CHAPTER - FIVE

INDIAN PEACEKEEPERS UNDER UNO : A DAUNTING TASK

Even during its pre-independence era, India was a member of the League of Nations and subsequently became a member of the United Nations Organisation when it was founded on October 24th, 1945. One of the major aims of the UNO has been to ensure world peace. Despite the noble intentions behind the founding of this organisation, after the Second World War, a number of local wars have taken place in different parts of the world and continue to occur even today. Although, UNO has not been able to always prevent such wars, in many cases, it has certainly been able to prevent those escalating into bigger conflagrations like the World Wars e.g. the Korean Crisis, which provided a big challenge to the world at large. It has also played a significant role world over in bringing about a conclusion to the hostilities. In some cases, the UNO has even been able to help in resolution of problems between warring countries. However, in some cases nations or groups of nations preferred to deal with each other to resolve their problems. There have also been cases where the UN itself formed a UN Force in order to counter aggression. India, as a leading member of the Non-aligned Movement and as an original member of the UNO, has always been and even today is playing an important role in the activities of United Nation. She has often been looked up to by the international community for her sane advice and assistance in bringing about and maintaining world peace through peaceful resolution of international problems. Whenever the UN sought her assistance, India has always tried to respond positively. There were many cases where India on her own initiative tried to help the United Nations in carrying out its role. There have also been cases in point where India has assisted countries even outside the United Nations in maintenance of peace throughout the world.

Thus, at the very outset, it may be prudent to highlight the fact that India’s contributions to the United Nations Peacekeeping have indeed been unique. She has been one of the leading proponents of co-operation among the troops contributing countries of the world and has many a times contributed her Armed Forces for UN Peace Keeping Operations. She has also contributed Advisors, Observers, Force Commanders and Staff to the United Nations, as also logistical support. In some cases, Indian troops had to fight in order to implement the United Nations mandate and even sacrificed their lives most willingly and cheerfully for their commitment towards world peace. As of now, Indian casualties have been the highest in the world. (For details refer Appendix ‘K’).

It would be heartening to note that India has contributed a total of over 85,000 troops, participated in 43 missions out of 63 UN missions and have on many occasions, made the supreme sacrifices of its 123 brave sons while serving the United Nations (For details refer Appendix ‘L’). It is further a matter of pride that for most of the times, India has headed the list of troops contributors and has participated in almost every UN peacekeeping mission (For details refer Appendix ‘M’), whenever and wherever called for. As on date, India’s ranks as number ‘Three’ in the world.

1 Chamling, Dhiraj R, ‘India and the United Nation’, p.132
2 Krishna, Ashok, ‘India’s Armed Forces: Fifty Years of War and Peace’, p.136
3 Krishna Rao, K.V., ‘Prepare or perish’, p.311
4 loc. cit
Needful to highlight that India’s involvement in UN peacekeeping operations and its current deployment is the largest at any given time i.e. total of approximately 9500 officers and men of the Indian Army. The current detailed deployment includes 3,756 men in Congo, 2,420 in the Sudan, 1,625 in Ethiopia-Eritrea, 672 in Lebanon and 187 on the Golan Heights. In addition, eight officers are deployed in the Ivory Coast, six in Burundi and two with the Department of Peacekeeping at the UN headquarters in New York. Thus, the United Nation in particular and the world in general has gained immensely from the wealth of accumulated experiences and answering commitment of the mighty Indian Army†. The Indian troops are known world over for their equanimity and forbearance, which has earned them not only popularity but universal recognition too. This has been possible only due to the immaculate professional competence of the Indian Armed Forces, which have constantly projected a very positive and vigorous image of our country commencing with Korean War⁶. Even after over fifty five years, the same spirit is still continuing to the present times. Contribution and dedicated support to the United Nations has thus been the hallmark of India in particular and the Indian Army, in general.

INDIA’S ROLE IN THE KOREAN WAR : THE INITIAL PHASE

Needful to state that the Korean War which broke out on June 25th, 1950, marked an important phase in the evolution of India’s policy of non-alignment. While to the USA, it represented the first experience of a ‘limited war’ in the period following the Second World War, to India it became the first acid test of its policy of non-alignment. India’s approach in the crisis can be placed in three broad categories⁷. Firstly, its support for the UN position as set forth in the Security Council Resolutions of June 25th and 27th, 1950. In adherence to the statement‡ made by Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru before the UN Congress on October 13th, 1949 and its joining others in naming North Korea as the aggressor; secondly its subsequent decision to withhold military support for the war inspite of the Security Council Resolution of July 7th, 1950 which asked UN member States to furnish military assistance to repel the aggressor; and thirdly, its persistent efforts to play a mediatory role so as to localize the conflict and bring about peace in the war torn peninsula.

Further, the Prime Minister of India, Mr Nehru, was of the view that a military commitment on the part of India would not be in its interest. Trygve Lie the Secretary General of the United Nation had suggested the possibility of India sending troops for peacekeeping operations.

† It has further resulted in India’s contribution of 12 Force Commanders, 3 Deputy Force Commanders, 2 Military Advisors and a Political Advisor.

§ Lancer, ‘The Indian Army’, p.98

⁶ Roy Chowdhury Shankar, ‘Officially at Peace,’ p.198

⁷ Kaushik, R.P., ‘India’s Role in the Korean War: The Initial Phase’, USI Journal, p.245

‡ The prime Minister of India stated, quote ‘where freedom is menaced or justice threatened or where aggression takes place, we cannot and shall not be neutral’ unquote.
However, Mr Nehru clarified India’s position† in a letter to Mr B.N. Rao. He further said, our moral help is a big enough thing which outbalances the petty military of some other countries. This subsequently became India’s main consideration in keeping out of military commitments abroad. As a first step, India announced that it would send a medical unit. It further reiterated that it would not send any fighting troops or be a party to any side which might aggravate the war. In a special session of the Indian Parliament on Jul 31st, the Indian President, Dr. Rajindra Prasad expressed his approval of the UN action in Korea. He re-affirmed that Mr. Nehru’s initiative was intended only to strengthen the moral force of the UN and in no way to condone aggression.

Mr Nehru confirmed this when he summarized India’s approach to the Korean issue. He said, ‘Meanwhile, our policy is first of course, that aggression which has taken place by North Korea over South Korea is a wrong act and has to be condemned, that has to be resisted. Secondly, that in so far as possible the war should not spread beyond area and that no other questions should be tied up with this Korean struggle. Thirdly, of course, that we should explore means of ending this war. He further stated, The future of Korea must be decided entirely by the Koreans themselves; in what form or shape one cannot just now say.

NEUTRAL NATIONS REPATRIATION COMMISSION (NNRC) IN KOREA

It’s a matter of interest to note that the Indian Army’s first commitment on a UN assignment came into being consequent to the War in Korea. The war, which began on 25th June 1950, raged for three long years between the North Korean and Chinese Forces on one side and on the other hand the South Korean and US led UN Forces. When the 1st Commonwealth Division was formed in Korea, 60 Para Field Ambulance became part of it. The unit attended to more than 1800 battle causalities and some 9000 sick and injured during its eventful tenure of three years. Recognition came when Britain’s Minister for War paid a tribute to the Unit and its Commanding Officer in the ‘House of Commons’. The unit also received a ‘Meritorious Unit Citation’ from the US Army. The Indian Government bestowed Maha Vir Chakra (For gallantry awards refer Appendix ‘N’) on Lieutenant Colonel (For details of rank structure of Indian Army refer Appendix ‘O’) Rangaraj and Major NB Banerjee and Vir Chakra on seven other officers and men of the unit (For details of those given Awards and Decoration refer Appendix ‘P’).

† ‘Our defence forces and our entire scheme of defence envisage home defence only. Deliberately we do not think in terms of expeditionary forces and the like. We do not keep big bombers, which can go far. Our Navy is in its babyhood and is likely to remain at those stages for a considerable time to come. An attempt to send any active help would be both ineffective and would upset our plans here. For a variety of reasons we cannot send any military, naval, or air help for the Korean operation’.

‡ B. Shiva Rao, ‘Nehru and the UN-1: Security Council on Korea’ (Extracts of letters exchanged between Mr. Nehru and B.N. Rao) the Statesman (New Delhi) 6th Dec 1965

§ B.S.N Murti, ‘India’s Stand on Korea’, p.39

10 Indian Parliamentary Debates, vol. 5 of 1950, pt 2, 3rd August 1950, col.236

‡ Troops from 16 countries constituted the UN Force under General Douglas Macarthur. India contributed a medical unit, 60 Para Field Ambulance, to this UN multinational force.
Needful to further state that, the President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad, on return of the unit to Indian soil, presented a commemorative trophy to 60 Para Field Ambulance at a special parade in Agra\(^{11}\). Both the warring sides accepted a resolution sponsored by India and cease fire was declared on 27\(^{th}\) July 1953. The war had resulted in the capture of a large number of prisoners, many of who refused repatriation to their countries of origin. For this purpose the UN set up a Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC) and India assisted in resolving this intricate situation. Lieutenant General KS Thimmayya, from India was appointed as the Chairman, with members from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Sweden and Switzerland. India also provided a Custodian Force under Major General SPP Thorat, to take custody of the prisoners numbering over twenty two thousand, pending their final disposal. The Indian Custodian Force consisted of Force Headquarters and elite battalions\(^{†}\). These units were transported by air and sea from India to ‘Hind Nagar’\(^{12}\). The Indian camp in the Demilitarized Zone in Korea was given this name, which finally became the hub center of Indian troops.

The NNRC, including the Indian Custodian Force was responsible for gathering non-repatriated prisoners into camps and for explaining to them their rights and privileges. The prisoners could then choose to go home or remain with the side that captured them. **This called for compassion, fairness and neutrality on the part of the Indian Custodian Force, who rendered yeoman service during the entire span of the mission from September 1953 to March 1954.** On several occasions, intricate situations could be resolved solely due to the patience and tact of Lieutenant General KS Thimmayya and Major General SPP Thorat, who proved their metal and brought laurels for the Indians. This was evident by the series of messages received in due course. The farewell messages to the Indians sum up the Army contingent’s success. Even the other side was equally admiring and appreciative of Indian Army‡.

Thus, on completion of the mission, valuing the contributions of the both the Generals, the Indian Government awarded Padma Bhushan to Lieutenant General KS Thimmayya and the Ashok Chakra to Major General SPP Thorat for their distinguished services and Generalship of the highest order.

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\(^{†}\) These Indian Battalions being 2 PARA (MARATHA), 6 JAT, 5 RAJPUTANA RIFLES (NAPIER’S), 3 DOGRA and 3 GARHWAL RIFLES along with 26 GENERAL HOSPITAL and other supporting units.

\(^{12}\) Ibid, p.10

\(^{‡}\) General Lee Sang Cho, Communist Command, had this to say, quote ‘It has been a great pleasure for us to see your officers and men in action. They have proved that they are not only good soldiers, but also they are good gentlemen’, unquote.
It is matter of pride for the Indian Armed Forces to state that 60 Para Field Ambulance commanded by Lieutenant Colonel AG Rangaraj was earmarked as the first unit to take part in the UN multinational force under General Macarthur\(^{13}\). The unit moved for Korea (Photo-1) on 8\(^{th}\) November 1950 with 17 Officers, 10 Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) and 304 Other Ranks\(^{14}\) (ORs) which also included lady medical officers and nursing officers. The unit set its feet on Korean Soil at Pusan, on 10\(^{th}\) November. Having reorganized, the unit reached Pyongyang on 29\(^{th}\) November after braving chilly winds and stormy winter.

On 4\(^{th}\) December 1950, 60 Para Field Ambulance supporting the 27 British Brigade had advanced north as far as Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea. Thereafter, the communist forces launched an offensive against the UN forces. The units were ordered to withdraw from Pyongyang area to Seoul on their own with no transport was provided\(^{15}\). The Men of ‘sixty’ found a railway engine and few bogies they filled the engine with water by means of buckets from a nearby river (thus earning the sobriquet ‘The Bucket Brigade’), gathered coal to run the engine from the station yard and coaxed a Korean driver to drive the train. On 5\(^{th}\) December 1950, they drove their small train over the last bridge; hours before it was demolished\(^{16}\). On 6\(^{th}\) December, the unit reached Seoul with all its equipment, stores and vehicles intact. It would indeed be difficult to imagine a better example of improvisation. Further improvisation was yet needed to survive the cold; since many had never seen snow before. Men had to go on running and jumping to keep the blood flowing as there were no arrangements for heating. Finally wind proof winter clothing was procured from the American Forces and issued to Indian troops.

On 1\(^{st}\) January 1951, the enemy pressure had increased and 27 British Brigade was tasked to provide cover for the withdrawal of XI Corps. To conform to this operational plan, a section of Advance Dressing Station (ADS) of 60 Para Field Ambulance had to be opened and closed three times at three different places between 1\(^{st}\) and 3\(^{rd}\) January 1951. Besides this, the withdrawal entailed a fair number of casualties. As their rearward evacuation was not possible, the casualties had to be treated, held and carried along with the ADS, wherever it moved (Photo-2). Simultaneously, the United Nation gave 60 Para Field Ambulance unit additional responsibility at Taegu for which the unit handled a 40-bedded hospital for British patients to cut losses of manpower. Surgical team was attached to Korean Military Hospital to operate on patients and train the Korean surgeons, anesthetists and nursing assistants. Indian team did a commendable Job and earned the commendation of the Korean government. Further, the unit also ran Taegu civil hospital, which was earlier popularly known as ‘Death Hospital’. The Indian medical team worked day and night and changed the status of this hospital which popularly came to be called as ‘Life Hospital’.

\(^{13}\) Krishna Rao, K.V, op.cit, p.311

\(^{14}\) Krishna, Ashok, op.cit, p.136

\(^{15}\) Spantech and Lancer, op.cit, p.12

\(^{16}\) Ibid, p.12
Ultimately, on 4th January 1951, the casualties could be transferred to US Army clearing station at Suwoh. During this Operation (Op), Lieutenant Colonel AG Rangaraj, the Commanding Officer of 60 Para Field Ambulance showed amazing power of endurance and utter disregard for personal safety. He carried on rendering medical aid to casualties and saved many lives†. In March 1951, the UN Command carried out an airborne assault against communist positions North West of Seoul along with 60 Para Field Ambulance. This airborne assault was popularly called as Operation Tomahawk.

A surgical team under Lieutenant Colonel AG Rangaraj landed in the rice fields near Munsan, together with some 4000 American Paratroopers. In due course of fighting, the team treated 400 casualties and performed many life saving surgeries (Photo-3). The aim of this specific military operation was to disrupt the enemy’s lines of communication, throw them in disarray and subsequently neutralize and decimate them with the ground link up, which was expected on 25th March 1951. However, the expected link up never came on the day of reckoning and on the contrary, resistance increased. There was no alternative but to dig trenches and hold the casualties in them along with stretcher cases. Only the fine fabric of some retrieved parachutes could be used to ward off the chilly winds and snow of Purunli. The men worked relentlessly in this operation, some thriving only on biscuits and tea. The desperately awaited link up finally arrived on 27th March evening‡.

On 31st March 1951 the Unit took part in action with 27 Commonwealth Brigade in securing Kancua line. The Unit had to deal with heavy casualties. On 3rd April the enemy launched a full scale offensive. Two sections of ADS were joined to cope up with an average of 115 casualties.

On 30th April the Main Dressing Station (MDS) moved to Yong-Pong. At this time the detachment at TAEGU opened a dispensary for civilian patients which had an average attendance of 200-300 per day. On 1st July 1951, Commonwealth Division was formed and the 27 British Commonwealth Brigade with 60 Para Field Ambulance came under its command. On 11th August 1951, the US Army for their splendid work in Korea cited the unit for meritorious unit commendation award. Towards the end of 1951, the unit with the British Brigade was engaged in a series of operations†‡.

† The personal courage, determination, and selfless devotion to duty were an immense source of inspiration to the rest of the team members. For this act of conspicuous gallantry, Lieutenant Colonel AG Rangaraj was awarded the second highest gallantry award of the Indian Army i.e.; MAHA VIR CHAKRA (MVC).

‡ In this operation, two Officers, Maj V Rangaswamy and Capt NC Das and one Operating Room Assistant, Naik Rattan Singh received VIR CHAKRA (VrC), the third highest award for gallantry of the Indian Army and one Officer, Maj NB Banerjee, was awarded MVC.

†‡ During Operation COMMANDO in second week of September the unit treated a total of 348 casualties in six days of fighting. Capt Ashok Banerjee was awarded the Vir Chakra (VrC) in this operation.
On 4th November 1951, a numerically superior enemy heavily attacked and forward positions were overrun. One Regimental Aid Post (RAP) had to be reinforced with one Medical Officer, and stretcher-bearer squads from 60 Para Field Ambulance. Casualties were evacuated from RAP to ADS under heavy enemy shelling. The attack lasted till evening of 5th November. There were a total of 101 casualties. It followed with yet another heavy attack on 17th November 1951 in which forces suffered heavily and Indian medical teams treated the casualties†. At the end of December 1951, the forward elements of 60 Para Field Ambulance withdrew to rest but the detachment at TAEGU continued to work untiringly treating North Korean’s, Army and civilian casualties. On 17th March 1952 Lady Mount Batten accompanied by Major General Castle, the Division Commander visited the areas of concern including Main Dressing Station (MDS) The meritorious record of service of 60 Para Field Ambulance impressed Lady Mount Batten and she conveyed her feelings in a cablegram to the Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

The period from June 1952 brought in difficult times for the unit. Adverse weather conditions continued enemy attacks and indiscriminate firing by enemy brought in a lot of casualties. The MDS came under heavy shelling on 13th September 1952 when more than 70 shells landed on it. There were six casualties of 60 Para Field Ambulance unit personnel. On 30th October 1952 a Silver Salver was presented to 60 Para Field Ambulance in appreciation of their service to the Battalion. Naik Umrao Singh was awarded VrC for his untiring devotion to duty, risking his life on several occasions to evacuate casualties during the period of December 1950 to 1952. In the mean time, both the sides accepted a resolution sponsored by India and cease-fire was declared on 27th July 1953. The war had resulted in the capture of a large number of prisoners many of whom refused repatriation to their countries of origin. For this purpose the UN set up a Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC) 17.

On 23rd August 1953, 60 Para Field Ambulance joined the Custodian Forces at the Demobilization Zone and opened treatment wings in North and South Camps, only to face new problems. Most of the Prisoners of War (PW) suffered psychologically due to indoctrination and mass hysteria was rampant. Officers and men were also engaged in guard and escort duties in PW Camps. The Korean People’s Army, Chinese People’s Volunteers, Neutral Nations Supervision Commission (NNRC) and the Korean Military Advisory Commission (KMAC) formed a society called the Hind Nagar Medical Society and the location of the Custodian Forces was called Hind Nagar. By 1st October 1953, the unit had established a hospital, mobile dispensaries and medical inspection rooms (MI Rooms).

On 9th February 1954, the glorious chapter in the history of 60 Para Field Ambulance in Korea finally came to a close. Among the 20,000 men from 16 countries that made up the Commonwealth Division in Korea, one small unit of the Indian Army viz; 60 Para Field Ambulance carved out a unique name for

† Two soldiers namely Naik Nagsen Singh and Lance Naik Budh Singh of 60 Para Field Ambulance were awarded VrC in this operation.

17 Spantech and Lancer, op.cit. p. 9-10
itself in the military chronicles of UN Peacekeeping Operations.† It’s indeed very heartening to note that these medical men stayed in Korea longer than any other unit, many never even went on leave. They never carried arms yet they were more military than any other unit. They served and endured in the far off lands to bring cheer and hope to the victims of violence, with their unstinted devotion to duty amidst toil, sweat and blood. Tasks performed by 60 Para Field Ambulance in Korea have gone down in the annals of Indian Army and serve as an inspiration for future generations of soldier medics. All war veterans of this mighty outfit even today remember their association with US Armed Forces with nostalgia.

THE CUSTODIAN FORCE OF INDIA (CFI)

‘For the honour of India’ was its motto; the CFI lived up to it.

Composition of The CFI

Originally, the Custodian Force was to be made up of 5 Rajputana Rifles, 6 JAT, 3 Dogra and 3 Garhwal Rifles, which together with the ancillary services like EME, ASC, Provost, etc, were grouped together into the 190 Infantry Brigade. This composition was based on the recommendations of the units of Advance Party and further additions were however made in the Force strength as a result of the experience gained during the first few days of taking over responsibility. One more battalion i.e. 2 Parachute Battalion, the Maratha Regiment and a detachment of the 3rd Battalion, the Mahar (Machine Gun) Regiment had to be flown to Korea later.

The Actual Order Of Battle Of The CFI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force</th>
<th>Formation/Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Headquarter Force</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headquarter Commander Army Service Corps</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Headquarter Commander Army Ordnance Corps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headquarter Commander Electrical &amp; Mechanical Engineers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headquarter 190 Infantry Brigade</td>
<td>Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force Headquarter Signal Unit.</td>
<td>Signals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190 Infantry Brigade Signal Section</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Platoon 74 Field Company</td>
<td>Engineers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† On 10th March 1955 President of India, Dr Rajender Prasad, presented a trophy to 60 Para Field Ambulance in recognition of their meritorious service in India & Overseas.

18 The above information is an extract from the ‘History of the Custodian Force (INDIA) IN Korea 1953-54, Historical Section Ministry of Defence’ Government of India.
### Force

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formation/Unit</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Rajputana Rifles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 JAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 DOGRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Garhwal Rifles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2(^{nd}) Parachute Battalion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detachment of the 3 MAHAR (Machine Gun)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>745 Independent Transport Platoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>238 Composite Platoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190 Brigade LAD Type I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force Headquarters LAD Type I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Redcross Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Field Hygiene Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26(^{th}) General Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 Para Field Ambulance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detachment 82 Infantry Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>601 Field Security Sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force Postal Unit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MOVE TO KOREA

The Custodian Force left India in **five contingents**, which were as follows:

- The **first** Contingent consisted of the 5\(^{th}\) Battalion the Rajputana Rifles, one company of the 6\(^{th}\) Battalion the JAT Regiment and some Force Headquarter units under command of Lt Col S S Kalan, Military Cross (MC). It left Madras on 18\(^{th}\) August 1953 by the ship Jaladurga and reached Inchon (Korea) on 14\(^{th}\) September 1953.

- The **second** Contingent consisted of the 3\(^{rd}\) Battalion, the DOGRA Regiment, and some Force Headquarter units. This contingent, commanded by Lt Col M G Hazari, left Madras on 19\(^{th}\) August 1953 by M. V. Dilwara (UK) and reached Inchon on 6\(^{th}\) September 1953.

- The **third** Contingent composed of the 6\(^{th}\) Battalion the JAT Regiment (less one company), Headquarters 190 Infantry Brigade, and some Force Headquarter units. Commanded by Lt Col M R Budhwar, MC left Madras on 19\(^{th}\) August 1953 by the ship Empire Pride (UK). Brigadier Gurbaksh Singh, OBE, Deputy Force Commander and Brigadier R S Paintal, Commander 190 Infantry Brigade was aboard. The ship reached Inchon on 30\(^{th}\) August 1953.
The fourth contingent consisted of 3rd Battalion, The Garhwal Rifles, and ‘A’ Platoon of the 74 Field Company Engineers and the balance of the Force Headquarters units. This contingent commanded by Lieutenant Colonel B S Grewal left Madras on 5th September 1953 by the ship Jalagopal and reached Inchon on 28th September 1953.

All these ships met with heavy rough weather and unfortunately the fourth contingent lost 3 other ranks.

- The fifth and the last contingent consisted up of the 2nd Parachute Battalion, the Maratha Regiment and a detachment of the 3rd Mahar (MG) Regiment. It was airlifted from Calcutta to Japan in ‘Globe Masters’ provided by the UN Command.

Although the Custodian Force was sent to Korea at the specific request of the UN Command as well as the Korean Peoples Army, Chinese Peoples Volunteers Command, President Rhea of the Republic of Korea had taken a very unreasonable and anti Indian attitude. He had declared that if Indian troops attempted to land on South Korean soil he would oppose their entry by Armed Force, if necessary. The United Nation Command was therefore forced to transport the CFI to the Demilitarized Zone without the Force touching the South Korean soil. The United Nation Command had suggested to the advance party that the Force should be transported either by helicopters or by landing craft going up the Injim River. The Injim River was heavily mined and was dangerous for navigation owing to its tidal variations. The former method of transport was therefore adopted. On reaching Inchon, troops were transferred from their ships to a UN aircraft carrier. They enplaned in helicopters on the deck of the aircraft carrier and were flown to the Demilitarized Zone in batches of five men per helicopter. This was the largest helicopter lift ever undertaken till then. There was not a single accident during the entire operation. Helicopters transported only men and their personal equipment. Unit baggage was carried into the Demilitarized Zone by rail.

**TASK OF THE CFI**

The history of the Indian Custodian Force in Korea of 1953-54 is the official history of India’s first overseas military operation as a peacekeeping mission to restore international peace in the war torn Korean peninsula. The task of the Indian troops engaged there was novel and unique. It was not to guard a cease fire line or to fight an enemy but to hold custody of 22,959 Prisoners of War (PW) of various nationalities of the East & West and facilitate their repatriation or disposal otherwise.

† These soldiers were standing on the deck of the ship when a big wave suddenly washed the deck and carried them away. In spite of the sea being very rough, a lifeboat was lowered but the men were drowned before any of them could be rescued.

‡ These troops reached Inchon via JAPAN on 28th September 1953. Major General Thorat and some of the staff officers of Headquarters Custodian Force also travelled from India by air and reached the Demilitarised Zone in Korea on 6th September 1953.

†† The operation involved some 1,300 sorties and was carried out with admirable efficiency.
Some of the PW at times even resorted to violence obviously due to political pressure on them\(^{19}\). **Inspite of such stupendous difficulties faced by the Indian troops, their task was ably accomplished and this raised the stature of India and her Army in the eyes of all nations.** It must be emphasized that the work of the CFI in Korea has a very special place in the history of India and the Indian Army. Not only was it practically the first International Peace Mission undertaken by the Armed Forces of Independent India but also the problems it faced was novel and baffling.

It accomplished its task in the best form it could be accomplished. The officers and men of the CFI throughout their **stay in Korea worked and behaved in a manner entirely befitting the traditions of the Indian Army.** Their professional ability and gentlemanly qualities earned them respect and regard of both the Commands and the soldiers and statesmen of nearly a dozen nations who were living and working in the Demilitarized Zone. If ever there was complete accord between the UN Command and among the many politicians professing different ideologies, it was a completely unanimous appreciation of the qualities of the Indian officers, soldiers and civilians who formed part of the Custodian Force. **Their praise went far beyond the customary diplomatic courtesies and appeared really genuine**\(^{†}\). From the many laudatory messages received from senior foreign officers, only a few are mentioned\(^{‡}\).

Even the prisoners came to realise that the Indian troops were impartial and wrote in a letter; ‘**The whole thing is now clear to us and we are sorry for holding demonstrations under some misunderstanding. We hope you will kindly excuse us. We shall co-operate with you to the end**’. Many of the foreign observers insisted on believing in spite of amused denials that every single man in the CFI has been handpicked after very careful selection. General Throat won deep respect for his truly soldierly qualities of straight dealing and human approach. **Thus, CFI ably projected the neutral and humanitarian policy of the Indian Government. No military force could earn higher praise as was bestowed to the Indian Army**\(^{†‡}\). ‘**For the Honour of India**’ was its motto; the CFI lived up to it and the Indian Units can well be proud of being a part of it.

\(^{19}\) Krishna, K.V, op.cit, p.311-312

\(^{†}\) Major General Shoosmith, Deputy Chief of Staff, UN Command, wrote to General Thorat, ‘**There is no question that the conduct and efficiency of the Indian Army during their difficult and delicate task has called forth the admiration of the whole world and has done a tremendous amount to raise the prestige and standing of your nation and its Army**’.

\(^{‡}\) General. HULL, the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C), UN Command, said in his final message, ‘**The Custodian Force of India, including officers and all other ranks have earned the respect and admiration of my Command for its outstanding performance while exercising custody over these personnel.**’

\(^{†‡}\) At the farewell party General Lee Sang Cho praised the work of the CFI. Speaking on the same occasion, General Tink Kou Yo also said: ‘**Indian soldiers and officers have done a remarkable piece of work. Their devotion to duty is as great as their impartiality**’.
The Battalion moved to Jhansi from Naoshera in 1952 under Lieutenant Colonel MG Hazari. It had just settled into peace time routine when on 10th July 1953 it was ordered to move to Korea as part of the Custodian Force (India), a UN Force formed under the Neutral Nations Repatriation Committee for repatriating the Prisoners of War to their respective homelands†. India was the Chairman and Executive Agent and umpire of the NNRC‡. The Custodian Force was to be exclusively from India and was to be based in Panmunjom in the De-Militarized Zone (DMZ) along the 38th Parallel, the boundary between North and South Korea. In short preparatory period of one month unit personnel were recalled, deficiencies in equipment, stores and manpower were made up and all ranks were trained for the new role. India had no experience in UN missions and 3 Dogra became the first fighting unit of independent India to go abroad on a UN assignment. The Battalion sailed in ‘Dilwara’, a British troop ship from Madras on 19th August 1953 reaching Inchon on the 6th September 1953. The personnel were ferried by 30 US helicopters from their aircraft carrier Point Cruz to the DMZ as South Korea refused the use of their territory for move of the CFI. Hind Nagar, the home for the next six months for the Dogras was a tented colony (Photo-4) set up by US troops replete with all the then modern facilities like running water, electric lights, heating arrangements, furniture and domestic services.

The Battalion had three enclosures of Prisoners of War (PW) to look after including a hospital enclosure, with approx 9500 prisoners of North Korea held by the South Korean and the US Command. They were so well indoctrinated that they would become agitated and violent on seeing communist members. Twice, the prisoners attempted to break out of the compound en masse but the friendly yet firm Dogras foiled their attempts. (Photo-5) Later, the battalion was responsible for handling approximately 4000 prisoners of war, out of which only 25-30 opted to go back to North Korea. After the 90 days period plus an additional 30 days allotted for repatriation, all the remaining PW were handed back to South Korea and the US Command. During the stay, the battalion had made good Korean friends who presented their Korean flag (Photo-6) as a memory for times to come. The Battalion was praised for its conduct and soldierly attributes by the highest authorities in the UN, the US Command and the Commonwealth Division, when Lt Gen Thimmayya, Chairman of NNRC and Chief of Staff, General Ridgeway met in DMZ of Korea (Photo-7). The Battalion sailed back to India on 22nd February 1954 via Hong Kong and Singapore reaching Madras by ship ‘Jaldurga’ and was given a very warm welcome.

† It was perhaps the only time in history of warfare that Prisoners of War (PW) did not want to go back to their countries.
‡ It consisted of Sweden, Switzerland, Poland, Czechoslovakia and India.

†† The first attempt was made on the day the Battalion was initially taking over the PW from the Commonwealth Division with much fanfare and spectators. The troops were unarmed, yet the situation was brought under control immediately by physical intervention of troops. Thereafter, the troops were always armed. During the second attempt, firing had to be resorted to control the rioting PW. One PW was killed and five were injured. On both occasions, Major AK Mitra, along with his company handled the situation very well with Lieutenant Colonel MG Hazari supervising the actions personally.
The 3rd Garhwal Rifles commanded by Lieutenant Colonel BS Grewal sailed of to Korea on the ship Jalgopal in September 1953. Assigned with the task of custody and repatriation of Prisoners of War, the battalion accomplished the mission with much professionalism and finesse, a contribution that was greatly appreciated by all nations. Leaving Jhansi on the 17th August, the battalion reached Madras on the 2015 hours but had to wait there for a fortnight due to non availability of a suitable ship. It embarked on the ship Jalgopal and sailed for Inchon on the 5th September (Photo-8). The monsoon was still vigorously active in the Bay of Bengal. Rough seas caused seasickness on a large scale and a day’s halt at Singapore on the 12th September came as a relief. The British Force Commander at Singapore provided transport for sight seeing and the Indian community provided its hospitality.

The ship sailed from Singapore on the next day and met with extremely rough weather in the South China Sea. At a point about 170 miles south west of Hong Kong a mighty wave broke across the foredeck of the ship and unfortunately washed away overboard three Garhwali riflemen. The next day the ship docked at Hong Kong. Indian High Commissioner and community welcomed the troops and the British authorities provided sightseeing facilities. Leaving Hong Kong on the 21st September on the last leg of its voyage, the ship reached Inchon on the 27th September. The troops were transferred to an aircraft carrier and were lifted by helicopters to Hind Nagar (Photo-9) in the demilitarized zone on the 28th September. This was necessary, as the South Koreans had forbidden Indians to land on their territory. Having settled down, the battalion assumed its duties on 1st October.

The task of the battalion was to hold the Chinese and Korean prisoners of war and to produce them before the Natural Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC) and to ascertain their wishes regarding repatriation to China, North Korea or South Korea. It was also required to provide reinforcements to other units in case of emergencies arising in their enclosures†. The prisoners by and large, were cooperative but there were many who were reluctant and disobedient too. They tried to prevent their comrades from exercising their options freely and in this process often resorted to violence. Even some murders and suicides took place inside the enclosures. Under these conditions all ranks down the line to the riflemen were required to exercise a great deal of tact, patience and understanding in the discharge of their duties.

† Enclosure ‘A’ under the command of Major RGL Bali was meant for prisoners who had been screened and expressed their wishes for repatriation. Enclosure ‘B’ was to hold the bulk of prisoners to be produced before the NNRC. This was commanded by Major DC Shukla with Captains Hari Singh and PC Bagchi as his assistants and 13 Junior Commissioned Officer and 412 other ranks to guard the prisoners. All ranks were forbidden to carry firearms. The enclosures were manned on the 1st October while the Battalion HQ and the administrative personnel from the companies settled down at Raj Nagar. Enclosure ‘A’ held only 13 prisoners who were willing to be repatriated. The strength in Enclosure ‘B’ was much greater as 4483 Chinese and 15 North Koreans were still to be screened.
Their own discipline had to be exemplary. In this unusual role everyone rose to the occasion and performed his duty to the satisfaction of all the concerned parties†. All prisoners of Enclosure ‘B’ (Photo-10) were handed over to the United Nation Command on the 20th January 1954. Two days later the prisoners in Enclosure ‘A’ were transferred to Enclosure ‘G’ guarded by the Dogras. Thus, the battalion was relieved of all guard duties on the 22nd January. It immediately started a cycle of weapon training and managed to put a batch of trainees through the annual range classification on an improvised range.

Leaving a rear party of 4 officers, 6 JCOs and 369 Other Ranks to hand over barracks and stores to the United Nation Command, the battalion embarked on the SS Muzaffari at Inchon on the 11th February and reached Madras on the 1st March. It was a memorable homecoming. Mr C Rajagopalachari then the Chief Minister of Madras, Mr Justice Mahajan, the Chief Justice of India and Major General JC Katooch, General Officer Command (GOC) Madras Area, welcomed the battalion. General Katooch also read messages of welcome from the Prime Minister and the Chief of the Army Staff. The battalion arrived at its old station Jhansi on the 6th March. Meanwhile, the rear party left Inchon on the SS Jaladurga on the 24th February and arrived at Jhansi on the 22nd March. By August the entire battalion had availed of annual leave and again got busy itself with normal training. The command of the battalion changed in October 1954; when Lt Col BS Grewal was succeed by Lt Col Yudhbir Singh Panwar who had already been the Commandant of the Regimental Centre. (Photo-11)

6 JAT

Move orders of the unit were received on 14th July 1953 as per which 14 Officers, 24 JCOs and 836 Other Ranks were to proceed to Korea with the Battalion. Lieutenant Colonel MR Budhawar, MC, the commanding officer proceeded to New Delhi on 10th August to attend conference and address by Prime Minister Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru. GOC, 5 Infantry Division Major General K Bahadur Singh addressed the unit before marching to railway station. Later, alongwith General Officer Commanding (GOC) Brigadier R S Paintal Commander 190 Infantry Brigade and other units in the station came to the railway station and gave a grand send off to the Battalion. Subsequently, the unit stayed in camp area at Madras and started making arrangements for embarkation on 16th August.

Commanding Officer attended the Brigade Commander’s conference on 17th August and held conference of all officers and issued instructions for embarkation. All Officers, JCOs and 75 OR were invited to tea at Raj Bhawan where Deputy Defence Minister Shri Satish Chander and HE Governor of Madras freely talked to officers and men. They were impressed with high spirits of Jawans. The troops of one of the company loaded their kits and heavy baggage in SS Jala Durga and came under command 5 Raj Rif for the period of voyage. The Battalion stacked heavy baggage at south Quay.

