's Message

It gives me immense pleasure to share a message on the 156<sup>th</sup> edition of the quarterly professional publication and a mouthpiece of UNDOF, "Golan – the UNDOF Journal." I remain confident that the last edition was of significant value in articulating the activities of the Mission conducted for implementing the mandate effectively. Let me inform all the readers through this Journal that there has been a significant progress in expanding the Mission's footprints in the Area of Separation on the Bravo Side. Currently, UNDOF has been executing Ph IV, the Enhancement phase, which is the last phase of the Incremental Return Plan since September 2020. The Ph III, Consolidation phase, should have been completed in May 2020 but due to COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions, the construction process slowed down delaying the phase by 4 months.

Within Ph IV, UNP 10A has been fully occupied by the additional platoon of Nepalese Mechanized Company. Similarly, construction of a new UN position has been identified in Sector South for the additional Uruguayan Mechanized platoon to occupy. This position is located at the site of former UNP 86B. Likewise, UNTSO continues with its program of redeveloping UNOPs in parallel with UNDOF. UNOP 71 is due for occupation in July 2021 with the reconstruction of UNOP 57 planned to be completed by August 2021. I take this opportunity to appreciate the mission leadership and all concerned for your tremendous effort in pushing the Mission to a successful point, as it stands today.

UNDOF continues to implement its mandate in the context of measures adopted by the host nations as well as guidelines given by the UN Headquarters to control COVID-19. However, the previous months were quite challenging for all of us due to two outbreaks of the pandemic in the Mission. It gives a full satisfaction to mention that we stood victorious against the menace of COVID-19. I honestly acknowledge that it was because of UNDOF's workable plan and the system within that functioned accordingly, we were able to contain further transmission of the virus within a short timeframe and without an active case at present. Nonetheless, I urge you all to continue with every possible precaution against COVID-19 while carrying out your duty.

The first half of March 2021 saw two of our significant members of the Mission Leadership Team repatriating after successfully completing their tenure. Brigadier General Maureen O'Brien, Deputy Force Commander and Colonel Martin Alvarez, Chief of Staff left the Mission leaving behind their important footprints and memorable contributions in this Mission. I thank them for their positivity and support to the Mission in a much-matured



manner even during the challenging time. Similarly, we have successfully completed the rotations of three contingents; Fiji Mechanized Company, Irish Force Reserve Company and Indian Logistics Company.

I would like to welcome new contingents in the mission and remind that your national identities and pride of being diligent members of your respective Contingents have always become a great source of strength for the UNDOF team. I would also take this opportunity to thank repatriated contingent members for their outstanding service to the mission and wish them, and their families, peace and happiness as they return home. I would like to welcome the incumbent Deputy Force Commander, Brigadier General Anita Asmah, and Chief of Staff, Colonel Tim Daly, into the Mission. I am very much glad to have such experienced and professional members in the leadership team. I also wish a pleasant stay and a rewarding tenure to both of them.

Finally, as we have already started experiencing warmth of the summer season in Golan, I wish to commend the tremendous work of all military and civilian personnel of UNDOF and Observer Group Golan, who have effectively carried out their assigned tasks while faced with past extreme chilled weather condition. I also extend my sincere appreciation to both the parties to the agreement for their strong commitment in upholding the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. May peace and stability prevail in Golan!

Thank you.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL ISHWAR HAMAL  
HOM / FC, UNDOF

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

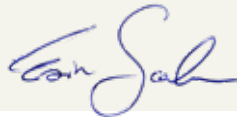
**W**ELCOME to the 156<sup>th</sup> edition of GOLAN, the UNDOF Journal.

The Media & PR Cell of UNDOF HQ are thrilled to continue the publication of the revamped UNDOF Journal with this latest issue, focusing on training and mitigating the Covid-19 threat in the mission area. Similar to the last issue, much has happened in the interim period, and it is impossible to capture the wealth and breadth of the hard work of each TCC in a small number of pages and articles. In March and April, we asked the respective PIOs for some content - pictures, articles and events - and we were overwhelmed with the responses. Despite the challenges laid down by the global pandemic of Covid-19, TCCs did not for one day let up on their operational output. The dedication with which every troop rose to the task and evidently contributed towards UNDOF's mandate was, to be frank, humbling.

In this issue, we decided to focus on the training that UNDOF undertakes routinely and the underlying developments in terms of Covid-19. We felt that these themes, although perhaps at odds, accent nicely the perseverance that is synonymous with the mission's ethos. Since the last issue, UNDOF has experienced two Covid-19 outbreaks and seen the welcome arrival of vaccines. These were major events of interest in terms of posterity, and we are proud to document UNDOF's resilience and teamwork.

Finally, I would like to take the time to thank UNDOF's Commanders and Section Heads for contributing towards this publication and making my job that much easier. I sincerely hope you enjoy your time in the mission as much as I have.

COMMANDANT EOIN SCANLON,  
EDITOR IN CHIEF




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**ON THE COVER:** NEPCON troops raise the UN and national flag on the heights of Mount Hermon.

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The UNDOF 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 Office publishes the Golan Journal quarterly. While articles and photographs are welcomed from all members of the Force, the views 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.



Staff of the Level 1+ prep the first Covid-19 vaccines to be administered in Camp Faouar, 30 April 2021.



NepCon IX troops lower a casualty in the snow during a CASEVAC Exercise - part of their regular training on Mt. Hermon.



UMIC conducting an Observe, Monitor & Report (OMR) patrol



Force Commander Lt Gen Hamal and Deputy Force Commander Brig Gen O'Brien after receiving her medal in March 2021



Force Commander presents the Force Hygiene Officer with his UN Medal on INDCON's Medal Parade



Nepalese officers and troops celebrate Nepali Army Day by laying a wreath in Camp Faouar to commemorate their fallen soldiers, 11 March 2021



NepCon conducting a ski patrol during the cold weather conditions over the winter on Mount Hermon



FRC Padre Fr Séamus Madigan blessing the shamrock on St Patrick's Day, 17 March 2021



UMIC commenced their Covid-19 vaccinations in UNP-80 in early May 2021



Col Martin Alvarez (COS) being presented with his UN Medal by Brig Gen O'Brien (DFC) prior to his End of Mission



UNDOF's Lab Chief trains FRC troops in the correct technique for taking Covid-19 nasal swabs



Force Commander and Ghanaian Ambassador during a visit

# Deputy Force Commander



Brigadier General Anita Asmah was commissioned into the Ghana Armed Forces in 1992. She has served in various appointments including the Chief Coordinator, General Officer Grade I and Commanding Officer of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC). She also served as the Director of Higher Education at the Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College and was a Course Director at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre. Brigadier General Anita Asmah was the Deputy Military Secretary at the Ghana Armed Forces General Headquarters and later the Director of Ghana Armed Forces Education, General Headquarters.

Brig Gen Asmah has served as a Contingent Member, Chief Personnel Officer at the Sector West Headquarters and Liaison Officer with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in 1998, 2013 and 2015. She has also been a Military Observer with the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) and United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in 2003 and 2007.