† The battalion handled some 22,000 Chinese and Korean prisoners and earned high praise from the NNRC and the United Nations Command.
Thus, before moving out, a number of dignitaries addressed the troops and communicated their heartfelt feelings†. The Battalion embarked Empire Pride on 19th August. The Governor of Madras, Deputy Defence Minister, GOC Madras Area and many military and civil officials came to wish ‘Bon Voyage’ to troops. Deputy Defence Minister, Brigadier Apji Rajinder Singh and Maj Gen KC Katoch read out messages of good will and wishes from the Prime Minister and special order of the day from Maj Gen SP Thorat, from the bridge of the ship respectively. The officers sailed from Madras in HT Empire Pride. The ship sailed toward Singapore on 20th August and the sea was rough. The ship took over HM Dilwara on 21st August and further the ship passed Nicobar Island on 22nd August. The ship reached Singapore on 24th August and mail of troops for India was handed over to representative of Indian High Commissioner in Malaya. The ship entered Hongkong Port on 28th August. Indian Trade Agents visited the ship and they were received amongst loud cheers. The troops were permitted to go into town of Hongkong from 0900 hours to 1300 hours for sight seeing and shopping. Later during the day the ship sailed off at 1600hours.

On 1st September the representatives of the advance party came on the ship to receive the battalion. UN press reporters toured on to the ship and took snaps of the troops. First party composed of ‘D’ Company took off in helicopters from American aircraft carrier ‘Point Cruz’ for demilitarized zone. 60 Para Field Ambulance received them there. Helicopters lifted the rest of Battalion less ‘C’ Company. Subsequently, on settling down in the camp, demonstrations were conducted by US Army personnel about the proceedings of taking over prisoners of wars. All officers, JCOs and NCOs attended the demonstration. On 6th September, guard of honour of one officer, 2 JCOs and 50 OR was given to Major General SPP Thorat at the helicopter landing ground. On his arrival in Demilitarized Zone, six wagons of Prisoners of war (PW) were taken over for distribution to all enclosures.

On 10th September, one Company (Armed) from the unit was called to help taking over first batch of North Korean Prisoners of War who had threatened the communist’s observers by rushing through the camp. In the sequence of events to follow, it was on 11th September that unit started taking over first lot of Chinese Prisoners of War. 435 PW were taken over in compound No 33. PW stoned communist representatives and observers but they were checked and stopped soon. Lt Gen KS Thimmayya and all members of NNRC came to see the taking over. Another lot of 409 were taken over in compound 32. B Coy’ and 28 men under command Major JC Puri who sailed from Madras with 5 Rajputhana Rifles in Jala Durga arrived in D4 by helicopter on 14th September. The Prisoners of War received proved troublesome‡. They refused to move into the enclosure. From later evidence it appeared that these prisoners of war were under misapprehension that they were the first to be handed over to the Custodian Force.

† Deputy Defence Minister addressed all troops of Custodian Force to Korea in Station Officers Mess and conveyed the message of good wishes of Prime Minister and Ministry of Defence. Brig Apji Rajinder Singh read out message of good wishes and good will of Lt Gen SM Srinagesh Officiating C-in-C Indian Army. Sri Raj Gopalacharya, Chief Minister of Madras also addressed the troops of the battalion.

‡ In the morning the first batch of 250 refused to get down from their vehicles. They demanded that all of them should be taken over at the same time and put in the same compound.
Inspite of assurance they did not debus. Thus, they were sent back and taking over continued with another lot. The same lot who at first refused was, however, brought back at 1400 hours and as soon as they entered, they started shouting and also threw stones on communist observers. They also started scaling wire fence and breaking compound perimeter using tent poles. All Officers, JCO’s and men of the unit on duty under great provocation showed great patience and restraint in dealing with delicate situation and violent demonstration. Brig R S Paintal issued a special order† of the day appreciating the good work done.

On 15th September, Captain Asa Singh and Captain JS Sindhu went inside compound Number 29 to check Chinese PW who had demanded the return of another co-prisoner having opted for repatriation the previous night. After taking down his statement, the PW concerned was punished for jumping over the wire. There after the officers were allowed to come out. Later, enclosure Commander Major BM Bali told the prisoners of war that the prisoners would not be returned. Major Balbir Singh assisted OC 5 Rajputana Rifles in carrying out reconnaissance of ‘C’ enclosure while the later had to take over for accommodating Chinese Prisoners of War. A message from the Force Commander Major General SPP Thorat was received‡.

On 21st September, 1869 prisoners of war were received in ‘B’ enclosure. Two JCOs and 80 men assisted in taking over last batch in Hind Nagar. Thus, finally a total of prisoners of war received in ‘B’ enclosure were 4869 (Chinese). On 25th September, the prisoners of war in compound 31 in addition to anti communist demonstrations staged anti Indian demonstrations (Photo-12) as well. They took courage even to throw stones on Captain Asa Singh and Captain JS Sindhu, the Compound Commander’s. To pacify the PW, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) together with Commanding Officer (CO), Lt Col MR Budhwar, MC and Major HS Grewal, the Chinese Interpreter entered the compound at about 1230 hours.

† Quote, ‘I congratulate the Officers, Junior Commissioned Officers and men of The 6 JAT Regiment and 3 DOGRA Regt on the very hard work that you have put in during the last four days, without bothering about your personal comfort. Your turnout, smartness, bearing and above all devotion to duty, calmness and fortitude under extremely trying conditions have been of the highest standard. I am indeed proud of you all. You have already proved to the world, very high standard of training and discipline of the Indian Army that we so fondly cherish. I want two men’s work from very single man of the famous ONE NINETY BRIGADE. You have done it before and I know you will do it again’ unquote.

‡ The General said quote, ‘I have been very impressed with the excellent manner in which you are carrying out your duties since your arrival in Hind Nagar. I know that you are working for long hours without much rest and I admire you for the cheerful way in which you are doing so. I would like to compliment you for the excellent manner in which you have been taking over the custody of PW to date. In dealing with them, often in the face of grave provocation, you have shown much patience and great tact. For this I thank you and in particular the 3 Dogra who so magnificently controlled the attempted break out on 10th Sep 1953 and 6 JAT who did equally magnificent work during the violent demonstration on 14th September 1953. INDIA has placed a very heavy responsibility on the Custodian Force. I have no doubt that we will discharge this responsibility satisfactorily for I have confidence that each one of you will work and behave in a manner which will bring credit to himself, to his unit and to the Custodian Force. Above all I know that you will give all you have and do every thing you can for the honour of India the MOTTO of the Custodian Force’ unquote.
The Brigade Commander and Deputy Force Commander joined the GOC later. The attitude of PW was distinctively hostile and they were demanding the return of one of their co-prisoner who had elected repatriation on the previous day. The GOC rejected the demand but assured the Prisoners of War that if they put in representation he will be only too pleased to forward it to NNRC. After this, GOC and party started coming out. However, the PW did allow the party to go out but caught hold of Major HS Grewal who happened to be at the rear. The GOC realized the situation and went inside the compound to demand the immediate release of Major HS Grewal. The CO immediately took special measure for the protection of the GOC and sent Sepoy Daulat Ram with a party of 10 men armed with lathis. The PW used tent poles and few of our men sustained minor injuries. All officers and men showed considerable restraint throughout the critical period; a situation, which might have become critical, was avoided by the cool courage and team spirit of all unit persons involved.

It was on 2nd October when prisoners of war of compound 25 broke through the compound gates and attempted in large numbers to assault Major BM Bali, the enclosure commander and the escort. The escort killing two and inflicting injuries to three fired 7 Shots in self-defence and thus peace was restored. Congratulatory message from GOC, CFI were communicated to the troops†. Commanding Officer’s while communicating his appreciation said, ‘The Commanding Officer wishes to record his appreciation of the excellent work done by all officers, JCOs, NCOs and OR employed on duty in ‘D’ enclosure that controlled the very delicate situation on 2nd October 1953’. The Commanding Officer also gives congratulations to Major JC PURI and all ranks who were employed on operation search of ‘E’ enclosure on 2nd October. He has no doubt that the high morale and great vigilance displayed by all ranks so far will always be maintained’.

On 3rd October, the congratulatory message from the Chairman NNRC to the GOC, Custodian Force was also received‡. Commanding Officer attended General Officer Commanding, Custodian Force conference on 9th October. Matters relating to PW security and administration problems were discussed. Deputy Assistant Quarter Master General HQ Custodian Force carried out inspection of unit stores and American cooking ranges provided by UN Command for cooking meals for unit personnel. Two Officers, four Junior Commissioned Officers and fifteen other ranks attended a demonstration-cum-film on use of winter clothing arranged by UN Command on 15th October, Commanding Officer and enclosure commander’s leaders of B, C and D enclosures were also present. Chairman NNRC (Lt Gen KS Thimayya) described the procedure and layout of explanation area to the compound leaders and gave assurance that the INDIAN troops would bring back these PW in their original compound after explaining who do not chose repatriation.

† From GOC for Lt Col MR Budhwar ‘I congratulate you and through you Major BM Bali and your troops for dealing with difficult situation in PW enclosure ‘D’ firmly yet with considerable restraint. I also congratulate you and your unit on this morning searching operation in E enclosure.’

‡ From Chairman NNRC to GOC, CFI, quote, ‘Please convey my deep appreciation to all ranks under your command for the most commendable behavior displayed by them in the last two days under tiring conditions. Their conduct and forbearance were exemplary and deserved the worthiest praise’ unquote.
Further, the Chairman NNRC informed the PW that NNRC subordinate body would permit no coercion and intimidation of any kind of Indian troops during explanation. Every prisoner would be given facilities to exercise his free will. It was also explained to the PW leaders that it was obligatory for the PW to go before explainers and later arrange for PW representative to see the explanation area. Commanding Officer established his tactical Headquarters in the area of Officer’s Mess to conduct ‘OP Explanation’. From Tactical Headquarters (HQ) he could observe all activities of the compound. Wireless and line communication were established with enclosure commander, Chairman (Lt Gen KS Thimayya) and members of NNRC, General Officer Commanding CFI Major General SPP Thorat and Brigadier RS Paintal watched the Operations from Tactical HQ. A stand by Force consisting of the units under command of Lieutenant Colonel MR Budhwar, MC stood by in the unit lines waiting for his orders†.

The prisoners gave a pledge to come out of their compound D-31 and go before explainers but requested that the time should be extended by 1.30 hours. The commission agreed to it and thus 1330 hours was fixed final zero hours. PW were warned that force would be used if they did not come out of the compound voluntarily to go before explainers. Stand by force was to be used if prisoners refused to come out of their compounds. The prisoner of war held discussions and stated that they were prepared to come out only the next day. As this was unacceptable, Commanding Officer on receipt of direct instructions from GOC, Custodian Force INDIA, ordered force INDIA to march to compound and encircle it. It had the desired effect and the PW started coming out. The patience, tact and perseverance of all ranks brought this tricky episode to successful conclusion. The GOC, CFI Major General SPP Thorat and Brig RS Paintal HQ 190 Infantry Brigade were exceptionally pleased on the successful conduct of the Operation and congratulated the CO personally; later CFI issued a special order‡ congratulating all concerned.

†The actual composition of the Force was as under:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 Para</th>
<th>Major MS Sehgal and fifty other ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Rajputhana Rifles</td>
<td>Lieutenant Colonel SS Kalan with one Officer and seventy five other ranks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Dogra</td>
<td>one JCO and twenty five other ranks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Garhwal Rifles</td>
<td>Lieutenant Col BS Grewal with two officers and one hundred twenty five other ranks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 Para Field Ambulance</td>
<td>One JCO and twenty five other ranks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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‡ The special order read as, quote, ‘Today you were successful in persuading compound D-31 to attend explanation without resorting to any form of Force. I know what a tremendous mental and physical strain it has been on each one of you in planning and implementing this operation in an atmosphere of such tenseness as I have seldom seen before, Your patience, restraint and firmness were admirable’. I can best describe today’s operation as a battle of wills in which the superior will win. I hope that the success of today’s operation will favourably influence similar operations in the future and thus bring to a successful conclusion of the task, which our country has assigned to us. Let us not merely rejoice over the little successes we achieved today but let us in all humility offer our thanks to God for having enabled us to deal with a delicate and explosive situation without causing blood shed. Let us pray that He gives us strength of mind and body to enable us to discharge our duties in a manner, which will bring credit to our motherland, which we love next only to God. On this auspicious day of DUSEHRA, I send you my sincere good wishes and greetings. Thank you for all that you have done, are doing and would continue to do for the Honour of India,’ unquote.
On 22nd October, Dusehra greeting message from the Prime Minister of India and GOC CFI was also received. CO held conference of all battalion officers. Defence Platoon under command Gopal Ram was attached to HQ CFI for providing guard to GOC’s residence and to protect CFI in emergency. On 28th October, CO attended conference of Brigade Commander. 190 Infantry Brigade in connection with conducting search and identification in compound D-28. Some repatriated prisoners of this compound had been making allegations that in compound D-28 a Chinese PW was murdered. Two repatriated prisoner of war volunteered to show the place, where the body was stated to have been buried. They also stated that they would identify the alleged murderers. Accordingly, plan of this Operation was prepared. The operation was to be carried out on 30th October 1953.

On 1st November search and identification in D-28 commenced. The PW were ordered into the chicken run. The place shown by the repatriated PW was dug in the presence of NNRC and press representative from UN Command, but no trace of the body was found. The PW were then told to file past the witness for identification but they made a rush for the compound and started demonstration. The identification Operation was postponed to 2nd November 1953. On 6th November two officers of 5 Rajputhana Rifles were taken as hostages by the PW in Songgongni camp and four Platoons of this unit under command Captain BR Saharan stood by to assist 5 Rajputhana Rifles, if required. However, the officers were released at about 1400 hours. Two companies under command Captain MA Lima participated in ceremonial parade on 2nd January, which was held at Raj Nagar (Korea) to award ASHOKA CHAKRA to L/NK Thakar Singh, ASC, the NCO who had followed Major HS Grewal, the Chinese interpreter of the Custodian Force who was taken as hostage on 25th September 1953 in compound D-31. On 8th January 1954, the Chinese prisoners of war of all the compounds simultaneously started demonstration against CFI. Unit’s enclosure was mild in their protest. The contention was that prisoners of war repatriated on 31st December 1953 were sent against their wishes and should be returned. They also displayed anti Indian posters were displayed.

The Chairman NNRC on return to the UN Command on 19th January 1954 informed the plan of GOC, Custodian Force to the leaders of prisoners of war. The PWs were told to be calm and obey whatever they were asked to do. They were further informed that once the operation started, it would continue till all the PW were transferred to the UN Custody and their cooperation was necessary to finish it smoothly and as early as possible. Separate handing over points for the Chinese prisoners were set up and the routes finalized in conjunction with the UN authorities. Major Balbir Singh was officer in charge at the handing over point. Continuous broadcasting in Korea and Chinese languages was carried out asking the PW not to go to South Korea and Formosa. They installed loud speakers on two ridges on their side of the demilitarized zone and went on broadcasting music mixed with propaganda talks.

† The Prime Minister of India communicated, quote, ‘On the occasion of DUSEHRA please convey my greetings and good wishes to all officers and men of the Indian Custodian Force in Korea. We are proud of the way they have conducted themselves in the difficult task they have undertaken and I am sure that by their conduct and behavior they will enhance the prestige of Indians and Indian Army. We must always remember that we have gone there on a mission of peace and friendship and that we have to be friendly to all the people with whom we have to deal with’ unquote.
The PW were warned that they would be disillusioned in South Korea and Formosa and they would always be treated with suspicion by the authorities there. They were told to report to the nearest Indian position and ask for repatriation. This broadcast continued endlessly until 0200 hours as 19th January 1954. During night 19th/20th January entire personnel of the CFI and guards in particular had very little sleep due to incessant loud noise. At 7.30 AM on 20th January unit started taking the prisoners out of compounds. When they were collected near the inner gate of the enclosure chicken run, they were told through interpreters that those who wished to be repatriated or who did not wish to be handed over to the UN Command, should on coming out of the gate step aside. Unit assured them that it would protect them and arrange for their repatriation.

Later some of the Chinese compounds attempted to forcibly release from custody, prisoners who wanted to go north. These demonstrations were also controlled. The handing over of prisoners started at 9 AM on 20th January and continued till 2PM on 21st January with spasmodic interruptions. The situation was not too bad till the evening when darkness combined with the drizzling rain and the bitterly cold breeze made the operations indeed very tiring. By now troops had been at posts for twelve hours with the prospects of a further twelve hours continuous hard work ahead. However, troops carried out their respective duties most admirably and to the complete satisfaction of all. The result was that by 2 AM on 21st January nearly 22,000 prisoners had been returned to the UN command in an orderly manner†. During this process over a hundred prisoners were repatriated.

The credit for this smooth handing over of such a voluminous body goes firstly to the meticulous planning by Force Headquarters, Brigade Headquarters and the various units and secondly to each one of them who implemented these plans inspite all difficulties and inclement weather. During this operation one knows that one had to suffer much physical hardship due to the unruliness of the excited prisoners and also due to the rain, slush and biting wind which were raging from the evening till completion of the operation. Unit's behavior was praised in flattering terms by every one who witnessed the operations.

Ever since the unit took over the prisoners it treated them as human beings and not merely as pawns in a game of politics between two sides. Units had much trouble with the prisoners yet in the end due to good behavior; innumerable friendship was formed. Those who wanted to be repatriated had the good wishes to start a new life in a new country. One can say confidently that as a result of the impartial, fair and humane treatment, which was consistently given to the prisoners, they would certainly remember Indians with gratitude. This was proved by the tender good byes which took place at the final parting and one was moved by the expression of affection and gratitude shown by the prisoners towards Indians. Their loud and prolonged cheers of ‘Sai Nara’ (good bye) are still remembered by those who witnessed the scene i.e. as they shook warmly by the hands while crossing the limits of Hind Nagar.

† The handing over of 22,000 human beings in an orderly, soldier like manner and without any incident is indeed a very creditable achievement, as was viewed by everybody.
During its assignment, the battalion established innumerable links of friendship†. These links were destined to increase the respect which they had cultivated for the nation and helped in enhancing the prestige of India in the world. Magnificent work was indeed done by the battalion in this regard. Having completed the assigned tasks it was on 4th February that Commanding Officer attended General Officer Commanding conference regarding Battalion’s move back to India. Orders for return voyage of CFI and NNRC were received. Battalion personnel were detailed to move by the ship named Mozaffari with 9 Officers, 21 JCOs and 724 ORs.

The ship sailed for Hongkong at 0830 hours on 12th February. However, on 16th February the ship could not anchor Hong Kong harbour due to heavy mist and had to anchor 30 miles out of Hongkong harbour. Accordingly, the ship sailed into the harbour of Hong Kong at 1000 hours on 17th February. Ship berthed at Hongkong and troops were received by Indian Trades Commissioner, Indian Business Community and Common Wealth troops at 1200 hours. Troops were granted shore leave upto 1900 hours. The jawans were provided with sweets. The ship next berthed at Singapore harbour at 1100 hours on 23rd February and there too, it was received by Indian Trade Commissioner, Indian business community and commonwealth troops. Gorkha’s band was in attendance. Troops were served with sweets and tea. In the evening cinema show was arranged by the Commonwealht troops. Indian trade commissioner provided transport for the troops for sight seeing and shopping in Singapore. The ship sailed for Madras at 0845 hours on 24th February 1954.

Finally on 1st March, the ship anchored at Madras at 0715 hours. The battalion was received by a number of senior dignitaries‡. The Battalion disembarked at Madras and marched to the Transit camp at 1200 hours. The reception committee organized by the Madras State provided Tea to all ranks of the Battalion at 1800 hours. At 1800 hours the Battalion drama party staged a skit depicting scenes of explanations, which the Battalion confronted during stay in Hind Nagar (Korea). The Chief Minister of Madras State and other high civil and military officers of the station were greatly amused. In addition they were conceived with impressions of almost realistic activities of our Force in Korea. At 1815 hours, a classical dance for the troops was also arranged. On 10th February advance party for Inchon harbor left Hind Nagar by train. The party consisted of Major Balbir Singh as OIC advance party, along-with Captain BR Saharan and Captain SK Mukherjee. The advance party took over accommodation for the troops on SS Mozaffari. The entire strength of SS Mozaffari was 1450 all ranks. (Photo-13) and thus the troops of CFI said Bye to Korea.

† The links were not only with the prisoners but also with the people of Australia, China, Czechoslovakia, Canada, England, North Korea, Poland, Switzerland, Sweden, South Korea, Thailand, USA and many other countries who had come into their contact.

‡ The dignitaries included the Chief Justice of India Shri Mahajan and Chief Minister of Madras State C Raja Gopalacharya, Ministers of the State, GOC Madras Area, Major General JC Katoch, Brig Moti Sagar, BGS Southern Command and civil and military officers. The Chief Justice of India and Shri C Raja Gopalacharya Chief Minister of Madras gave a welcome speech and commended the excellent work of the Custodian Force India.
On 11th February the battalion marched to railway station Hind Nagar and entrained at 0430 hours. The train shunted out of the station at 0600 hours. Jawans were in high spirits. The train arrived at Inchon harbor at 0920 hours and was received by the UN embarkation staff. Commanding Officer called for a short conference of Company Commanders and described the procedure and order of embarkation. Battalion embarked ‘SS Mozaffari’ after being ferried from shore at 1100 hours. GOC Custodian Force with his staff officers saw off the Battalion on the ship at 1200 hours. Battalion heavy kit and personnel beddings were loaded at 1730 hours. On 6th March battalion arrived by train at Jhansi Railway Station (Photo-14). Warm reception was arranged by Headquarters 5 Infantry Divisions and citizens of Jhansi. Headquarters 5 Infantry Division distributed sweets to the troops. The battalion marched to old unit lines (Wellesley Lines) with centre pipe band at 1000 hours (Photo-15). The unit thereafter got busy in setting down†. Instructions were received from HQ 190 Infantry Brigade informing that the Battalion as a whole was to proceed on annual leave/accumulated leave. Urgent and compassionate cases upto 10 percent of the unit strength could immediately proceed. The battalion was further instructed to finish survey board, inspection of arms, ammunition and instruments and audit of accounts before the battalion proceeded on leave i.e. with effect from 1st April 1954.

5 RAJPUTANA RIFLES

5th Battalion (Napier’s) the Rajputana Rifles was a part of the first contingent out of five units, which formed the Custodian Force of India (CFI) in Korea. The unit left Madras on 18th August 1953 by ship named Jaladurga and all ranks were given a very warm send off by various dignitaries. The troops reached Inchon (Korea) on 14th September 1953. From 15th September 1953, the battalion took over the prisoner of war camps under the command of Captain Bakhtawer Singh. The total strength of prisoner was 4570 in ‘B’ enclosure and 5314 in ‘C’ enclosure. It was on 1st October 1953, at about 1130 hours that NNRC team went to visit prisoner of war hospital where 53 prisoners attempted a mass breakout. However, after repeatedly warning the prisoners not to scale the wire fencing, sentries were ordered to open fire. 12 single shots were fired as a result of which one prisoner of war was killed and five wounded.

On 15th October 1953, Major General SPP Thorat GOC, Custodian Force of India issued a special order of the day commending the work of the troops in Korea‡. The battalion carried out its assigned tasks with total dedication and concern like all other Indian units of HQ 190 Infantry Brigade. The battalion returned to India on 21st February 1954 by the ship Asturias. The ship reached Madras at 0730 hours, where a large crowd welcomed the returning troops. The Battalion was presented a trophy as a goodwill gesture at Madras on their arrival.

† On 13th March 1954, Commanding Officer and Subedar Major proceeded on temporary duty to JAT Regiment Centre Bareilly to meet General Sir, Frank Messervy, KCSI, KBE, CB; Colonel Commandant of the Regiment. They also discussed various problems regarding the battalion and the Regt with the Centre Commandant.

‡ On 23rd October 1953, British paper ‘The London Times’ & ‘The Daily Telegraph’ also praised the Indian Custodian Force in Korea for its handling of prisoners. They highlighted all the facts and stated that ‘the patience and tact shown by Indian Troops deserved the highest praise’
Indo-China, comprising the three States of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, was a French colony which during the World War II had been over viewed by Japanese Forces. When Japan capitulated in 1945, France decided to receive its empire. This led to a war between the French and Ho Chi Minh’s army leading to the famous Battle of Dien Phu in 1954, in which the French Forces lost and decided to quit. Soon after, a conference on Indo-China was held at Geneva. Consequently, Vietnam got partitioned into two and Laos and Cambodia became independent.

India played an important role during the mediations at the Geneva Conference. To supervise the observance of the Geneva Agreement, three separate commissions were set up in Indo-China one for each State called the International Commission for Supervision and Control. Each Commission had India as the Chairman with Canada and Poland as the members. Army officers (Photo-16) were to form part of these commissions and the first batch was flown from Calcutta in September 1954.

The Commissions were to monitor the ceasefire, regroup armies in each region as precaution against the resumption of hostilities, repatriate prisoners of war and check the movement of arms across the borders. For this purpose, 26 points of control were agreed upon at the Geneva Conference. At each point a team was stationed to check and report infringements of the Agreement to the respective Commission Headquarters. Each of these teams had six members. Two officer’s from each of the three Nations comprising the commission with an Indian member acting as the Chairman. In addition, there were two mobile teams in the three States. Their composition was similar to the other teams except that they moved from place to place to conduct investigations, supervise the transfer of areas from the control of one side to another and oversee the movement of troops.

The Headquarters of the Commission for North Vietnam was at Hanoi and was headed by Mr J Desai, Ambassador Designate, with Major General KP Dhargalkar as Alternate Delegate. For South Vietnam, a Sub Commission was set up at Saigon, now Hochi Minh city. Mr JN Khosla with Major General PS Gyani as Alternate Delegate headed the Commission for Laos in Vietnam. Phonom Penh was the Headquarters of the Commission for Cambodia, with Mr G Parthasarathi as Chairman and Major General Sardanand Singh as his military counterpart. For the security of various headquarters and teams, 2 Guards was sent to Indo-China. A month after the Commissions had been established, the Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, paid them a visit (Photo-17).

20 Krishna Rao, K.V, op. cit, p.312.
21 Krishna, Ashok, op. cit, p.138
22 The Indian Army; op cit, p.15.
23 Ibid, p.15.
As the work of the Commissions continued, the officers and staff personnel serving with the mission were replaced. Gradually, the requirements decreased. **By 1970, the Indian strength in Indo-China had come down to a handful of officers and men.** Due to ethnic and ideological rivalries, as also the interplay of outside influences, the region remained strife torn. **India, on her part, had more than contributed her might in the cause of peace.** Thus, by about 1970, the Commissions were able to carry out bulk of their responsibilities. Subsequent intervention in Vietnam, of course changed the complete situation.

**THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR VIETNAM**

The same three countries were also to provide the machinery for the conduct of elections in Vietnam in 1956. In pursuance of these Agreements and the final declaration mentioned above, a conference was held in New Delhi to co-ordinate the setting up of the ‘Three Commissions’. **At the conclusion of the Conference, the Government of India issued a declaration in August, 1954, informing the members of the Geneva Conference States that complete accord had been reached between the three State Members of the International Supervisory Commissions and further stated that the three Commissions had been established on due date, viz, 11th August, 1954, in the three territories in accordance with the terms of the respective Agreements.** It is pertinent to state that in addition to various Committees and teams staffed by officers, there were also units and detachments of Indian Army for providing necessary logistic support. In so far as the signals were concerned, to begin with there was a full regiment to provide cover for the Laos and Cambodian Commissions in addition to the Viet Nam Commission. However, on the reduction of activities of the Laos and Cambodian Commissions, the strength was reduced to that of a Company. **Even though the Laos Commission had been revived, it had its own signal communications independent of the Viet Nam Commission.** Personnel of the Indian Army units were flown in and flown out by chartered fights for their nine month tenure of duty. **About two-third of the strength of troops were located in Saigon and approximately one-third at Hanoi in North Vietnam.**

Further, the **language difficulty** was indeed felt by our troops as it denied to them the normal amenities, for example, cinema. Even when going out for shopping or for excursions, the language difficulty was felt. In addition, being in a foreign country, the need for maintaining discipline and the good name of our country was of very great importance. To add to all this since India was the Chairman country, the decisions of the Commission taken from time to time were sometimes reflected in the attitude of the people towards our personnel. All these factors further limited the freedom of movement and amenities for our jawans. In view of this, Army

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24 Krishna Rao, K.V, op. cit, p.312

† **At these stations, the troops lived in camps and had their own messing, canteen and recreation rooms which were very much on the same lines as in India.**
Headquarters had made suitable arrangements to the extent possible under the circumstances for the regular dispatch by air of mail, newspapers and the provision of projectors, films record, indoor games and other means of amusement of our troops\textsuperscript{25}. A canteen was also run where daily requirements were made available at reasonable prices. It had been mentioned earlier that the messing for troops was on the same lines as in India. Some items were purchased locally and others were imported from India. However other items such as atta had to be obtained from Australia. In order to avoid staleness and make the best use possible of the opportunity to see the manners, customs and way of life of the people of this area, an interchange of duty between Hanoi and Saigon was arranged during the period of their tenure. Where possible, opportunities were also given for visit to certain historic sites in Cambodia and Laos. In Cambodia one found the famous ruins of Angkor Vat, ancient temples built on a magnificent scale, which were a proof of cultural ties between India and this part of the world. They were in ruins and covered over by forests until the last century when they were discovered and reconstructed. Because of pressure of work and the limitation of facilities available only a certain number of the personnel could visit such places of interest\textsuperscript{26}. Although, it was much desired that such opportunity be afforded to one and all.

### 2 GUARDS

On 5\textsuperscript{th} August 1954 the Battalion was warned for service in Indo-China. A tentative strength of 300 personnel was detailed. The contingent was fully equipped and was kept ready till it was finally decided that 3 Officers, 5 JCOs and 178 OR would be sent out as Security Guards. The distribution was to be different for different locations\textsuperscript{†}. Major HE Michael who had arrived in the Battalion as Second-In-Command on 1\textsuperscript{st} August 1954, alongwith Captain CN Somanna, Captain MPS Mann, Subedar Phool Singh, Sub Bhiwani Singh, Sub Natha Singh, Keshab Dutt and Maruti Rao Bhadange were detailed for service with the Indo-China. They began flying in small parties on 3\textsuperscript{rd} September 1954.

On arrival the unit provided the Army Contingent for the Guard of Honour given to the Indonesian Prime Minister on his arrival and departure on 22\textsuperscript{nd} September 1954 and on 26\textsuperscript{th} September 1954 respectively. Lt Raghuvir Singh commanded the Army Contingent on both the occasions and Major JN Patel commanded the Guard of Honour on the departure of the Prime Minister (Photo-18). The unit was assigned various duties like mounting of guards at the offices at Hanoi. Various fixed and mobile teams were made operative in Cambodia. The unit took on all types of assignments and performed its duties with excellence. The turn over of personnel in Indo-China was completed in three phases commencing from 26\textsuperscript{th} August 1955 and completing on 10\textsuperscript{th} October 1955. The last contingent from Indo-China consisting of Sub Natha Singh and 20 OR returned to unit on 10\textsuperscript{th} October 1955 under command of Capt CN Somanna.


\textsuperscript{26} Ibid, p. 167.

\textsuperscript{†} For Hanoi (Bodai Palace) Major Michael alongwith two Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO), and 74 Other Ranks were earmarked. Likewise, Captain Mann alongwith one Junior Commissioned Officers and 39 Other Ranks were earmarked for Cambodia. The team for Laos and Saigon was to be formed under Captain Somanna alongwith two Junior Commissioned Officers and 65 Other Ranks.
Ever since the State of Israel was constituted on May 14th, 1948 there had been continuous confrontation between Israel and the Arab States as the Arabs never reconciled to its existence. The UN had to intervene in order to keep peace between the two sides but clashes continued to occur from time to time and Israel invaded Egypt on October 29th, 1956. Britain and France had their interests in the Suez Canal so they issued an ultimatum to both the countries to withdraw their forces 16Km from the Canal and to allow their (British and French) Forces to be stationed alongside the Canal. While Israel accepted, Egypt refused the demand. British and French Forces landed in the Canal Area on 5th November 1956. However, on November 6th, the UN intervened and brought about a ceasefire. The UN arranged a cease-fire in November 1956 and established a peacekeeping force called United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF). It consisted of contingents from eight countries including India. A UN Emergency Force (UNEF) was constituted under Major General ELM Burns of Canada to supervise the ceasefire. India contributed a contingent for this Force, comprising a PARA Battalion and certain ancillary troops. This Force moved to the area in early December 1956. Initially, it was deployed in the Canal area but subsequently was employed in the Gaza Strip area. Israel having refused to vacate the strip, the UN Force had to face considerable problems in maintaining peace between the Egyptians and the Israelis but they managed to carry out their role tactfully. The participating units were changed every year and thus others got an opportunity to serve the UN Force. Subsequently, in January 1960, the command of the entire UNEF was given to Major General P.S. Gyani of India. Later, Major General IJ Rikhye took over the command of the Force. It may be mentioned that it was also an opportunity for the Indian to be the Military Adviser to the Secretary General of the UN in New York. The UNEF was wound up on 19th May 1967, just 17 days before the Arab Israel War.

It may be noted that a UN Observer Group was also set up in Lebanon to ensure free elections in 1958 where India had contributed a number of officers to this group. Col Ranbir Singh of the Indian Army was appointed as the Head of the Group. On completion of its task, this observer group was wound up in December, the same year. Needful to state that the combined military action against Egypt by the Anglo-French forces in October 1956 resulted in gaining control of Port Said and Port Faud in the Suez Zone. Simultaneously, the Israeli Forces captured most of the Sinai Peninsula and a 43 km long Egyptian territory known as the Gaza strip. Several thousand Egyptian troops were taken prisoner. The Indian contingent as stated above consisted of a Headquarter, an Infantry Battalion, a platoon from the Army Service Corps, detachments from the Corps of Signals, Ordnance, Medical, Military Police and Army Postal Services. The first infantry battalion to go abroad was 3 Para Regiment.

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27 Spantech and Lancer, op.cit, p.17.
28 Krishna Rao, K V, op.cit, p.312-313
29 Krishna, Ashok, op.cit, p.139.
The contingent was flown out from Agra in US Globe-Master and Super Constellation aircraft, by the first week of December 1956. 3 Para Regiment operated south of Port Said in the buffer zone that had been created to separate Anglo-French Forces from the Egyptian. The Battalion supervised the exchange of prisoners of war between the Egyptian and Anglo-French commands. Also, in conjunction with other UNEF troops, the Battalion monitored the pullout of Israeli Forces from the Sinai Peninsula. Since Israeli had refused to allow UNEF on their side of the demarcation line and the peacekeeping force had to confine itself to the Egyptian side, the UN troops in Gaza thus had a very tough task at hand. In the Indian sector several posts were set up to watch the boundary line and Indian rifle companies took turns to man them. Anti personnel and anti-tank mines liberally planted by the Egyptians and the Israelis was the main hazard which resulted in a number of casualties.

Since violations of the cease fire had decreased, the unit (Para 1) then utilized time for refresher military training, free time for friendly matches, cultural exchanges and other professional and social contacts. After a year, 3 Para was replaced by 1 Para in November 1957. Thereafter, the annual relief became a routine. All Indian units were commended for their discipline, bearing and their role in preventing escalating situations. Many Indian dignitaries visited the Indian contingents during their tenures of duty. In 1960, 4th Kumaon Battalion was visited by the Indian Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

The UNEF continued to function as a buffer between the opposing sides till 19th May 1967 when it was wound up at the request of President Nasser of Egypt. Exactly 17 days later, the ‘Six-Day Arab-Israeli War’ broke out. In swift lightening attacks, Israel seized the Gaza strip and the Sinai. Unfortunately, the Indian troops caught in the fighting sustained 39 casualties. They disengaged and returned to India via Cyprus.

1 PARA (SPECIALIZED FORCE)

Having weathered the rigors of Jammu and Kashmir operations, the Battalion was selected to represent India in the United Nations Emergency Force at Gaza. For some of the veterans of World War II, the sight and sounds of Port Said were not unfamiliar; having fought earlier at El Alamein and later crossed the Mediterranean to fight in Italy. The unit served at Gaza till December 1958 under the command of Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General) I S Gill, Military Cross.

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30 Spantech and Lancer, op.cit, p.17.

† The other battalions which followed were: 2 Grenadiers, 4 Kumaon, 4 Rajput, 2 Sikh, 2 Maratha Light Infantry, 9 Dogra, 4 Guards, 3 Punjab and 1 Sikh Light Infantry.
Unit’s advance party left Agra on 4th November 1957 by train. Having arrived at Bombay on 5th November 1957, the unit embarked for Egypt on 7th November on board **SS Strathairu**. The remaining Battalion left Agra on 8th November 1957 and sailed on board S S Mozaffari on 13th November 1957. The advance party landed at **Port Said** and thereafter left for Gaza strip on 16th November. The main body arrived at Port Said and completed its move to Deir-el-Balah, its permanent location in Gaza strip by 27th November 1957.