She has a rich repertoire of Governance and Leadership issues from courses attended. These include, but are not limited to, Political Advisors Course, Humanitarian Assistance in West Africa, Strategic Leadership, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Courses. She was in Croatia for the Mission Training Officer's Course and



in Kennesaw University, USA for the Women in Leadership Course. She has a mastery of needs assessment in respect of Border Security Management, Child Protection, Gender Modulation and Welfare Mainstreaming.

Brig Gen Asmah holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree and Bachelor of Law Degree from the University of Ghana. She holds a Professional Law Certificate from the Ghana Law School and is a Practicing Lawyer. She has a good working knowledge in French.

Having arrived into the Mission Area in April 2021, Brig Gen Asmah will serve as Deputy Force Commander of UNDOF for a period of 12 months.



DFC on patrol in Southern Lebanon with UNIFIL Liaison Branch, 2016.

# Chief of Staff



Command & Staff course in 2009.

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the National University of Ireland and a master's degree in leadership and management also from the National University of Ireland. He has deployed overseas on eight occasions in Lebanon, Kosovo, Liberia and Mali. Colonel Daly is married with two daughters and lives in Cork, Ireland.

Colonel Daly is married with two daughters and lives in Cork, Ireland. He is an avid reader. He enjoys watching rugby in his spare time. He supports Munster and Ireland of course. He likes to walk, particularly around where he lives in Cork as there are some very good hills to climb.

Colonel Timothy Daly was born in 1964 in Galway, Ireland and joined the Irish Army as a cadet officer in 1983. He was commissioned as an artillery officer in April 1984 and assigned to 1 Field Artillery Regiment based in Cork in the south of Ireland. He was promoted to Major in 2003, to Lt Col in 2012 and to Colonel in 2017. He served in all command and staff appointments in the Artillery Corps including Battery Commander and Regimental Commander.

He served at Brigade Headquarters Level as G1, 1 Brigade in Cork and at Ireland's national Defence HQ in the J1 branch. His most recent appointment was as Deputy Commander & Executive Officer of 1 Brigade in Cork.

He completed the Junior Command & Staff course in 1998 and the Senior



COS as a company commander with IRISHBATT, UNMIL in Liberia in 2006

## NMC BID FAREWELL TO DFC

On 2 MARCH 2021, UNDOF's Deputy Force Commander, Brig Gen Maureen O'Brien made a farewell visit to NMC HQ. NMC Acting CO Maj Min Bahadur Godar welcomed the DFC at Camp Faour and she participated in a small program of events to mark her end of tour, and a memorable experience with the Nepalese Mechanised Company. At the end of the morning's events, she addressed all NMC troops, as well as NepEng troops, and visited the other UNPs of NMC. NMC bids Brig Gen O'Brien all the best in her future endeavours.



TOP: NMC A/CO makes a presentation to DFC on the occasion of her visit.

RIGHT: UNTSO and UNDOF conducting joint patrols in the AoR.



NEPCON IX troops prepare to evacuate a casualty with a Pistenbully during a training exercise on Mount Hermon Complex.

## TRAINING

### CASEVAC FROM MT. HERMON

As part of its scheduled training plan, NEPCON IX conducted a large-scale CASEVAC exercise on Mt. Hermon Complex earlier this year. The exercise involved all troops of NEPCON IX and the scenario was based on different types of casualties in three different locations. The snowmobiles were used for the evacuation. The main objective of this exercise was to refresh TTPs and keep levels of preparation high - from skills & drills to equipment.

The troops all benefited greatly from the exercise and developed an appreciation for the difficulties of a real-world scenario in dealing with the extraction and treatment of casualties from the adverse and inclement weather on Mt. Hermon Complex. Regular training is a key aspect of life for Mount Hermon's peacekeepers as it develops and hones unit cohesion, personal skills and contributes to the fulfilment of UNDOF's mandate.

## PATROLLING

### JOINT PATROLS WITH UNTSO



UNDOF and UNTSO continue to support each other in the Area of Separation, complimenting each other's objectives through a shared goal.

Shared Observing, Monitoring and Reporting (OMR) patrols are an excellent way to familiarise both parties with recent events and get frequent 'eyes-on' particular areas of interest.





## MEDICAL

### COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

In April 2021, UNDOF received an allotment of Covid-19 vaccinations from the United Nations. This was a major step forward for the mission, as these vaccines will help reduced the threat of the disease to the mission.

After the launch of the UN's 'EverBridge' IT system to record their administration, UNDOF commenced the rollout of vaccines and the first jab was given on Friday 30 April, 2021 - a historic day in the mission without doubt. Thanks to the incredible effort of its health workers, UNDOF



reported that almost 95% of its personnel had received the first dose in the following 2 weeks.

## SPORT

### VOLLEYBALL

There are few games that challenge the mind and the body in equal measure, but UNDOF's volleyball matches surely are one of them. Although Covid-19 has not permitted much over the past year in terms of team sports, this has not prevented much discussion and debate about the game with a view to inter-TCC competitions soon.

Individual practice, while difficult, is an excellent way of keeping fit and readying the competitive mind for when the volleyball court is next opened.

The United Nations Volleyball Community (UNVC) is an independent think-tank with the mission of keeping skills sharp, while staying safe. Avid players are advised to keep fit and maintain their interest in the sport until it is safe to once again don their volleyball shoes.



## HOTO

### FIJIBATT HANDOVER

FIJIBATT 8 (Task Force Daimani 2) took over from the outgoing FIJIBATT 7 (Task Force Daimani 1) on 22 April 2021 at Camp Ziouani (CZ). UNDOF's Force Commander was the Chief Guest for the parade.

Prior the HOTO parade, key elements of different departments each conducted their own handovers over the duration of one week. By the end, Chalk 2 of FIJIBATT 8 arrived at the Ben-Gurion Airport and was brought straight into quarantine at CZ. FIJIBATT 8 then bid farewell to FIJIBATT 7, who returned to Fiji after serving 18 months in the mission area (due to Covid-19).

FIJIBATT 8 is looking forward to a great year of service with UNDOF and not forgetting to face its challenges and opportunities that comes with it. Vinaka



## COUNTER IED TRAINING

Two days of Counter IED (CIED) training was conducted in NMC HQ from 26 FEB 2021 to 27 FEB 2021 by UNDOF's CIED Officer Captain Richard O'Hagan (of the Irish Defence Forces). The aim of the training was twofold: to ensure all personnel are aware of the IED threats facing peacekeepers and to refresh skills & drills in the event of an IED strike. The training included theoretical classes and practical exercises regarding techniques of identifying IED threat, the proactive and reactive drills to counter IED hazards and various 'actions on'. An excellent demonstration from the FRC CIED team was also displayed during the training.



TOP: A member of the FRC CIED team demonstrates the placement of IEDs during CIED training.

LEFT: Outgoing and incoming FijiBatt Commanders complete the HOTO documents with FC Lt Gen Hamal officiating.

# UNDOF's New Faces



As is now traditional in UNDOF, this publication takes the opportunity to introduce to you the newest faces in the mission. While many of the key appointments have remained unchanged since the previous publication, there have been some new and welcome additions. Let's meet them now.



Chief Operations Officer

Lt Col Norton was born on 21 October 1966 in Portlaoise, Ireland. He commenced his military career in 1984 as a trainee aircraft technician in the Irish Air Corps, before being commissioned into the Irish Army as a Transport Officer in 1988.

Lt Col Norton has served the majority of his career as a Logistics Officer within the Army's Transport Corps. He has held various positions at unit level – including command of a Transport Group within the Irish Defence Forces' Training & Logistics Centre in Kildare – as well as senior staff officer appointments in the Irish Defence Forces' J3 (Operations), J4 (Logistics), J7 (Training) and Directorate of Transport echelons. Lt Col Norton holds a B Comm from the National University of Galway, an MSc in Supply Chain Management from the Dublin Institute of Technology, and a MA in Leadership & Defence Studies from Maynooth University Ireland. He has served on numerous overseas missions, beginning with three tours of duty to UNIFIL (between 1993 and 1999), two tours with EU forces (EUFOR BiH in 2006, EUTM-Mali in 2017), one tour with ISAF in 2010, and served as an observer with MINURSO in 2014. He is married to Elaine and resides in Dublin with their two daughters.



CO FijiBatt

Lt Col Aseri Nabete Rokoura was born on 23 Dec 1971 and hails from Navutu, Navuakece in Naitasiri. He attended the University of the South Pacific in 1990 in Foundation Social Science and later BA in Accounting and Economics and completed 10 units before joining the Army in 1994. He enlisted in the Republic of the Fiji Military Force Army in 1994 and

graduated from the Australian Royal Military College, Duntroon in 1998 as 2nd Lieutenant and was posted to Third Battalion (3FIR). His staff appointments have included Adjutant, Aide De Camp, Foreign Liaison Officer and with Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA), and Personal Staff Officer (PSO) and ADC to the Commander RFMF and later the Prime Minister of Fiji from 2008 to 2014. He has completed various courses in Fiji and overseas which includes; Junior Staff Officer Course and Infantry Captain Course, and Grade Three Staff Command Tactics course at the Officer Training School in Fiji. He graduated with Masters Degree in Military and Defence Studies from Australia National University. He has served overseas in Sinai Egypt in 1995 and 1999. In 2000, he served under the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). He also served with UNIFIL in 2001 and Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF), Regional Assistance Mission in Solomon Island (RAMSI) in 2004. He was also deployed as Military Observer in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) in 2014-16 with Observer Group Lebanon and later with Observer Group Tiberius, Israel Syrian Border.



CO FRC

Lt Col Frank Flannery is the Officer Commanding the Force Reserve Company. He joined the Defence Forces in 1990 and was commissioned in 1992 to the Infantry Corps. He has amassed a wide range of experience across a number of roles at home, serving in command and staff roles at battalion

level in 1 Infantry Battalion, in 4 Infantry Battalion, and in 6 Infantry Battalion. He has significant experience in training of both soldiers and officer cadets, having served in Brigade Training Centres in 1 Southern Brigade and 4 Western Brigade and in the Cadet School, Military College. Lt Col Flannery has extensive prior overseas experience in the Middle East and Africa, having served in command and staff appointments in Lebanon (UNIFIL), Liberia (UNMIL), East Timor (UNTAET), Kosovo (KFOR), and as a Military Observer in Western Sahara (MINURSO). Lt Col Flannery is a graduate of the National University of Ireland in Galway, and holds a Masters Degree in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies from the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. He is a graduate of the Command and Staff Course run by the Command and Staff School in the Military College. He has most recently served as Officer Commanding 1 Infantry Battalion in Dún Uí Mhaoiliosa, in Galway.



# WO1 Amenisitai Vatoga 1968 - 2021 RIP

WO1 Amenisitai Vatoga was the Regimental Sergeant Major of the First Battalion Fiji Infantry Regiment who had just settled in after completing its 8th rotation with the outgoing battalion. He passed away on the 13th of May at the age of 53 while serving under the United Nations, his country and world peace.

The RSM enlisted on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1987. WO1 Vatoga served 34 years in the Republic of Fiji Military Forces, an impressive ten years of which he served overseas. He served twice in UNIFIL (Lebanon), five times in Sinai (Egypt) under the Multinational Forces and Observers, twice in East Timor under UNTAET and UNMISSET, and once with UNAMI in IRAQ. His latest deployment to UNDOF was his 11<sup>th</sup> TOD and first in UNDOF before his passing. He served under the Third Battalion Fiji Infantry Regiment, as Company Sergeant Major based in the Western Division in Fiji and he was

earmarked to assume the appointment of Force Sergeant Major upon his return from the Golan Heights. Apart from the various promotional courses he has completed whilst in service, he was well renowned as a tough Physical Training Instructor.

As the most senior soldier in the Battalion, he was personally chosen for the role, not only on merit but for his moral and ethical character. The late RSM was a soldier who never yielded to the challenges of tasks given to him, and this allowed him to maintain the integrity of his unit through a great deal of respect.

The Fiji Battalion conducted a Memorial Service for the late WO1 A. VATOGA on Thu, 20 May 21 at the Koronikalou Chapel (Fiji Batt Chapel) in Camp Ziouani (CZ). The late WO1 A. VATOGA passed away on Thu, 13 May 21 at the CZ hospital. The Memorial Service was attended by

the UNDOF Force Commander, Lieutenant General Ishwar Hamal, representative for GIL0 and members of UNDOF family, military and civilian staffs.

The Memorial Service commenced with a Church Service and concluded with a funeral march from the Koronikalou Chapel to the CZ main gate and refreshments at the Fiji Batt HQ. The Memorial service comprised of a Catafalque Party and an Escort Officer.



## TRAINING

# CIED TRAINING

Written by  
Capt Richard O'Hagan  
SO CIED

The prevalence of IEDs as a weapon of choice in conflicts today means that all UN Peacekeepers must understand the threat and be properly trained and equipped to react effectively to it. UNDOF is certainly no exception, operating in areas where there are a significant number of IED incidents that pose a real and substantial risk to our personnel. At the end of February 2021, a two-day Counter-IED course was run for twenty-five officers and NCOs of NMC. The purpose of this course was to give these personnel, who are responsible for leading their soldiers in fulfilling UNDOF's mandate, a good understanding of the threat posed by IEDs in UNDOF's AOR and the knowledge, skills and drills that can best help us counter this threat.

The course blended theory with practical to best achieve its learning outcomes. Students were introduced to the different types and classifications of IEDs, typical IED networks, and to common enemy TTPs. They learned about IED indicators and ground sign awareness, culminating in a Visual Recognition Lane which tested the student's knowledge and understanding when they were required to find IEDs and IED indicators along a 50-metre lane that contained emplaced devices and common tell-tale signs.



With a good understanding of IEDs behind them, the second day of the course focused on teaching the students Friendly Forces' TTPs. They practiced conducting the '5 and 25' metre drill, which is used to ensure the safety of halt locations. They also learned how to approach Vulnerable Points, such as choke points and culverts. The students learned the appropriate actions on IED discovery, which are the 5C's: Confirm, Contact, Clear, Cordon and Control. Finally, they were introduced to reactive drills for the actions to be taken in the event of an IED attack.

# SGT NARAYAN - NEPCON'S TRAINER

Sgt Narayan is the Training Sgt of NEPCON IX in Mt Hermon. He has been serving with UNDOF since October 2020 and this is his first peacekeeping mission. Back home, he serves in the High Altitude & mountain Warfare School of the Nepali Army, with 15 years of service. He is 34 years old, and belongs to Baglung, Nepal.