**Tasks**

The tasks performed by the unit during its tenure with UNEF basically were to **prevent violation of ADL** (Armstree Demarcation Line) by manning observation posts by day and patrolling the area at night, **reporting of air activities** and **Protection** of HQ UNEF and Maintenance area ‘Rafah’.

**Visits**

The unit during its tenure in Gaza was visited by a number of Indian and foreign dignitaries†. Despite heavy commitments of the unit, regular training was conducted which included route marches, specialized and pioneer training. Selective persons also underwent a sand model exercises. The unit was also able to manage a short collective training for the entire unit elements participating in the mission.

The memorable tenure of the unit was recognized by a farewell visit of the **Secretary General of United Nations Organisation, Mr Dag Hammarskjold**‡. Having spent it’s tenure of duty in Gaza till end of the year, the Battalion arrived back at Agra after serving with United Nations Emergency Force. Later, Major portion of the unit proceeded on two months annual leave to attend to their kith and kin in India.

### 2 GRENADIERS

The unit was in Babina as a part of 43 Lorried Infantry Brigade when on 1st August 1958 the news of the battalion’s selection for duty with the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) on the GAZA strip was received. Lieutenant Colonel Amar Singh Chima took over the command of the battalion on 8th August 1958. The advance party under Major Mohinder Singh flew from Delhi on 9th October and the main body sailed on 15th November 1958 from Bombay aboard the ship ‘Mohammed’†‡.

† These visits included the visits of **General E L M Burns** on 25th January, 7th July and 20th July 1958, **Col I J Rikhye** on 12th December 1957 and 17th August 1958, **Mr Dag Hammarskjold**, UN Secretary on 23rd December 1957, **HE Shri Nawal Ali Yavar Jung**, Indian Ambassador to Yugoslavia on 10th January 1958, **Mr D B Vavgan**, Director of UN General Services on 29th March 1958, **Mr William Mc Caw**, Deputy Controller, UN on 29th November 1958, **Brig Wab Anderson OBI, CD**, Acting Adjutant General Canadian Army on 2nd June 1958, **Mr Rajeshwar Dayal**, Member of UNOGIL on 21st October 1958 and **Mr Galu Plaza**, Chairman UNOGIL on 18th November 1958.

‡ Mr Dag Hammarskjold aptly commented, quote, ‘I am very much impressed with the military efficiency of the Para troopers’ unquote.

†‡ Prior to their departure, **Major General KP Dhargalkar**, General Officer Commanding 1 Armoured Division inspected the battalion at a ceremonial parade.
The battalion touched Aden and the men were thrilled to see the name of the 2nd Grenadiers engraved on the gates of the port of Aden where many Grenadiers had seen service earlier. It arrived at Port on 27th November and was given a warm welcome by Lieutenant General E.L.M. Burns, Commander UNEF, and Colonel I.J. Rikhye, Commander Indian Contingent and Chief of Staff of the UNEF. This was perhaps the first occasion when the General had personally received any unit, which certainly had been a matter of pride and privilege for this excellent unit. On reaching the new location Deiret Balah which literally means ‘Nursery of Dates’, the men settled down to their new duties of manning the defended localities on the Armistice Demarcation line, earned the appreciation of the concerned Nations as well as the gratitude of the local population by their impartial behavior, readiness to help, friendliness, and efficient performance of duty.

A number of foreign dignitaries visited the battalion during its stay at Gaza†. The Indian Ambassador to the U.A.R., Shri R.K. Nehru visited the unit twice on 3rd February and later on 8th October 1959. During his first visit he expressed his feeling through words of appreciation and complemented the unit‡. Lieutenant General Burns presented the battalion the UNEF medal at a colorful medal presentation parade commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Chima on 8th July 1959‡‡. Officers and men of other UNEF contingents, members of UNEF headquarters staff and United Arab Republic officials in the Gaza Strip also attended the event. The exemplary tact and tolerance displayed by the men in the course of duty won for them five commendation cards and a personal congratulatory letter from General KS Thimayya, Chief of the Army Staff. The first incident on 3rd April 1959 was between a patrol of B Company and armed hostile locals in outnumbering proportions. The handling of the situation by Major Iqbal Caleb and the courage of the patrol leader earned them the personal appreciation of the Chief of Army Staff (COAS). Commendation cards to Lance Naik Ram Mehar, Grenadier Balu Ram, Grenadier Bhup Singh, and Grenadier

† Prominent among the visitors were Mr Hammarskjold, Secretary General of the UNO, Mr Arnold Smith, Canadian Ambassador, General Ahmed Salim, Administrative Governor of Gaza, Lieutenant General Christopher Son, the Norwegian Minister of Defence, and Mr Burnelf, the Swedish Ambassador.

‡ Shri R.K. Nehru, Indian Ambassador to the U.A.R very proudly stated, quote, ‘The previous contingents of the Indian Army have earned a good name but the way in which the present contingent is working has doubled the previously earned fame. I have heard about your work, discipline and behaviour from other contingents of various countries. They speak very high of you, for which I congratulate you all’ unquote.

‡‡ Addressing the troops, General Burns said, ‘your colour bears the honour Gaza 1801 and it is interesting to think of the difference on the mission which your regiment carried out then and that which it is carrying out now. In the meantime the regiment has fought in the Middle East in both World Wars. You are now here on a different kind of task of keeping peace, not the stern duty of making war. You and the battalion’s of the Indian Army which have preceded you have been the mainstay of the UNEF’.
Narain Singh were also awarded having been the participants of the said patrol. In another incident, Major Das and Sub Major Sant Ram, MC saved the lives of two Canadian soldiers who were being mauled by armed Arabs after a traffic accident. They also received commendation cards for this courageous act and timely intervention at great personal peril. When orders were received for the battalion to return home after completing its duty in the Gaza Strip, Shri RK Nehru accompanied by General Burns paid a farewell visit to the unit on 8th October 1959. They went around the battalion headquarters and the companies manning the different localities. In addition to having excelled and achieving best of results the Battalion also won outstanding success and earned acclaim for the regiment in the sports field. The unit collected 57 gold, 30 silver, 8 bronze, one UNEF championship cup, the decathlon cup and three team cups, a record in such a sports event. After its successful tenure with the UNEF at Gaza, the Battalion returned to India in December 1959 and was stationed at Ambala Cantt. All ranks were awarded the UNEF Medal and the Videsh Seva Medal for conduct of their exemplary duties impartially and with tact, thus leaving lasting impression behind on the foreign soil.

4 RAJPUT

On 13th April 1960, while the battalion was enroute from Dalhousie to Poona in a special train, a telephone message from Gen Sardanand Singh the then Colonel of The Regiment was delivered to the Adjutant of the battalion through the station master Kota stating that the battalion had been selected to go to Gaza under UNEF. The tenure of the battalion was from 29th October 1960 to 21st November 1961 under the able guidance of Lieutenant Colonel Prem Lal, the then CO of the battalion with Major Jit Singh as the Second-in-Command. The United Nation Forces took active defences in Gaza strip acting as buffer zone between the two countries. The battalion was chosen for the UNEF and was deployed in the Gaza strip for the same.

Important achievements and Milestones.

The battalion having been inducted to Gaza strip under UN mandate stabilized the situation in the assigned area of responsibility. The actions taken by the battalion to bring normalcy were highly appreciated by the locals and the UN. Besides the main task, the battalion also excelled in the field of Games and Sports by winning the United Nation athletic championship cup.

† General Thimayya the COAS of India in his congratulatory letter to the Commanding Officer stated, quote, ‘The incident of 3rd April 1959 in which a patrol of your battalion was faced with an ugly incident has been brought to my notice. I consider that the patrol and the reinforcements sent to assist it displayed remarkable patience and a sense of discipline of the highest order. Please convey to Major Iqbal Caleb, Lance Naik Risal Singh and all ranks of your Regiment my heartiest congratulations in dealing with the situation in such an exemplary manner. They, more than amply demonstrated to those who are aware of the incident that the officers and men of our Army are impartial in their dealings even in the face of gravest provocations’ unquote.

‡ The athletic team carried away all but two gold medals in 4th UNEF Athletic meet held from 21st to 23rd October 1959 at Grenadiers sports ground at Deir El Blah. Six new meet records were created. Naik Ramji Lal claimed the decathlon title with a record breaking total of 4,851 points.
While the battalion was part of 3 Himalayan Division, it was nominated for an assignment with the UN as part of the UNEF and moved to Poona in July 1963. Before the departure for Poona, the Northern Army Commander and General Officer Commanding 15 Corps addressed the battalion. At Poona Lieutenant General MS Wadalia, Deputy Chief of Army Staff on 19th August 1963 addressed the battalion. Gen JN Chaudhary, Chief of Army Staff took the salute at an impressive parade given by the battalion on 7th October 1963 and later addressed the troops in a Sainik Sammelan. **The advance party of the battalion left for Gaza by air from Bombay under Major Rewat Singh, the Second-in-Command on 8th October 1963. The main body left by sea on ‘SS Mohammedi’ on 31st October 1963 and disembarked at Port Said on 11th November. From there the battalion left by three special trains for Deir-el-Ballah where it relieved 2 Maratha Light Infantry.** On 19th November, Major General Inderjit Rikhi, Military Advisor to the Secretary General of UN, Mr Brain Urfuhart and Mr AL De Lanro of UN visited the battalion†.

On 3rd January 1964, the unit won UNEF Volleyball championship by defeating Brazil in the finals. **Lieutenant General PS Gyani, Commander UNEF visited the unit and addressed the troops on 9th January 64.** The unit won the UNEF Darts Championship, the only Indian Contingent to do so. **Major General CF Paire Chaves, the new UNEF Commander formally visited the Battalion and addressed the troops in a Sainik Sammelan on 18th January 1964.** In March, the battalion proved its superiority by winning the UNEF Athletic and Swimming Championships. The Battalion’s volley ball team also won the ADL race and the Shooting Competition. On 24th March 1964, **General JN Chaudhuri, Chief of Army Staff inspected the battalion accompanied by Major General MN Batra, Director of Military Intelligence.**

On 28th April, UNEF medals were ceremonially awarded to the Battalion from Army Headquarters, Military Operations Directorate. **His Excellency, Shri Azim Hussain, Indian ambassador in Cairo with Begum Azim Hussain attended the grand function.** Major General Paire Chaves was impressed by the turnout, steadiness and high standard of drill. A guard of honour was presented to His Excellency Shri Azim Hussain, Indian Ambassador to UAR on his departure. Battalion swimming team won the UNEF Rough Water Swimming Championship held at the Mediterranean Beach in GAZA. **Battalion Volleyball team won the UNEF Championship for the second time without losing any game throughout the tournament. It also won ADL race and the Athletics Championship for the second time in September 1964.** Three UNEF records were broken in Athletics by the battalion, a feat greatly appreciated by all.

**Finally on 4th November, the ninth embarked on ‘SS Mozaffari’ after an eventful and successful tenure in Gaza and set sail for Bombay. On 16th, ‘SS Mozaffari’, berthed on Ballard Pier in Bombay, Major General Chand Naraindas, General Officer Commanding, Madras and Goa Area, received the battalion on behalf of Chief of Army Staff. The battalion left Bombay in a special train for the new station Babina on 19th November 1964 and reached the next day. The whole battalion went on leave in a special train on 28th November 1964.**

† In order to make the event memorable, the battalion hosted a house warming party and invited officers from all the contingents.
In October 1964, the Battalion sailed from Bombay for service with the United Nations Emergency Force in Gaza. There it served alongside troops of six other European and American nations. It is a credit to the Battalion that in whatever activity the officers and men participated, the unit always stood in the lead i.e. whether it was in the field of sports, a swim in the Mediterranean, the bridge table, the drill square or the performance of duties along the Armistice Demarcation Line. (ADL)†. Orders were received for the battalion for move to Gaza and preparations were made accordingly. The battalion moved to Pune on 1st June and on 1st October 1964, Major Tahilramani left for Gaza with an advance party. Two weeks later Major RK Khanna took another advance party to Bombay to receive the battalion prior to embarkation.

Move to Gaza

4 Guards during World War-I known to be 2 (Queen Victoria’s Own) Rajput Light Infantry had manned the Suez Canal defences and fought in Mesopotamia. It had passed through Aden a couple of times and was familiar with Ismailia and Kantara. As part of the UNEF, it was to visit these places again on its way to Gaza. The UNEF contingent at Gaza consisted of a number of troops contributing countries‡. The role of the UN Force was to maintain peace. It had gone there on the invitation of the Egyptian government but was not recognized by the Israelis. The ADL was a 2-foot ditch, which had to be constantly kept clear of sand to prevent its obliteration. The Palestinian personnel and Egyptian troops were kept outside a buffer zone of 500 meters from the ADL. The role involved observation over the area from static observation posts by day and surveillance by patrolling by night. Contrary to general impression, this was a boring and strenuous job for the troops as their duties were extensive. It took Lt Col SP Malhotra, the commanding officer, a great deal of effort and patient persuasion for six months to hand over part of one sector to the Swedish battalion.

Prior to leaving for Gaza, the officers and men familiarised themselves with the political problems of the Middle East in general and the dispute between Egypt and Israel in particular. On arrival at Bombay, the Maharashtra and Gujarat Area Commander addressed all ranks on 20th October and wished them good luck. The next day the battalion left Bombay harbour on the SS Mozaffari with the band of 2nd Grenadiers in attendance at the quayside. After a pleasant journey via Aden where the men visited the town, the battalion arrived at Port Said on 1st November and was met by Col KM Pandalai, the Indian contingent commander and Major BJ Tahilramani. The next day it arrived at Deir el Ballah in the Gaza strip. The Battalion Headquarters was located here and companies were spread out on the ADL. Over the year the battalion carried out its duties effectively. It did not permit any major border violation by the Israelis or the Palestinian/Egyptian personnel. It could achieve this only after taking some firm action in the early part of its tenure.

† Brigadier NC Rawley, MC, AVSM Colonel of The Brigade of The Guards on 6th February 1965 said, ‘I am very impressed with the standards you have set as the foreigners in the UNEF HQ were full of praise . . . Good show.’

‡ Contributing countries being Brazil, the Canada, Danor (a mixture of Danish and Norwegian troops), Swedish, Yugoslav and the Indian troops.
The major activity at Gaza was sports. Within a month of its arrival the unit defeated the Danish team in the inter-contingent volleyball followed by the Yugoslavs and a combined team of other contingents a few days later. The basketball team also repeated the performance of the volleyball players and won the finals. In the rough water swimming, shooting, sports, athletics and cross-country, 4 Guards kept its first position by setting in various new records. The Battalion had a number of visitors during its stay in Gaza†. All ranks of the contingent spent a week at Cairo during winter and another at Beirut during summer at the UN leave centres. This was an exciting experience for every one. The officers availed of their leave and visited Europe, coming back with experiences which found mention at many a mess function for a number of years.

**Departure for India**

Before leaving Gaza, Lt Col SP Malhotra visited Nicosia in Cyprus to bid farewell to Gen KS Thimayya‡. On the eve of departure from Gaza, Gen S Sarmento paid a farewell visit to the battalion on 6th October and told all ranks how pleased and satisfied he was with their work during the last one year. General Thimayya also sent a special message of commendation. The advance party under Major JM Singh had already flown to India a month earlier. The main party left Gaza on 18th October. Two days later, the SS Mozaffari sailed for India from Port Said with the 4 Guards waving cheerful good-bye to the senior officers and contingent commanders from the UNEF who had come to Port Said to see off the battalion.

On its arrival at Bombay on 1st November, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra praised the manner in which the contingent had carried out its difficult and delicate assignment and gave the battalion a warm welcome. The Area Commander read out a message on behalf of the Chief of the Army Staff who praised the work of the contingent at Gaza. Lieutenant Colonel SP Malhotra suitably replied to the welcome addresses and offered thanks for honouring his unit.

**3 PUNJAB**

Captain Richard Mathew raised the Battalion on 12th March 1767 in Madras Presidency as 16th Battalion of Coast Sepoys at Cuddalore. It changed its designation several times†‡.

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† Prominent among these visitors were the Governor General of Gaza, various commanders, administrative and logistic officers of the UNEF, the Indian Ambassador and the Military Attache in Cairo and the Yugoslav Army Chief.

‡ General Thimayya was the Commander of the UN force there and was also the Colonel of the Brigade of Guards being COAS of the Indian Armed Forces from 1957 to 1961.

†‡ In 1902, the battalion was designated as 72 PUNJABIS and in 1922 3rd Battalion the 2nd Punjab Regiment. Finally designated as Third Battalion the Punjab Regiment on 26th January 1950 and ever since than it is know by designation of 3 PUNJAB.
The Battalion took part in most of the wars in which Indian Army was engaged during Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries including Operations in China, Mesopotamia, Egypt, North West Frontiers, Middle East and Burma. Daring acts of all ranks of the Battalion resulted in grant of various decorations and battle honours.

Farewell to the Gaza Forces

Inspite of Indian commitments there is a need to honour our international obligations, said India's Minister for Defence Mr YB Chavan in a brief farewell message in Hindi to the hundreds of jawans who were leaving for Gaza for a year, as part of the UN Force. Lt Gen SP Thorat (Retd), Colonel of the Regiment, welcomed Mr Chavan at the `Barah Khana' at Ballard Pier as the troops cheered resonantly. Refreshments, the colourful bhangra and introductions to officers all formed a part of the cheerful farewell function. Later that evening, at a lavish dinner held on board the 'Moghul Lines' Mozaffari, chartered by the UN. The guests wished the officers bon voyage and good luck. Present on this occasion were Brigadier and Mrs Haripal Singh, Lt Gen Thorat, Col Jatar, Lt Col Bali, Mr and Mrs KP Paruck of The Onlooker and Lt VC Chibber.

UN Medals For Indian Force (3 PUNJAB) In Gaza

Officers and men of the Indian contingent of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Gaza were presented UN service medals at an impressive ceremonial parade at Dierel Ballah (on the outskirts of Gaza), being the Headquarters of the Third Punjab Regiment.

† Award of Decorations and Battle honours

In 1891 in the famous Manipur Operations, a detachment under Lt CJW Grant stationed at Tamu was ordered to effect the release of few British officers held captive by Manipur insurgents. Lt Grant with his detachment of 50 OR stormed the hideout held by approx 800 insurgents with conspicuous bravery and fought ruthlessly against hostiles, unsupported for 13 days with meager ration and got captive freed. For this act of gallantry Lt Grant was awarded the highest distinction Victoria Cross and every individual of his detachment with order of Merit, a distinction unparalleled in the history of Indian Army.

During World War II, unit fought with valour in Eritrea, Abyssinia, Libya, Burma and Java for which it was the recipient of numerous honours and awards. During that period, 3 PUNJAB was possibly the only unit to have fought on all the fronts and against all the adversaries.

Since Independence, the battalion has distinguished itself in various parts of the country and thereby added further laurels to its well-known name, fame and glory. The unit had been on foreign assignments after 1947 i.e. in UN Peace Keeping Force at GAZA during 1965-66.

It is noteworthy that the regiment is indeed a very highly decorated unit. Since its raising, battalion has won over 600 decorations including one Victoria Cross, two Vir Chakras, Five Shaurya Chakras and fourteen Sena Medals. The unit also has to its credit 33 Battle Honours.
The medals were pinned to the personnel of the Indian contingent, comprising the Third Punjab Battalion and military police and medical units, by the Commander of UN Forces in Gaza, Maj Gen Indarjit Rikhye. As the Regimental band played, Gen Rikhye reviewed the parade at the battalion sports ground and took the salute. As the Indian troops marched past the saluting base their smart turnout evoked compliments from officers of other UN units stationed there.

Addressing the troops, Gen Rikhye commended the work done by the contingent in keeping with India's role in the cause of peace. He said as an officer of the Indian Army he felt honoured to be presenting the medals to the Indian contingent. Colonel AN Jatar commanded an Indian contingent, the largest among the UN troops stationed there. The Third Punjab Battalion commanded by Lieutenant Colonel BN Bali controlled peace along 27 kilometer of the 59 kilometer long Armistice Demarcation Line along Gaza and Israel.

1 SIKH LI

A detailed study on the subject of the unit reveals that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Jews began a movement to carve out a home for themselves in Palestine. During World War I, the British sought the help of Arabs to fight for them by giving them definite promises of self-government. On the conclusion of that war they did not respect their word. Instead, in 1917, according to the Balfour Declaration, they declared themselves in favour of establishing a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. When the Palestine Mandate was awarded to the British Government in 1920 they encouraged the Jews from Europe to migrate to Palestine. The Arabs resented this and there were anti-Jewish riots in the mandated territory. At the end of World War II, the United Nations General Assembly agreed to the partition of Palestine and thus the new State of Israel was born in May 1948. One million Arabs became refugees. Five Arab nations attacked the newborn State, agreed to a cease-fire in November that year but never forgave Israel ever since then. In October 1956, Israel attacked Egypt when President Nasser of Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal. The UN stepped in and the belligerents agreed to a cease-fire in the first week of November on the condition that Israel and Egypt allowed a UN Emergency Force (UNEF) on their soil until a final peace agreement was concluded. Ten countries including India provided contingents. When the news reached 1 Sikh Light Infantry that it was selected for service with the United Nations Expeditionary Force (UNEF), the officers brushed up their knowledge of the UNEF and Gaza. The First Battalion arrived at Pune on 17th July 1966 and got busy making preparations for the move to Gaza. 17 officers went to GAZA with the battalion.

† The Pioneers had fought in Gaza earlier in World War-I but to their descendants, Gaza, half a century later, was indeed different.
On 9th September, an advance party consisting of 4 officers, 3 JCOs and 22 OR left for Gaza by air from Bombay to join the UNEF. On 28th September, the troops left for Bombay by train and arrived at Ballard Prier the next day. The unit boarded the ship SS Muzaffari, held a party aboard the ship that evening and gave a Guard of Honour to the Colonel of the Regiment, Lt. Gen. PS Bhagat VC, who came especially to Bombay to wish good luck to the 1st. As the ship left Bombay on 1st October, the Battalion celebrated twenty fifth anniversaries on board the ship. At Aden, on the 6th, the men were taken round the British Base and Lt Col E.W Carvalho was invited to the residence of the GOC, Middle-West Command, Major Gen JEF Willoughby, CB, CBE along with the Commissioner, Mr. AR Sethi and his wife to luncheon. In the afternoon, when the GOC with his ADC and Major John Slim came on board the Muzaffari, Sub Maj Mohan Singh proudly told Maj Slim that he had met his father, the famous Field Marshal Slim, in Burma. On 12th October, the 1st disembarked at Port Said and was received by Col Munshi Singh Brar, the Contingent Commander.

The unit arrived at Deir el Balah and took over its new duties from 3 PUNJAB. On 24th October, a detachment from the Battalion under Nb Sub IKP Singh participated in the UN Day parade at which the Regimental Centre’s brass band made its official debut. On 10th November, Major CC Muthanna and two buglers flew to Jordan by UN aircraft and enjoyed the hospitality of the British Government on the occasion of the Commonwealth Remembrance Day. Maj Gen IJ Rikhye inspected the ADL and was satisfied with the Manning of it. There was increased activity on the ADL from 2nd December 1966 as tension began to mount between Egypt and Israel. It was on the 6th that, some Light Machine Guns (LMG) fired from the Israeli side. Later on 10th January 1967, the Indian Ambassador in UAR, A B. Pant visited the Battalion. It was a matter of pride for the unit that on the 20th, the 1st won the UNEF Volley ball Championship and subsequently it also won the Athletics Championship.

With regard to the unit’s operational performance, it was very unfortunate that the Arab-Israeli 6-day war commenced on 5th June. Israeli tanks were reported moving towards the ADL opposite Lucknow (B Coy) and Chandigarh (A Coy), firing on B Coy and seriously wounding a non-combatant washer man. A UN convoy returning to Battalion HQ from Rafah that morning was strafed resulting in three OR being killed and some wounded. In the afternoon, the Bn HQ was shelled by Israeli artillery killing Sub Ajit Singh and one OR and injuring 10 OR of whom one died later. Shells also destroyed the wireless link with HQ UNEF and telephone lines were cut by advancing troops. The camp was also machine gunned by a passing AMX tank regiment. There was more shelling and more persons were wounded during the night.

† Lt. Gen. P S Bhagat, VC, addressed a durbar where he stressed the importance of keeping up the name of the Battalion, the Regiment, the Army and the Country. In his talk to the officers he stressed that they were not only soldiers representing their country but also the ambassadors of their country.

‡ There were cases of minor violations of the ADL; but there was no serious incident till 16th May when the Commanding Officer was called for a hurried conference at the HQ UNEF at Gaza. Israel flooded Wadi Gaza and the Chief of Staff of the UAR Army asked the UNEF to vacate the international border. The UN took the decision to withdraw the UNEF from the occupied areas within 50 days. Watchtowers and OPs were to be withdrawn to their respective locations by the evening of the 19th. The Indian Contingent was to return to India on 19th June.
A mine outside the city killing four persons and wounding one distributed the following morning a vehicle from Battalion HQ carrying casualties to a hospital in Gaza. Between 10th and 13th June, the 1st moved to Asdod port in Israel and left by three different ships for Famagusta in Cyprus. From the 15th to the 17th, personal of the Battalion with their arms were air lifted by Air India planes from Nicosia in Cyprus to Bombay. On 18th June 1967, the unit concentrated at Pune. Major RC Datt stayed back with the wounded, returning-on 29th June after packing and handing over to the UN the Battalions heavy stores, the officers' mess property and canteen stores which eventually arrived by sea at Bombay in December that year. Almost all ranks were sent on leave to attend to their families immediately on their arrival on the Indian soil.

A copy of letter dated 8th June 1967 from the Secretary General of United Nations to the Permanent representative of India to the United Nations expressing to the Government of India his very great appreciation of the bearing and performance of the Indian Contingent in UNEF, The First Sikh Light Infantry especially under the very hazardous conditions of June 5th, 6th and 7th, 1967’ is placed on record.

**UNITED NATIONS OPERATIONS IN CONGO**

**OUNC : 1960 TO 1963**

Congo

Belgian Congo, as the name implies was a colony of Belgian in Africa. Although decolonization by the British, French and the Dutch took place earlier, the Belgians only conceded independence to Congo on June 30th, 1960 after a bloody struggle. The people of the colony were kept extremely backward and foreign commercial interests as well as Belgian itself continued to exploit them after independence. Congo had many teething problems at the time of independence. First, the army mutinied; subsequently Belgian inverted without concurrence of the Congolese Government. Later one of the provinces, Katanga seceded, followed by another province, Kasai. Behind all these, the hand of the European interests could be perceived. Congo appealed to the UNO for help and this was promptly agreed to on July 14th, 1960\(^3\). Belgian was called upon to withdraw its Forces. United Nation troops were to be despatched to restore normalcy and economic assistance was to be provided. India initially provided some logistic support to the UN Command (OUNC) but subsequently provided a bridge on request from the UN. 99 Infantry Brigade Group under Brig K A S Raja was sent by air and sea to Leopoldville, the capital, in March-June 1961. Moise Tshombe, the leader of the breakaway Katanga province had a Gendarmerie comprising thousands of troops under Belgian officers. The UN Command initially tried to effect reconciliation between the breakaway provinces and the Central Government but could not succeed. It was, therefore, decided to use force to bring the provinces back into the country\(^4\). This also succeeded but Tshombe escaped to Northern Rhodesia. Subsequently in September, a ceasefire came about but the Gendarmerie again started hostilities in November.

\(^3\)Spantech and Lancer, op.cit, p.27.

\(^4\)99 Brigade less a battalion (retained at Leopoldville) was sent to Katanga province for the purpose. The Brigade was initially located in the area Albertville and cleared the Northern part of Katanga by July 1961. Subsequently, it moved to Elizabethville and operations were mounted against control on the rest of Katanga.
Indian troops had once again to deal with the situation firmly. In these operations, Captain GS Salaria of 3/1 Gorkha Rifles was awarded the Param Vir Chakra (Posthumously) for velour of the most exceptional order. By January 1962, the ONUC obtained control over Katanga. Later, there was a turn over of Indian troops Brig RS Naronha took over as new Commander of 99 Brigade. Major General Dewan Prem Chand was appointed Commander of the Katanga area. Tshombe whenever was under pressure would come to an agreement with the Central Government but could soon recent, asserting his independence when pressure was released\(^32\). In this, the White Mercenaries supported him. Towards the end of 1962 the Gendarmerie once again started attacks against the UN Forces. Narohna mounted operations to clear the Gendarmerie. Initially, the area around Elizabethville was cleared by end of December 1962. Subsequently, an advance was undertaken to a place called Jadotville, a mining centre, despite several roadblocks and bridges having been blown.

The Brigade advanced speedily and secured the line of Lufira River by January 3\(^{rd}\), 1963. Subsequently, Jadotville was captured unopposed. After securing Jadotville, the Brigade advanced to Kolweizl mining centre. Despite stiff opposition from the Gendarmerie the Brigade progressed well and reached the line of Tshilongo River by January 17\(^{th}\). The Gendarmerie was so demoralized with the momentum of the advance that they broke up and retreated in small groups. Tshombe now agreed to end the secession of Katanga and surrender all the weapons of his Force. Naronha centered Kolweizl on January 21\(^{st}\). Subsequently, the Gendamerie surrender their weapons. Thus, ended the UN operations which resulted in the reunification of Congo. It may be mentioned here that the troops had to operate under several constraints such as restrictions imposed by the UN on conduct of operations, frequent changes of mind of Tshombe, shortage of equipment, need for ensuring that civilian population was not harmed due to military operations and so on. The Indian troops received considerable credit for the efficient but humane manner in which they carried out their tasks. The contingent returned to India in March-April 1963\(^33\). The contributions of our Indian soldiers are remembered even today, with nostroligia.

### 99 INFANTRY BRIGADE

99 Infantry Brigade, stationed at Kasauli, was earmarked for move to Congo on 4\(^{th}\) March 1961. Besides 2\(^{nd}\) JAT the other Battalions were 1\(^{st}\) Battalion the Dogra Regiment and 3\(^{rd}\) Battalion the 1\(^{st}\) Gorkha Rifles. It was formed into R Brigade group. Supporting arms and services were provided to carry out the task in an independent role. 3\(^{rd}/1\(^{st}\) Gorkha Rifles was to move first, followed by 1\(^{st}\) Dogra and 2\(^{nd}\) JAT. Brigadier KAS Raja left Delhi by air for Congo on 9\(^{th}\) March. The Battalion moved out of Dagshai along with other units of the Brigade Group on the 11\(^{th}\) March 1961 and concentrated at New Delhi for the airlift.

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\(^{32}\) Krishna Rao, K.V., op.cit, p.314

\(^{33}\) Ibid, p. 314.
On 14th March 1961, speaking to the officers and men on the necessity of sending combatant troops, Shri VK Krishna Menon, Defence Minister, said that the Brigade group was not embarking on a war of conquest but was going to help restore peace and order in a disturbed country, which was having its first birth pangs of independence and was being exploited by interested parties. He gave a warning that each man was an ambassador of his country and must conduct himself as such. Five US Air Force C 124 Globe Master Aircrafts were made available for the airlift. 3rd/1st Gorkha Rifles flew out in the month of March 1961 and landed at Dnjili airport and the rest of the Brigade followed in succeeding weeks. It was a major operation and it took 115 sorties to lift only a portion of the Brigade†. A portion of 2nd JAT along with equipment, Jeeps and trailers also availed the airlift and the remaining two companies followed the rest of the Brigade by sea.

2 JAT

Lieutenant Colonel Raghuraj Singh, Commanding Officer accompanied by Major Ran Singh, Captain PA Patole and 61 other ranks of D Company left Delhi by air on 2nd April and landed at Leopoldville two days later. Battalion Headquarters and elements of D Company also reached the same day. The move of these parties was completed by 9th April 1961. US Ship General Blatchford, carrying 1st Dogra and half Battalion 2nd JAT under Major RK Jasbir Singh, left Bombay on 1st April and berthed at Dar-es-salam. The other two ships with Brigade personnel left at the end of the month‡. The Brigade group was able to complete move to Congo in about two and a half months and the last party which moved by sea fetched up at Leopoldvills via Dar-es-salam on 21st May.

Immediately on arrival, A Company under Major SS Jouhal was rushed by air to Kamina on 5th April since situation there had become very tense. One section medium machine guns and two detachments of Recoill Less (RCL) guns also accompanied them. The Company returned to Leopoldville the next day as the situation eased. Nine other ranks were injured in an unfortunate vehicle accident when it overturned. Sepoy Surat Singh succumbed to his injuries the next day. As planned, the Brigade group was to be based at Leopoldville and to operate as one body. The main headquarters was also located there with Lieutenant General S Mcheown, Commander UN forces in Congo. President Tshcmbe had been opposed to the move of Indian troops to Congo from the very beginning and their deployment in part of Katanga. This hostility continued all along. Even before 3rd/Ist Gorkha Rifles had completed concentration, they were ordered to move to Kamina air base. The Brigade Commander agreed to this on the specific condition that the entire brigade would be concentrated at the base.

†US government had expressed its inability to provide more aircraft for the airlift of all the Indian troops.

‡US ship Sergeant Eltinge took them to Mombasa and Sergeant Kimbro berth at Dar-es-salam. Further, airlift was arranged from these ports to Kamina.
Towards the end of April the situation took a turn for the worse with an attempt by the Katanga Gendarmerie to siege Kabalo with the help of the mercenaries. It was, therefore, decided to deploy Indian troops in Katanga and take over control of North Katanga base. By this time the sea parties also started arriving. They were all flown to Kamina and not Leopoldville as planned earlier. The Indian independent Brigade group was made responsible for operations in North Katanga and took over from the Nigerian Brigade†.

**At Leopoldville**

2nd JAT Battalion Headquarters however remained at Leopoldville, as the Force Commander required them to be there. The other half of the Battalion also joined there on its arrival. It was, thus, permanently separated from the Brigade through out its stay in Congo. The Battalion was kept busy at Leopoldville in looking after duties as assigned by United Nations. The camp was about eight miles away from the town. On 13th May, the JATS organized a **beating-of-the-retreat** and **torch light display‡**. These were witnessed by all contingents including by Mr Mekki Abbas, UN action special representative in Congo, Lieutenant General Mcheown, Colonel Kimbe, Chief of Staff of the Congolese Army and other senior officers.

There was torrential rain during April and May. On 25th May, the whole camp was flooded and practically everything got drenched. Diseases prevalent in the area were infective hepatitis, gangran finger, penile-warts, etc against which stringent precautions had to be taken.

**Operation Sunflower**

The Battalion undertook Operation Sunflower in June which continued until early August, side by side with the military operations. The UN also worked for reconciliation under a resolution which desired the convening of the Congolese Parliament. The Congolese Conciliation Conference was a great insecurity and frustration in Congo. The legally elected Members of Parliament wanted to meet and decide their future. The UN agreed to provide them safety and security for a meeting in a calm and undisturbed atmosphere. The newly constructed ultra modern Louvanium University was selected for this purpose. It was situated on the top of an isolated hill 14 miles from Leopoldville amidst rolling bush country. The area was cleared of all the university authorities and the accommodation taken over. The place was soon converted into a well defended fortification.

The defensive plan consisted of an inner and outer perimeter to control access to the area. All gates were to be closed except one. All arrivals were to be thoroughly searched for arms, ammunition and documents. As a measure of further security, even the food served to them had to be tested before consumption.

†The units were deployed at Kamina base, Albertville, Kilubi, Kabalo and further to the interior.
‡Bands of 2nd JAT, 1st DOGRA and 3rd/1st Gorkha Rifles participated. The programme also included mass PT, gymnastic, exhibition, wrestling bouts and bhangra i.e. an Indian famous folk dance.
2 JAT Group was formed with member of units under its command†. Tunisian troops were also deployed outside the perimeter. **The detailed tasks of the Battalion group were to:**

- Co-ordinate the activities of all sub units located in Louvanium and placed under their command for the purpose of protecting the Congolese Parliament.

- Provide adequate security precautions by sealing off the university area and dominating the group beyond the wire by guards, sentries, posts and screens both by day and by night.

- Deny access to the perimeter to any one who did not satisfy the requirements of entry. Any person refusing to obey orders/challenges was to be placed under arrest and escorted to the guardroom to be provided by the Battalion.

- Ensure that unauthorized helicopters did not land within the wired perimeter or in the vicinity of Louvanium.