**SO PR:** First, can you tell us a little bit about your background and what motivated you to join the force?

**SGT NARAYAN:** I am Sgt Narayan Sharma, a soldier of Nepali Army with 15 years of experience, currently deployed in Mt Hermon, UNDOF, as a member of NEPCON IX. Back home, I am basically from a small village of Baglung, situated in Gandaki province of Nepal. I'm currently working as a training Sgt in my contingent. My motivation to join the force was basically driven by my interest and passion to serve my nation and people. Nepali Army is an organization with a long institutional history, a prestigious organization, which lives by its ethos of 'Mission First and People Always'. Nepali Army was my favorite organization since childhood. Discipline, patriotism, and adventure were my biggest motivation to join the Nepali Army and I feel proud as a soldier of Nepali Army.

**SO PR:** How long have you been in the mission area? Can you please share your any memorable experience till date?

**SGT NARAYAN:** It has been five months since our contingent deployed to the mission area. Weather in Mt Hermon is unpredictable. One of the most memorable moments I've ever had was when we were on patrol, weather was not good, and we were receiving light rain. Suddenly after a few minutes it started to snow very heavily. We got the order to return but within a few minutes snow got piled up to knee, wind speed was more than 120 km/hr, it was difficult to move, and we were unable to see even our friends due to dense fog. Temperature fell up to -5 degree Celsius. All these things were happening simultaneously, but we were able to reach Unit HQ. This was a severe but memorable moment I had till today.

**SO PR:** It's been few months since you have been here, how is your daily routine from dawn to dusk?

**SGT NARAYAN:** We are military, and we have a set routine in all UNPs unless there are unforeseen eventualities and exercises. It's important to be physically and mentally fit to fulfill the assigned task in the unit and mission. Following morning fall in and PT, I have to join in daily training and operational activities. During daylight hours, going patrol, attending training, joining operational, administrative, and logistics activities including game parade and recreational activities are my regular events. We have set breakfast, lunch, and dinner time. During the evening, I have to attend rollcall and I also read some books. During night, I have to be a part of Night Guard duties. As a training sergeant I have to be busy in daily training activities.

**SO PR:** What was the foremost thing that made you eligible in meeting the selection criteria for this mission? Did you attend any form of training?

**SGT NARAYAN:** Nepali Army has clear Directive, Policy and criteria for the peacekeeping missions. Selection of peace keeping missions are based on the Nepali Army's Peace Keeping Directive. Because of the difficult geographical condition and weather in Mt Hermon, members of NEPCON should be skilled mountaineers. I have done my Basic and Advanced Mountain Warfare training from Nepal and abroad. Beside that I have served as an instructor in High Altitude Mountain Warfare School. I believe all these qualities made me eligible for this mission.

**SO PR:** What is your view regarding this climate? Is it challenging? What difficulties do you face while working for operations?




**SGT NARAYAN:** The weather in Mount Hermon complex is extremely challenging and unpredictable. We've the experience of mountains and this type of climate in our country. But now we also have experienced the challenges of Winter in Mt Hermon, where within a few hours 17-20 ft of snow gets piled up, wind speed goes more than 120 km/hr and it is difficult to see even 5 meters due to dense fog. Temperature falls up to -20 degree Celsius and the communication system breaks down. Vehicle movement is restricted, you cannot even go outside and see what is happening. Our challenge lies in conducting operational activities effectively in unpredictable and harsh weather. But NEPCON IX is always ready for any challenge and we are conducting our operational and logistics activities smoothly.

**SO PR:** Do you have any previous experience about attending the mission? What is the most interesting thing about being

*in the mission?*

**SGT NARAYAN:** This is my first UN mission, and It's my new experience. Most interesting part of the mission is, there are different types of forces and members from different countries operating under UNDOF. It's a multicultural and multinational environment where I got an opportunity to learn about geographical, historical, social, cultural and political aspects of Syria and other friendly countries. Under the NEPCON IX, UNDOF we are working with the Slogan of "One Mission, One Team and One Goal". Serving under the Blue Helmet in UNDOF is a great honour for me.

# UN PEACEKEEPING AT A GLANCE

 **By 2028,**  
we aim to **triple** the number of women serving in  **military contingents**  
& **double** the number of women serving in  **formed police units**

Over the past **72 years,**  
more than **1 MILLION** women and men from **125 COUNTRIES** have served in  
**71 PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS** 

We keep the peace with **90,000**  **PEACEKEEPERS**  
in **12 OPERATIONS** around the  world

 **PEACEKEEPING**  
helps countries achieve  **LASTING PEACE**  
supports  **POLITICAL PROCESSES**  
 **PROTECTS** hundreds of thousands of civilians  
& helps  **GUARANTEE CEASEFIRES**

 Studies show  
more  **PEACEKEEPERS** in conflict areas means  
fewer **civilian deaths**, less **violence** and a higher chance at **lasting peace** 

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@UNPeacekeeping



## FORCE HYGIENE

# QUARANTINE

## Containing Covid-19 in UNDOF

Written by

Captain Richard O'Hagan,  
SO CIED & A/Covid  
Coordinator

IN EARLY 2020, Covid-19 utterly changed life for most of humanity, becoming a global pandemic on a scale unseen since the so-called "Spanish Flu" in 1918. For most people, normal life would not return any time soon. This was also the case for UNDOF, with quarantine becoming the norm, and previously unheard-of concepts like 'physical distancing' becoming part of our day-to-day vocabulary and

actions.

I think it is fair to say that UNDOF did extremely well, and indeed was also fortunate, to avoid a significant outbreak of the disease for the duration of 2020. Indeed, it was also fortunate, to avoid a significant outbreak of the disease for the duration of 2020. However, as has been demonstrated all over the world, Covid-19 is a particularly tricky virus to keep out of a population completely, and all it takes is one point of entry to break down even the most robust defences.

In early January 2021, one of UNDOF's positions reported that a small number of personnel were experiencing fevers, with one reporting a loss of taste and smell. An outbreak response team was dispatched from Camp Faouar to assess the situation and take some samples for PCR testing. Later that evening, the

suspicion that Covid-19 had finally entered an UNDOF camp was confirmed with four positive PCR test results. While this was of course unwelcome and disheartening news, UNDOF's pre-prepared mechanisms for dealing with such an outbreak were immediately activated.

Movement to and from the position was immediately ceased to prevent further spread of the virus to other UNDOF positions. A crucial part of the response process was the commencement of a robust contact tracing procedure. This was conducted primarily by the personnel within the position itself, with assistance and oversight from the outbreak response team. The actions necessary on foot of the results of the contact tracing proved a significant logistical challenge, with the need to arrange for the separation of all close contacts of the confirmed cases into quarantine, while maintaining strict isolation for those who had tested positive for the disease. As more personnel became symptomatic, this challenge became increasingly difficult, resembling a moving chessboard.