- Ensure that no groups of individuals, small or large, were permitted to approach the wired perimeter or attempt to infiltrate/overcome the defences.

- Liaise with 3rd Tunisian Company located at Louvanium and co-ordinate with them for the defence of the area.

- Undertake the treatment of all minor ailments to military personnel in their rear aid posts, to be located at Louvanium.

Warning order for **Operation Sunflower** having been received, A, B, C and Support Companies moved out almost daily to the university area for preparing the defences. It entailed concerted efforts and the task was completed within record time. Around the perimeter was an electrified fence, some 10 feet high with warning signs of danger of electrocution, in five different languages. The area was lit up and neon lights placed at 25 yard intervals, which gave it a festive and Diwali like appearance. Trenches were dug and sand bagged inside the area and barbed wire was used to further strengthen the defences. Sentries stood at regular intervals and the area was constantly patrolled, both inside and outside the perimeter. Extensive patrolling was carried out by the Malayan armoured car troop and by helicopters. All roads were sealed and only one gate heavily guarded by the JAT Regimental Police and UN security guards was used for entering the university. Special reserves were created to reinforce any threatened sector. A guard stood constantly to take action against any unauthorized helicopter landing on the temporary helipad at the university.

† The units under command being one troop 121 Independent Heavy Mortar Battery, one platoon 4 MAHAR (Medium Machine Gun), one troop 2 Reconnaissance Regiment, Malayan Special Force (armoured cars), section Swedish War dogs, Military police and UN Security Personnel, were placed under command of the Battalion to form 2nd JAT group.
A dress rehearsal was held on 1\textsuperscript{st} July. Another rehearsal was gone through ten days later in the presence of UN representatives, some Congolese Parliamentarians and the press. The Battalion moved to the university area on 14\textsuperscript{th} July. President Kasavubu was the first to arrive. Other members of Parliament followed soon after. The main session began on 24\textsuperscript{th} July. By the end of the month, a coalition government was formed under Mr. Adoula and all the Parliamentarians left by 2\textsuperscript{nd} August. \textit{(Photo-19)} The JATs as soldiers of peace were, thus responsible for bringing peace to the strife-ridden country. It was indeed an important and delicate assignment and there was much praise for their handling of this important task\(^\dagger\). As the situation at Kamina was getting serious, the Battalion reverted to Leopoldville command on 6\textsuperscript{th} August. While Battalion headquarters and B Company remained at Garnier Camp, C Company was deployed at Chanic Camp and D Company on guard duties. A Company was left behind at the university area for the time being. These Companies were regularly turned over. The duties not being very heavy, officers and men were permitted short leave to go to Europe. Training and promotion cadres were also regularly held.

Conditions in Congo continued to remain insecure and the Brigade units were constantly on the move to meet local threats. While \textit{Operation Marthor} had commenced in Elisabethville on 13\textsuperscript{th} September, the Swedish and Irish Battalions at Kamina base were attacked by the gendarmerie on the 14\textsuperscript{th}, with the ultimate aim of capturing the base and airport. Though these troops repulsed the determined attacks time and again, the pressure continued. Air strikes were also made. One aircraft carrying the Irish minister of foreign affairs was shot at and had to crash-land, luckily there were no casualties. Meanwhile the Irish Company near Elisabethville was surrounded and it surrendered. C Company (Major RK Jasbir Singh) along with the mortar platoon (Lieutenant Suresh Chander) was ordered to move by air to relieve the Irish Company. As the aircraft took off on 16\textsuperscript{th} September, the plane (DC-4), carrying Major Jasbir Singh and Company headquarters was diverted to Kamina, as pressure on that air base had since increased. The other aircraft carrying the mortar platoon and the first and second line ammunition of the Company which did not receive the orders landed at Elisabethville as scheduled. They gave valuable support to 3\textsuperscript{rd}/Ist Gorkha Rifles deployed there.

As ‘C’ Company personnel were unloading at Kamina, a Katangese Fcuga jet aircraft attacked them. There was only one casualty but the DC-4 aircraft was destroyed on the ground. There was great confusion at Battalion headquarters when this news was relayed to them as they feared heavy casualties. The Company was placed under command of the Irish Base Commander at Kamina and was ordered to repulse attacks by the Kaminaville troops, who were threatening to take the air base. \textit{Major Jasbir Singh had a hard time in repulsing these with only pouch ammunition that was available with the troop’s i.e. just 50 rounds per rifle. A little later D Company (Major Ran Singh) reinforced the Company and Lieutenant Colonel Raghuraj Singh, CO also arrived to personally direct the operation. Team of officers posted with the battalion did a magnificent job, wherever they were deployed (Photo-20).}

\(^\dagger\) ‘Complete trust was placed by the Congolese in the UN Indian troops and of their confidence that in an emergency, these troops could acquaint themselves admirably and with honour is in itself a major victory for our soldiers of peace and sufficient reward for their work’, \textit{says a report on Operation Sunflower}. 
Garnier Camp

A cease fire was soon arranged and came into effect at midnight 21st September. C Company was ordered to Garnier camp soon thereafter. A message to the Commanding Officer was sent from the Force Commander about the operation. After the cease fire, when Major RK Jasbir Singh was going to one of his platoons deep inside the airbase he found to his surprise that about one company strength of the gendarmerie was in position there. All by himself he kept his presence of mind and called two 106 RCL guns from the Company. On their arrival, the gendarmerie lost no time in clearing from the airbase and disappearing. The rest of the Battalion was flown to Kamina on 10th October for protection of the base. By 1st December the Battalion was fully re-deployed.

As the Brigade had spent about a year in the strife torn country, where actual operations had to be undertaken, a relief programme was arranged and fresh Battalions arrived from India for this purpose. An advance party of 4th Battalion, the Rajputana Rifles arrived on 5th March 1962 and the Battalion advance party of JATs got ready to move. With the increased threat to Albertville, the Battalion was warned to move at short notice. A Company (Major Dhanna Ram) was airlifted on 31st March, followed by D Company on 2nd April. Kamina base was handed over to the Swedish Battalion and the remainder of 2nd JAT less C Company was flown to Albertville two days later. Flag marches led by the band were undertaken in Albertville and outlying areas. Regular patrols were also sent out. The surface parties under Major PA Patole moved for Kigoma on 26th April. The Battalion left Albertville by air for Dar-es-salam in early May and then by ship to Bombay. They brought along with themselves the ‘Congo Memories’ in the form of ‘Congo Trophy,’ (Photo-21) which is displayed even today in the Battalion with pride and nostrolgia.

3/1 GORKHA RIFLES (GR)

Events Leading to Deployment

Congo is located in Central Africa with Tanzania to its east, Atlantic Ocean to the west, Angola & Zambia to the south and Cameroon to the north (Map-1). Congo was under Belgium rule since 1878. The country was divided into six provinces with a sparse tribal population. It was gifted with abundance in mineral and forest wealth including ivory, uranium, diamonds, cobalt etc. European Companies, making her a prized possession of the Belgium Empire, mostly exploited the rich mineral & forest resources. The Belgian Congo gained independence and became Republic of Congo on 30th June 1960.

† The Force Commander’s message read, quote, ‘I firstly would like to congratulate you on the excellent work you have done with the Irish group at Kamina during the past 10 days or so. We are loud in our praise of the excellent spirit and determination shown by all ranks in your group’, unquote.

‡ The first party consisted of Major K Radhakrishnan and 45 other ranks; the second had Subedar Mukhlidar Singh and Bharat Singh and 10 other ranks and the third Lieutenant GS Khanna and 49 other ranks. The heavy baggage was also sent to Albertville.
Congo had many problems on attaining independence. Congo appealed to the UN for help, which was promptly, agreed on 14th July 1960. It is noteworthy that the UN Operation in Congo (ONUC) was the largest peace keeping effort by the UN during the Cold War era. This mission from 1960 to 1963 also stands out as the mission in which the largest number of Indian troops participated and conducted military operations. The formation selected was 99 Infantry Brigade which was further supplemented with additional troops and needed allied support.

**Conduct of Operations**

Mr. Moise Tshombe, the leader of the breakaway Katanga province had an army comprising thousands of troops under Belgian officers. The UN command initially tried to effect reconciliation between the breakaway province and the Congolese Central Govt but it did not succeed. It was decided to use force to bring the province back into the folds of the Country. Accordingly, 99 Infantry Brigade less a Battalion was sent to Katanga province for this purpose. By January 1962, ONUC had obtained full control of Katanga.

During the two years period when the Indian Army operated in Congo, it achieved the reunification of Congo. During this period, the Indian Army sustained 147 casualties including 39 who died in action. The professional ethics of its officers and men drew praise from all quarters. Their courage won them many awards. Perhaps, the most apt comment on the role of the Indian troops in Congo came from Lt Gen Mackeown of Ireland.

UN troops had moved in July 1960 with a mandate. 3/1 GR, which had been raised on the 21st of December 1959, joined the ranks for its first overseas assignment, under the command of Colonel SS Maitra. The battalion was seen off by then Def Minister and moved by air to Congo. The battalion formed a part of the Indian contingent of 99 Infantry Brigade, which had moved in Congo to fulfill the Security Council mandate.

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† The Army mutinied within a week of independence. Its soldiers demanded more pay, promotion and the expulsions of all Belgian officers. Anti White and anti Belgian riots broke out. This prompted Belgium to intervene without the concurrence of the Congolese Govt. A fortnight after the independence, backed by Belgium assistance, the mineral rich province of Katanga seceded and was followed by another province of Kasai.

‡ It consisted of 1 DOGRA, 2 JAT, 3/1 GR, Squadron of 63 CAV, 120 Heavy Mortar Battery, 12 Field Company, Company from 4 MAHAR (Machine Gun) and 95 Field Ambulance. A flight of 6 Canberra aircraft from No 5 Squadron was also dispatched to Congo in support of ONUC.

†‡ Besides, 1 Param Vir Chakra, 3 Maha Vir Chakra, 14 Vir Chakra and 23 Sena Medal were earned.

‡‡ The UN Force Commander said, ‘The Indian Brigade Group can be likened to a very small blanket thrown over a very large man. When the top of the body gets cold the blanket is drawn up and when the feet get cold the blanket is moved down again. Not only this, but the blanket had to get into small pieces to cover at the same time various parts of the body’.

††† The mandate was to ensure withdrawal of Belgian troops, restore law and order, peace and assist the Congo Govt with military assistance, if necessary.
Needful to state that tensions between the UN contingent and the Katangese and Gendarmerie forces had led to incidents of firing on UN troops. **14 United Nation personnel were reported missing†.** The Gendarmerie established roadblocks at: various locations, namely ‘Tunnel’ which affected the direct road communication between the Swedish contingent camp and the UN Command HQ at Castle and the Indian Brigade. The other being ‘Round About’ which prevented the use of the road to the airport. Failure of negotiations led to the decision to clear these road blocks by military. 3/1 GR was tasked to clear the road blocks at Round About at 0900 hours on 5\textsuperscript{th} December 1961. Operation ONU-KAT (Map-2) went into action after identifying the enemy’s strength and location‡.

**Captain Gurbachan Singh Salaria’s Gallant Action.**

On 5\textsuperscript{th} December 1961, 3/1 GR was ordered to clear a road block established by the gendarmerie at a strategic round-about at Elizabethville, Katanga, Congo. The plan was that one company (C Coy) with two Swedish armed cars would attack the position frontally and Captain Gurbachan Singh Salaria with 2 Armed Personnel Carriers and a platoon would advance towards this road block from the air field to act as a cut off force. The area was called ‘Round About’.

During this action Captain Salaria with his platoon ran into a subsidiary road block/ambush at about 1300 hours approximately 1500 yards from the main road block at ‘Round About’. **Despite being out numbered 3:1,** Capt GS Salaria, having appreciated that this Force might jeopardize the action of C Coy, charged the enemy with bayonets, khukris and grenades. **In this daring and gallant action the small Force of Capt GS Salaria killed 40 men and destroyed two armed cars of the enemy.** Despite being wounded in the neck by a burst of an automatic fire he led the charge and continued fighting till he collapsed due to profuse bleeding and made supreme sacrifice. This unexpected bold action completely demoralized the enemy that fled despite their numerical superiority and protected positions.

Captain GS Salaria’s personal example of utter disregard for personal safety and dauntless leadership inspired his small but gallant Force of 16 Gorkha soldiers to hold on to their position, dominate the enemy and inflict heavy casualties despite the enemy’s superiority of numbers and tactical positions. **Captain G S Salaria’s (Photo-22)** leadership, courage and unflinching devotion to duty and disregard for personal safety were in the best traditions of the Indian Army. For this unprecedented act of gallant daring and brave leadership he was awarded the most prestigious and the highest gallantry award of the country the **Param Vir Chakra (PVC).** It was the pride of Shri Munshi Ram, father of Captain G S Salaria to receive the prestigious award of PVC (Photo-23).

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†These included 11 Swedes, 2 Norwegians and one Indian Officer, Major Ajeet.

‡ Road block at ‘Round About’ was manned by approximately 150 Gendarmerie with 2 x Armed cars. Further maneuvering to encircle the airport had been reported and a Katangese fighter had been sited.
During its tenure of duty, extensive use of UN helicopters was made (Photo-24) for carrying out reconnaissance of enemy areas and also for evacuation of own casualties. On termination of operation ONU–KAT, homage’s were paid to the fallen hero’s (Photo-25) as a tribute to their selfless devotion to duty and having laid down their lives for the cause of maintaining peace in Congo.

63 CAVALRY

On 19th March 1961, the regiment received a warning order to earmark a Squadron for service in Congo under the United Nations. As a result of this the ‘C’ Squadron (Sikhs), was chosen for this assignment and was reorganized as 5 Independent Armoured Squadron and re-equipped with Daimler Armoured Cars. On 14th April 1961, the Squadron sailed from Bombay for Congo and concentrated at Albertville (Katanga) where it became an integral part of the Indian Independent Brigade Group. In the wake of the United Nations Security Council’s resolution of 21st February 1961, ‘C’ Squadron 63 Cavalry with its Daimler armoured cars, was earmarked to form part of the Indian Independent Brigade group. By May 1961, the Squadron was at Albertville (Katanga) employed for the protection of important installations such as airports, powerhouses and railway stations.

The Squadron made a great contribution towards the success of United Nation Operations. Following are some of the outstanding features of their Service in Congo:

- Took part in operation ‘Rum Punch’ at Albertville, Nyunzu – Niemba and Manon.
- Acquitted itself well in operation ‘North Katanga’ at Albertville during September 1961.
- In December 1961 fought Operation ‘UN KAT’ Manon (Katanga).
- On 14th December 1961, Squadron Headquarters and two Armoured Cars Troops were flown from Albertville to Elizabethville to reinforce the United Nations force and support the United Nations infantry in several attacks.

In January 1962, ‘A’ Squadron (RAJPUTS) was kept ready to relieve the Squadron in Congo†. The Sikh Squadron in Congo returned to India and disembarked at Bombay on 18th May 1962. The RAJPUT Squadron also did an equally magnificent job and kept up the name, fame and traditions of the mighty Indian Army by performing their duties with total devotion and dedication.

† ‘A’ Squadron moved to Ahmednagar to reorganize itself as an Independent squadron. Finally the squadron embarked from Bombay for Congo on 27th April 1962.
4 MADRAS

4th Battalion (WLI) The Madras Regt under Lt Col DS Randhawa, MC, formed part of the Indian Independent Brigade Group in 1962 and was sent to Congo under Command of Brigadier RS Noronha, MC an ex Wallajahbadi. The battalion moved by air to Congo and was seen off by many military and civil dignitaries. Besides numerous actions the Battalion was mainly responsible for the quick crossing of Lutria, a fast flowing and crocodile infested river, a major natural obstacle on the axis of advance of the brigade group. Neither mercenaries nor the blow up bridge across the Lutria could stop or retard the momentum of the Wallajahbadies advance. This crossing with ‘A’ Company under Major SP Mahadevan (Photo-26) and ‘B’ Company under Major Sami Khan marked him beginning of the end of the Tshombe State Katanga. Lt MM Wallia and his commando platoon without any fire support captured the enemy mortars and neutralized enemy fire support during this action. In the meantime 2 Lt VN Madan with his platoon managed to cut off the enemy about 50 miles from the bridge. For this operation in Congo, persons of the battalion were given many awards†. Brigadier RS Noronha, MC was honoured with PVSM. The Battalion was declared the best Battalion of the entire UN contingent deployed in Congo including the Battalion of the European Army. Having carried out all its assigned tasks with excellence, the battalion returned to India in 1963 and was received at Bombay by the Governor of Maharashtra (Photo-27).

UN OBSERVATION GROUP IN LEBANON
UNOGIL: JUNE 1958 TO DECEMBER 1958

It was in the later half of 1950's that situation in and around Lebanon started deteriorating resulting in breaking out of an armed rebellion in Lebanon in May 1958. The disturbances started from the predominantly Moslem City of Tripoli and soon spread out to Beirut and northern/northeastern areas near Syrian border. This state of affair endangered the maintenance of international peace and security. Further, the sequence of events dictated that general elections were to be held in Lebanon in 1958. Thus, to ensure free and fair elections and to check the smuggling of arms and the entry of foreign elements into Lebanon, the UN authorized temporary stationing of an Observer Group34. Accordingly, a UN Observer Group was setup in Lebanon in June 1958 with a view to ensure complete transparency in democratic process of elections in the country.

The Observer Group consisted of 71 officers drawn from various countries‡. It is noteworthy that India contributed a select group of 20 competent military officers as observers for the said mission. The Observer Group arrived in Lebanon on 19th June 1958 and was named as UNOGIL. The function of UNOGIL was to ensure that no illegal infiltration of personnel or supply of arms or other material was allowed across the Lebanese borders. It was a matter of pride that the Secretary General also appointed Mr. Rajeshwar Dayal of India as the member of UNOGIL.

†One VrC (2 Lt VN Madan), Four SM (Maj Sami Khan, Lt MM Wallia, Naik Issac and Sep K Kuchaiah), One VSM (Lt Col DS Randhawa, MC) and 10 Mention-in-Despatches.

‡These countries namely Norway, Ecuador and India.

34 Spantech and Lancer, op. cit.,m p.25
In addition, an Indian Officer, Colonel Ranbir Singh, headed that mission. Finally, after ensuring successful completion of its assigned tasks, the mission was wound up in December 1958.

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY FORCES IN WEST NEW GUINEA (WEST IRIAN)

Needful to state that the territory of West New Guinea (West Irian) had been a Dutch Colony ever since 1828 and was in possession of Netherlands. However, when Indonesia became independent in 1949, a dispute arose over the status of West Irian causing serious differences between the Governments of Netherlands and Indonesia. The UN undertook to resolve this dispute through its good offices which led to the establishment of the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) and the United Nation Security Force (UNSF) in 1962. Arrangements for a ceasefire were to be supervised by an Indian Officer, Brigadier IJ Rikhye, then the Military Adviser to UN Secretary General.† The Secretary General directed Brigadier IJ Rikhye to lead the Military Observers team that was to be provided by the six member States.‡ These countries provided a total of 21 Military Observers for the said purpose. Pertinent to state that, the Indian contribution consisted of provision of two Military Observers from its contingent serving in Congo at that time. Besides supervising the ceasefire, the UN Observers helped re-supply the Indonesian troops with food, medicines and assisted in regrouping at selected places. By September 21st, 1962 all Indonesian Forces were concentrated and 500 Indonesian political detainees had been repatriated. The Observers mandate had thus been fulfilled and all actions concerning the cessation of hostilities had been completed without any incident.

By now, Brigadier IJ Rikhye had completed the assigned task in accordance with the memorandum to UNSF. In May 1963, an elected Government of West New Guinea was established as a result of success of this UN mission. It was indeed a spectacular achievement and the contribution of Indian Brigadier IJ Rikhye in particular had been most significant.

UNITED NATIONS YEMEN OBSERVER MISSION
UNYOM: JULY 1963 TO SEPTEMBER 1964

It was in the early 1960’s that a Civil War broke out in Yemen in September 1962. In order to bring peace to the country and to its people, as a result of the initiative of UN Secretary General, U Thant, the UN Yemen Observer Mission (UNYOM) was established on 13th June 1963 for a period of one year.

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35 Krishna Rao, KV, op.cit, p.313
36 Spantech and Lancer, op.cit, p.42.
† U Thant was then the Secretary General.
‡ Member States are namely, Brazil, India, Ireland, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Sweden.
37 Krishna Ashok, op. cit, p.142
38 Spantech and Lancer, op.cit, p.37
The civil war in Yemen infact contained the seeds of wider conflict with international dimensions due to involvement of Saudi Arabia and United Arab Republic (EGYPT) and sharing of extended border by Saudi Arabia with Yemen. The mission comprised of 200 personnel with 25 Military Observers, including those from India. General Von Horn was appointed as the Commander of UNYOM. However, he resigned in August 1963. At that time Lieutenant General PS Gyani of India, then Commander of UNEF was temporarily appointed as Commander of UNYOM^39.

Major General IJ Rikhye of India also helped to organize and establish the UN Observer Group in Yemen. The tasks of UNYOM were limited strictly to observing, certifying and reporting in connection with the intention of Saudi Arabia to end activities in support of the Royalists in Yemen and Inventors of Egypt to withdraw its troops from Yemen. The mission in Yemen was finally closed in September 1964 on completion of its laid down onerous task.

United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
UNFICYP : January 1964 to December 1976

Cyprus, a British colony in the Mediterranean, became independent on 16th August 1960 under an agreement between Greece and Turkey. The ethnic composition of population ranged 80% as Greek Cypriot and Turkish minority population of merely 20% or so. Their mutual suspicion and politics led to conflict between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. Continued tension between the two communities came to head in 1964 and the Security Council established a peacekeeping force UNFICYP to police the green line between the communities in Nicosia^40. On January 17th, 1964, Lieutenant General PS Gyani was appointed personal representative of the UN Secretary General and later he was appointed as Force Commander of the 6400 strong UN contingent deployed in Cyprus. He was succeeded by General KS Thimayya, of India in January 1964 and remained in that post until his death in December 1965. Later, in December 1969 Major General Dewan Prem Chand, PVSM, of India was appointed as the Force Commander, who held that assignment till six long years with distinction^41.

United Nations Secretary General’s Representative in Dominican Republic
DOMREP : May 1965 to October 1966

A political crisis developed in the Dominican Republic towards the end of April 1965 resulting in civil strife that had considerable international repercussions, resulting into two rival governments. The military phase of the crisis took place mainly in Santo Domingo. This led to establishment of an Inter American Force on 6th May 1965 to operate under the authority of the Secretary General.

^39 Krishna, Ashok, op.cit, p.141-142.

^40 Krishna, Ashok, op.cit, p.141.

^41 Spantech and Lancer, op.cit, p.39
The main purposes of the mission were to help resolve normal conditions in the Dominican Republic, maintain the security of its inhabitants and inviolability of human rights. Also create atmosphere of peace and conciliation that would permit the functioning of democratic institution. Major General IJ Rikhye led the advance party to Santo Domingo with military observers from Brazil, Canada and Ecuador, acting as Military Advisor of the mission and represented India with pride in fulfilling the assigned tasks†.

UNITED NATIONS IRAN-IRAQ MILITARY OBSERVER GROUP
UNIIMOG : AUGUST 1988 TO FEBRUARY 1991

The war between Iran and Iraq, during the period 1980 till 1988⁴² was most violent since the Vietnam War. It was a national war and soon developed into an ethnic war with Arabs fighting Persians. However, when the war ended, the two adversaries accepted a ceasefire along the international frontier with no territorial changes the dispute over the line of border in the Shattel Arab River remained unresolved. Intensive UN efforts to end the long eight years war between Iran and Iraq resulted in formulation of the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG). It was established to verify, confirm and supervise the cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of all forces to the internationally recognized boundaries. A number of terms of reference were set out for the said mission‡. Further the mission also aimed to prevent through negotiations any other changes in status quo pending withdrawal of all forces to the internationally recognized boundaries, supervise, verify and confirm the withdrawal of all Forces to internationally required boundaries. Thereafter, the Force was to monitor the ceasefire on internationally recognized boundaries and obtain the agreement of the parties to other arrangements pending negotiations of a comprehensive settlement.

The UNIIMOG at its peak comprised of strength of approximately 400 all ranks, including 350 military observers. India contributed eight military observers in addition to the services of Brigadier VM Patil who was appointed as the Assistant Chief Military Observer (Iraq) and Indian National Senior. It is heartening to note that the Indian Military Observers performed their tasks in difficult areas with admirable dedication, professionalism and total impartiality⁴⁴. The mission was finally closed in 1991.

† The mission was finally wound up in October 1966.

⁴² Krishna Rao, KV, op.cit, p.316

⁴³ Spantech and Lancer, op.cit, p.45.

‡ The terms of reference being established with the parties agreed ceasefire line, monitoring compliance of ceasefire, investigate any alleged violations of ceasefire and restore the situation.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p.45.
Namibia, in the 19th Century known to be Swaziland was annexed by Germany in 1884. Germany retained its colonial control over Namibia until the First World War when an invasion by South Africa resulted in the defeat of German Forces in 1915. Namibia, was thus, handed over to South Africa by the League of Nations in early 1920’s as war reparations†. Later, in 1945 the UN requested South Africa to return South West Africa (Namibia) to the UN as one of their de-colonization measures. Ever since then, it has indeed been a long story of struggle for its transition to independence for the people of Namibia. For this purpose, the UN finally established the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in May 1989. Thus, 21st March 1990, Namibia’s day of Independence holds a special significance in the history of UN45. Needful to state that despite a UN Resolution, Namibia was one of the last of the African countries to gain independence from the colonial rule. It was under the mandate of South Africa which had been exploiting the mutual resources of the country for a long time. The South West African People Organisation (SWAPO) under Sam Nujoma and certain other local organisation were fighting for independence. Some of them were in fact functioning from the neighbouring countries and were assisted by the Cuban troops. South Africa on its part tried to put down the SWAPO Forces by all possible methods but could not succeed. Ultimately, they agreed to implement the above said United Nations Resolution. The United Nations took over the administration of Namibia to start with the idea of preparing and training the Namibians for administration46.

Thus, establishment of UNTAG was essentially more of a political operation since its very basic mandate was to ensure that free and fair elections could be held in Namibia. Accordingly, a varied variety of tasks were undertaken many of which in fact went well beyond those previously undertaken by more traditional operations. UNTAG operations had many novel features and constituted an evolutionary step beyond the traditional peacekeeping. The political process involved Namibia’s transition from an illegally occupied colony to sovereign and independent State. UNTAG, had to perform multifold tasks‡. UNTAG; thus, consisted of a diverse group of international military personnel and civilians to undertake the above stated multifarious tasks. The military component of UNTAG consisted of three enlarged and reconstituted Infantry Battalions, 300 Military observers and a number of logistic units. The total strength of the military component thus worked out to be approximately 4500, with its elements deployed in penny packets at almost 200 locations.

† Namibia was to administer the territory of South West Africa on behalf of League.

45 Spantech and Lancer, op.cit, p.49


‡ Tasks included monitoring implementation of the ceasefire, withdrawal and de-mobilization of troops, monitoring of local police, managing political ‘normalization’ process, supervising and controlling the resultant elections and finally assisting the transition to independence.
India had contributed a team of 15 skilled Military Observers, police monitors and electorate supervisors\textsuperscript{47}. The Indian Officers were mostly communications experts, specialists in boundary demarcation and experienced in monitoring elections. In addition to the above Indian contributions, Lieutenant General Dewan Prem Chand, PVSM of Congo and Cyprus fame was appointed as the Force Commander designate in 1980 and he had infact played an active part in the preparation for the UNTAG operations. His headquarters were established at Suiderh of base in Windhoek. He ensured cordial relations and close coordination with the special representatives and also between the military and all civilian components of UNTAG. Thus, needful to state that the Namibian success story owes a lot to the untiring and able leadership of this Indian General, whose dedicated services spread over a decade and UNTAG proved to be his last and most challenging UN peacekeeping assignment\textsuperscript{48}. During the 1980’s, Brijesh Mishra of India was also appointed as UN Commissioner for Namibia (1982-1987) and he helped the Namibians a great deal in preparing for their independence and overall success of the peace process\textsuperscript{49}.

**ORGANISATION DE NATIONS UNITÉS AND CENTRAL AMERICA**  
**ONUCA : NOVEMBER 1989 TO JANUARY 1992**

There was total turmoil for a number of years in Central America which finally led to the establishment of UN observer group, organisation De Nations Unites and Central America (ONUCA). It played a key part in peace process in the region and was deployed in December 1989 to verify compliance with security commitments undertaken by various Governments.\textsuperscript{†} Because of the nature of terrain in the region, ONUCA operations involved mobile teams of military observers patrolling from verification tents and smaller operational posts in forward areas. Patrols were carried out by land, air and even by river. India provided five military observers for ONUCA and aided in achieving demobilization of most of the armed groups and was successful in ending decades of bloodshed.

On 25\textsuperscript{th} August 1989, the UN undertook verifications of the electoral process of Nicaragua and established a civilian mission called UN Verification Mission I Nicaragua (ONUVEN). Needful to further state that subsequently the UN Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) was also an offshoot of ONUCA. These missions were greatly successful in bringing end to the ethnic clashes in Central America. India provided military observers for both ONUCA and ONUSAL till 1992. These observers earned good fame for their impartiality and contributed to the success of the mission by their unflinching dedication\textsuperscript{50}.

\textsuperscript{47} Spantech and Lancer, op.cit, p.49  
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, p.50  
\textsuperscript{49} Krishna Rao, op.cit, p.317  
\textsuperscript{†} Basically the governments of Costa Rica, Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.  
\textsuperscript{50} Spantech and Lancer, op.cit, p.55.
The United States has been unwilling to tolerate the Red Flag or any approximation to it being flown alongside national flags between the Rio Grande and the Panama Canal. **Doctrinal heresy in this regard has been punished by a number of means†.** In El Salvador, a left wing rebel movement, the FMLN (Farabundo Marti Liberation Front) challenged the right wing government with varying degrees of success, in spite of the American policy of linking military and economic aid with efforts aimed at democratisation. As far as Washington was concerned, the rebellion in El Salvador was linked to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and through them to Cuba and Moscow. **From the late 1970’s to the late 1980’s the Salvadorian Civil War is said to have cost up to 70,000 lives, mainly those of civilian’s.** Since early 1980s, Latin American governments were coming together to promote peace in Central America. They formulated the **Esquipelas Agreements,** which addressed Central America as a whole‡. In early 1990, the Salvadorean government and the FMLN began peace negotiations under the auspices of the United Nation. The establishment of an Observer Group (ONUCA) to verify security arrangements followed it.

However, the Security Council continued to extend ONUCA’s mandate until it was subsumed in ONUSAL, created by the Council in May 1991 to monitor agreements reached between the Salvadorean government and the FMLN to resolve the civil war, to promote democratisation, guarantee human rights and reunify Salvadorean society, ONUSAL began by monitoring the Agreement on Human Rights, investigating violations and following up action taken by the parties to correct them. **India provided seven military observers in the period from 1991 to 1993.** Further, on 26th July 1991 the UN Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) was launched to monitor al agreements concluded between the Government of El Salvador and FMLN (Frente Farabund Marti Para la Liberaco’n Nacinal). For this observer mission, India provided four Military Observers. The military observers contributed by India for both ONUCA and ONUSAL till 1992 earned a very good name for their impartiality, unflinching dedication and optimum efficiency, which indeed contributed to the success of both these missions.

In the after myth of the Gulf War in January 1991, the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq led to a military action against it by a multinational force with the consent of the UN Security Council. The UN Secretary Council imposed sanctions against Iraq and established a De-Militarized Zone (DMZ) along the Iraq - Kuwait border§.†

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† The means included total isolation including a comprehensive economic embargo without UN authority; sponsoring and arming rebel movements; and in the last resort when the military task was straight forward, full scale invasion.

‡ It dealt with national reconciliation and end to hostilities, democratisation, free elections, termination of aid to insurgents, non-use of territory to attack another State, control and limitation of weapons and international inspection.

§ Krishna, Ashok, op.cit, p.149.
Thus, the UN Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) was deployed in May 1991 in DMZ, straddling the Kuwait-Iraq borders to ensure the inviolability, demarcation with guarantee of the frontier between the two States with a view to avoid a conflict situation and thus ensuring peace. We may thus state that the categorical mandate of UNIKOM was basically to monitor the DMZ and Khawr’ Abd Allah waterway† between Iraq and Kuwait, to deter violations of the boundary through its presence in grid surveillance of the DMZ. A critical look at the operations of UNIKOM does dictate emergence of a specified pattern or concept of such operations. The concept of UNIKOM operations may be summed up to be monitoring of the withdrawal of any of the Armed Forces from the DMZ; operate observation posts inside the DMZ and on the main roads to monitor traffic in the DMZ; conduct patrols throughout the DMZ by land and air; monitor the Khawr’ Abd Allah from the observation post set up its shores and by air. Finally, to carry out investigations, when and where needed since UNIKOM is tasked to ensure inviolability, demarcation and guarantee of the frontier between the States52.

The mission has approximate total strength of 1100 personnel including over 200 military observers. Needful to state that in keeping with the national policy to support the UN in its peacekeeping endeavours, India has been providing military observers every year to the mission ever since 199153. As on date, eight military observers from India are presently deployed whose services have been commended from time to time due to their total dedication and impartial attitude.

UNAMIC was formulated with a number of aims which included helping the parties in conflict to address and resolve any violation of the ceasefire, maintain contact with SNCC (Supreme National Council Cambodia) on preparation for the deployment of UNTAC efforts in Cambodia and finally to prepare the grounds for safe and orderly repatriation of Cambodian refugees and displaced persons. For this mission in Cambodia India also provided six military observers whose services had been well appreciated as they contributed to the successful achievements of the above stated aims of UNAMIC‡.

† The DMZ is about 200 km long extends 10 km into Iraq and 5 km into Kuwait. The Khawr’ Abd Allah Waterway is about 40 km.

52 Ibid, p.149.

53 Spantech and Lancer, op.cit, p.59.

‡ The mission was finally wound up in March 1992.
United Nations Military Liaison Team in Cambodia

UNMLT: September 1993 to May 1994

Following the end of UNTAC’s mandate, the United Nations Military Liaison Team (UNMLT) was deployed in Cambodia on 15th November 1993 consisting of 20 unarmed military observers to maintain close liaison with the government and report to Secretary General on matters affecting security. India provided three military observers to perform this delicate task till the end of the mission†.

United Nations Protection Force in Former Yugoslavia

UNPROFOR: February 1992 to March 1993

Critical look at the historical records clearly highlight the facts that Yugoslavia, the multinational State consists of three major nationalities Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. It is noteworthy that despite their common Slavic roots and identical languages Serbs and Croats failed to live together in the same State‡. Further, it was at the end of World War I that the establishment of the ‘Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes’ took place which in 1925 was renamed as Yugoslavia, meaning ‘Land of the South Slaves’. It is pertinent to state that the ethnic bloodshed and breakup of the former Republic of Yugoslavia has been regarded perhaps as the worst tragedy of the European Continent since World War II54. Let’s not forget that Yugoslavia had been occupied during World War II, by the German and Italian troops.

The communist partisans led by Marshal JB Tito merged as the victorious political force after World War II. Later, Tito had preserved his State by a complicated balancing act between the three major nationalities and lesser minorities. During 1990 the federal authority in Yugoslavia ceased to function. Serbia’s attempts to re-establish a more central authority based on Belgrade with the ultimate aim of creating a greater Serbian State were opposed by Croatia and Slovenia and provoked their declarations of independence on 25th June 1990. The Croatian President gave no guarantee for the protection of minority rights. The pursuit of independent Statehood placed the Muslim dominated and encircled Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina in a dilemma leading to the subsequent declaration of its independence. These events led to ethnic conflicts and civil war in the area. The European Community managed a ceasefire. The UN involved itself in September 1991 and the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was thus set up†‡. The Force was to deploy in certain areas of Croatia designated as United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs), where special interim arrangements were required to ensure that a lasting ceasefire was maintained.

† This short mission was finally wound up in May 1994 having fulfilled its duty and assigned mandate of maintenance of close liaison with the government.
‡ Significant religious destructions too have been noteworthy since Serbs are basically Orthodox Christians, Croats and Slovenes are Roman Catholics. However, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there is a substantial Muslim Slav population.
54 Spantech and Lancer, op.cit, p.61
†‡ The Force was committed under Security Council Resolution 743 of 21 February 1992.
The UNPROFOR’s mandate was to ensure that the three UNPAs in Croatia were demilitarized and protracted from fear of armed attack. **Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar, PVSM, AVSM, VrC of India** was appointed as a first head of the mission and Force Commander of UNPROFOR in April 1992. This distinguished and brave General of Indian Army established this difficult mission with noteworthy depth of understanding and range of vision. He completed his assignment of one year with great distinction in one of the most complex mission undertaken by the United Nations. **Lieutenant Colonel Philip Compose** as his staff officer accompanied him.