The following day, when it seemed that the situation was in the process of being controlled, more bad news struck. A person in Camp Faouar



**FAR LEFT**  
Medics in UNP 80 prepare to test a suspected Covid-positive patient.

**CENTER**  
UNDOF's Lab technicians perform a PCR test in Camp Faouar.

**BOTTOM**  
A member of INDCON prepares antigen testing at the North Gate of Camp Faouar.

who had recently travelled from the location of the initial outbreak was displaying minor symptoms. She was immediately tested and soon thereafter confirmed as a positive case. This meant the outbreak had spread to UNDOF's most populous position. The outbreak response team now had to concurrently manage two positions at once, which stretched the mission's PCR testing and contact tracing resources. At this stage, the mission leadership took immediate and decisive action to minimize the chances of the outbreak spreading to the contingents in Camp Faouar. Strict 'bubbles' were formed, and communal areas were closed to eliminate any opportunity for transmission of the virus. Other preventative measures already in place were strengthened and reinforced.

During this time, the contract tracing team learned just how difficult the virus is to contain. The incubation period, meaning the period that

someone has the virus without displaying any symptoms, was significant. Unfortunately, Covid-19 can be spread to others during this time, meaning that without proactive contract tracing, we would always be a few days behind the virus. However, this was not the case, and all positive cases underwent detailed tracing to ensure all of their 'close contacts' within the 'contact tracing window' were immediately quarantined to prevent spread of the virus. Over the coming days and weeks, twelve personnel in Camp Faouar tested positive for Covid-19. Thanks to the decisive measures taken, the outbreaks in both locations were soon brought under control and eliminated.

This was a difficult time for the mission; however, all UNDOF personnel demonstrated extraordinary resilience and team spirit through their actions, with everyone doing their part to manage the situation. The UNDOF medical staff under the guidance of

the Force Medical Officer ensured that all patients received the highest standard of care, and thankfully nobody experienced severe illness. The Force Hygiene Officer ensured that robust decontamination procedures were followed throughout, and the Laboratory Team worked around the clock to provide the PCR testing capacity that was so crucial to containing the outbreak.

In the time since the outbreak, UNDOF has successfully kept Covid-19 at bay. In addition to the maintenance of existing measures, Rapid Antigen Testing is being used to check external personnel coming into UNDOF camps to minimize the chances of another outbreak occurring. It appears that UNDOF's prospects in the fight against Covid-19 are bright going forward. Significant proportions of the contingents that have recently arrived are already vaccinated, and the mission is due to receive vaccinations for all personnel in the coming weeks. The important lessons learned from the outbreak will enhance UNDOF's ability to respond effectively to any future crisis that may arise.



# UNDOF - GOING GREEN

*UNDOF's Engineers are always busy behind the scenes - whether they are maintaining the equipment essential for everyday life in the Mission Area, or working with contractors to put in place those processes and equipment that help ensure the safety and security of UN positions. OIC of UNDOF's Engineering Section, Alex Candano, took this opportunity to highlight some of the key works completed recently, particularly those that are helping UNDOF achieve the UN's goal of becoming more green in the field.*

### Camp Ziouani's Solar Panels

On August of 2020, UNDOF Engineering Section installed a 250-kilowatt peak (kWp) "On-Grid" Solar PV System at Camp Ziouani. This project was put up in order to adapt to the environmental strategy of the United Nations to reduce the mission's carbon footprint from fossil fuel power generation. This system is an additional source of power to the Grid Power Source of Camp Ziouani. It is composed of 900 photovoltaic (PV) arrays, a PV mounting system and support structures and PV inverters and accessories. The system voltage is 400 volts, 50 Hz, 3-phase. The payback period of this project is about six years, meaning that after 6 years the project will be saving the UN that amount of electricity. With the operation of this PV system, UNDOF will be able to reduce the power consumption from the grid by 25 to 30 percent and save approximately 70,000 US Dollars annually.



### UNP 37 Solar Panels

With the same purpose of adapting to the environmental strategy of the United Nations to reduce the mission's carbon footprint from fossil fuel power generation, UNDOF Engineering Section also installed a PV system and Battery Banks at UN Position 37. This system is 50-kilowatt peak (kWp) "Off-Grid" will be operationalized by 15 May 2021 and will be an alternate source of power to power generators being used in the Position. It is composed of PV arrays, roof type PV mounting system and support structures, PV and Battery inverters, battery banks and accessories. The voltage is 400 volts, 50 Hz, 3-phase. The payback period of this project is between six and eight years. With the operation of this PV system, UNDOF will be able to reduce the power consumption from power generators by 75 to 80 percent and save approximately 23,000 US Dollars on fuel consumption annually.



Below: CZ's arrays of Solar Panels

Right: The battery inverters stored in CZ.



UNDOF'S ENGINEERING WORKS

Potable Water in Camp Faouar

In order to intensify the reduction of plastic waste generation particularly plastic bottles of water, UNDOF Engineering Section installed a filtration system facility to produce potable water in Camp Faouar. The facility started to operate on February of 2021. It has the capacity to produce about 560 liters per hour. The plant is currently producing 5 to 6 cubic meters per week or approximately 50 percent of the bottled water consumption in the camp. This translates to a reduction of approximately 8,000 bottled waters per week. The quality of water is monitored by Engineering Section with the collaboration of UNDOF Laboratory; this ensures Quality Control (QC) and Quality Assurance (QA) standards.



Newly installed potable water general access points.

Car Wash facility in Camp Faouar

In order to optimize the use of treated water produced by the Waste Water Treatment Plants (WWTPs) in Camp Faouar, UNDOF Engineering Section built a central car wash facility. The WWTPs produce an average of 1.2 million liters of recycled water per month with quality that passes WHO standard.

The car wash facility is composed of six water tanks with a capacity to hold 5,000 liters and a concrete platform base which can cater to four light or two large vehicles at the same time. The facility started to operate on November 2020. The consumption of treated water by this facility is approximately 390,000 liters per month and increases to between 450,000 and 480,000 liters during the winter season. The quality of water is regularly monitored by UNDOF Engineering Section.



Car wash water storage tanks in Camp Faouar

Car wash facility in Camp Faouar



Written by  
Mr. Alex Candano,  
Officer In Charge  
UNDOF Engineering Section



Irish Defence Forces troops patrolling during an exercise prior to their deployment to UNDOF.



Troops engaged in a CASEVAC exercise RV with an AW139 Helicopter in Ireland during simulated combat.

TRAINING

# FRC PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING

**UNDOF'S FORCE RESERVE COMPANY (FRC)** is a 130 person strong unit which provides the Force Commander, UNDOF with a reserve Mechanised Infantry Company which can be deployed across the UNDOF Area of Responsibility. The primary function of the FRC is to provide a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) which can be rapidly deployable to emerging situations within the UNDOF mission area, although the FRC has been deployed on order of the Force Commander in support of other mission support tasks during its tour of duty. While the FRC consists primarily of one Mechanised Infantry Company, it is supported by a comprehensive suite of combat support detachments which present the FRC as a flexible and independent asset to the Force Commander.

The FRC's initial period of 11 weeks of pre-deployment training was undertaken in Ireland in August of 2020; this period of training was

then validated by a two week period of mission readiness exercises which assessed the mission readiness of the Unit. The pre-deployment training was representative of the current situation within the UNDOF mission area which trained and revised soldiers in a wide range of skills with particular emphasis on Mechanised Infantry tactics- this being the Unit's primary role. Taking account of the legacy threat which remains from the recent civil conflict within the mission area, the pre-deployment training was supported by an awareness campaign focusing on the danger posed by unexploded ordnance (UXO) and explosive remnants of war (ERW). A series of lectures and interactive seminars was supplemented with realistic training exercises focusing on individual and infantry section level procedures. Similarly, counter-improvised explosive device (C-IED) awareness and training was revised and

“The primary function of the FRC is to provide a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) which can be rapidly deployable to emerging situations within the UNDOF Mission Area”





An FRC Mowag Pirhana III, the APC of the Irish Defence Forces, engaged in observation of the Area of Operation.



An FRC engineer practices his skills and drills as he searches carefully for mines in an exercise, one of many designed to keep specialists on their toes.

exercised to a very high standard as the current indirect threat from non-state actors within the mission area stems from the likelihood of collateral damage/attack from improvised explosive devices. Along with mission-specific training, traditional military skills such as battlefield first-aid, use of communications equipment and marksmanship were revised as these skills are a ubiquitous and essential aspect of any properly-trained Unit's capabilities. The two week-mission readiness exercise presented the Unit with a series of realistic scenarios which exercised every aspect of the Unit; each exercise scenario required a comprehensive mission analysis and decision making process to be undertaken by the Unit's Staff Officers which would then be formalised by producing a mission operation order or fragmentary order as suitable. This would then form the basis for sub-units to conduct their own planning and analysis in order to undertake their assigned mission. The exercise period was externally monitored and assessed throughout using domestic and international best-practice assessment models which provided a robust and objective framework for evaluating the Unit's mission readiness. The Unit was pleased to have been awarded an excellent grading in many of its assessment areas.

### The Training Plan

From the beginning of the Unit's deployment in-theatre in October of 2020, the Unit has had a comprehensive training plan in place which has aimed to ensure that the individual and collective skill set has been maintained and developed. The core purpose of the Unit's training plan has been three-fold: Firstly, training must be progressive and inclusive of all arms and capabilities of the Unit. Secondly, training must be mission specific with the Unit's objective of supporting the UNDOF mandate and the centre of training output. Finally, training where possible must develop the individual from a career development perspective- it



FRC regularly conduct OMR patrols, including in difficult terrain in the Golan, which their rigorous training has helped them prepare for.

is the belief of the Unit Commander that Unit members must be returned to their home Units having developed and benefitted from their tour of duty.

The first significant block of training which was undertaken by the Unit was to revise and update the Unit's contingency plans for reacting to any scenario at UN positions across the mission area. The Unit's QRF assumed a schedule of area familiarisation/route familiarisation patrols to each UN position in order to familiarise crews with the route to/from and layout of each post. This then enabled section-level commanders to train and rehearse



## “Training within the FRC has been an essential part of the Unit’s day to day routine”

their troops from ground-level up. The Unit’s QRF was exercised in its response to a medical emergency at a UN position in December 2020. This exercise was planned and conducted jointly by UNDOF/OGG without notice and provided an excellent opportunity for the Unit to practice the execution of its contingency planning. The Unit’s performance met the strict timeline for responding to such incidents and was praised by the Chief Operations Officer, UNDOF. One interesting follow up from this was that internal FRC medics have engaged with NEPCON medics within Camp Faouar Level 1+ hospital to establish a series of patient-handover protocols to be used in any future exercise or real life incident. This collaborative project among international contingents has been mutually beneficial and represents the spirit of mutual co-operation in support of the UNDOF mandate. The QRF’s contingency response was also displayed for the Force Commander on his visit on the FRC in December 2020. The Force Commander received a first-hand demonstration of the mobilisation and activation of the QRF from the FRC’s Company second-in-command and was

highly complementary of the Unit’s reaction.

The FRC’s training policy has aimed to be inclusive of all-arms available within the Unit which has led to a number of combined-arms training exercised to take place. For example, in January 2020, the Unit’s Engineer Specialist Search and Clearance Team (ESSCT) was exercised in conjunction with a Mechanised Infantry Platoon in a mine detection and clearance exercise. The exercise scenario was that the FRC were required to clear an (simulated) abandoned UN post for reoccupation by UNTSO personnel. As part of the scenario, an unexploded landmine was discovered which would require the Unit’s Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) detachment to respond. This exercise enabled three distinct arms of the Unit to combine to achieve the exercise mission- Mechanised Infantry, ESSCT and EOD. This exercise proved to be highly beneficial for all involved and served to remind the Unit of the level of inter-detachment training and collaboration which must be maintained in order to support the overall FRC objective.

### Relevant Training

Drawing on the benefits from the combined-arms search exercise, the Unit has also conducted two Military First Responder (MFR) courses. The MFR course is a first-aid course which has two distinct elements- a military battle first-aid component, and a civilian first-aid complement. Importantly, the civilian component of the course is accredited by the Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council in Ireland which accredits each student with a civilian qualification as a cardiac first responder. While there are obvious benefits and application to this potentially life-saving qualification, it also fulfils the other aspect of the Unit’s training objective- that members should be professionally developed by their tour



FAR LEFT: An APC crew member trains frequently on the weapon systems prior to deployment.

CENTRE LEFT: Tactics, Techniques and Procedures had to include Covid-19 mitigation measures, such as the wearing of face-masks.

LEFT: FRC troops engaged in a simulated firefight in the Glen-of-Imaal, Ireland.

of duty. This qualification enables students to progress and attain subsequent medical qualifications at home both within the Irish Defence Forces, and in the civilian sector. The courses themselves have proven to be very enjoyable for students and have contributed to the Unit's operational capability. The techniques taught during the course were exercised as part of a mass-casualty simulation exercise which combined a Mechanised Infantry platoon suffering a number of casualties. Course students as first responders were then required to react and provide military first-aid and await casualty evacuation. This exercise was conducted under strict conditions and provided students and infantry commanders alike with an opportunity to engage in high tempo decision making and military command.

The presence of COVID-19 preventative measures and precautions has impacted every aspect of the FRC's tour of duty and training has been no exception. The FRC is bound by both national Irish laws, Irish Defence Forces regulations and instructions, and UNDOF COVID directives in the execution of its operational and training objectives. The realisation of these precautions have required FRC commanders to ensure strict compliance with social distancing during training, mask wearing and hand hygiene/cough etiquette. While this has to an extent impacted the realism of training by

fostering less than ideal tactical conditions, it is the view of the Unit that the Unit's training objectives have been achieved. This view has been validated by the reaction to QRF call out exercised which have been deemed to be highly successful by UNDOF HQ.

Training within the FRC has been an essential part of the Unit's day to day routine and has aimed to be complementary to the Unit's operational readiness by expanding on the training undertaken during the pre-deployment phase of the Unit's existence. Ongoing training has been borne out of 'lessons-learned' and developments within the mission area to ensure that the Unit remains capable and ready to fulfil its primary role of providing a rapidly deployable and flexible asset to the Force Commander. To this effect it can be stated that the Unit's training plan has been successful and it is the intention of the current FRC to ensure that the standard is maintained by the incoming FRC contingent during the Unit's handover period.

Written by

Captain Killian Owens,  
Training Officer  
62 Inf Gp  
UNDOF FRC



TOP: An FRC patrol receives its orders prior to departing on patrol.

BELOW: 62 Inf Gp FRC on their medal parade in March 2021 near the conclusion of a successful deployment in UNDOF.