Lt Gen Nambiar as the overall Force Commander had under him the Force strength for the original mandate of approximately 14000 which included 15 battalion sized units, military observers, civilian police monitors and international civilian staff for political affairs and administration. By end of February 1993, the Force strength stood at just under 25000 personnel making at that time, the largest operation undertaken by United Nations. It is noteworthy that the military and police personnel for the Force from about 35 countries around the world together with civilian staff made it a truly multinational effort the command of which was not only challenging but rewarding too as had been stated by the Indian General himself.

**UNITED NATIONS OPERATIONS IN MOZAMBIQUE**

**ONUMOZ : DECEMBER 1992 TO OCTOBER 1994**

After the collapse in 1974 of almost five centuries of Portuguese colonial rule in Africa, Mozambique entered one year in transitional government before gaining independence in June 1975. This was followed by a split in the main freedom party which led to 16 years of turmoil and devastating civil war. The economy was thus devastated and almost 1.5 million Mozambicans fled to neighboring countries. Towards the late 1980’s, Mozambique, formerly a Marxist-Leninist State, steadily moved towards liberalization and democratization. Mediation by the Catholic Church led to a General Peace Agreement being signed in Rome in October 1992 between the warring factions i.e. the Government and the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO). Thus, a United Nations Mission in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) was established on 3rd December 1992. The mission was mandated to perform various tasks. On establishment of ONUMOZ by about April 1993, the military component comprising the contingent for peacekeeping and the observer groups had been deployed to undertake the above tasks.

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55 Ibid, p.61.

† Subsequently, expansion of mandate entailed accretion of three small sized battalions for Sarajevo airport in July 1992, four reinforced battalions for Bosnia-Herzegovina in November 1992, one full strength Nordic battalion for Macedonia in January /February 1993 and additions to the complement of military observers, civilians police monitors and civilian staff.

56 Spantech and Lancer, op.cit, p.75.

‡ The tasks of mission being to monitor and verify the cease fire, separation and concentration of forces of two warring parties, their demobilization and collection, storage and destruction of weapons, monitoring and verifying the complete withdrawal of foreign forces, provision of security to the transport corridor, security of vital infrastructure and assistance in humanitarian aid.
The Indian contributions to ONUMOZ had been noteworthy. Indian Army contributed 18 military observers, 21 staff officers, two engineer companies, one logistic company and one headquarter company. During their tenure of duty all the above elements did a magnificent job. Both the engineer companies had carried out combat engineering tasks and various civil action schemes. The logistic company made provisions for transportation and supply cover while the headquarters company provided provost and clerical support. Thus, we may take pride in stating that the untiring efforts and total dedication of Indian officers and men have indeed done India and the Indian Army proud57. To this effect the appreciations of the than United Nation Secretary Mr. Boutros Ghali are well on record†.

**UNITED NATION OBSERVER MISSION IN LIBERIA**  
**UNOMIL : SEPTEMBER 1993 TO SEPTEMBER 1997**

Liberia, the second oldest black republic in the world (after Haiti) survived the decolonization of its neighbours without disturbance58. The American–Liberian elite had maintained control since 19th century and they continued for most of the 20th century. It was in 1980 that the American–Liberian rulers were overthrown by a bloody military coup led by master Sergeant Doe, who turned out to be a military dictator. Nine years later, some of his colleagues rebelled. The subsequent civil war destroyed the Central Government and law and order throughout the country, In addition it claimed the lives of more than one lakhs civilians. It also displaced both internally and beyond the borders about seven lakhs refugees. Several hundred deaths had already occurred in war between government and opposition forces. It is noteworthy that from the outset of the conflicts, the sub-regional organisations, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), undertook several initiatives aimed at peaceful settlement which had the support of the United Nations. However, regrettably these regional level initiatives proved to be without much success.

Consequently, the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) was established with a clear mandate to supervise and monitor in co-operation with the military observers group of the ECOWAS, the Cotonou Peace Agreement signed by the Liberian parties on 25th July 1993 and verify their impartial application by the concerned parties. It is important to note that the mission was assigned multifold important tasks‡ which in due course were executed with lots of determination and dedication.

57 Spantech and Lancer, ‘The Indian Army, United Nations Peace Keeping Force’, p.75
† Mr Boutras Boutras, Ghali acknowledged that, quote, ‘The Indian Troops, by virtue of their superior training, high standard of discipline and sense of responsibility, have had a significant contribution in ensuring the early return of peace in Mozambique’ unquote.
58 Krishna, Ashok, op.cit, p.156
‡ These tasks included disarming and demobilization of combatants, assist in maintenance of assembly sites, undertake humanitarian assistance activities, investigate and report human rights violations and finally to observe and verify election process.
UNOMIL consisted of 500 personnel including 300 military observers. The Indian Army contributed 20 military observers who were deployed in September–October 1993 for the first time in a UN mission undertaken by UN in co-operation with regional peacekeeping organisations. It was during this mission that a number of Indian Military Observers had to undergo various dangerous experiences like even being taken as hostages. Despite such tiring situations, the Indian military observers showed tenacity in adversity and rendered exemplary service in the cause of international peace. Thus, the Liberian peace process finally came to a successful conclusion, with the holding of the elections in Liberia in 1997 and installation of a new government in the country. The efforts of Indian Military Observers have been well appreciated.

UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION FOR RWANDA
UNAMIR: OCT 1993 TO MARCH 1996

The former Belgian colony of Rwanda has a long history of ethnic clashes between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes. It is worth noting that in Rwanda although the majority of the population belongs to the agricultural Hutu tribe but historical power has rested with the pastoralist Tutsis. Fighting broke out between the predominantly Hutu Rwandese Armed Forces and the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) across the Ugandan border in 1990. Ceasefires were arranged but broken and the warfare resumed in early 1993. OAU (Organisation for African Unity) and Tanzanian sponsored negotiations were in progress between the combatants. In light of the widespread violence between Hutu and Tutsi tribes both Rwanda and Uganda addressed the Security Council and UN Observer Mission Uganda – Rwanda (UNOMUR) was deployed. In October 1993 the Security Council authorized the establishment of UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) whose mandate included monitoring of the Security environment, gathering of information on revenge killings, investigations, resettlement of refugees and coordination of humanitarian relief. We may, thus, say that UNAMIR was to provide repatriation of about 900,000 Rwandese refugees and displaced persons.

On April 6th, 1994, the President of Rwanda (Hutu) was killed when a missile hit his aircraft. This led to the murder of the Prime Minister who was a Tutsi. Thereupon, an organized massacre of minority Tutsi community and moderate Hutu started. At this time the UN had only about 2,500 personnel in Kigali and not the equipment to quell what amounted to a sudden nationwide explosion of violence which saw a mass exodus and the killing of more than 250,000 people. The UN Secretary General recommended the induction of 5,500 UN troops but the UN due to high cost opposed the move. Sadly, 184 nations of the UN failed to generate a timely response to a call to the international community to send troops and supplies.

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*Spantech and Lancer, op.cit, p.97*

† *The Secretary General* said, quote, ‘I have failed, it is a scandal’ unquote. After some efforts 5,500 troops from *India*, Ghana, Ethiopia and Senegal reached Kigali in end 1994.
The Indian Contribution to UNAMIR consisted of an Infantry Battalion Group, one signal company, one engineer company, staff officers and military observers. The first infantry battalion was 1/3 Gorkha Rifles. The tasks assigned to this Indian army battalion were safeguarding UN installations, manning 23 security posts, patrolling the area of responsibility, providing escorts and security to the capital Kigali from irregulars and armed bandits\(^{60}\).

Needful to state that in their characteristic style, the Indian contingent performed its tasks with rare devotion and distinction. The significant contribution of the battalion included assistance in the move of over 70,000 internally displaced persons, movement of about 7000 prisoners to other areas, looking after eight orphanages, several schools and much required medical assistance to the local population. The Signal Company was the first such unit from the Indian army to provide communications to a UN Force HQ\(^{61}\). Both the Signal and Engineer Companies from India did render yeoman services in UNAMIR which was evident from the farewell address speech made by the UNAMIR Force Commander, Major General GC Tousignant from Canada. He indeed paid his rich tributes to the Indian contingent for the selfless services provided by these Indian peacekeepers.

**UNITED NATION MISSION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

**UNMIBH : DECEMBER 1995 -TODATE**

The Secretary General stressed the need for continuity of the mine information network and database established by the Mine Action Centre at UNPF Headquarters in Zagreb. **Four military mines information officers were detailed in Bosnia and Herzegovina** to maintain accurate records under the directions of the United Nations coordinator. **India has been contributing one military mines information officer for UNMIBH.** India has also always been in the forefront in de-mining activities. Needful to further state that in the recent times India has contributed immensely in the field of de-mining in Angola, Bosnia and Cambodia.

**UNITED NATION MISSION IN CONGO**

**MONUC : NOVEMBER 1999 -TODATE**

On 10\(^{th}\) July in Lusaka, Zambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), along with Angola, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe signed the Ceasefire Agreement for cessation of hostilities between all belligerent Forces in DRC. The Movement for the Liberation of the Congo, one of the two Congolese rebel movements was signed on 1\(^{st}\) August. The Agreement included provisions on the normalization of the situation along the DRC border, the control of illicit trafficking of arms and the infiltration of armed groups, the holding of a national dialogue, the need to address security concerns and the establishment of a mechanism for disarming militias and armed groups.

\(^{60}\) Spantech and Lancer, *op.cit*, p.93

\(^{61}\) Ibid,
The agreement also provided for a Joint Military Commission (JMC) composed of two representations from each party under a neutral Chairman appointed by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and proposed an ‘appropriate Force’ to be constituted, facilitated and deployed by the United Nations in collaboration with OAU. In light of the above, UN Security Council\(^1\) authorized the deployment of upto 90 United Nations military liaison personnel alongwith necessary civilian staff. However, need was felt for the expansion of the Mission. Accordingly, on 24\(^{th}\) February 2000, the Security Council\(^2\) authorized the expansion of the mission to consist upto 5,537 military personnel including upto 500 observers. The Indian Army is contributing 34 military observers in the mission, who are doing a commendable Job.

**UNITED NATION MISSION IN ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA**
**UNMEE : MARCH 2001 - TODATE**

Needful to state that when viewed at a glance the UN mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea was basically established to setup a buffer zone called the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) with a view to maintain a secure environment and assist an independent boundary commission in speedily delection and demarcation of the inter State boundary between the two countries. With regard to Indian contributions, to start with an Indian infantry battalion group i.e. 12 Maratha Light Infantry was initially deployed in the central sector in the UN mission in Ethiopia-Eritrea in relief of the SHIRBRIG in June 2001. Later, 27 Rajput replaced the 12 Maratha Light Infantry. The Indian contribution to this mission includes a Force Reserve Company and an Engineer Construction company. India has also a substantial representation on the staff of HQs UNMEE. This mission is covered subsequently in detail.

**UN TRANSITIONAL AUTHORITY IN CAMBODIA**
**UNTAC : FEBRUARY 1992 TO SEPTEMBER 1993**

The twelve years of conflict in Cambodia has been one of the most vicious in recent history. Years of UN initiatives finally led to the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement in 1991. The Agreement assigned the UN an unprecedented role. A large mission called the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was set up to supervise refugees and above all, organize and conduct free and fair elections. Over 21,000 peacekeepers from 80 countries took part in this noble UN endeavor. Elections in May 1993 finally led to the installation of a popularly elected government in Cambodia in September 1993, thus successfully fulfilling UNTAC’s task.

\(^1\) Resolution 158 of 6\(^{th}\) August 1999.

\(^2\) Resolution 1291.
The most noticeable feature is that India decided to send its troops after a long gap of 25 years†. The Indian contribution to UNTAC was indeed considerable as its Army contingent consisted of Assam Infantry Battalion Group‡. Later, in March 1993, 1st Assam under command of Col AK Tiwari was replaced by 4 JAK Rifles which was commanded by Col A N Bahuguna.

The area of responsibility of the Indian unit included the three most politically sensitive provinces encompassing the under developed and rather large provinces of Kampong Cham, Svey Reng and Prey Veng. Indian Field Ambulance at Battambang also had Infantry Battalions from Malaysia, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Netherlands dependent on it. The vastness of the area of responsibility dictated a number of tasks for the battalion†‡. Need full to state that the unit took on these challenging tasks with utmost vigor and dedication. UNTAC was a success of restraint and tactful diplomacy of UN peacekeeping. The Khmer Rouge was to have been disarmed as per the UN treaty but they kept their weapons and remained in their strongholds. Consequently, other factions had to be given their surrendered weapons for their self-defence. The atmosphere was tense, punctuated by violence and intimidation and obstacles, which often seemed insuperable. Despite the dice being heavily loaded against UNTAC, elections took place as scheduled and all the participants accepted the results.

In Cambodia, the Security Council and the Secretary General were lead players from the outset in the meticulous pre-planning of the largest UN operation ever undertaken, surpassing even the Congo in size and scope. It implemented an executive mandate covering almost all aspects of the country’s life. The costs incurred were substantial. Cambodia provides the right example for future UN operations in analogous circumstances. In this case the international community displayed considerable commitments, perhaps due to a sense of guilt at the destruction of the country during Vietnam war.

4 JAK RIFLES

Needful to state that 4th Battalion the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles (Fateh Shibji) one of the oldest and most decorated battalion of the Indian Army was selected for ‘Peacekeeping’ operations as part of United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in 1993. The UNTAC for its ease of operations in Cambodia had been divided into 10 sectors of which Sector 5 E comprised of the provinces of Kampong Cham, Prey Veng and Svay Rieng. From time immemorial this area which is in and around the confluence of Mekong and Tonle Sap rivers has played the most crucial part in shaping the history of Cambodia.

† Troops were earlier sent to Gaza, wherein, they had participated in UNEF-1 till 1966 (During the intervening period from 1967 to 1992 only military observers were sent for various missions from India).

‡ Apart from this, a field ambulance, a mine training team, staff officers and 13 Military Observers also participated in UNTAC.

†‡ These tasks included disarming of armed factions, providing a secure environment for registration of voters, electoral security and protection of UN civilian members and their property.
Sector 5E was entrusted to 4 JAK RIF (Fateh Shibji). The Battalion assumed its responsibilities on 31st March 1993, barely a week prior to the commencement of the electoral process. As always, the unit accepted the gauntlet and set to work in real earnest. It implied that no political party could hope to form a National Government on its own without carrying Sector 5E with it. By the same token, the converse was also true. Should the National Army of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK) have decide to disrupt the elections by playing the percentage game, yet again 5E in all reckoning would have been its primary target. Thus, sector 5E held the key to the destiny of Cambodia.

UNIT’S IMPORTANT ACHIEVEMENTS

Ambush At Chamkar Leu (Photo-28)

‘C’ Company’s patrolling party consisting of one JCO and 20 OR left Trach Chas WU-2247 for Stung Trang WU-4160 in a jonga and 2x1 tons. At about 0900 hours when the patrolling was near Ph Trapeang Opei WU-3861, the leading vehicle came under effective heavy AK-47 fire. Immediately thereafter, probably one B-40 rocket, hit the fuel tank of the vehicle thus setting it ablaze. The small arm fire injured five of the six persons in the vehicles.

Despite their injuries the troops jumped out of the vehicles and returned the fire. The second and third vehicles, which were traveling at approximately 50-60 meters distance from each other stopped and the OR from these vehicles, started firing at their ambusher. The NADK thereafter engaged the other vehicles with AK-47 fire. Besides, they also fired four B-40 rockets at the second and third vehicles, but missed them. Due to the quick reaction of the patrolling and effectiveness of their fire, the NADK fled from the ambush site. Local sources later confirmed that two NADK soldiers were wounded and carried away from the place of incident by their comrades. Due to various restrictions imposed on Peacekeepers, the patrolling party did not give chase to the fleeing NADK soldiers. The casualties were evacuated by road to Chamkar Leu district HQ and then by helicopter to the German Hospital in Phnom Penh.

Notwithstanding the ambush, the remainder of the patrolling was ordered to continue on its planned move to Stung Trang, despite various reports indicating that the NADK had a camp which was covering the track Chamkar Leu – Stung Trang. The following day Major SN Jha, Company Commander, was ordered to personally lead a strong patrol from Trach Chas to Strung Trang and back (Photo-29). The offensive spirit of the Battalion continued unabated and this action besides raising the morale of UNTAC personnel and locals in the area had earned lot of praises for the unit. On numerous occasions NADK had fired upon troops of various units in Cambodia and in quite a few cases had even snatched their weapons. In fact a feeling had engulfed Cambodia that military units were afraid to face the NADK. This myth was exploded when the NADK ambushed the patrolling of ‘Fateh Shibji’.

† The Battalion was under the able Command of Colonel Ajay Nand Bahuguna, Kirti Chakra.
This is for the first time in the history of UNTAC that not only troops retaliated in self-defence in such a professional manner but also inflicted casualties on NADK. This incident had become the talk of Cambodia and unit was flooded with compliments. Mr Akashi, Special Representative of the Secretary General in Cambodia despite his hectic schedule, took time off to spend an entire day with the Unit which included visiting the platoons of Chamkar Leu and Stung Trang.

Lt Gen JM Sanderson, Force Commander, Brigadier General Klass Ross, Commissioner of Civilian Police and the Ambassador of India to Cambodia, Shri CM Bhandari also paid visits and praised the standard, professionalism and other dedication of the Battalion persons. Other civil dignitaries which visited the battalion were the Governor of Kampong Cham (Photo-30) and Primer Minister of Cambodia.

Realizing the importance of Civic Actions, the unit, despite its hectic schedule, undertook the tasks in real earnest. The common historical and cultural ties that exist between two countries also motivated the Battalion. Infact, the Indian soldiers always felt at home in Cambodia.

Cleaning of Pagodas

A concerted effort was put in to ensure the cleanliness in and around pagodas‡, to include minor repairs and clearing the undergrowth by sending regular maintenance parties.

Cleaning and Repairing of Village Wells. (Photo-31)

State of village wells was appalling by their constant neglect. A detailed plan was put into motion which entailed covering the wells from top, making a parapet around wells so that unhygienic water does not flow into them and cleaning and repairing the inner walls. Unit also tasked its medical teams to educate the villagers on hygiene and sanitation.

Provision of Water. (Photo-32)

There was an acute shortage of potable drinking water in some of the villages and the locals were forced to drink unhygienic water which resulted in increase of water borne diseases. The unit initially resolved this problem by using own water bowzer to regularly supply drinking water to these villages in the area of responsibility.

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† The UNTAC spokesmen during his daily briefing informed the press about the incident; Quote ‘the Spokesman then said that the attack against a convoy of Indian soldiers that had occurred yesterday in Kampong Cham province was now believed to have been conducted by the NADK. The Indian troops had retaliated very vigorously and fired six rounds of 60mm Mortar against their assailants as well as approximately 300 rounds of small arms and machine gun fire. According to UNTAC investigators, the immediate reaction of the Indian battalion had caused the attackers to withdraw rapidly. It was clear from their report that the NADK had not expected the UNTAC troops would retaliate in this fashion’ Unquote.

‡ These include pagodas at villages Tbong Khmum, Phum Pongro-Cheung Prey, Skon Market Cheung Prey, Dambe-Dambe (Provincial Town), Choutun Norom-Kampong Siem, Phum Andong Svay-Kampong Cham and Banthey Thomar Kampong Cham.
Repairing of Small Culverts and Construction of Diversions

Due to the poor surface conditions and constant neglect, the state of culverts had deteriorated and they had become unsafe. Using own resources number of culverts/diversions were repaired by the unit. There was a total lack of medical care in the countryside. So as to reach the masses and improve the health of the populace, this unit undertook on a number of activities†.

Medical Camps

Unit had conducted large scale medical camps in various villages. The response of the locals had been overwhelming. A large number of locals including those from neighbouring villages availed of medical and dental facilities. The diseases were basically due to lack of safe drinking water, malnutrition and poor personal hygiene. Unit had treated approximately 5000 patients at the various camps (Photo-33). The Doctors and Nursing Assistants were sent out with patrols on familiarization tasks and treated the villagers in remote villages. Soon, they started looking forward to these visits by patrol parties. For the first time in Cambodia, the dentist held camps in schools to treat the children as well as to educate them on dental care. These include dental camps at Prince Sihanouk High School, Kampong Cham, Primary school Ramul Kampong Seam and Primary School Krola Kampong Seam. Besides all the above, almost every day 20 to 30 civil patients were treated in each company MI Room by Medical Officers or the Nursing Assistants. The unit even treated and evacuated gun shot injuries and mine blast injuries. The government hospitals did not have adequate medicines and life saving drugs. Thus, in order to help them the unit had distributed medicines to hospitals and Non-Government Organisations.

Schools

Schools all over Cambodia were in a sad state. As students are the future of a nation, the unit took up the task of improvement/construction of schools (Photo-34) on a war footing. Six schools were adopted during the unit’s stay‡. The above resulted in Major repairs to existing buildings, construction of new buildings, construction of children parks and provision of new furniture for classrooms and repair of the existing broken furniture.

Metal Works Project

A metal works project was conducted in Kampong Cham for training in basic metal works like arc welding, gas welding sheet work and grill work in which 50 students had been trained. The students had picked up the basic professional skills very well and the items produced by them during training were not of very high quality including walking aids for the handicapped.

† These activities included establishment of medical camps, sending medical teams with daily patrols, establishing dental camps and free distribution of medicines.

‡ The adopted schools were Ankor Primary School, Krola Primary School, Ramul Primary School, Tameang Primary School, Beng –Basak Primary School and Beng – Kok Primary School
Driving School

To encourage self-employment, the demobilized soldiers were encouraged to learn driving. Three such camps were organized in Kampong Cham, Skon and Kamchay Mea. This unit had trained 185 drivers and some of them were thereafter employed by UNTAC.

Construction of ‘Fateh Shibji’ Children Park

Phnom Penh had only one Children Park which was overcrowded in the evening. It was near the Supreme National Council (SNC) building that ‘FATEH SHIBJI’ Children Park was constructed utilizing the swings, sea-saws etc manufactured in units metal works project.

Agriculture Implements

The locals were using rather primitive implements for cultivation. With the knowledge of Indian troops the unit had manufactured prototype agriculture implements like burrow, plough etc. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) representatives were very impressed with these and tried these implements to find their utility.

Thus, the humanitarian assistance provided by the unit went a long way in providing better qualities of life and improving the living standards of the Cambodian people.

UN OPERATION IN SOMALIA
UNOSOM - II: AUGUST 1993 TO OCTOBER 1994

Somalia occupies a strategic location in the Horn of Africa. War with Ethiopia over Ogden and due to the corrupt dictatorship of Said Barre, Somalia’s political and economic situation deteriorated steadily through the 1980s. Said Barre’s overthrow led to the emergence of some 15 political leaders (including General Aided and Ali Mahdi) which resulted in clan wars, famine and total lawlessness. Relief efforts failed despite UN deployment (UNOSOM-1) due to armed gangs who were either associated with Somali factions or operating independently and looted relief agencies. In early December 1992, the UN approved a large scale deployment of troops in Somalia (about 37,000), which finally took the shape of Operation Continue Hope in May 1993 (UNOSOM-II). 66 (Independent) Infantry Brigade from India† reached Mogadishu in August-September 1993 (Photo-35). The formation was to earn much praise in the ensuing year from the Somalis and from the UN for the manner in which it carried out its mission. Its Commander was Brigadier MP Bhagat.

66 (INDEPENDENT) BRIGADE GROUP

HQ 66 Mountain Brigade was earmarked for operations in Somalia during the month of December 1992. The Brigade acquired status of an Independent Infantry Brigade and was re-designated as 66 (I) Infantry Brigade Group. It had 21 major and minor units under its command.

† The Brigade comprised of 1 Bihar, 5 Mahar, 2 Jammu&Kashmir Rifles, 3 Mechanized (Mech) Infantry (1/8 Gorkha Rifles), a squadron from 7 Cavalry, 8,722 Light Battery, 6 Reconnaissance and Observation Flight, a troop of trawls and logistics elements.
Pre Induction Training

Preparation for induction to Somalia started at full scale. The Brigade HQ was split up into three functional groups to cater for preparation and necessary actions at Delhi, Bombay and Binnaguri which involved a series of major tasks†. Deliberate and concerted pre induction training of the Brigade commenced after it had concentrated at Delhi. Detailed briefings, conference and lectures were organized whereby the officers of the Brigade were educated in detail about the ensuing mission. Lectures and demonstrations were organized on urban insurgency drills. The concepts of peace making and peacekeeping were elaborately explained to all ranks upto junior most level and the importance of conduct of humanitarian operations were highlighted. Military Training Directorate of the Army HQ was approached for conduct of Somali language training for the personnel of the Brigade. A number of cadres on Somali language were conducted at Delhi Area location under the aegis of Military Training Directorate of the Army HQ.

Induction

Within India

During the month of July 1993, the 66 (I) Infantry Brigade Group started concentrating at Delhi and Cargo at Bombay. Sub units and troops from all over the country moved to Delhi and Bombay. A total of 11 military special trains were used for the purpose of this mobilization.

Move to Somalia.

The movement across the Indian Ocean started on 28th Aug 1993 and the final elements were inducted on 22nd October 1993. A total of ten Boeing 747, one Boeing 707, two AN 124, four RORO Ships and three Cargo ships were used during these two months for smooth induction of Infantry Brigade Group (Photo-36 & 37). The Area of Responsibility (AOR) of the Indian Brigade covered 2/3rd Southern Somalia, measured approximately 175,000 sq kms that was nearly 70% of the area under UNOSOM control. A large number of crops are cultivated throughout the year. Before the civil war there was a number of co-operative farming societies located in this area‡.

† The major tasks were to maintain constant liaison with Army Headquarters, preparation of passports for approximately 5000 persons, obtain government sanction within stipulated time frame, concentration of Brigade Group and assuming of Command and Control and establishment of liaison cell at Bombay to co-ordination move of cargo.

‡ The population of this region in the Indian Area of Responsibilities was nearly half the population of Somalia.
Military Operations

Somali Regions in the Indian Brigade Area of Responsibility

Out of the nine political regions of the Somalia under command UNOSOM Forces, five regions fell under the Indian Brigade Area of Responsibility. These regions were Bay Bakool, Gedo, Middle Juba and Lower Juba.

Mission.

The mission of the Brigade was to maintain a secure and stable environment for the continued advancement of political reconciliation, ensure economic development, conduct humanitarian relief operations and assist in the political rehabilitation process in the Area of Responsibility (AOR).

Tasks

The tasks assigned to the Brigade Group by the Force HQ were as under:-

- Assist in the ongoing political process in Somalia, which should culminate in the installation of a democratically elected Government.
- Enforce UNOSOM-II weapons policy by active patrolling and checkpoints.
- Provide protection for the personnel, installations and equipment of the UN and its agencies.
- Support the UNOSOM policy of voluntary disarmament and demobilization.
- Occupy, secure and defend key areas like, airports and sea ports.
- Maintain and keep open lines of communication by picqueting and removing all roadblocks.
- Escort UN humanitarian and logistics convoys.
- Occupy and secure key population centers and cross roads.
- Conduct humanitarian relief operations in the Area of Responsibility.
- Help with the repatriation and resettlement of refugees and displaced personnel.
- Check and curtail banditry in the Area of Responsibility.
- Raising and training of Somalin Police and prison guards.
- Assist in the re-organisation and revival of the Judiciary in the Area of Responsibility.
The policy of the Indian Army in Somalia was based on the fact that the
Indians had found that clan priorities overrode national ones. The policy of using
force to bring about peace was a failure from the start for many of the earlier
UN contingents and had aroused the dislike of the Somalis. The UN just did not
have the Force to block the routes followed by arms traders. The Indian strategy
was therefore to build peace as much as possible with consent of the Somali
people and with an adequate amount of emphasis on humanitarian
assistance. To illustrate, Brigade Headquarters made it absolutely essential to
obtain the consent of the leaders of the different factions and important
decision makers in the community before introducing any scheme. It was
important to get such consent before carrying out even a comparatively
simple cordon and search operation. It was also necessary to brief the Somali
leaders after an operation so that they were with the formation and they learnt of the
good work done by the Brigade. By October 1994, when the Brigade had been in
Somalia for two months the situation in their area had improved considerably while
it had continued to deteriorate in other areas. Indeed, by October 1994 out of
some eight and a half political regions under UNOSOM control, the Indian
contingent controlled five. It had set Five Regional Councils and 18 of the 22
District Councils. Normal life was beginning to return, schools were
reopening, farms were beginning to be cultivated and Somalian’s were
beginning to move to and fro between villages and the city to trade. However,
the worsening situation elsewhere did indicate how fragile the situation had
become.

The application of large UN military forces is sometimes
counterproductive. In Somalia it was better if a response to a problem was
quick and efficient. It was vital that the response was coupled with the
dissemination of the information to Somali elders and decision makers. The Somalis
had to be taken to the site of the problem at the earliest moment. This meant that
each Indian post had to have transportation available and sometimes a well planned
air effort was also required. In many cases, Force hardly had to be used and the
Somalis took it on themselves to defuse a conflict situation. Most of the UN
contingents in Somalia were briefed on Somali culture but few had the inbuilt
aptitude to deal with the Somalis. There was a vital need to select and train officers
with these aptitudes, who enjoy talking and dealing with people of other cultures. It
was vital for they would have to hold key appointments in future UN Missions.

For more than a year the Indian contingent helped to restore peace to
war torn Somalia. The task was not an easy one; twelve members of the
brigade died in Somalia. Then, as the time for the Indian withdrawal drew
near the situation became tense for some Somali clans were growing
belligerent. A speedy naval evacuation was the obvious answer but an
international naval task force proved difficult to assemble. Western countries
appeared reluctant to co-operate. The Americans had finally left Somalia in
March 1994 and Somalia was designated as a ‘quiet’ area, even though the
reality was very different.
It was then decided to send an Indian Naval Task Force to bring back the brigade. Indian Navy made its valuable contributions†. On December 6th, 1994, another Indian Naval Task Force set off from India to bring back the formations‡. Members of the naval staff and Commanding Officers from the Brigade met regularly and problems were settled as they arose on board INS Ganga. On December 9th and 10th the Ro Ro ship and cargo ship from Bombay berthed at Kismayu. The Task Force sailed north from Kismayu on the night of December 11th/12th and arrived in Mogadishu the following afternoon. Here it provided support for the other troops of the Brigade until the final evacuation on December 23rd. The meticulous planning and organisation of the Indian Task Force gave 66 (Independent) Brigade complete protection during their evacuation. There were no causalities or damages to equipment. This was the first instance in the history of the United Nations that an Asian Naval Task Force had been deployed for such a task.

As is well known that, Somalia is a flat and arid land with few resources. Water is so scares that it is often sold in Somalia and many of the conflicts in the country take place over who controls the water resources. Two rivers the Juba and the Scelbi flow through the southern part of the country which was the area given to Indian Brigade. It was the most fertile part in the entire country. Many factions wanted to control the Indian Area of Operations and the Indians thus had to work with most of the 15 political leaders including General Aidid and Ali Mahdi. The Brigade was responsible for some 170,000 sq kms with a population of three and a half million which is nearly half of the estimated total population of the country. The policy of the Indian Army in Somalia was somewhat different to that followed by the UN contingents that had come from some 28 other countries. The major clans in Indian Brigade area had been farmers or businessmen. It was soon the Indian Brigade’s view that the incursions into militia and banditry were because of lack of opportunity for a peaceful existence. There had been a bitter Civil War for over four years. One clan would encroach on the land of another and smaller wars would result.

The United Nation’s intervention was noble in concept but was not made with the consent of the people‡†. The UN Security Council Resolution 794 (1992) had given the military contingents wide powers.

† The importance of Indian Naval contribution can well be appreciated as during induction in 1993, three ships including the INS Survana had brought 66 (Independent) Brigade to Mogadishu from India.

‡ It consisted of the frigates INS Ganga, Godavari, and a logistics ship, INS Shakti, under Commander P Kaushiya.

‡† Unintentionally, some of the early policies initiated by the UN to form a Somalian government away from or outside some of the Somalia factions frequently led Somalia to demonstrate their growing dislike and finally their hatred towards the Blue Berets.
However, the policy of using force to bring about peace was sadly a failure from the start for many of the earlier UN contingents had aroused the dislike of the Somalia. They were unwilling to forget earlier problems. The strategy of the Indian Brigade was based on firm principles i.e. to make resources available to the Somalia population including the all-important water so that potential conflict could be avoided, to win trust, confidence and respect from the Somalia so that Indian officers could resolve conflicts before these became serious. For example, there were only two Zone Officers in the Indian Brigade Area of Operations so that Indian platoon and company commanders found themselves representing all the agencies of the United Nations with whom the Somalis were discussing the issues, which mattered.

To build peace as much as possible on the consent of the local people for example, a cordon and search operation to flush out bandits was much more effective if it was made with the agreement of the Somali decision makers. Bandits and militia were terms frequently used within the country; the terms are synonymous. The militiaman became a bandit when driven since there were no codes of conduct. However, well-armed young men were able to wander where they wished and had a plentiful supply of Khat, the intoxicant weed so heavily in demand that it was flown in from Kenya on a daily basis strong and effective military action was frequently needed.

Yet, a question comes to one’s mind is that, what was the job of Indian Force? Based on the strategy, it seemed obvious to begin with, especially to the first members of the UN Force to arrive that disarmament was the main solution. The Indian Brigade soon came to believe though along with many others in the UN, that however desirable this could not be achieved. For the Somalis, the personal weapon is part of his being and he resisted violently any effort to make him surrender his weapon in the absence of a foolproof alternative. Any amount of weapons could be brought into the country through Somalia’s open borders with Ethiopia and Kenya. Neither the United Nations nor the Indian Brigade had the will or the force to block the routes followed by these arms traders.

The Indian Brigade had now evolved an organisation which had a 30 per cent humanitarian bias. This was being set up in a Somalia where anarchy had prevailed and many of the buildings were burnt to the ground. Indian’s had worked out the policy from the first day they landed in Mogadishu. Indian asked for a good four weeks in Mogadishu in September 1994 to concentrate and indoctrinate the Brigade. Units used this time to study the situation on the ground and learn about their new tasks. Indian’s were given the limited task of guarding the Bypass Road but most of the time was spent in learning how in the Indian’s view the problems needed to be tackled.
The Indian’s learnt how important it was to brief the Somali leaders after an operation so they carried them along. They learnt of the good that had been done by the Brigade. Again and again, Indian’s learnt that disarmament, as the principal policy to bring about a secure environment was wrong. Study of the ground and the Somali psyche showed that disarmament was not feasible with the limited troops and resources available to the UN. Every UN venture has to remember that theirs is almost certainly a short term deployment. A vital part of their job was, therefore, the creating of viable police/paramilitary force able in future to take over security from UN military contingents.

The Indian’s learnt to train such forces; sadly, too many agencies handled military police affairs in Somalia with the result that a well-established police force had not yet taken root in the country. It was self evident that UN agencies and non-governmental organisations played important roles in the humanitarian mission. What had yet to be done was to learn how to establish ways in which they and their work can be placed in framework of operations. Zone officers in Somalia had one humanitarian coordinator who was supposed to coordinate the work of the non-governmental organisations. However, since everyone had to be linked to security, the coordination of humanitarian work was eventually undertaken by the Indian Brigade in the area by weekly and daily conferences held under the Brigade Deputy Commander. Zone Office officials, the Humanitarian Officer, the UN agency co-ordinator, the representative of the military units in the area attended most of the meetings, also of course, the Somali district officials and Somali peace commissions.

The different UN Headquarters in Somalia were, perhaps, handicapped because so many units had landed in Somalia with their organisations all set up before they arrived. Many had been worked out in staff colleges in the home nations and along rigid lines i.e. not with concern enough flexibility. However, the humanitarian aspects of the mission in Somalia meant that brigade and unit headquarters had to work with Zone officials, Somalis, non-governmental organisations, the Somali police and others in the way that have already been explained. This meant that the first headquarters had to be quickly reorganized in order to deal with these agencies. Some contingents found it easier than others.

The Indian Brigade started two newspapers whilst they were in Somalia, Sadly, they did not have a radio station! The Indians were determined to develop their media and to tell the Somalis what the Indians were doing to help their country. For the same reason they carried out weekly briefings of key Somalis.

† There was lopsided growth in the judiciary, district councils and prisons and this tended to create divisions within each district so that each institution might find itself working at cross purposes with each other.