# FIRE FIGHTING

Fire is a major potential hazard in the Golan, as the region frequently experiences fire damage. United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) has an extended deployment reaching geographically from Mount Hermon to the Sea of Galilee. Because of this stretched deployment that includes vast farming lands alongside UN positions/Observation Posts, UNDOF's positions are quite vulnerable to fire, and it turns out to be very tough for a central quick reaction team to react. To make the mission and AoR fire-free is one of the foremost concerns of the mission leadership. In this report, we take a look at the recent works undertaken by UNDOF and its Fire Marsall to mitigate the threat of a fire in the mission area, and the key components of fire safety.

## Fire Safety Inspections and Risk Assessments

To ascertain the state of fire safety of the mission, our FFM (Force Fire Marshall) carried out fire safety inspection and risk assessment by physically visiting every buildings, bunkers, offices, accommodations, stores and all the UN Positions of UNDOF, on both sides of the Area of Separation. This was completed in the relatively short span of five-months, given the importance placed on fire safety by the mission leadership. Full fire safety support was also provided to UN Observation Posts of Observer Group Golan (OGG), United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO). The fire inspection drill is now being done every quarter.



## Fire Fighting Training

A detailed fire evacuation plan for every location of the mission is currently being drafted, and firefighting training has been given to troops of Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) and to UN employees at various locations throughout the AoR. The fire truck in the mission has also been reinstated, and various crew members have been trained to operate it. This reinvigorates UNDOF's capacity to respond in case of an emergency. A close eye is being kept on every fire hazard and the same is being dealt with as a top priority. UNDOF is proud to say that its firefighting capabilities and drills are of a remarkably professional and competent standard. Recent exercises in the mission area have demonstrated this, and the intention is to continue to prioritise fire safety and preparation through frequent training.



## “SAVE LIVES, SAVE ENVIRONMENT”

### Identifying and Substituting Faulty Equipment

A specific drive was initiated to resolve some of the outstanding and important fire-prevention issues of classifying and addressing any faulty or expired firefighting equipment and/or fire detectors. In a relatively quick span of one month, any such equipment or detectors were refilled/replaced, and UNDOF has complete confidence that full equipment readiness will be achieved by the end of July 2021. This concerted effort marked demonstrated



### Coordination with Local Fire Departments

Every UN mission has limited firefighting capacity, and UNDOF is no exception. We depend on the host countries to overcome this limitation. To coordinate efforts in the event of a fire/emergency, the FFM organised a meeting with Quneitra Fire Brigade of Syria, Katzrin fire fighting forces of Israel and received assurances for the full cooperation of host countries' respective fire departments. A full mapping of the nearest fire brigades is now an integral part of UNDOF's plans, and similarly a quick response plan has been written to improve our reaction in the event of a fire anywhere in the AoR. The FFM has also established a monthly meeting, joint firefighting practice and training between UNDOF's firefighters and the local fire fighting forces on both sides of the Area of Separation.



### About the Force Fire Marshall

Major Karan Vijay Singh Shekhawat is the first Force Fire Marshall (FFM) & Chief Fire Safety Officer (CFSO) of UNDOF. An alumnus of the Officer's Training Academy, he was commissioned into the Army Ordnance Corps of the Indian Army 12 years ago. He has served extensively in various high-altitude locations, jungle terrain and counter-insurgency operations in the North and North East of India. He has been awarded with various commendation cards of General Officer Commanding-in-Chief and Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief. He has also tenanted various staff appointments, most notably ADC to His Excellency Governor of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh and Staff Officer to General Officer Commanding of a Mountain Division. He belongs to Rajasthan in the western desert of India, is a national basketball player and a keen horse rider.





# #ChooseToChallenge



## International Women's Day, 08 March 2021

The theme of International Women's Day 2021 was "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world", and UNDOF was proud to have the opportunity to highlight the important contributions of its women in pursuing the fulfilment of its mandate - particularly during a global pandemic. Social media came alive on 08 March with fantastic accounts, images and inspiration of women peacekeepers across the world. Each participant shared some of their experiences via UN and UNDOF social media platforms.



Lt Gen Hamal, FC & HoM, and Brig Gen O'Brien, DFC,  
#ChooseToChallenge on #InternationalWomensDay2021



Pte McKeever of UNDOF's FRC  
(Ireland)



Lab Chief, Maj Prachi  
Rayamajhi



Military Police Officers of INDCON  
(India)



T/WO1 Kalpana KC  
Level 1+ Hospital (Nepal)



T/WO1 Rajju Thapa, Level 1+  
Hospital (Nepal)



Pvt Rossana Fernandez  
UMIC (Uruguay)



Capt Aastha Ghimire  
NMC DO (Nepal)



# #YouthForPeace



## International Day of UN Peacekeepers, 29 May 2021

The International Day of UN Peacekeepers was established by the UN General Assembly to pay tribute to the professionalism, dedication, sacrifice and courage of all military, police and civilian personnel serving in UN peacekeeping operations. This year, the UN focuses on Peacekeeping and the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda, under the theme: "The road to a lasting peace: Leveraging the power of youth for peace and security". UNDOF's young soldiers contributed to this social media effort with some pictures and inspiring stories about their professional experiences as peacekeepers. Here is a glimpse of some of what they had to say.



2/Lt Martín Acosta, 26 years old, 3 Platoon Commander (Uruguayan Mechanised Infantry Company), Uruguay:

*"My main work is carrying out patrols in the Southern Section of the Area of Separation. During this period of time I have learned that we must actively prevent the spreading to COVID-19 in order to be able to accomplish this vital mission. I have also learned that the people really believe in the meaning of the United Nations Emblem and Flag. I can see hope in the eyes of children when we pass by and appreciation in the faces of the people. The best part about my work is displaying the United Nations Emblem together with the Uruguayan flag and sharing this with my soldiers."*

T/WO1 Sumitra KC, 27 years old, Registered Nurse, NEPCON IX (Force HQ Infantry Support Unit), Nepal:

*"Despite the pandemic, my performance is always directed towards the promotion of health, prevention of COVID-19 and its treatment. But my 24/7 hour healthcare services to UNDOF's soldiers to help combat COVID-19 has rendered me with huge amount of positive response, trust and a sense of accomplishment and has also helped to mitigate the taboos related to present pandemic and spread awareness among the soldiers. I enjoy helping people get better – which is why I do what I do. The more I am involved in my job, the more patience I have gained which is of utmost significance to deal with the unprecedented health status of the patient."*



Private Pallab Jyoti Borah, 28 years old, Force Military Police, India:



*"My main work is with the Military Police Detachment in Camp Faouar, observing and promoting military discipline in the mission area – one of the most basic of military skills. During this period of time I have learned to work with many different nationalities, cultures and personalities. It has been an immensely rewarding experience. The best part about my work is the rewarding nature of Military Police work in an international environment."*

Captain Yuva Raj Lama, 26 years old, Transport Officer, Nepalese Mechanised Company (NMC), Nepal:

*"NMC Transport Officer plans, monitors, and manages transportation activities and operations. I handle and direct the deployment of transportation units while adhering to legal requirements and safety regulations. I also ensure the appropriate use, maintenance and repair of all vehicles. Due to Covid 19, seating arrangements along with the movement of vehicles were highly affected. Learning new things daily and getting to know the vehicle along with the procedure in every step involved with the vehicle has been one of the most fascinating things to me. I learned that coordinated and well balanced effort from all the branches is most important to achieve the goal of the mission."*



UNDOF  
HOLIDAYS 2021

Alpha

- 01 Jan
- 14 Jan
- 15 April
- 14 May\*
- 17 May
- 23 July
- 07 Sept
- 16 Sept
- 21 Sept
- 24 Dec

Bravo

- 01 Jan
- 05 April
- 17 April
- 03 May
- 13 May\*
- 14 May\*
- 19 July
- 20 July
- 25 Dec
- 26 Dec

\* Dates are subject to change



Mount Hermon during Winter 2020/21.