‡ The meetings were held for the benefit of the NGOs and after teething troubles, they proved highly beneficial in creating an environment of mutual trust and confidence.

†‡ Summing up, formation and unit commanders had to be chosen for their flexibility and their ability to modify their organisations tables so as to improve their effectiveness- quickly.
Not only did these keep them informed but it gave them an opportunity to air their own views. Future UN contingents should thus, work out such necessary plans well in advance and more importantly make sure that they have the resources available before they arrive. This means spending time in working out a media plan during the early reconnaissance of the area in which the UN Mission is to be placed.

It be noted that the UN will have to find ways and means to maintain their neutrality and yet, at the same time, learn how to develop peace and security without going too far or to put it another way without over-stepping the line and threatening the sovereignty of nations, however weak or under developed those nations might be. Military contingents such as our Indian Brigade will continue to be part of UN missions. People who live in a secure environment are fortunate. Those in Somalia, the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda exist in environments where peace people enjoy is not to be found. This is a challenge to military commanders of all nations that may be entrusted with future UN peacekeeping operations. The Indian Brigade developed its own approach in Somalia. However, no situations will be alike. What is for certain is that there are no hopeless situations that goodwill and military skill cannot overcome. The Soldiers have been and even today can hope to bring peace in this world.

**Humanitarian Operations**

The concept of Indian Contingent’s humanitarian operations had been to win the hearts and minds of the people, bring in awakening in the Somalis that Somalia is their country and they should take pride in being Somalis, give healing touch to the suffering of famine and civil war, thereby ensuring a peaceful and secure environment in the Indian Area of Responsibility. Frequent inter clan fighting in the Indian Area of Responsibility had affected the NGO’s relief operations. It was first priority to create conducive atmosphere for relief operations as also generate confidence in the NGOs about Indian Army’s way of functioning.

**Medical Aid**

320 Field Ambulance in remote villages of Somalia organized a total of 40 medical camps (Photo-38). These medical camps were over and above the regular medical camps being run at Battalions and Brigade HQ. A total of 1600 patients from remote villages were treated. 320 Field Ambulance had 20 doctors including two surgeons, two anesthetists, one orthopedic surgeon, one medical specialist, one pathologist, one radiologist, one preventive medicine specialist and one dental officer. A total of 1, 76, 249 patients were treated by Indian doctor’s at Military Hospital of 66(I) Infantry Brigade Group.

**Veterinary First Aid Cadre**

A total of nine Veterinary First Aid Cadres were run in Indian Area of Responsibilities by Remount Veterinary Corps detachments of Indian Infantry Brigade Group. Out of these, eight were basic training cadres and a total of 600 Somalis were trained in giving first aid to various animals. One Veterinary Advance Training Cadre was also run for 151 Somalis. Like other medical camps even veterinary camps were organised to treat the animals (Photo-39) and likewise water points were also established for animals (Photo-40).
**8722 LIGHT BATTERY**

The unit received orders for its maiden overseas tenure while it was still at Binnaguri under command of 20 Mountain Artillery Brigade. Lt Col S Bose was commanding the unit at that time. **8722 Light Battery was nominated to represent the Regiment at UN mission in Somalia.** Major M Malhotra was commanding the subunit. The subunit reached Somalia in two groups; **first group** was led by Capt R Menon which left for Somalia on 13th November 1993, where as the **second group** was led by the Battery Commander and embarked on 16th December 1993. The Battery functioned in Somalia under the aegis of 66 (I) Infantry Brigade. **The sub unit was initially stationed at Mogadishu where it had a unique experience of matching shoulder to shoulder with troops from other countries†.** After some time the subunit was shifted to Baidoa. There it relieved French troops, who were looking after the airport security. The Battery was given a major task on 1994 New Year’s Eve celebrations which was celebrated in a gala style under the UN flag. The subunit managed to build good reputation among the civilians and over a period of couple of months the battery managed to dig five bore wells as part of civic action. This helped to earn the good will of locals in next few months and was quite instrumental in reducing the casualties /damages of any kind in that location in its complete tenure. The troops had even to undertake the challenging tasks of diffusing of bomb on the outskirts of Baidoa (Photo-41) in addition to the other assistance provided by them to the people of Somalia. **The Battery served for 14 months in Somalia and returned back to native land by 16th December 1994.**

**7 CAVALRY**

It was a matter of great honour for the unit to have been selected as part of the Indian Contingent to represent UN Forces for operation UNOSOM-II in Somalia. The mission was for duration of one year. **The selection of the men, the equipment, technical back up, spare parts for the tanks and B vehicles and administrative loads were to be carefully worked out to ensure that operational efficiency of the unit was maintained at all times.** The induction of the unit was in a phased manner i.e. the stores and vehicles were to be moved to Bombay for onward journey by ship to Somalia. The personnel concentrated at New Delhi to move with limited administrative loads by air. Further, the move necessitated final co-ordination with regard to a number of issues at hand‡. All vehicles were painted white with UN markings and all 14 tanks were carried after a thorough check.

In order to motivate the men and obviate the consequences of a prolonged stay out of the country and routine duties, the welfare of troops in terms of entertainment was important. Audio/Video visuals, sports facilities both indoor and outdoor were also carried to the area. Since the mission in Somalia required a healing touch to the war torn population, civic action and humanitarian attitude towards the locals was immensely important. A number of articles for the women and children were brought for distribution. The Squadron was given strength of 6 Officers, 11 Junior Commissioned Officers and 118 Other Ranks. This included one Junior Commissioned Officer & 13 Other Ranks of EME posted to the Squadron to provide repair cover for the tanks. A balance was kept in deciding the various trades and categories.

† Other countries namely; US, France, Pakistan, Italy and Thailand.

‡These issues pertained to move of stores by special train to Bombay, move of the personnel to New Delhi, collection of stores from various depots specially ammunition and move it to Bombay by road/rail etc.
The special train left the permanent location on 21\textsuperscript{st} August 93 and reached Bombay on 25\textsuperscript{th} August 93. The intervening period upto 20\textsuperscript{th} September 93 was used to organize the load into various lots, branch and category wise. The loading dimension of the ships had to be kept in mind. This period at Bombay was also important for the squadron as some of the squadron stores, ammunition and spares were being brought in from various places. These had to be packed for loading. The stores not required in the mission area were packed category wise to be left in the rear. Having completed the remaining formalities and establish a unit rear with one JCO & 13 men the main body left permanent location for New Delhi on 23\textsuperscript{rd} August 1993. The first ship (RORO) was loaded on 23\textsuperscript{rd} Sep 1993 and sailed off with Capt Jasbir Singh and his team on 22\textsuperscript{nd} September 1993. This ship was scheduled to reach Somalia on 1\textsuperscript{st} October 1993. This necessitated that adequate men from the unit were present in Somalia to unload the stores.

Captain S Natarajan loaded the second ship on 25\textsuperscript{th} September 1993 and it sailed off on 27\textsuperscript{th} September 93 and reached Mogadishu on 10\textsuperscript{th} October 1993. All the men had to reach Delhi after loading the ship for their onward journey to Somalia by air. The ships reached Mogadishu on 1\textsuperscript{st} October 1993 and 10\textsuperscript{th} October 1993 respectively. The stores were unloaded and unit’s concentration in Mogadishu was completed on 22\textsuperscript{nd} October 1993. Further, there were neither any major breakages/damages nor losses of any kind of the unit stores. The troops having arrived in Mogadishu were located at Refinery area. Having organized itself in a week’s time the unit took all round defence for protection against the actions of the local militia and bandits. The unit security was organized to ensure round the clock vigil. It was done by way of sentry posts and patrolling guard. The town of the Mogadishu had been a place of fierce fighting between the militia and the UN troops\textsuperscript{†}. The tanks were however not employed. The unit was subsequently employed on convoy protection duties with B vehicles on the Main Supply Road (MSR) in Mogadishu.

**Move to Area of Responsibility (AOR)**

The troops then moved to their designated AOR in Kismayo on 1\textsuperscript{st} December 1993. The total geographical area covered by the AOR was approximately 68000 Sq kms. It had the Indian Ocean to the East with the second largest township of Somalia, Kismayo located on the coast (Map-3). The area to the West was the vast flat wasteland with virtually no habitation. The area close to the sea was sandy and relatively higher which merged into the flatlands to the west.

The town of Kismayo held the key to peace and stability in this region. However, the village along Juba River on road Mogadishu Kismayo was important to keep the only land route to Kismayo open. Kismayo had considerable poll awareness while the villagers given into wishes of the dominant clans in their areas. Shortage of food, lack of NGO support and mutual differences in the clan’s outlook led to regular disturbances in these areas.

\textsuperscript{†} The UN troops had undertaken a mission to flush out the militia on 3\textsuperscript{rd} October 1993. A troop of tanks of the unit with 6 rounds each of main gun were put on stand to, to take part in operation. Captain Joginder Singh and Capt R S Bagga carried out the reconnaissance.
Tasks Allotted

The unit was tasked as under:-

- Ensure security of the AOR.
- Man checking point Falcon in Kismayo town and carries out check of civil vehicles, personal for arms, ammunition and explosives.
- Check banditry along major communication arteries by mobile patrols and establishment of checkpoints.
- Disarm people in possession of unauthorized arms & ammunition and keep a check on illegal trade and movement of arms.
- Carry out 24 hours round the clock patrolling of Kismayo town.
- Escort and protect UNOSOM officials and VIPs.
- Obtain information and intelligence of factions through sound intelligence net work.
- Maintain a QRT at the Squadron HQ/Post for unforeseen contingencies.

Extensive briefings were undertaken to familiarize the men for the assigned task with the emphasis on a number of issues†. The unit was thus able to execute the assigned tasks with utmost care, certainty and optimum efficiency. There by, earning a good name for itself in the history of Indian Peacekeeping.

De-induction

A Joint Planning Committee team on behalf of the Chairman Chief of Staff Committee of India led by Lt Gen Vijay Oberoi, AVSM, VSM, DGMO alongwith AVM VK Bhatia, AVSM, VrC visited the Indian Brigade in Somalia from 17th September 1994 to 20th September 1994 and had discussions with the Commander and staff on the overall UNOSOM withdrawal plan from Somalia. The Brigade commenced de-induction on 26th October 1994. The theme of the movement plan was ‘Home by Christmas’ which was actualized with the last elements landing at Delhi on 23rd December 1994. The success story of the Brigade not only added feathers to the standards of the Indian Army but had also helped the nation in pursuing its native interests.

† The major issues of concern included imparting knowledge of background to the civil war in Somalia and prevailing sit, the Somali clan structure, arms available with the militia and their modus operandi, security of own posts and areas of responsibility, essentials of patrolling and establishment of check points with tanks in areas of operations, humane behavior with the civil population and civic measures and importance of fire discipline and fire control.
Genesis of the Conflict

If we think of Africa as many people do i.e. as a flat, brown, sandy land with few trees and little rain, Rwanda comes as a shock to the senses. With lush green slopes enfolding much of the country, it is often called ‘the land of a thousand hills’. It is heartening to note that few events in recent history have generated as much confidence in the future and such high hopes for a better world as the fall of the Berlin Wall, symbolizing as it did the end of the Cold War. The specter of global nuclear cataclysm, which has haunted humanity since the dawn of nuclear age has receded and in its place has emerged the promise of an era of international peace freeing the energies of nations to work together towards economic and social progress for the whole of humankind.

However, sadly the record of world affairs over the past few years has largely belied those optimistic expectations. Many old conflicts continue to defy the efforts of the international community to bring about a settlement and new wars have continued to erupt. The end of the Cold War has neither brought in global peace nor has ushered a new international order. On the contrary, according to the Human Development Report 1994 prepared by the UNDP after 1991 the years Cold War was perceived to have ended. There were 82 conflicts, of these, 79 were within nations and only three were between the nations. This lopsided behavior reveals a striking change in the nature of conflict. In the last over 55 years or so, the casualty ratio between soldiers and civilians in conflicts between nations was 90:10. On the other hand conflicts within nations revealed just the reverse a casualty rate ratio of 90 percent civilians to 10 percent soldiers. Rwanda is one such sad example.

Rwanda has seen some of the bloodiest clashes in history with estimates of up to a million people, mainly Tutsis slaughtered in tribal massacres when the armies of Hutu led Rwandan Government Forces (RGF) and the Tutsi controlled Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) clashed following the death of the former Hutu President of Rwanda, Juvenal Habyarimana. The world awoke to reports and images of whole villages and people who had sought refuge in Churches and citizens on the run from warring groups being mercilessly slaughtered with machetes, spiked clubs and if they were lucky bullets fired from small arms. Not since Nazi Germany has the world seen such violence against a race of people on such a large scale. The country had risen to its feet ready to meet the challenges it faced for the return of normalcy. The Rwandan Government and the people of Rwanda worked tirelessly with the help of international community and United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) to make Rwanda a better place to live in.

1 Rwanda is a landlocked country situated just one degree south of the Equator in East Central Africa. It is on the watershed between the Nile and Zaire River basins and is one of the smallest countries in Africa having just about 26,000 square kilometer (km) area. She is bounded by Uganda in the North, Tanzania to the East, Burundi to the South and Zaire to the West. Rwanda has a total of 893 km land border with its neighbors (Burundi 290 km, Tanzania 217 km, Uganda 169 km, and Zaire 217 km). Amongst the four countries, Rwanda and Burundi share a similar ethnic composition.
UNAMIR has since its inception, been playing a very meaningful and satisfying role in restoring normalcy and helping rebuild Rwanda. The people and contributing nations of UNAMIR have formed together under the UN flag to bring peace to this war ravaged country. Before going through the background history of the Rwandan crisis, it is imperative to understand the overall problem of Central Africa. History reveals that the various tribes originally inhabited both countries. Then came the HUTUs from the North, hundreds of years ago, followed by the TUTSIs during the 18th century. Although these tribes were living peacefully under colonial rule, the TUTSIs took advantage of western education, socialization and became increasingly dominant. Being in the minority (around 14%) in both countries then virtually maintained themselves as the ruling class with authority over 84% HUTU majority. This TUTSI domination resulted in an innate hatred for them by the HUTUs.

The inter-ethnic violence that has been going on for decades in Rwanda and Burundi appears to be rooted in the suppression of one group and its exclusion from power using military domination by the ruling group. While in Rwanda the problem has been that the ruling HUTUs had been trying to suppress the minority TUTSIs, in Burundi the reverse has been the case. Prior to the colonial era, the system of governance in Rwanda had been through monarchy. The TUTSIs, being the ruling class, were the upper caste and they maintained a tender system based on cattle and exercised virtually total control over the majority HUTUs. The Belgians prolonged the feudal system and made it more exploitative producing deepened ethnic divisions and bitterness between the HUTUs and TUTSIs. This system advantaged the TUTSIs over the HUTUs for over 40 years and at the approach of independence of Rwanda, the Belgians switched support for the HUTUs. This sudden switch of support by its colonial master was one of the most sensitive causes of bitterness that has influenced Rwandan politics to date. In 1959, the majority HUTUs rebelled and overthrew the ruling TUTSIs.

In 1979, the Ugandan Government under President Milton Obote started prosecuting the Tutsi refugees. An influx of about 45,000 refugees fleeing from the prosecution forced the Rwandan Government to close its border with Uganda. The reason was that the Rwandan economy was incapable of sustaining the influx. Following this situation the Tutsis decided to join the guerrilla group of President Museveni who was at that time fighting to overthrow the government of Milton Obote.

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† It is well known that today’s Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi were once an area for which Germans and Belgians competed during World War I. However, the Belgians gained the upper hand and under the League of Nation’s mandate of 1919, established colonial rule in these three countries, which came to be known as the Belgian Congo. The problems in Rwanda and Burundi are similar.

‡ This rebellion led to the fleeing of over 1, 60, 000 TUTSI into the neighbouring countries of Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania and Zaire, while an estimated 20, 000 were killed. A UN supervised referendum brought victory to the HUTU led party known the ‘Party of HUTU Emancipation Movement’ (PARMEHUTU) in 1961 and independence was granted to Rwanda on 1st July 1962. The period after independence saw the TUTSIs making several attempts to return to their homeland. Their efforts became even more difficult when another coup d’etat was staged in 1973 by a HUTU, Major General Juvenal Habyarimana who refused to accept the return of the TUTSIs.
After Museveni’s victory in 1986, the Tutsi guerrillas organized their own resistance movement named the **Rwanda Patriotic Force** with the hope of receiving support from President Museveni’s ruling party. The period from 1982 to 1990 was marked by cross border refugee problems that soured Rwanda–Uganda relations. The economic and political conditions in Rwanda deteriorated sharply towards the end of the decade. Accusations of corruption, illegal currency dealings and nepotism by the Government were rife and the regime appeared to be experiencing considerable strain and some observers questioned its prospects for survival. Between November 1990 and July 1992, they gradually took a strip of land along a length of Rwanda’s border with Uganda. Life for ordinary people became dominated by news of arrests and sectarian killings. The tension was increased by all night curfews and the search for papers to authorize residence, identity and travel. Society was being gradually militarized and polarized between the racial groups. The horizons of life shrank to acute anxiety about what would happen during the next 24 hours. The conflict continued for close to two years until a ceasefire was negotiated in July 1992.

Following the resurgence of violence in February 1993, an estimated one million civilians fled their homeland and moved south or left the country for neighbouring Uganda and Tanzania. Although fighting continued, on 5th March 1993, an international conference was held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, which led to the signing of a cease-fire agreement and a joint communiqué between the two warring parties. Between others, this cease-fire agreement provided for the deployment of an OAU sponsored Neutral Military observer Group (NMOG). The resultant effect was the signing of the Arusha Peace Agreement on 4th August 1993, which had a number of salient points†.

The peace agreement also called on the UN to establish and deploy a neutral multinational force to assist in the implementation of the Arusha Agreement. Following the passing of UN Security Council‡, UNAMIR was deployed with mandate of six months. Between July 1993 and 6th April 1994, however, the accord had not been implemented. On 6th April 1994, while returning from a regional summit of Central African leaders President Juvenal Habyarimana’s plane was mysteriously shot down on its approach to Kigali airport killing all on board including President Cyprian Ntaryamira of Burundi. The death of these two men was followed by a horrific bloodbath that began in Kigali and spread throughout the country, claiming between 3, 50,000 and 5, 00,000 lives in eight weeks that followed. RPF took full control of Rwanda by 17th July 1994 and declared a ceasefire. Broad based Government of National Unity was established on 19th July 1994 for a transitional period of five years. The UN Secretary General recommended the induction of 5,500 UN troops. The UN due to high cost opposed this. Sadly 184 nations of the UN failed to generate a timely response to a call to the international community to send troops and supplies. After some efforts 5,500 troops from India, Ghana, Ethiopia and Senegal reached Kigali in end 1994.

† The salient points included establishment of a Broad Based Transitional Government (BBTG), integrate RPF and RGF into the National Defence Force, formation of a National Gendarmerie (Police), the return of refugees to Rwanda and the resettlement of war displaced persons.
‡ Resolution 873 of 5th October 1993.
The Indian Contribution to UNAMIR consisted of an Infantry Battalion Group, one Signal Company, one Engineer Company, staff officers and military observers. The first infantry battalion was 1/3 Gorkha Rifles. The tasks assigned to this Indian Army battalion were safe guarding UN installations, manning 23 security posts, patrolling the area of responsibility, providing escorts and security to the capital Kigali from irregulars and armed bandits. Needful to state that in characteristic style, the Indian contingent performed its tasks with real devotion and distinction. This significant contribution of the battalion included assistance in the move of over 70,000 internally displaced persons, movement of about 7000 prisoners to other areas, looking after eight orphanages, several schools and much required medical assistance to the local population. The Signal Company was the first such unit from the Indian Army to provide communications to a UN Force HQ. Both the Signal and Engineer Companies rendered Yeoman services in UNAMIR which was evident from the farewell address speech made by the UNAMIR Force Commander, Major General GC Tousignant from Canada, who paid his rich tributes to the Indian contingent.

1/3 GORKHA RIFLES

The Battalion formed part of United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) from 10th November 1994 to 19th April 1996. The Battalion was given the specific tasks of providing security of VIPs, safeguarding of UN Installations, convoy protections, transportation of IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) and Prisoners, patrolling and other operational tasks like RRF (Rapid Reaction Force).† Due to the professional conduct, smart turnout, smart drill movements, sincerity, dedication and devotion to duty, the Battalion earned volumes of praise and appreciation from the Rwandan Government, local RPA (Rwanda’s Patriotic Army), civil dignitaries including ambassadors, foreign armies, UNAMIR staff, NGOs (Non Government Organisations) and the Indian Community.

Imp Achievements and Milestones

Operational Activities. Operation activities of the Battalion were as under: -

- **Operation HOPE.** Battalion participated in Operation (op) HOPE on 14th-15th December 1994. This was a cordon and search op carried out in conjunction with the RPA in Kibeho IDP Camp. In this operation the battalion recovered large number of swords, spears and machetes. *(Photo-42)*

- **Operation RETOUR.** This operation was carried out to move all Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from the IDP Camps in South West Rwanda to their respective home communes. The Battalion provided transport and escorts and assisted in move approximately 7194 IDPs to their home communes. *(Photo-43)*

† Apart from the assigned tasks, the Battalion also voluntarily carried out a well-coordinated Humanitarian Aid Programme which included adoption of 12 Orphanages for provisioning of assistance, establishment of two medical clinics, helping Rwandan Government to decongest prisons by transportation of prisoners and helping in construction of prisons, distribution of cooked food and rations to orphans and arrange of entertainment programs for orphans.
**Kibeho Incident.** During the Kibeho incident, from 18th to 24th April 1995, the Battalion dispatched ten troops carrying vehicles with escorts for move of the IDPs from the IDP Camp to their home communes. The Herculean task was performed braving the heavy odds i.e. the firing, unruly mobs, bad roads, heavy rains and unmanageable hordes of IDPs and a total of 3068 IDPs were move out of the Kibeho IDP Camp.

- **Security of UN Installations.** The Battalion provided security to 13 key installations in Kigali†.

- **Security of Ndera Overnight Way Station (OWS).** Ndera OWS was an Overnight Way Station, which housed refugees/returnees on their way to their home communes. Day and night patrolling were conducted to provide security to the OWS. Humanitarian assistance in terms of emergency medical aid and transport was also provided. A large No of IDPs was moved through this OWS to their home communes.

- **Rapid Reaction Force.** This was a Motorized (Mot) platoon based on bullet proof vehicles from South Africa, ready to move at short notice, capable of responding to an immediate threat at section level. The Force was deployed on more than 20 occasions and its timely intervention helped in defusing many volatile situations.

- **Patrolling.** Vigorous patrolling of the Battalion area of responsibility was carried out until the mandate deleted this task on 9th June 1995 and the RPA took over the responsibility. Patrols were also sent into other sectors for area familiarization and carrying out liaison with other contingents. The basic tasks of the patrols were, ensure security of the area of responsibility, instill a feeling of security in the local population, obtain terrain and local information, carry out humanitarian activities and assistance, show the UN and Indian presence and to provide a deterrence to the RPA (in the initial stages) and the criminal elements from carrying out atrocities and insurgent activities against the local population.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

- **Government /RPA.** The Rwandan Government did not possess the basis infrastructure and resources to carry out even the most rudimentary of tasks. The Battalion established a healthy rapport with the Rwandan authorities and the RPA by providing much needed assistance to them‡.

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† These key installations being, UNAMIR Force Headquarters, Blue Beret Camp, Force Cdr’s Residence, UN Helicopter Hanger, Trafipro/UN administration base, 500 men Transit Camp, Transit Camp Annexes, Brown and Root Complex, UN workshop, Communication compound, UN Petrol Pump, UNHCR Headquarters and UNDP Headquarters.

‡ Main assistance provided was exchange of new currency, transportation and distribution of examination papers, answer sheets and education materials for the schools throughout Rwanda for the Ministry of Education, decongestion of the Rwandan prisons by move prisoners, assistance in prison administration so as to alleviate the sufferings of the prisoners, assisting the Ministry of Health by supplying medicines, hospital equipment etc, Shifting of rations for the RPA from Kigali to the various deploy areas and move of IDPs to home communes.
- **NGOs.** A number of NGOs functioned in Rwanda and they approached the Battalion for transport to move foodstuff, seeds, fertilizers, tiles for constructions of houses, farming implements etc.

- **Orphanages.** Assisting the rehabilitation of the orphans was one of the key areas for the battalion. The Battalion identified ten orphanages in the area of responsibility and they were provided the maximum assistance†.

- **Assistance.** The assistance provided to the orphanages included donation of rations and foodstuff, periodic medical check up and distributions of medicines, electrification and wiring of the orphanage buildings, provision of water tanks and repair of water pipelines, transport for shifting of orphans and their belongings, donation for presents during festivals, entertainment by Jazz Band, donation of Canteen Stores, tentage and cots and repair of approach roads and living accommodation.

- **Medical Assistance.** The Battalion had established two clinics for providing medical assistance to the locals. The Indian clinics became extremely popular within a short time so much so that Rwanda’s locals used to come from all corners of the country for medical treatment to these clinics, NGO staff as well as Diplomatic Missions staff were frequent visitors. The clinics treated at an average, 250 to 350 patients in the remote villages as a part of the humanitarian aid *(Photo-44).*

The Battalion earned a lot of respect and goodwill of UNAMIR, the local Government and even the RPA. The unit was well equipped administratively and this was well appreciated by UNAMIR. The RPA also expressed desire to train their soldiers in India after seeing the standards set by the Indian soldiers. During its tenure, the battalion was visited by a number of foreign dignitaries including UN Secretary *(Photo-45)* finally on its return to India was complemented by the then COAS *(Photo-46).*

**UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION**
**UNAVEM – I, II & III : JANUARY 1989 TO JULY 1999**

**Angola**

Angolan independence merged into civil war between the Soviet and Cuban supported **Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)** and the South African and American Supported National **Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).** The people of Angola became pawns in the artificial East-West confrontation as orchestrated by the Reagan Administration in 1980’s in search for Namibian independence.

† The ten orphanages provided assistance were as follows, Missionaries of Charity, Kigali, Missionaries of Charity, Kibungo, Masaka orphanage, Kigali rural, Belgium Red Cross orphanage, Kigali, Unaccompanied Children orphanage, Kigali, Shyogwe Orphanage, Rwamagana, Gatsata Orphanage, Celsea Orphanage, Gahini Orphanage and Centre Medical Social, Bilyogo, Kigali.
With the 1988 agreement on Cuban withdrawal and the beginning of implementation of the Namibian independence process it looked as if this artificial construct had served its purpose and that Angola might be able to contemplate peace after 30 years of armed struggle against the Portuguese, civil war and savage incursions by the Republic of South Africa. To begin with, a UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM-I), was established by the Security Council in 1988 to certify the northward redeployment and withdrawal of the 50,000-strong Cuban contingent. India provided some military observers during the period 1989-91. In March 1992, the Security Council agreed to plan UNAVEM-II that would observe and verify the forthcoming elections with the consent of the parties. India again sent a few observers. The elections were conducted. The MPLA won 57 per cent of the votes of UNITA’s 31 percent in the Parliamentary elections. UNITA cried foul and resumed the war. Nearly 3.5 million people were displaced/drought affected and in need of various forms of aid as a consequence of the war. Appalling reports of sieges and massacres proliferated. By 1995, UNAVEM-III came into being. India sent a contingent of an Infantry Battalion (14 PUNJAB relieved by 16 GUARDS a year later) supported by Engineer Company (417 Field Company, later replaced by 386 Field Company) and other elements totaling 1,014 all ranks. The unit was deployed in the northern region of Angola for peacekeeping†. In Angola, the UN was a peripheral participant in a settlement drawn up by others with an inadequate mandate and operating with insufficient personnel on shoestring budgets. Its half-hearted performance is a lesson in how not to do it.

Angola, a country one-third the size of India, tucked away on the South West coast of Africa struggled to seek peace which had eluded its warring factions for over two decades. The sheer magnitude of the loss of lives, rampant destruction of property and complete break down of the administrative machinery led to the setting up of United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM) in an attempt to bring normalcy to the war torn country. Having limped and struggled through revised mandate, it led to the selection of 14 Punjab (Nabha Akal) Battalion Group as part of peace keeping troops was UNAVEM-III. As is the case with all contingents designated for such a mission this Battalion Group too underwent a rapid transformation from an elite fighting force to a peace keeping one.

EVENTS LEADING TO UNAVEM-III

The People’s Republic of Angola lies on the Atlantic Coast and is bordered by the countries of Zaire, Zambia and Namibia. In terms of mineral resources it is one of the richest countries in Africa. The arrival of Portuguese in 1648 saw an increase in slave trade and establishment of a number of trading posts along the Angolan coast graduating into total domination of the country by the 19th century.

† In addition, 19 military observers and 49 staff officers were also sent and they were deployed in Zaire, Ulge and Bengo provinces.
Struggle for Liberation.

After warding off the struggle of national movement against colonial rule for fifteen years, the Portuguese Government granted independence to Angola in 1975. Three major factions contended for power†.

Super Power Involvement and Peace Efforts

The post-independence period witnessed the escalation of civil war as the Popular Movement for Liberation of Angola; controlling the capital city Luanda battled the alliance of UNITA and National Front for Liberation of Angola. The USA and South Africa supported both the UNITA and National Front for Liberation of Angola whose success against the Popular Movement for Liberation of Angola was countered by Soviet support and Cuban intervention in 1975, early 1976. The Angolan support for South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) was cited as the grounds for trans-boundary military excursions by South African troops. UNITA made considerable territorial gains in early 1980 and was able to control most of South Eastern Angola. However, by 1986, the Cuban presence rose to 50,000 troops. As a result of sustained US efforts, Angola, Cuba and South Africa signed an agreement in 1988 related to the withdrawal of Cuban troops which was completed by 25th May 1991 with establishment of UNAVEM-1.

The changing political ideologies amongst the super powers encouraged attempts to bring peace to Angola. The signing of ‘Accords de Paz Angola’ between the People's Republic of Angola and the UNITA took place on 31st May 1991. As a result, Security Council extended the former UN presence by establishing UNAVEM-II with the end objective of holding multiparty elections by September 1992. The electoral process fraught with severe administrative and management problems was completed behind schedule. The initial results in favour of the MPLA and President Dos Santos caused the UNITA to denounce the elections as a fraud on 3rd October 1992. However on 17th October 1992, the final results were announced and despite the UN declaring them as free and fair, UNITA refused to accept them.

Return to Civil War.

Violence broke out between the UNITA and the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) on 31st October 1992. The UNITA suffered heavy casualties and several of its members were taken prisoners. UN mediation led to a ceasefire on 3rd November 1992 but the agitating UNITA went back to the bush and resumed fighting the FAA‡.

† The Popular Movement for Liberation of Angola led by Agostinho Neto and later by Dos Santos, the National Front for Liberation of Angola led by Holden Roberto, the National Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) led by Jonas Savimbi.

‡ Thus, the occupation of Urge and Negage by the UNITA on 29th November 1992 and the Government launching well co-ordinated attacks on Lumbago, Lobito, Benguela, Namibe, Saurimo, Luena and Dundo on 3rd June 1993, heralded the escalation of the civil war to a new high.
UN Mediation

The mandate of UNAVEM-II kept getting extended as efforts to broken peace between the two warring factions failed. UNITA's constant refusal to withdraw from illegally occupied areas invited sanctions on supply of weapons and fuel on 23rd September 1993. Meanwhile, the Security Council extended the mandate of UNAVEM-II till 15th December 1993. UNITA's acceptance to participate in the Lusaka Talks meant that the sanctions were not enforced.

Lusaka Protocol

The progress at the talks was excruciatingly slow resulting in several extensions of the UN mandate. Finally on 20th November 1994, the Angolan Govt and UNITA signed the Lusaka Protocol in an effort to bring lasting peace to the country†.


The involvement of United Nations in Angola commenced on 3rd January 1989 with the setting up of UNAVEM. UNAVEM-I was from 20th December 88 to 30th June 1991 with the aim to verify and oversee the withdrawal of Cuban troops completed successfully by 25th May 1991. At the request of the Angolan Govt, the UN decided to prolong the presence of UNAVEM-I in Angola primarily to verify the implementation of the peace accord signed on 17th May 1991. On 30th May 1991, the Security Council established UNAVEM-II by entrusting a new mandate aimed at monitoring and verifying the ceasefire and activities of the Angolan police. Subsequent extension of the mandate of UNAVEM-II at irregular intervals continued with minor alterations in its provisions. On 8th February 1995, the Security Council once again adopted a resolution authorising the establishment of UNAVEM-III. The mandate of UNAVEM-III laid down the maximum deployment of 7,000 military personnel in addition to 350 military observers and 260 police observers.

† The salient features of the Lusaka Protocol were: -

- Acceptance of Security Council Resolutions and re-affirmation of ‘Accordos de Paz’ by both sides.
- Cessation of hostilities by enforcing the re-established ceasefire.
- Disengagement of troops on both sides.
- Withdrawal, quartering and demilitarisation of UNITA forces under UN supervision and concurrent barracking of FAA.
- Completion of formation of unified Angolan Armed Forces and demobilisation of excess troops.
- Quartering of Rapid Reaction Police (RRP) under UN supervision and incorporation of UNITA into Angolan National Police (ANP).
- Working out of modalities for UNITA's participation in the state administration and diplomatic missions.
- Holding of second round of Presidential elections.
Mandate of UNAVEM-III

The UNAVEM-III was established by UN Security Council† and the deployment of the Blue Helmets started by second quarter of 1995. The main elements of the mandate pertained practically for all relevant fields.

Military Mandate

- To supervise, control and verify the disengagement of forces and to monitor the ceasefire.
- To verify information received from the Government and UNITA regarding their forces.
- To verify and monitor all troops movement.
- Assist in establishment of Quartering Areas (QAs).
- Verify and monitor withdrawal, disarming, quartering and demobilization of UNITA forces.
- Supervise the collection of UNITA armaments.
- Verify movement of FAA to barracks.
- Verify and monitor the completion of formation of unified FAA.
- Verify the free circulation of persons and goods.

Operational Concept of UN.

The salient aspects of the operational concept of the UN (as based on the mandate) were as follows:

- Units were to be employed to ensure compliance of the government and the UNITA with principles and modalities of ceasefire as specified in the Lusaka Protocol.
- UN Forces were to conduct operations in accordance with the new mandate for UNAVEM-III.
- UN Forces were to create by their presence an atmosphere of security, confidence and mutual trust.
- The Force was to make all efforts to diffuse a volatile situation.
- UN Forces were to use force only in self-defence or in case of obstruction in implementation of mandate in accordance with Rules of Engagement.

† Resolution 976 of 1994
- Attitude of the UN was to be disciplined, unbiased, fair, firm, decisive and yet not provocative.

**Phases**

Based on this operational concept, the UN had planned its operations in three phases.

**Phase 1 (31st October 1994 to 8th May 1995).**

When directed, the UN was to deploy observer teams to monitor ceasefire and limited disengagement of Forces of both FAA and UNITA military forces.

**Phase 2 A (9th May to 8th November 1995).**

When directed, UN peacekeeping Forces and observers were to be deployed to monitor withdrawal of UNITA Forces to designated quartering areas supervise/control the disarming of UNITA military forces.

**Phase 2 B (9th November 1995 onwards).**

UNITA personnel were to be integrated into FAA and police (including Rapid Reaction Police). The integrated FAA was to be reorganized including demobilization. The rehabilitation and reintegration of demobilized personnel including UNITA was to be carried out. The UN was to verify the free circulation of persons and goods.

**Phase 3**

This phase was to involve the second round of Presidential Elections.

**Force Structure Approved by the Security Council.**

Based on the above plan of UN the Security Council approved the Force to be deployed in the mission area. The whole landmass of Angola was divided into six Regional areas of responsibility. 59 team sites of police and military observers were to be deployed all over Angola. The Force HQ at Luanda and the Regional HQ were to be staffed by staff officers. One Infantry Battalion was to be deployed in each military region†. As per the above operational concept all Infantry Battalions were given the tasks in general to create conditions for other components of the Force to operate, including those components which exclusively do not belong to the force such as other organisations of UN and the NGOs.

† Deployment details were as follows:-

- **Northern Region.** Indian Infantry Battalion
- **North Eastern Region.** Zimbabwean Infantry Battalion
- **Central Region.** Uruguayan Infantry Battalion
- **Eastern Region.** Brazilian Infantry battalion
- **Southern Region.** Romanian Infantry Battalion
- **South Eastern Region.** Zambian Infantry Group and Argentinean Infantry Group
14 PUNJAB

PREPARATION AND INDUCTION STAGE

Initial Reconnaissance and Move to Angola

Col RK Arora, the then Battalion Commander, Mechanized Company Commander and representative from Army Headquarters New Delhi undertook the initial reconnaissance of the proposed mission area in the North Eastern region of Angola in April 1995. The finer aspects of composition of the Battalion Group and requirement of stores and equipment were looked into based on this reconnaissance. However, at the time of the actual deployment in July 95 the Area of Responsibility (AOR) was changed to Northern Region. Nonetheless, various inputs from this reconnaissance contributed immensely in the preparations of the contingent. The stores of the Battalion Group moved by ship from Bombay, whereas the manpower was inducted by air from New Delhi†.

Reconnaissance of the Mission Area

The Battalion Group was to deploy in the Northern Region spread over an area of around 1,78,000 sq kms. Extensive air and ground reconnaissance was carried out by the Battalion Commander and Company Commanders in order to come to a viable solution related to the location of the companies‡. It would be pertinent to mention here that the road network then was in a State of total collapse and move of vehicles was practically non-existent.

Induction into Battalion AOR

The initial movement of Battalion HQ and Company elements into the Area of Responsibility (AOR) was done with the utilisation of UN air effort. The main body of the Battalion Group was inducted into the mission area within one week by road under own arrangements and the rest brought about 80% of the stores forward under UN arrangements by air. Thus the United Nations commended the speedy and professional induction of the Battalion Group.

CONDUCT OF OPERATIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The mission of the Battalion was to conduct peace keeping operations in the Northern Region to include Urge, Negage, Quibaxe (Piri) and M’Banza Congo (N’Tuco) in accordance with the mandate of UNAVEM -III.

† The move was completed in four flights with the advance party landing on 9th July 1995 and the last flight arriving on 22nd July 1995 at Luanda. The ship reached Luanda on 23rd July 1995.

‡ The company locations were selected with an aim to show presence of UN peacekeeping troops in Angola as also to cater for the locations where Quartering Areas (QAs) were to be constructed subsequently to quarter UNITA soldiers.
Design of Operation

So as to fulfil the mission, design of operations was to provide security in own area through physical presence, escorting, guarding, observing and creating conditions required for all components of the force to operate including others.

Tasks in General (As Given by the Mission HQ) These were basically to verify, monitor and investigate the ceasefire and violations, if any. It mainly included the following:

- Move of UNITA to Query Areas.
- Verification of areas vacated by the UNITA.
- Verification and monitoring of Government troops, weapons and equipment in their barracks.
- Verification and control of collection of all armaments of UNITA.
- Storage of custody of armaments of UNITA included destruction of unsafe ammunition.
- Certifications of completion of QA process.
- Provision of security to key installations including HQ locations.
- Protection to UN elements and International personnel.
- Carry out escort duties and convey protection, when requested.
- Monitor areas vacated by UNITA to prevent FAA occupation.
- Control points of entry within AOR.
- Secure humanitarian compounds and distribution centres.
- Provide a suitable reserve upto one platoon capable of deploying by aircraft or helicopter.
- Verify and monitor the completion of formation of FAA and the demobilization of the excess personnel in strict compliance with Bicesse Accord and Lusaka Protocol.
- Verification of free movement of personnel and goods.
- Be prepared to assist humanitarian organisations in reception of refugees.

Tasks in Particular

However, the specific tasks in Northern region were to deploy to guard QAs at Negage, Piri (Quibaxe) and N’ Tuco (M’Banza Congo), construct and guard Weapon Storage Area (WSA) at Urge, and also verify the operative axes.
Area Familiarisation

Soon after deployment in the AOR, the Battalion Group got down to familiarising itself with the area. With company groups based 200 - 300 kms away and a dysfunctional road communication network it was a tough task to dominate the AOR. Extensive vehicle mounted patrols to remote areas instilled a sense of security amongst the local populace. Where areas were inaccessible by road, UN air effort was utilised to reassure the locals about the presence of UN troops.

Supervision, Control and Verification of Disengagement of Forces

In order to facilitate achievement of this aim, this Battalion Group embarked upon a number of actions as per details spelt out hereunder.

Constant Liaison

A concerted effort was made to have constant interaction with the UNITA and FAA authorities at all levels. Routine meetings were organised with respective commanders to gauge the pulse of the prevalent situation. Even meetings between the UNITA and FAA authorities were arranged to mutually resolve differences, if any.

Patrolling

Frequent patrolling at irregular intervals and through the existing fronts was undertaken. The disengagement limits were routinely checked as part of verification on this status.

Investigations

All incidents of Cease Fire Violations (CFVs) and troop movement alleged or otherwise, were investigated. The investigation teams included liaison officers from both sides in order to lend credibility to its findings.

Check Posts (CPs)

Mobile and static CPs were activated from time to time in order to ascertain move along particular routes. These Command Posts were also set up in sensitive and key areas in order to monitor with the aim of preventing both the parties from occupying positions in each other's area.

Aerial Survey

Use of helicopters was made to get first hand information of any movement or concentration of troops or construction of new fronts by any of the sides.

Quartering of UNITA Soldiers

The major task allotted to the Battalion Group was to make functional three Quartering Area and one WSA† in its Area of Responsibility

† The location of the QA and WSA were namely, Negage, Piri, N'Tuco and Urge (WSA).
Each QA was to be constructed by UNITA with UN assistance and was to accommodate 5000 UNITA soldiers and a sizeable number of families in the area allocated for them close by. The QAs, however, were constructed exclusively by own troops as UNITA refused to comply.†

- Inspite of initial hesitancy by UNITA Quartering Area completed the quartering of UNITA soldiers in an unbelievable period, reposing the faith of UNITA authorities in the Battalion Group.

- Transport of the Battalion Group was used to fetch UNITA soldiers from assembly areas as far as 250 kms away.

- Request by UNITA to quarter soldiers in excess of 5000 was agreed.

- WSA Urge guarded arms ranging from personal weapons to Artillery pieces numbering approx 12,000.

Demobilisation and Reintegration

During this stage, the quartered UNITA troops were reintegrated into the unified Angolan Armed Forces. The soldiers who were not reintegrated owing to being underage, disabled or unwilling were demobilised and settled in location of their own choosing with a package deal catering for one year supply of rations besides agricultural implements and seeds to help them start farming.

Verification of Free Circulation of People and Goods

This was a major stumbling block in the initial stages due to a large number of Command Posts established and manned by both the UNITA and the Government. Even UN vehicles had to halt and move of civil vehicles were non existent. Free move of personnel and goods commenced. It was only possible due to number of efforts under taken by the unit‡.

Civic Action and Humanitarian Aid

Civic Action and Humanitarian Aid formed an important facet of peacekeeping operations, as any effort to alleviate the hardship of the locals wins their confidence. Though not specific in tasking, these activities were the outcome of the ingenuity and innovation of the Battalion Group as a whole. Poverty, malnutrition, disease and deaths affected Angola. The sight of invalids limping or hobbling around on one leg was ugly reminders of the havoc brought by war. Close interaction and co-ordination with local civil/military authorities and NGOs led to prioritisation of areas requiring immediate relief.

† All QAs were constructed in record time without much mechanical assistance in areas, which were first demined and then cleared of thick undergrowth by using troop labour.

‡ It included routine patrolling, establishment of Check Posts and Observation Posts, escorting convoys of UN, NGOs and Government and maintaining intimate liaison with both authorities, i.e. FAA and UNITA.
Majority of these activities were undertaken from within the integral resources of the Battalion Group. In fact, Indian set emulate worthy pace for the other Contingents to follow. Some of the major humanitarian projects undertaken by the unit for the betterment of the general public are narrated here under.

**Repair and Opening of Roads**

The Engineer platoon played a vital role in the resuscitation of the disrupted road network in the Northern Region. Strengthening and repair of existing bridges was carried out in the initial stage. Repairs of stretches of road marked with huge craters and clearing mined patches was also undertaken from within the meagre resources.

**Medical Camps**

Under staffed NGOs could scarcely provide succour to the disease stricken people. Unit team of doctors, and medical staff organized numerous camps in remote areas and treated the patients as also vaccinated the children. Indian medical teams rushed to near and distant accident sites to evacuate the injured to hospitals as and when intimation regarding such mishaps was received. On a number of occasions own patrols and convoy escort parties too evacuated people injured in accidents to the nearest hospital besides providing valuable life saving first aid (*Photo-47*). There was a regular stream of patients seeking daily relief at the MI Rooms at various locations†.

**Veterinary Camps**

Sleeping sickness (Trypanosomiasis) assuming epidemic proportions, had wiped out most of the cattle population in the North, so the Remount Veterinary Corps (RVC) detachment ventured into other regions to conduct camps. Besides vaccination, they also laboured to teach disease prevention methods‡.

**Distribution of Ration**

Living upto the rich tradition of sharing ones own food the Battalion Group organized distribution of rations to the poor and needy. More than 35 tonnes of rations were given in a noble gesture out of own saving of rations.

**Vocational Training**

Organized means of livelihood had been severely disrupted by the long drawn out conflict. Even where the spirit was willing, there was no access to any kind of training in basic crafts. Realising the willingness amongst the people, the Battalion Group organized vocational training (*Photo-48*) in a wide variety of disciplines†‡.

† A total of 35,000 patients included 15,000 dental cases were treated.
‡ The education with regard to disease prevention methods resulted in treating over 50,000 animals and saving the lives of a voluminous number.
†‡ Vocational training covered jobs pertaining to basic training in carpentry and masonry, welding work, repair of vehicles, medical aid, electrical and radio repair, primary education in english and mathematics, elementary computer coaching, tailoring, driving and maintenance of vehicles.
Construction of Civic Amenities

Large scale damage to basic civic amenity structures was evident everywhere. A successful attempt was made to re-activate some of these and construct new ones. A few of the worthwhile achievements included construction of a market place at Negage, construction of playing fields, reactivation of public swimming pool, repairs to church and school buildings and repairs to roads and airports.

Miscellaneous Activities

Other activities organized were sporting events, cultural exchange programme, adoption of hospitals and schools for food and tree plantation.

Achievements

The major achievements of the Battalion Group in the mission area are worth mentioning. These were as follows:-

- Construction of three QAs and one WSA using exclusively own troops labour in record time to house more than 10,000 UNITA soldiers, approximately 50,000 family members and 12,000 weapons.

- Quartering successfully more than 10,000 UNITA soldiers, approximately 50,000 family members and collecting nearly 12,000 weapons and providing security to it.

- Opening of all major roads leading to northern region by laying bridges and clearing mines.

- Ensuring free flow of move in northern region and restoring a semblance of normalcy.

- Successfully monitoring ceasefire violations and preventing clashes between opposing forces.

- Winning confidence of FAA, UNITA as well as of civil population succeeded in starting the integration of UNITA soldiers into unified army and demobilisation of others.

- Provided humanitarian aid by treating more than 35,000 patients, distributing more than 35 tonnes of own rations, treating approximately 50,000 livestock, creating civic amenities and providing vocational training.

- Organized visit of several VIPs who visited the Battalion Group and applauded constructing these QAs and quartering them to optimum capacity. Negage QA was declared as model QA in Angola. Major General Frank Van Kappen Military Advisor to the United Nations Secretary General during his visit on 3rd December 1995 remarked that, ‘I wish we could have all the six Infantry Battalions in Angola from India.’ It was indeed a matter of pride for the Indian Army and Indian People.
As the completion of one year of stay neared, preparations got under way earnestly to hand over operational responsibility and equipment/store to the relieving unit. The unit’s inning in Angola finally came to an end. Needful to state that any peace keeping missions abroad tests the capabilities of soldiers and highlights their dogged approach to spread the message of peace. It is not a very feasible prospect to assuage physical and psychological hurt in an alien land amidst strangers. Nevertheless, 14 Punjab (Nabha Akal) Battalion Group lived up to its ‘never say die’ attitude as it toiled to restore peace, calm and normalcy to a country shattered by twenty years of civil war. The very fact that unit participated in moving the wheels of peace, speaks of Indian resolve and firm commitment towards the task. Meticulous planning and preparation played a pivotal role in gearing up the contingent for this mission. A lot of unseen hands contributed to the success and it was team effort of the entire Battalion Group, which helped to sail the turbulent sea of international peacekeeping. The Indian soldier once again stood up to the test and tribulations of working miles away from home and came out with flying colours. When the unit had arrived in Angola it witnessed the sunset of war but when it left, Angola was awakening to a dawn of hope, peace and stability. Last but not the least, INDBAT was the ‘AMIGO’ to every man, woman and child in the Northern Region.

16 GUARDS

The move of troops of the unit to Angola took place in three phases/stages. On arrival at Luanda the troops were organised into company groups, and despatched by UN aircrafts directly to their company posts. Troops who were to move by road to a nearby post were directed to the battalion logistic base and after a halt vehicles moved them to their respective posts. Induction into mission area was smooth since 14 Punjab Infantry Battalion Group had indeed done a very good job and all the posts were in good shape.

Mission

The Mission of the Battalion was to conduct peacekeeping operations in the Northern Region of Angola in accordance with the mandate of UNAVEM-III.

Operational Tasks

During the tour of duty the battalion carried out a large number of operational tasks. These tasks were divided into three clear distinct stages in keeping with the changing phases of the peace process as also to retain dynamism in an ever-changing fluid situation. These distinct stages were Initial or introductory phase tasks, Intermediary phase tasks and Final phase tasks.

† Owing to the restrictions on minimum strength to be maintained at QAs and WSA, a phased de-induction was carried out in which the personnel moved by air. Operational command changed hands after briefing and joint recce on 6th August 1996. The Battalion Group reached Delhi on 11th August 1996.

‡ In the first phase an advance party of 15 officers, 17 Junior Commissioned Officers and 113 Other Ranks was despatched to Angola by air on 17th July 1996. Subsequently, the remainder of the Battalion Group built up on the advance party in two stages on 10th August 1996 and 12th August 1996.
Operational Activities in Mission Area

The operational activities of the Indian contingent in the mission area encompassed a broad spectrum ranging from mundane guard duties to the most challenging exercises in tact, diplomacy, patience and self-restraint.

Extension of State Administration

All ceremonies were preceded by a sensitisation campaign and during the ceremony military contingents provided concentric layers of security to the VIPs who were attending the ceremony. INDBAT successfully carried out extension of state administration and went through incident free ceremonies at 35 critical locations in the Northern regions.

Achievements

The operational achievements of the unit were confidence-building measures, sensitisation of UNITA held areas, closure of QAs, demobilisation and despatch of UNITA troops.

Humanitarian Aid

This was planned as an adjunct to operations and paid dividends much in excess of efforts put in. Further, to open up self-employment facilities and also to provide gainful training to the locals, INDBAT opened vocational training schools in two locations.

Medical Aid and Training

Prior to undertaking medical aid the essential key areas were identified and medical camps were organ at these locations. This was provided to a number of civilians who went on to provide the nucleus around which the local primary health centres later started functioning. Civilians were treated in unit MI Rooms and shared the medicines with several needy civilians. The INDBAT medical teams liaised frequently with United Nations International Children’s Education Fund (UNICEF) and other NGOs in Angola for this purpose. The medical teams provided regular medical support to UNITA soldiers. Doctors assisted in evacuation, emergency operations and treatment to victims of bullet injuries and road accident. Dental treatment which had been defunct in the Northern Region over the past decades was extended to the civilians. Livestock in many parts of the country were either dead of diseased. The Remount Veterinary Corps detachment made concerted efforts to eradicate these diseases which in due course proved immensely beneficial to the local population.

† These challenging tasks included, area familiarisation, protection of UNITA soldiers in quartering areas, security of weapon storage area, creation of secure environment in area of responsibility, free circulation of people and goods, reintegration of former UNITA cadres into FAA, escorting of convoys, security cover to Vienna Logistic Base, protection to money for demobilised troops and demobilisation of troops.

‡ The locations being Negage and Urge. Both the vocational training schools received popular support, appreciation by UN and the international community.

†‡ Over 8000 patients were treated in a short period of one year.
Distribution of Food, Self Help Kits and Repair of Infrastructure

On many occasions INDBAT soldiers voluntarily contributed a portion of their daily rations for the poor and needy locals. On other allied occasions such as visits of VIPs, self help kits consisting of tools for various disciplines were distributed to the deserving and needy people. Repairs of infrastructure were yet another important humanitarian activity, which provided much required assistance to the locals. This took the form of repairs to buildings, roads, airfields and the re-establishment of basic civic infrastructure. In addition, a number of miscellaneous activities were carried out. These included opening of children school, donation of sports equipment, cultural interaction, ecological drive and restoration of good faith between opposing parties.

16 GUARDS Battalion Group also lived up to its ‘Never Say Die’ attitude as it toiled to restore peace, calm and normalcy to a country shattered by twenty years of civil war. It was team effort which helped the unit to sail the turbulent sea of international peacekeeping. The Indian soldiers of this battalion once again stood upto the test of time working miles away from their home and came out with flying colours.

21 MECHANISED INFANTRY

The battalion had the proud privilege of providing a Mechanised Company Contingent at Angola (West Africa) under United Nations Verification Mission at Angola (UNAVEM III) since August 1996. Though the Company was initially inducted as a part of 16 Guards for one year, the United Nations authorities requested for its continuation as Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) because of the dedication and professionalism displayed by the Indian troops. Ever since it’s induction, 14 Officers, 27 Junior Commissioned Officers and 388 Other Ranks of 21st Battalion the Mechanised Infantry had rotated through the Mission. Initially, the Company was responsible for protection of Weapons Storage Area (WSA) at Urge Province and protection of Negage Airport. The Mission was re-designated as United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) in June 1997. 16 Guards de-inducted on 11th September 1997 and the Mechanized Company in Angola took over the duties of Rapid Reaction Force. It was later renamed as Indian Military Task Force (INDMTF) † till it de-inducted on closure on the Mission on 20th April 1999. This had been an alarm Force comprising of 150 all ranks.

Tasks

Mechanized Company provided security and safety of Negage Quartering area (QA), holding same Area of Responsibility (AOR) as that held by 16 Guards with strength of just one Company, carried out verification, registration and demobilization of UNITA soldiers at Negage and Andulo, demolished five tons of surrendered ammunition handed over for Indian Battalion at Andulo, back-loaded all

† Scope of RRF/INDMTF activities involved collection of arms, accounting and destruction of dangerous ammunition, protection of United Nations convoys, humanitarian aid to the mission and the patrolling of Area of Responsibility (AOR).
Small Arms, Artillery Guns and Armored Personnel Carriers (APC’s) handed over by UNITA to Regional Headquarters Urge and Regional Headquarters Huambo†.

IMPORTANT MILE STONES/INCIDENTS

Counter Ambush on World Food Programme Convoy

On 16th September 1998, UNITA rebels ambushed a joint MONUA and World Food Programme (WFP) convoy of 21 trucks under INDMTF escorted by one Junior Commissioned Officer and ten Other Ranks of 21st Battalion the Mechanized Infantry transit from Luanda to Urge. The ambush was ingeniously sited and about 100 soldiers of UNITA took part in this ambush. Subedar Balraj displayed extraordinary courage and without caring for his personal safety deployed the escort party and charged the UNITA soldiers.

Hostage Crisis

21st Battalion the Mechanized Infantry forming the Rapid Reaction force came to the forefront on the International scenario during the ‘Hostage Crisis’. The headlines of word’s fifth columns heralded the name of ‘Force 21’ under Major (now Colonel) Rajesh Chopra for the tenacity and dexterity displayed during the entire crisis‡. As part of gradual demobilization of United Nations troops, this post was to fall back to Luanda by December 1998. However, the UNITA Forces cut off all the land and air routes to this post to prevent its pullout. The post did not get any supplies or water for two months. Despite all odds, Major (now Colonel) Rajesh Chopra and his team member refused to oblige the rebels and survived on emergency rations and water supply for two months rather than compromise and accept hospitality of the rebel forces. The Indian Company displayed tremendous spirit when almost entire Indian Contingent volunteered to be part of the detained force to ensure relief of their team members. Seeing the indomitable spirit of the Indian soldiers, the Rebels lost hope of effecting compromise on their terms and allowed the post to return safely to their Headquarters during this stand off that lasted for almost two months. Major (now Colonel) Rajesh Chopra maintained very cordial and professional relations with the Rebel Force Commander and was the only link of International Peace Keeping Force with the Rebel Force.

† Indian Rapid Reaction force provided assistance to Zimbabweans, Romanians and Portuguese for the back loading of their United Nations serviceable vehicles from different province of Angola, assisted repatriation of Zimbabweans from the Mission area. Provided administrative support to the United river Chuingha and restored traffic from Andulo to N’ Harea. Assisted United Nations Observer Mission Headquarters in Angola for closure of Team sites from inhospitable area and displayed courage, dexterity and patience when the police Force resorted to air crash of UN 806A with UNITA assistance after prolonged negotiations. This action was highly appreciated by under Secretary General of United Nations. Safely evacuated eight Team Sites and two Regional Headquarters back to Luanda including all United Nations Equipments and personnel.

‡ The crisis was also discussed in the Indian Parliament by the Prime Minister, Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee who wrote letter to the United Nations Secretary General and the Angolan President for release of our soldiers i.e. Major (now Colonel) Rajesh Chopra and nine Other Ranks who were located at Andulo Team Site.
It was only due to his communication skills that the entire peace talks between United Nations and warring factions continued rather than coming to an abrupt end. **Number of letters of appreciation had been received for the successful handling of crisis including from United Nations Secretary General Mr Kofi Annan, UNITA President, United Nations and then Indian Chief of Army Staff General VP Malik. The same are well on record.**

**Kuito Team Site and Luena Regional Headquarters Relocation**

The INDMTF soldiers located in Luena assisted in successful evacuation of Kuito Team Site when it was being withdrawn under most vulnerable conditions. The fighting between Government troops and UNITA was under way barely 15 km from the airport. A protection team of one officer and 10 soldiers went by air from Luena at one hour notice and on reaching Kuito airport cordoned off the aircraft from the large civil crowd which was pushing its way to board the aircraft. Thereafter, **they ensured safe evacuation of all United Nations persons and the Non Government Organisation (NGOs) who were to board the flight** (*Photo-49*). Again, a handful of Indian soldiers affected the safe withdrawal of United Nations persons under most volatile situation.

**Safe Closure of Team Sites and Regional Headquarters**

During relocation of Team Sites and Regional Headquarters the INDMTF persons assisted in safe extrication of all United Nations Persons and Property†. They ensured their protection enroute and assisted in loading them in United Nations helicopters and aircrafts at the airfield. INDMTF also provided escort during move by road (*Photo-50*). It is worth stating that on number of occasions, the Rebel Groups surrendered Arms to Force 21.

**Air Accident Investigation of Flight UN 806A**

On 25th January 1999, a United Nations investigation team visited the crash site of the ill-fated UN 806A Aircraft shot down on 2nd January 1999 in the war torn area between Bailundo and Huambo. **One officer alongwith nine soldiers of the unit went as escort to assist the investigation team in their Mission. They successfully assisted the team in carrying out the investigations and also dug out the mortal remains of the ill-fated passengers on board of this unfortunate flight‡.** Amongst some of the humanitarian activities, the unit persons donated food to Church and poor persons. The United Nations Mission in Angola finally wound up with the Company’s safe return to India on 20th April 1999 without any loss to life or property, discipline or medical problems and having done its job commendably. The then VCOAS, Lieutenant General Chandra Shekhar addressed the Contingent on its return at Delhi and complimented ‘Force 21’ for having done ‘a splendid job during the tour of duty’. The event was aired on all major Television channels of the country (*Photo-51*).

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† Safe extrication of all United Nations Persons and Property was from Urge, Luena, Menongue Regional Headquarters and six other Team Sites namely Andulo, Soyo, N'Dalatando, M'Banzq, Congo and Negage.

‡ For this act, letter of appreciation from Mr Benon Seven, Security Co-ordinator, was given congratulating all concerned for excellent accomplishment of Mission under difficult and dangerous conditions. Also, on behalf of Secretary General and on his own behalf Mr Issa Diallo conveyed his heartfelt gratitude in a memorandum.
If we cast a glance at the status of various countries world over, a hard known fact straightway comes to light that Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the world which had been bettered by years of civil war and military coups and has also long been victim to a rebel movement whose motives were murky and methods clearly brutal (Photo-52). Sierra Leone seemed to be in the grip of endless horror and tragedy with an estimated 50,000 dead, over a million people displaced, horrific crimes against women, children and other civilians including rape, mutilation, arson and mass murder. Peace had eluded Sierra Leone for nine years. Cities, towns and rural areas remained insecure and the supposedly defeated rebel army remained at large, indulging in a vicious retributive campaign of terror against the defenceless civilian population†.

A multinational UN peacekeeping force‡ was deployed which included military and civilian police from about 30 countries under the command of an Indian Major General Vijay Jetley.

**Background**

Sierra Leone is a small ex-British colony in West Africa with dense forests, rich agriculture and abundant natural resources that would normally allow for a prosperous lifestyle for its citizens. Instead, it is ranked by the UN as the world’s most unlivable country. Since independence in 1961, successive regimes have failed to deal with the collapse of a patrimonial system of wealth redistribution and inequitable exploitation of the country’s natural resources. The resulting social tensions produced military governments and armed rebels who shared a common origin in the ranks of disaffected and unemployed youths on the fringes of both urban and rural society. In March 1991, fighters of the RUF launched a war to overthrow the government. The leader of the revolt was Mr. Foday Sankoh, a former corporal in the National Army. He headed the rebel movement Revolutionary United Front (RUF) Leone’s army, with the support of the Military Observer Group (ECOWAS) which tried at first to defend the government. The following year, however, the army itself overthrew the government.

**The Lome Peace Agreement**

Detailed negotiations began in Lome in May 1999 and after two months of negotiations the RUF and the government of Sierra Leone reached a settlement. On 7th July all parties to the conflict signed an agreement in Lome to end hostilities and form a government of national unity. Sankoh was granted the ‘Status of Vice President’ and chairmanship of a Commission for the Management of Strategic Mineral Resources, National Reconstruction and Development. The parties also agreed to the deployment of a neutral peacekeeping force leading to a shift from reliance of Military Observers Group to a more diverse UN contingent of peacekeepers and military observers. The parties to the conflict also requested an expanded role for UNOMSIL.

† It is a pity that Sierra Leone had been trapped in the endless conflicts with human right abuses becoming an integral part of the conflict. Needful to further state that Sierra Leone is an example of a nation where the collapse of political and social structures made external intervention appears the only humanitarian solution.

‡ This multinational force of UN troops carried units from a number of African, Asian and European countries. Indian Forces constituted a major component of these UN troops.
Establishment of UN Mission for Sierra Leone to Aid in Implementation of Lome Peace Agreement

On October 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 1999, the Security Council authorized a new and much larger mission i.e. United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) \textsuperscript{†}. The Security Council mandated the new mission to: ‘co-operate with the Government of Sierra Leone and the other parties to the peace agreement that was signed in Lome on July 7\textsuperscript{th}, assist the Government of Sierra Leone in the implementation of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration plan (DDR), establish a presence at key locations throughout the territory of Sierra Leone, ensure the security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel and monitor adherence to the ceasefire’. So, a new and much larger mission UNAMSIL\textsuperscript{‡} was in place with a maximum of 6,000 military personnel, including 260 military observers to assist the government and carry out provisions to the Lome Peace Agreement. At the same time, the Council decided to terminate UNOMSIL.

Role of Indian Troops

Indian Forces constituted a major component of UNAMSIL. It was the UN Secretary General who desired an Indian to be in overall command of this peacekeeping operation. More so, because of India’s long and successful record of peacekeeping operations under the UN umbrella, it was the considered assessment of the UN peacekeeping contingent. Unlike most previous occasions when Indian troops were sent for peacekeeping operations, the troops and their commanders had been subject to controversy and physical pressures. In Sierra Leone, authorities and the RUF had not kept up with their commitments regarding the conditions under which the UN peacekeeping was to operate. It had been strongly condemned since ‘there is actually no greater humiliation for a soldier than to be deprived of his weapons’.

West African governments created another unwarranted controversy about the Indian Force Commander. The Heads of State and Governments of West African Countries in a Resolution\textsuperscript{†‡} adopted by the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) asserted that the Indian Commander, being unfamiliar with West African conditions had mismanaged operations and he should be replaced by a Commander from the West African region.

\textsuperscript{†} UNAMSIL became effective with immediate effect for an initial period of six months. Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, it was decided that UNAMSIL could act to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel and protect civilization under imminent threat of physical violence, taking into account the responsibilities of the government of Sierra Leone.

\textsuperscript{‡} Later, the Security Council revised the mandate of UNAMSIL and a number of relevant resolutions were taken up trying to control the situation in Sierra Leone. Finally, the mandate of UNAMSIL had been extended until December 31\textsuperscript{st}, 2000.

\textsuperscript{†‡} This resolution even suggested that a regional West African peacekeeping force should replace the multinational peacekeeping force. The demand of the West African governments was irrational because it was actually their failure to manage the regional crises, which resulted in the presence of the multinational UN peacekeeping force.
There had thus been continued tension between the Indian Force Commander and his Nigerian Deputy, Brig. Gen Mohammad Garba. Accordingly to publish reports, General Jetly of the Indian Army had accused some of the Nigerian troops of refusing to take orders and of collaborating with rebel forces in the illicit diamond trade in Sierra Leone that fuelled the civil war. The Nigeria government had asked that an African General must replace the Indian General Jetley. This demand seemed unjustified since Major General Jetley had performed his duties with a ‘high degree of professionalism and effectiveness’. He had acted with consummate and restraint despite the Indian Force being in danger. The onus was thus with the UN to ensure that the regional forces of West African did not question the credibility, impartiality, understanding and motivations of the Indian Commander of the Peacekeeping Forces. In the wake of this drama, India had proposed withdrawal of Indian Peacekeepers from Sierra Leone. However, it had said that its withdrawal was a routine rotation of its troops in various UN peacekeeping missions.

**Major Shortcomings of UNAMSIL at a Glance**

The problem of peace in Sierra Leone also highlighted basic flaws in the UN peacekeeping missions, where soldiers are often ill equipped and ill prepared for actual fighting. The deployment of UNAMSIL raised a number of questions about the capacity of the UN to undertake effective operations. The major problem which concerned UNAMSIL was equipment shortfalls. A number of difficulties experienced could be attributed to lack of essential equipment. The Secretary General himself asserted, ‘Our troops need vehicles, tents, communication equipments and more so our soldiers deserve the best possible support’.

Another weakness in UNAMSIL was the shortfall in intelligence gathering and processing capacity. UNAMSIL had encountered enormous difficulties gathering and processing military information. The absence of effective intelligence architectures and bureaucratic difficulties within the force had ensured that UNAMSIL was hardly in a position to create an accurate intelligence picture of the battlefield. Without this, it was unlikely that UNAMSIL as a whole would be in a position to fight as an effective and cohesive force. The failure of the RUF leaders to implement the Lome Agreement and its weaknesses proved to be hurdles in its implementation. In fact the Sierra Leone conflict clearly brought out a lesson that new approaches had to be devised for future mediations and negotiations in dealing with rebel groups that are elusive and unpredictable.

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1. India’s decision to withdraw from UNAMSIL may be primarily attributed to the continuing tension and controversy and questioning of the credibility of Gen. Jetley. Further, Indian’s were not very comfortable working in an expanded role (from peacekeeping to peace enforcement) for the UNAMSIL.

2. In this regard it is pertinent to highlight the comment of Denis Jet who said, quote, ‘You put poor troops into an impossible situation and this is what you get’, unquote.
Lastly, the main objectives of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of all combatants, end of human rights abuses and thus durable peace in Sierra Leone couldn’t be achieved through the deployment of a peacekeeping force alone. The main focus of the international community’s efforts should have therefore been on strong political efforts towards a durable peace in Sierra Leone.

5/8 GORKHA RIFLES (GR)

5/8 Gorkha Rifles Battalion along with various other elements of Arms and Services was inducted to the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in December 1999 and after a successful tenure, de-inducted in December 2001.

HISTORY AND GENESIS OF THE CONFLICT IN SIERRA LEONE

The country derives its name from the Peninsular Mountains. A Portuguese sailor Pedro da Cintra, likened the range of mountains to a crouching lion, and named them Sierra Leone (Lion Range) in 1462†. The country became a British Protectorate in 1896.

Nature of UN Mandate

With the Lome Peace Accord signed between Government of Sierra Leone and RUF on 7th July 1999, a fresh mandate to include disarmament of all belligerents was approved by the Security Council. In December 1999/January 2000, UN troops were deployed in Sierra Leone under Chapter VI of the UN Charter‡.

† The name gradually changed to its recent form - Sierra Leone. The British arrived in 1562 and were involved in the laving industry till 1750. During the period of the emancipation of the slaves, Freetown was established between 1787, 1792. Sierra Leone was declared a Crown Colony in 1807 and in the period 1807 - 1865 slaves from all over Africa arrived to establish their new found home.

‡ The mandate was aimed to co-operate with Government of Sierra Leone and other parties to peace accord, to assist the Government of Sierra Leone in implementation of DDR plan, to establish a presence at key locations throughout Sierra Leone, to ensure security to freedom of movement of UN persons, to monitor adherence of cease-fire, to encourage parties to facilitate delivery of humanitarian aid, to support the operations of UN civil officials and to provide support as requested to the elections.
Composition of Battalion Group

5/8 GR was nominated for UNAMSIL during the month of August 1999. The basic composition of the Indian contingent was as per the detailed note of DPKO, UN that spelt out the structure and specifications of the force†.

Induction and Initial Deployment Sequence

- Guard and Administration Company, was first to be inducted into the Mission Area i.e. on 6th December 1999. They were deployed at Freetown.

- The induction of Battalion Group and Quick Re-action Company (QRC) was done from 13th December 1999 to 6th January 2000 in four passenger flights.

- The Battalion Group concentrated at Lungi and established temporary camp near the International Airport (Lungi).

- QRC detached from the Battalion Group and established camp at Hastings Airfield.

The battalion and its affiliated units carried many important tasks in Lungi‡.

Activities at Daru including the Disarmament Ceremony at Segbwema

The Battalion took over responsibility of DDR Camp at Daru in April 2000. This DDR Camp had strength of approximately 500 ex-combatants of all the fighting factions in the area including some from the RUF, who voluntarily disarmed at Daru. The Battalion was able to organize proper security of the camp as well ensure its proper administration.

† The composition of infantry battalion spelt out was as 4 x Infantry companies of 5/8 GR (2 x Motorized and 2 x wheel based Mechanized Coys), 1 x Support Company of 5/8 GR with a workshop platoon, engineer platoon, signals platoon and 1 x Logistic Company with a supply platoon, medical platoon, transport platoon, one Military Police platoon. In addition, the Battalion was also required to provide a quick reaction company ex troops of 5/8 Gorkha Rifles and bulk of the personnel for Guard and administration company.

‡ The tasks pertained to security of Lungi International Airport, provided security to Mobil oil tankers at Lungi and provided escorts to convoys moving from Lungi to Port Loko and back, they provided for induction of other contingents to their respective Area of Responsibilities (AOR), the Battalion reconnaissance Group carried out reconnaissance of its proposed AOR, QRC provided escorts to convoys moving from Freetown to Port Loko and back, carried out reconnaissance of Eastern parts of Sierra Leone along with the Battalion reconnaissance team, carried out reconnaissance of Freetown Peninsula including the key installations, provided QRT of one platoon to Force HQ daily and provided security to Hastings Airfield. While bulk of the manpower of the company comprised of staff working within Force HQ, the Guard platoon was stretched to provide the security to the Force Cdr’s residence, provide security to Mammy Yoko Heli-Pad Freetown and Man check posts along the main road leading to the Force HQ.
On taking over the charge of DDR Camp at Daru, INDBATT-1 effected regular disarmament of combatants of RUF and Sierra Leone Army (SLA)†.

Deployment of KAILAHUN Companies

During the induction of the Battalion to Daru, the Second-In-Command took a confirmatory reconnaissance party to Kailahun. The reconnaissance team comprised of the Company Commander earmarked for Kailahun. The scope of the reconnaissance was to confirm the exact location to deploy the two companies and also to gauge the mood of the rebels controlling the area. The reconnaissance team was stopped on their first attempt at a RUF check post at Bombahun which was enroute to Kailahun. They were prevented from proceeding further by the rebels and hence had to return back to Daru on orders from the Force HQ. After a few days, as a result of negotiations carried out with the RUF leadership, the reconnaissance team was given through passage up to Kailahun‡. After completion of the reconnaissance, the Force HQ ordered immediate deployment of one Motorized Rifle Company at Kailahun. Accordingly, Motorized Company with one platoon of BRDM (Bronir ovannya Razviedyielnno Dozornaya Machine) moved with their stores and equipment by road to Kailahun on 13th March. The Company convoy was stopped at Kuiva by the RUF and told them to return. The reasons given by the RUF leadership were that they were not informed of the deployment plan of the Indian soldiers and hence not cleared by the RUF Field Commander. The Company returned back to Daru on orders from the Force HQ the same day. On 15th March, the company once again moved unhindered to Kailahun after being cleared by the RUF leadership and deployed there. The second company i.e. mechanized one company finally deployed at Kailahun on 22nd April.