PRIORITIES

UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S TEN PRIORITIES FOR 2021

The UN General Assembly held a plenary meeting on priorities for 2021. The UN Secretary-General told governments that after the "tragedy and peril" of 2020, the SDGs are more important than ever to put the world on track in 2021. He outlined ten urgent priorities for the year ahead.

1. Respond to COVID-19
2. Start an inclusive and sustainable economic recovery
3. Make peace with nature.
4. Tackle poverty and inequality.

5. Reverse the assault on human rights.
6. Gender equality, the greatest human rights challenge
7. Heal geopolitical rifts.
8. Reverse the erosion of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime
9. Seize the opportunities of digital technologies while protecting against their growing dangers
10. Launch a reset for the 21st century

ASTRONOMY

TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

A total solar eclipse will occur on December 4, 2021. During a total eclipse of the Sun, the Moon covers the entire disk of the Sun. Total solar eclipses happen when the New Moon comes between the Sun and Earth and casts the darkest part of its shadow, the umbra, on Earth.

Only viewers located in the path of the Moon's full shadow, its umbra, can see a total solar eclipse. On average, one total solar eclipse happens every 18 months.

When the Moon is about 400 times closer to Earth than the Sun, the Moon's and the Sun's apparent sizes roughly match. It is the only time when the disk of the Moon looks big enough to cover the entire disk of the Sun.

A total solar eclipse can last for several hours and totality can range from a few seconds to 7.5 minutes. The longest total solar eclipse of the 21st century took place on July 22, 2009, when totality lasted 6 minutes and 39 seconds.



Quick Impact Project conducted by UNDOF in Ha-dar, Quneitra Governorate

TECHNOLOGY

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S STRATEGY ON NEW TECHNOLOGIES

The goal of this internal strategy is to define how the United Nations system will support the use of new technologies like artificial intelligence, biotechnology, blockchain, and robotics to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and to facilitate their alignment with the values enshrined in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the norms and standards of international law globally cybersecurity. Based on consultations across the UN system, he has identified five principles to guide UN engagement with new technologies:

1. **Protect and Promote Global Values:** Our work must be anchored in the values and obligations of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
2. **Foster Inclusion and Transparency:** We must provide a platform for governments, businesses and civil society across generations to make collective choices about new technologies.
3. **Work in Partnership:** We must promote the development of partnerships across a range of actors to increase collective knowledge, test ideas, and expand dialogue.
4. **Build on Existing Capabilities and Mandates:** our engagement with new technologies is necessary for preserving the values of the UN Charter and the implementation of existing UN mandates—it is not a new mandate.
5. **Be Humble and Continue to Learn:** For many industries, civil society groups and government bodies, the UN is not an obvious partner on these issues—so we need to engage and learn from each other.



"In implementing this strategy, I believe that we should be both ambitious and humble." - ANTONIO GUTERRES

HISTORY

SPANISH LANGUAGE DAY

Every year on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, Spanish Language Day celebrates the second most spoken language in the world. It's also a day to honor the most revered writer in the Spanish language, Miguel De Cervantes Saavedra.

The Spanish language originated in Spain. Currently, there are more than 450 million native Spanish speakers in the world. Only the Chinese language surpasses Spanish as the most spoken language in the world. Spanish is also the third most studied language in the world, behind English and French. About 75 million people in the world speak Spanish as their second language.

Not surprisingly, Mexico is the most Spanish-speaking country in the world. The United States ranks second for the number of Spanish speakers

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) founded Spanish Language Day in 2010. Their goal was to celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity. They also sought to promote equal use of the organization's six official working languages. They chose April 23<sup>rd</sup> to commemorate the death of Miguel De Cervantes Saavedra who died in 1616.

SPORTS

SPORTS DAY IN UN

The International Day of Sport for Development and Peace on 6 April presents an opportunity to recognize the role that sport and physical activity plays in communities and in people's lives across the world. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought new challenges to the world of sports. Workers, fans and athletes have felt the pain of absence, of lost revenue and of dreams deferred. But many competitions and leagues have found new ways to create opportunities for community and joy despite the crisis.

As vaccines spread hope and spectators begin to return to arenas, the world of sport has crucial contributions to make in forging a safe and sustainable recovery. The United Nations looks forward to continuing to work with sportspeople and organizations around the world to advance climate action and to promote peace, human rights and sustainable development. We will play and cheer again when everyone is safe from the pandemic.



FRC during 5KM run in Camp Faouar

**About:** Maj Binod Bikash Pathak (Nepal), as SO PR, authors this section in an effort to promote general information and inspire creative thinking in UNDOF.

# Let's Work Together to Get Our Lives "Back to Normal"!

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If we use all public health preventive measures possible, we will stand the best chance to get our families, communities, and workplaces "back to normal" soon

**Get vaccinated.**



**Wear a mask.**



**Wash hands often.**



**Stay 1-2m/3-6ft from others,  
and avoid crowds.**

# COVID-19 VACCINATION

## Protect Yourself & The Community

### COVID-19 VACCINATION SAVES LIVES



Vaccination **reduces the risks** of infection, especially severe infection that leads to hospitalisation.

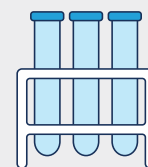
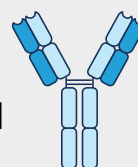


This will help keep our hospitals and healthcare facilities from being overwhelmed.

### COVID-19 VACCINES ARE SAFE AND EFFECTIVE

All COVID-19 vaccines have to undergo rigorous testing as follows:

**3** phases of clinical trials



Approval process of **Stringent Regulatory Authorities**

National drug regulation authority which is considered by the WHO to apply stringent standards for quality, safety and efficacy in its process of regulatory review of drugs and vaccines for marketing authorisation.

Vaccinated people are probably **less likely to transmit** COVID-19.

Enough vaccinated people can **reduce the spread**.

The **community will be safer**, especially for those who cannot be vaccinated.

Vaccination can contribute to a **safe & gradual reopening of the economy & society**.

While **vaccination is voluntary**, all who are eligible are **encouraged to be vaccinated**.



Seek **facts**, backed by research and data, published by credible health care providers and organisations.

**Avoid spreading misinformation.**

WHO

ECDC

CDC

If you have any questions or doubts about COVID-19 vaccination, reach out to your trusted doctors and health providers for clarification.

For more information, go to <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/vaccination>  
[iseek.un.org/coronavirus](https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/vaccination)





*One Mission, One Team, One Goal*