Activities at Kailahun

The major activities at Kailahun pertained to carrying out sensitization patrolling within the AORs visit all key-crossing places along the Guinea and Liberia border, carry out extensive interaction with the RUF leadership and their sympathizers in order to persuade them to join DDR process and providing security to the Military Observers (MILOBS) at Kailahun. Certain civic activities that were carried out were provision of drinking water for locals in Kailahun, medical assistance and food to hospital inmates and locals of Kailahun, helped in organizing ‘Kick Polio Out of Sierra Leone‘ Campaign at Kailahun, repair and maintenance of the road Daru–Kailahun, provision of mid day meal to primary school Kailahun, gifted sports equipment to various villages located in the AORs, created water points that provided clean drinking water to locals of Kailahun, medical assistance and food to hospital inmates and locals of Kailahun, helped in organizing ‘Kick Polio Out of Sierra Leone’.

† Owing to the manner in which the camp was run by the battalion, disarmament process continued despite constant threats from top leadership of rebels. Owing to the confidence generated by presence of Indian troops at Daru, RUF leadership decided to disarm their rebels located at Segbwema (which falls in the AORs of the Battalion) on 10th April. The disarmament ceremony was carried out in the presence of the RUF Chairman and leader Foday Sankoh, and was witnessed by the Force Commander, the senior staff members of the UNAMSIL and the international media. 84 combatants of RUF laid down their arms on this occasion. The disarmament continued at a steady pace.

‡ The local leaders welcomed the reconnaissance team at Kailahun and they expressed their willingness to permit deployment of Indian troops at Kailahun and work with them to maintain peace.
Campaign at Daru and Kailahun, repair and maintenance of Daru–Kailahun road, provision of mid day meal and stationery to primary school Kailahun and gifting of sports equipment to various villages located in the AOR.

**Events Leading to the Stand-off during May, June, July.**

The situation in the AOR of the Battalion Group remained peaceful throughout March and April during which the RUF under leadership of Foday Sankoh carried out disarmament of 200 persons at Segbwema. During this period free movement of UNAMSIL personnel was possible anywhere in the AOR. The interactions and the civic action carried out by the Indian peacekeepers won the hearts and minds of the people. The secured environment during this period also encouraged many aid agency and NGOs to start their activities in the so far neglected eastern region. Chief Administrative Officer of Kailahun District visited Kailahun after 10 years and organized a public meeting with the RUF leaders and the local chiefs attended by the CO INDBATT and the Company Commanders of Kailahun on 29th April 2000.

**Events at Makeni**

Events suddenly turned for the worse on 1st May when RUF at Makeni attacked KENBATT post of DDR Camp. This action as claimed by the rebels was in protest against disarming of 10 RUF combatants, without permission from their commanders. In the ensuing battle between the Kenyans and the RUF, both sides suffered casualties. The turn of events were however not communicated to the Battalion group at Daru.

**Sequence of Events at Kailahun and Daru**

- At Kailahun Company Commander and the 11 MILOBS were invited for a public meeting by the RUF on the pretext of discussing the modalities of disarmament and were taken hostage.

- An unscheduled UN helicopter carrying two civilians with US$10000 (payment for MILOBS) landed at the helipad and was surrounded by the armed RUF cadres. The crew and two civilians were taken hostage.

- The RUF cadres surrounded both company locations and tried to disarm the troops. Their attempt to enter the camp was prevented by the determined troops holding the perimeter defense.

- Captured hostages were separated in two groups, one group was held at Kailahun MILOB Team site and the other group including two Company Commanders was shifted to Geima, a place 15 Km south of Kailahun.

- Battalion Second-in-Command with a platoon who rushed from Daru to negotiate release of Company Commanders and MILOBs at Kailahun were detained at Kuiva. Negotiations were carried out at all levels to secure the release of hostages.
- At kailahun, the captured helicopter crew and the civilians were released by the RUF and the helicopter was allowed to fly back to Freetown.

**Action of the Quick Reaction Coy**

The Force HQ, moved to Makburaka in order to reinforce the Kenyan Company being attacked by the RUF, mobilized the Quick Reaction Company of the Battalion, located at Hastings on 2nd May. The Company occupied defences in the Kenyan locality as reinforcement. On 3rd May, the Company assisted in carrying out a fighting breakout that involved roadblocks and ambushes laid by the rebels. The offensive action of the company that combined speed and firepower enabled beating back all the opposition and succeeded in extricating the Kenyans safely to Mile 91 without suffering any casualties. At Mile 91, the Company fought off repeated attacks by the rebels on their positions and thus ensured that the strategic Mile 91 did not fall to the rebels†.

The Company Commanders, other officers including the MILOBs held as hostage at Kailahun and Giema were freed to return back to the Company location at Kailahun on 12th May. However, despite repeated negotiation at all levels, they were denied free movement within the area of operations. Continued negotiations at the Battalion level convinced the RUF to permit food convoy to move to Kailahun unhindered. However, the RUF did not permit any helicopter move towards Kailahun even for evacuation of patients. The planning and preparation for carrying out a rescue operation was in progress at the Force HQ level. Officers disguised as or moved with the food columns to reconnaissance likely helicopter landing sites and gauge strength and location of the rebels. The Companies located at Kailahun and also at Daru prepared well co-ordinated defences to guard against any attempts by the RUF to attack own positions. Forest was cleared manually by the troops at Kailahun and a secure helipad suitable for bigger helicopters was prepared.

21 hostages held at Kuiva were moved to Pendembu. Arrival of the Sector HQ from India during the month of June along with an Infantry Battalion, one Support Company and one attack helicopter unit put fresh impetus to the planning for offensive action. Despite continued negotiations; the situation remained unchanged, with the RUF demanding the release of their arrested Chairman Foday Sanko in exchange of release of the Indian hostages‡. Further attempts at all levels to negotiate free passage for the Company held at Kailahun were not successful. The radio intercepts indicated likely build up of rebel forces at the Liberian border closer to Kailahun along with heavy weapons to attack the Kailahun companies. The outbreak of fighting at the Guinea-Liberian border proved to be the ideal time to launch operations for the extraction of the Kailahun companies which was code-named as **Operation Khukri** and created history being one of the most crucial operations undertaken by the peacekeeping Forces. Details of plan and execution of operation are given here under.

† *Intervention of the international communities and involvement of President Charles Taylor of Liberia, resulted in freeing of all the UN peacekeepers held in custody of the RUF except the Indian peacekeepers, through Liberia.*

‡ *21 hostages were held at Pende. Strong diplomatic pressure from India resulted in Charles Taylor once again instrumental in releasing them through Liberia.*
Op Khukri was launched as a multinational operation involving Indian, Ghana and Nigeria. The mobilization of troops at Daru and Kenema was completed in two days i.e. 13th and 14th July. The details of this important operation are highlighted as under.

**Over all Plan**

**Design of Battle**

The design of battle envisaged the following:

- **Mobilize maximum air effort** to concentrate own forces at Kenema and Daru secretly.

- **Ground offensive from Daru and Kenema and breakout from Kailahun**.

- **Simultaneous engagement of key RUF locations by attack helicopters** and artillery.

- **Selected troops to be heli landed** with attack helicopters at key locations along the road axis to secure picquets for safe passage of ground column.

- **Ensure early link up** of both the columns at Pendembu and evacuation by air.

- **Return of all vehicle columns** from Pendembu for redeployment at Daru on completion of air evacuation.

- **Security of Daru to be ensured at all times**.

**Troops Available**

The troops available for this operation were:

- **INDBATT-1** (5/8 GR and two Companies of 14 Mechanized Infantry).

- **QRC** (Troops of 5/8 GR, 14 Mechanized Infantry, 23 Mechanized (Reconnaissance and Support), 9 PARA (SF)).

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† Op Khukri was a unique multinational operation launched in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), involving India, Ghana, Britain and Nigeria. The aim of the operation was to break the two month long siege laid by armed cadres of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) around two companies of 5/8 Gorkha Rifles (GR) Infantry Battalion Group at Kailahun by affecting a fighting break out and redeploying them with the main battalion at Daru. Its successful execution displayed the effectiveness of the United Nations and brought it kudos from every corner of the globe. The professionalism and the dedication of the Indian Armed Forces were yet again reiterated for the world to see.
- INDMECH QRC (Company from 11 Mechanized Infantry).
- INDENG Company-2 (Company from 7 Engineer Regiment).
- INDSF Company (Company 2 PARA (SF).
- Indian Aviation Unit (MI-8s, Chetaks and MI-35s).
- Indian Sector HQ.
- Forward Surgical Team.
- INDBATT-2 (18 GRENADIERS).
- Independent Composite Battery (120 mm Mortars) from 310 Light Regiment and Field Guns (105 mm) from 255 Field Regiment.
- 2 Companies GHANBATT (Ghana Army).
- 2 Companies NIBATT (Nigerian Army).
- 2 x Chinhook helicopters of the UK Royal Air Force (RAF).
- Elements of D Squadron of the British Special Service.

**Conduct of Operations**

**Mobilization**

The build up at Daru and Kenewa was conducted from 13th to 15th July 2000. Three x MI-26s, 7 x MI-8s, 2 x Chinook helicopters and 1 x RAF C-130 aircraft were pressed into service for the task. Daru being cut off from the rest of government controlled areas had to be built up by helicopters. By the last light of D minus One (14th July 2000) the build up of forces was completed. The operation was conducted in five phases:-

**Preparations at Kailahun**

The entire operation depended on the successful breakout of Kailahun companies and extrication of MILOBs. The Kailahun Company Commanders were given a broad outline of the plan and the Force Commander and Commanding Officer (CO) also spoke to them regularly on satellite phone (sat phone). As most of the troops were to be heli landed and close support was dependent on attack helicopters, the weather conditions for flying were of paramount importance. The two companies were deployed 500 meters from Kailahun on dominating ground. Two helipads within the defended area were secured by occupied perimeter defence and deploying protective elements.

**Air Extrication**

On 15th July 2000 the helipad was secured and entire area was sanitized by 0600 hours. Despite bad weather, two RAF Chinook helicopters landed exactly as per plan at 0620 hours and extricated 44 personnel including 11 MILOBs and war like stores. Enroute the same helicopters had dropped Company 2 PARA (SF) two kilometers South of Kailahun. The RUF had approximately 300 to 400 of its cadre in Kailahun
Due to the arrival of Chinook Helicopters the RUF were activated but were effectively engaged by own fire†.

**Breakout**

Prior to move, a fire assault was delivered for 10 minutes‡. As per the plan Mechanized Company-1 of 5/8 GR (Mech 1 Company) was tasked to capture Town Square in Kailahun and Motorized Rifle Company-1 of 5/8 GR (Mot 1 Company) to capture RUF check post astride road Kailahun-Daru. The advance was led by the Ghatak (Commando) Platoon supported by three armoured reconnaissance vehicle (BRDMs). The advance drew fire from Quarter Guard area and RUF check post. Ghatak neutralized Quarter Guard area with support of BRDMs. Thereafter, on contacting the Town Square, a firebase established by Mech 1 Company and Mot 1 Company assaulted the check post with the Town Square as their Forming Up Place (FUP)†‡. At around 0930hours the attack helicopters arrived and thereafter it was easy to break contact from the RUF who by now had reorganized and were continuously sniping at the rearguard. Around 1030hours the road column arrived at Geihun to link up with the INDBATT-2 Company which had been helicopter landed earlier. The Force Commander landed at Geihun to meet the troops and ordered the helicopter lift of 60 troops to Daru.

**Move to Pendembu**

After reorganizing, the column moved on and encountered two major road blocks in the form of 8 feet and 4 feet deep ditches dug on the road covered by small arms and rocket launcher fire. Continuous sniping by rebels and slushy conditions on the road impeded progress. The area was physically secured and bridging stores carried by the column and those dropped by an MI-8 helicopter facilitated speedy bridging. The column met the linkup force under the Commanding Officer 5/8 GR Battalion Group five kilometers from Pendumbu at 1700hours, on the day of operation. Thereafter the entire column moved to Pendembu and was directed to deploy in respective areas of the battalion harbour for the night‡‡.

† As per plan the Chinooks were to be followed by three MI-8 escorted by Attack Helicopters (AH) of India Aviation Unit to extricate more stores. However, these helicopters could not take off due to bad weather.

‡ Fire assault compressed of employing firepower of rocket launchers, armoured personnel carries, automatic grenade launchers, 51 mm mortars and medium machine guns.

‡‡ The advance of Motorized 1 Company towards the barrier came under heavy fire from the RUF by the fierce assault closed in and soon secured the check post. Immediately, the B vehicles column moved out and Motorized 1 Company established link up with Company 2 PARA at the barrier. The firebase at Town Square in Kailahun continued to be in position till elements had crossed and then disengaged by fire and move. The column quickly advanced towards Geihun With Company 2 PARA and BRDMs covering the tail.

‡‡ The insertion of SF Company and extrication of MILOBs from Kailahun at 0620hours signaled the commencement of operations of forces located at Daru. 18 Grenadiers advanced and secured a firm base in conjunction with the Infantry Combat Vehicles (ICVs) of 5/8 GR Battalion Group and artillery bombardment.
5/8 GR Advance to Pendembu and Link Up with QRC

5/8 Gorkha Rifles columns ex Daru commenced advanced immediately on securing of the firm base with the ICVs of Mechanised-2 Company leading. At approximately 0830hours the lead elements came under heavy fire from North of the road 500 meters short of Tikonko. An ICV effectively neutralized fire and the advance continued. The column again drew fire from houses in Bungalow (RUF Company location) but burst through with all guns blazing. At Kuiva, heavy small arms fire was encountered from jungle on either side of the road and the village. It was initially planned to physically secure and search Kuiva, but the progress of Kailahun columns indicated a possibility of link up and air evacuation on the same day. Therefore, CO decided to continue to advance with speed for Pendembu. Supported by battalion mortars, the columns crossed the town by fire and move. The rebels had taken up positions inside the village but after offering initial resistance fled into the jungle in face of accurate fire leaving ammunition scattered behind. The column moved at good speed suppressing small arms fire using its ICVs. In the meantime, the battalion’s QRC was lifted from Daru in two waves of 3 x Mi-8s each and captured area 3 Brigades by heliborne assault. Maintaining momentum, the 5/8 GR columns advanced at high speed to link up with the QRC. Enroute a rebel vehicle full of arms and ammunition was chased by the ICVs and recovered by Motorised-2 Company at 1230 hours the link up was established with the QRC and thereafter the battalion column started to deploy on the southern edge of Pendembu.

Securing of Pendembu

Pendembu was the HQ of RUF’s Brigade and its stronghold in the east where a pitched fight was expected. The town was about one Kilometer in length and had solid single storied cement houses. Tall grass along the road and inside made it ideal for ambushes. An attack helicopter directed to strafe Pendembu made five passes at 1300hours and carried out pinpoint engagement of the known RUF locations in town. In the meantime, the battalion mortars were deployed north of Bridge 3. CO reviewed the plans and chose 2 Company, to secure the complete built up area of nearly 300 houses and an airhead in the South West portion of Pendembu. First to secure the northern flank, Mechanised-2 Company moved through with all guns blazing and occupied the north edge of the town. Thereafter, the Motorised-2 company began its operations by first silencing heavy fire from the South West of the town using ICVs and then using its rifle platoons to clear the houses systematically†.

Link up with Kailahun Column

At about 1630 hours, CO led a column to the link up site. The advance through dense jungle was done by boldly employing ICVs and link up was established with the Kailahun party at about 1730hours. This column was escorted to Pendembu by about 1900hours (Photo-53).

† A massive RUF cache of arms and ammunition was found. Some rebels were killed in the South West portions by 4 Platoon of Motorised-2 Company and more were killed while clearing the armoury by 6 Platoon. Later a suitable air head was selected along the Pendembu-Daru road. The QRC Company linked up to the South West of Pendembu. Thereafter, companies were reorganized, areas allotted and preparation of temporary defences for the night commenced.
Pendembu Night 15/16 July 2000

Officer Commanding QRC co-ordinated the defences at Pendembu and on arrival, the Kailahun columns were guided to their respective areas of responsibility. Throughout the night, the RUF who tried to probe the defences were much to their discomfort, accurately engaged by own fire. The 105 mm Light Field Gun (LFG) and the battalion mortars were used to engage likely routes of RUF reinforcement throughout the night. *(Photo-54)*

**Heli lift Operations**

By 0700 hours, 2 Company prepared a helipad and troops earmarked for helilift started to up stick as per their de-induction schedule and the defences were readjusted. The MI-8s started arriving at the helipad at 0815 hours in continuous stream. A total of 12 sorties were flown. Mechanized 1 Company, Motorized 1 Company SF Company, D Company 18 Grenadiers and QRC Company (two Platoons) were de-inducted. The last helicopter took off at 1030 hours. *(Photo-55)*

At about 0930 hours, own troops deployed to the north of the town reported 50 to 60 armed RUF cadres moving towards the platoon post along the road. An armed helicopter directed by the Adjutant, acting as an Air Control Team (ACT) effectively engaged them. Later, selected RUF bunkers in basement of buildings and their ammunition storage centre demolished with help of the battalion engineers.

**Move Back to Daru**

After the last Helicopter took off for Daru, the road column comprising of Daru companies and QRC Company less two platoons and vehicles of Kailahun Companies started to reel in as per their order of March with Motorized 2 Company leading. The Mechanized 2 Company was told to hold on to the north edge of the town till the last and bring up the rear of the column after conducting a tactical disengagement. Continuous watch and intimate fire support was given by one MI-35 helicopter at all times till the column reached Daru. While crossing area 3 Brigade, the CO’s party came under fire. The BRDM was effectively used to silence the fire. The column reached Kuiva without incident. Speculative fire was brought down at all suspected locations by the leading ICVs. The troops deployed for the firm base also started reeling in as 5/8 GR moved back.

**Bewabu Ambush**

The column then moved ahead with caution towards Bewabu and at about 1430 hours, the leading ICVs, short of Bewabu came across a ditch covered by heavy small arms fire from high ground on both sides of the road. The Motorized 2 Company Commander, moving just behind he second ICV of the column realized at once that the column was in the killing ground of the ambush. Immediately Number 4 Rifle platoon following just behind was ordered to counter ambush on the high ground supported by ICV fire. The firefight continued for next 15 minutes†. Number 6 Platoon and the battalion’s engineer platoon immediately set about bridging the gap.

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† *Attack helicopters* were also tasked to strafe both sides of the road to stop the rebels from further interference.
Mobai Ambush

While the head of the 5/8 GR column was engaged in tackling the Bewabu road block, the 18 Grenadiers column was following up about six kilometers behind with 2 x BMPs (Bolivia Mechena Pekhot i.e. Russian Infantry Combat Vehicle) of Mechanised-2 and 2 x BRDMs of Mechanised-1, at the end of the convoy. This convoy came under heavy fire short of Kuiva. After 10 minutes of exchange of fire, the troops again mounted the vehicles and advanced. After about 500 metres of move, a vehicle carrying artillery ammunition had a direct RPG hit. A Chetak helicopter flew in to pick up the casualty from Kuiva. The entire convoy thereafter moved at high speed without encountering any resistance and carrying out speculative fire where necessary. With the MI-35 helicopters also providing intimate fire support, the convoy made good speed and reached Daru at 1730 hours.

REASONS FOR SUCCESS

Synergisation of Available Assets

Op Khukri was a classical example of synergy of effort. The optimum utilization of all resources, joint planning (Indian Army, IAF, UNAMSIL forces and the British Forces) and execution resulted in a synergy that multiplied the effectiveness of the assets deployed. Various reasons can be attributed to the success of this military operation†. Further, it may well be said that the success of OP Khukri was not felt only in its tactical terms. It gave the RUF its worst defeat in recent history and at the same time gave a tremendous boost to the UNAMSIL forces in particular and to the UN as a whole. The detractors of the UN were silenced and the potential of his noble institution was once again displayed. The greatest reward for the Indian Peacekeepers was the rapturous reception given to them by the people of Daru as they came triumphantly back from battle. It was the welcome of a long suffering and desperate people who understood that there were people in this world who would shed their blood for them. Perhaps, that is why they helped build the Khukri Memorial in Daru barracks overlooking the Mao River.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES

Disarmament

As Op Khukri had shattered the morale of the RUF especially the lower cadre, a large number of them fled to Daru and disarmed. This, at times consisted of whole platoons and in one instance the complete coy located at Jojoima (nearby RUF held village) disarmed. The RUF had to bring in its hardcore soldiers from the North to prevent further desertions from its ranks. On induction, INDBATT-1 immediately took upon itself the onerous task of carrying out civic actions, humanitarian measures for upliftment of local populace and improvement of infrastructure in its area of responsibility. This coupled with positive measures taken to improve living conditions of even ex-combatants who had disarmed ensured popularity of the battalion at Lungi, Hastings, Daru and Kailahun.

† Major reasons of success being similarity of operation, provision of real time Human Intelligence (HUMINT) and Signal Intelligence (SIGINT), deception and security during buildup, maintenance of momentum, flexibility in conduct of operations, attack helicopters support, timely and accurate artillery support and finally the resolute and competent leadership of leaders, especially junior leaders.
When the hostage crisis unfolded on 2nd May, the civil populace exerted pressure on RUF leadership for breaking the impasse and allowing peace to return. Had it not been for the political reasons in Sierra Leone, the civil populace would have freed the hostages without necessity of launching ‘Op Khukri’ and owing to the goodwill earned by the battalion in a very short period of their stay. At Daru the town committee decided to change the name of the main town street to India Road and also volunteered to form a Town Peace Committee by signing peace memorandum. The battalion carried out the humanitarian assistance related activities as explained in succeeding paragraphs.

**Activation of Water Point**

With the available engineer resources of the battalion, water point at the airport complex was activated thus making provisions for troops as also for civilians.

**Running of Civil Hospital**

On arrival at Kailahun the companies found that the only civil hospital was devoid of medicines and basic amenities. The hospital was provided with medicines from own quota, the hospital inmates were provided with food on a daily basis and the companies did provide entire water supply to hospital. In addition, the hospital staff was assisted in carrying out patient care by employing nursing assistants and twice a week medical check up by the unit Regimental Medical Officer (RMO).

**Weekly clinic for children**

A weekly clinic for children below 5 years of age was organized by the unit which benefited the entire population. The companies also assisted in organizing kick polio campaign and assisted in administering oral polio doses.

**Assistance in Remote Areas**

The North Eastern region of Kailahun being devoid of basic amenities, food, medicines and sports facilities were conspicuously absent. As a welfare measure, medical camps were set up in remote areas with free check up and medicines distributed to the needy. Certain food items were also distributed amongst the children. As a goodwill gesture a few sports equipment was provided to the schools.

**Social Interaction**

The companies at Kailahun participated in festivals and social celebrations to interact with civilians and exchange cultural heritage. The civilians were enthusiastic about Indian culture and tradition. Along with this sports competition were also organized amongst school children.

**Repair Work of Road**

At the time of deployment of the company’s road condition of most of the roads including the main artery Daru-Kailahun was far from satisfactory.
The Engineer Coy-1 of 116 Engineer Regiment along with the troops from the Kailahun Company carried out repair works to make them trafficable. This included filling up craters, earthwork, strengthening of culverts, demolition of uncut portions etc. The road Daru-Kailahun could thereafter take heavy vehicle traffic including 7.5 ton vehicles and BRDMs.

**Construction of Bailey Bridge**

The erstwhile wooden bridge on river near Pendembu 30 Kms south of Kailahun was destroyed by RUF during the long lasting war and the existing wooden bridges were weak and unstable and not suitable for sustained traffic. The Engineer Company assisted by the battalion launched a Bailey bridge. The bridge had been left intact in its location.

**HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES AT DARU**

**Management of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Camp**

The DDR Camp at Daru remained an example of organisational skills displayed by the battalion officers and men. The camp with the majority strength of RUF ex combatants was a sensitive locality in the government backed CDF stronghold of Daru surrounded by RUF dominated area all around. The battalion organized security of camp inmates, implemented disciplinary measures, ensured correct distribution of food, supplied water for the inmates, cook house for staff and ensured the living conditions of ex combatants and their families improved. In addition the battalion opened a school for children of ex combatants, later named as INDBATT School and assisted the children by providing stationary and other material. A library and a typing school were opened inside the camp. INDBATT workshop started vocational training for some of the ex-combatants and imparted training in trade categories such as Vehicle Mechanic, Welder, Blacksmith, and Electrician etc.

**Medical Assistance**

At Daru unit RMO treated patients in the camp thrice a week throughout the year. The RMO visited the remote areas with the outgoing patrols and treated the sick and wounded. The battalion took great interest to ensure that civilians learnt importance of good hygiene and sanitation. Medical evacuation was organized by MI-26 helicopters for the civilian patients needing to move for immediate medical treatment to Freetown.

**Medical Camp**

The battalion organized a three days medical camp during November 2000. Free treatment, advice and medical assistance to include medicines were organized. Approximately 4000 civilians were offered services. This was the first medical camp of its type ever held at Daru.
Provisioning of Drinking Water at Daru

Owing to acute shortage of drinking water at Daru and absence of any aid by any agency/NGOs to build one, INDBATT-1 started providing drinking water right from the day it was deployed at Daru. This humanitarian measure continued right up till the time the battalion de-inducted from Daru.

Interaction with civil adm and the NGOs

At Daru, NGOs were not fully functional and there was lack of co-ordination between these groups and the government machinery. The battalion appointed a Town Commandant who co-ordinated the activities of these agencies. With the assistance from the Battalion, the civil administration was able to do undertake the following:-

- Repairs to school structures.
- Assistance in construction of culverts, wooden bridges, road repairs.
- Assistance in terms of medicines and medical advises of RMO.
- Provision of transport for ferrying of stores of NGOs.
- Assisting to organize food and other essential stores for the DDR ex combatants, when the road to Daru was closed by the RUF.
- The battalion organized weekly co-ordination meeting of NGOs and Government servants to understand their problems. This was personally chaired by the CO and brought in a lot of confidence amongst the civilian authorities.

Mid Day Meal Scheme

Owing to the poverty and the shortage of food brought by the ten years of war, the civilians were forced to send their wards in search of food into the jungles thereby depriving them of primary education. The battalion started a mid day meal scheme for children of Moa barrack school offering one free meal daily. This encouraged parents to send their children to school daily. This scheme was run by the Battalion out of its own resources and a total of 775 children were benefited by it. Seeing the response of the people to the scheme the World Food Programme came forward took over the scheme when the battalion started de-inducting. Several such schemes were later planned in Daru, encouraged by the response to the above scheme by INDBATT-1

Destruction of Unexploded Bombs

Upon arrival at Daru, the battalion discovered a number of unexploded bombs spread all around Daru. The presence of these bombs posed great danger to the inhabitants of Daru. The battalion engineer officer along with his team worked hard and succeeded in demolishing all of them and thereby making the place safe.
Visits

This period also saw the visit of numerous important dignitaries including the President†, Vice President of Sierra Leone and the Ambassadors of the Member Nations of the Security Council of the UN.

Projection of Indian Image

The impression about Indian troops in the eyes of the people of Sierra Leone and also people from the other countries was that of an impartial, professional and sympathetic Force. Indian Army ethos and traditions paved the way for the troops forming instant rapport with the locals and their confidence in their capability to function as dedicated peacekeepers. The display of a number of banners and written pleas to the President of Sierra Leone urging him to stop untimely pull out of Indian troops goes to prove the above fact. Some of the activities of the Indian troops that helped project a good Indian image are highlighted in the succeeding paragraphs.

 Discipline of All Ranks

The Indians troops were rated to have the best standards of discipline and professionalism. Throughout the mission the troops showed compassion to the needy and their sufferings. There were no incidents of unruly behavior by any Indian on and off duty. Indians were conspicuously singled out as a disciplined lot who were not given to drinking, womanizing or violence.

Role during OP KHUKRI

The sympathizers of RUF were truly moved by the restraint shown by Indians during the tense period of 75 days of crisis period. If Indians had acted in haste, it would have caused collateral damage. The concern shown by the Indians later on was appreciated by even by the RUF leadership. On the other hand OP KHUKRI amply demonstrated Indian operational capability, meticulous planning and raised the image of Indians as truly professional soldiers with astute leadership. The team of officers who worked shoulder to shoulder takes pride in remembering their colleagues even today. (Photo-56)

Welfare Projects

The people of Sierra Leone found the Indians to be genuinely interested in their welfare. As comparisons were drawn between earlier troops and the Indians, the feeling was that their lives could have improved much more had the Indians been called to their rescue earlier during peak years of civil war. The willing action on part of civil officials of Daru in naming the main street as India Road goes to prove the rapport enjoyed by the Indians with the locals.

† Visits of His Excellency Mr Allaji Tejan Kabbah. The Battalion played an important role in gaining the attention of the President of Sierra Leone, i.e. through the civil administration towards the lack of food and basic amenities to the people of Daru, as a result of closure of the roads by the RUF. His Excellency paid a visit to Daru after a gap of four years at the behest of the Battalion. The battalion, besides organizing the security arrangement, also was instrumental in organizing various functions at Daru and thereby giving people a closer look at their President. A large quantity of ration was donated by the President to the people of Daru that provided great relief to them.
Finally, with lot of pride in their selves, all ranks of 5/8 GR battalion group successfully completed one year’s tenure as a part of the United Nations Mission to Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in the year 2000. The battalion played a major role in the establishment of the largest UN mission that was set up in the troubled torn States of Africa. The hard work put in by the battalion and the compassion shown to the locals in order to improve the living conditions won the hearts of the locals and the members of the international community operating in that area. The professional approach of the Indian troops and the action during Op Khukri won the admiration and respect of all. To sum it up, the success of the Indians in the mission area has helped the UN to build up further on the infrastructure, a point well acknowledged by them.

14 MECHANIZED INFANTRY (16 JAK RIFLES)

In 1999, a UN ceasefire came into effect and India agreed to contribute to the peacekeeping force which was to build up on the existing UN observer mission and replace the Nigerian Armed Forces already deployed there. Since time was at a premium, the Indian contingent, comprised of a Battalion group, Field hospital, Engineer company, Transport company and Mi - 8 Transport helicopter flight, were to be air lifted from Delhi. Three companies of 14 Mechanized Infantry under Major AS Karki formed the Mechanized component of the Indian contingent. The Mechanized element composed of 12 BMP, 2 Infantry Combat Vehicles and 9 BRDM Reconnaissance (Wheeled) APCs (Photo-57). The Mechanized Infantry companies were designated as Mechanized - 1 coy (under Major RP Punia), Mechanized – 2 coy (under Major BS Sambyal) and the Quick Reaction Coy (QRC, under Capt SV Sharanappa).

On arrival in Sierra Leone, as the Indian contingent established camp in the vicinity of the Lungi International Airport, where they could see, feel and hear the sights of a country badly ravaged by civil war. All buildings, including the Lungi International Airport were pock marked with bullet holes and had broken windows hanging from hinges. There was no electricity or water supply system inexistence. Sand bagged barricades of the Nigerian Army which had defeated a rebel RUF (Revolutionary United Front) attack on the capital city of Freetown, were to be seen everywhere, with jittery soldiers willing to shoot at the slightest suspicion. Men, women and children with amputated hands i.e. a handiwork of the drugged child soldiers of the RUF, were a common sight. Immediately after the arrival of the UN contingent at Lungi transit camp, the UN Battalions were moved out to replace the positions occupied by the Nigerian Army.

† Unfortunately, the battalion had to face the brunt of the teething problems during the initial stages but undaunted by any kind of opposition/ problems managed to assist the Force HQ to smoothly carry out deployment of other contingents who had come to the mission area ill-equipped. The battalion was the one and only unit of the UNAMSIL that was able to deploy into territories not even seen by the international forces operating in the country.

‡ The air induction of the Force itself was a logistical feat not seen by the Indian Army before. The contingent equipment was airlifted in 20 gigantic AN – 124 Russian transport planes, each capable of carrying 120 tons. In military terms, the said load was for six heavy duty trucks or six Infantry Combat Vehicles. In addition, one IL-76, four IL- 86 and two Boeing 747 chartered aircrafts carried the troops in an 18-hour flight direct to Sierra Leone.
The INDBATT was to occupy Daru and Kailhun towns in Eastern Sierra Leone deep inside RUF held territory. The formidable reputation of the Indian Army had preceded and the local people and press had praises for Indian professional behaviour. The rebel RUF Forces, though a signatory to the peace accord permitting deployment of UN Forces, resented the presence of UN Forces in their area of control.

An introduction to the difficulties that lay ahead was received by the Indians quite early when a 60 vehicle administration convoy movement from Lungi to the designated Battalion HQ location at Daru was stopped by rebels at a place called Bendu junction. While Daru town was in government held territory, the road to Daru had to pass through areas held by rebels. Despite the best efforts of the convoy commanders, the impasse could not be solved and hence message was immediate passed to the Battalion HQ as well as to the Force HQ regarding the situation. Things started becoming ugly when armed reinforcements of the rebels started arriving at the site and started taking up positions around the convoy. Moreover, a message from the Force HQ ordering the Indian column to break through the roadblock was intercepted by the rebels, thereby taming the situation even more volatile. On receipt of the orders, the Indian troops carried out a quick assessment of the situation and formulated their plans. A column of APC’s from the Ghanian Battalion also arrived, to beef up Indian column.

Once the entire INDBATT was at Daru, the first task at hand was to take stock of the situation and become operationally effective. Daru garrison (Moa Barracks) as such was an old British Army Cantonment dating back to World War II days and was quite well spread out. True to the Indian Army traditions and drills, the Indians quickly got down preparing defence around the camp. Detailed reconnaissance of the area around the camp was carried out and companies prepared defence in their areas of responsibilities. In addition, barbed wire fences were erected all around the camp to enhance the security of the garrison. An effective and comprehensive patrolling programme was drawn up and put into effect, thereby dominating the areas beyond visit reach. Daru town soon became the hub center of all activities. Once the Indians took over the Disarmament, Demobilization and Rehabilitation (DDR) camp, it underwent a sea change, with the trademark of Indian Army’s efficiency coming into action. From basic issues like layout and cleanliness of the camp to more advance things like a primary school for the children of the ex-combatants, medical camps, adult literacy classes etc.

†The troops and the BMPs were moved by Mi –8 and Mi –26 helicopters and the Battalion loads were transported by road in UN convoys.

‡ Broadly speaking, the Govt Forces and the pro-government militia, the CDF (controlled the capital port city of Freetown and the Western part of the country, whereas the Rebel Forces (RUF) controlled the diamond rich Eastern part of the country. The countryside was nothing but dense equatorial forests (the African Bush) and movement was possibly only along the unpaved roads that snaked though the Bush.

†‡The Indian touch made all the difference. For the poor and needy people of Daru town, a much needed water point was established, for which the Indians earned a lot of gratitude from the locals. Medical camps were also conducted for the locals. In addition, liaison was carried out with RUF Commanders of the nearby areas and a positive relationship were sought to be established. A number of meetings were held with the representation of RUF and the CDF, to create an environment of mutual trust.
As things started settling down in Daru, reconnaissance was carried out of Kailahun town, to assess the situation there as well as to select a suitable site for the Indian camp besides a possible site for the DDR camp which was to come up in Kailahun at a later stage. The only difficulty encountered by the reconnaissance was that the terrain connecting Daru and Kailahun was a narrow dirt terrain with a number of destroyed bridges on it. The condition of the road was such that the biggest vehicles, which could ply on it was a TATA 2.5-ton truck. At places, palm tree trunks had been cut to make crude bridges, where the bridges had been destroyed during the civil war. In due course, troops moved to Kailahun and established camp there. First to induct was the Motorised–1 coy of 5/8 GR, which was subsequently followed by the Mechanized–1 company. At both locations, things settled down and the troops went about their routine work in an organized manner besides regiment Physical Training and games. Time was spent on the camp defence and on patrolling, to familiarize with the area. Patrolling was sent deep inside the Bush where the villagers were spoken to and medicines and medical treatment given to the sick and wounded. This earned the Indian’s a lot of good will that was to help later during the crisis situation. The peaceful stability that was beginning to be formed was not to last for long.

An important fact of the UN mission was the process of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration† (DDR). The Daru DDR camp run by INDBATT, under the overall responsibilities of Major BS Sambyal was, without doubt, the best organisation and functioned DDR camp in the country. Statistics still held in UN files do confirm the success story of the Daru DDR camp. What made the Daru DDR camp such a successful phenomenon was the fact that even during the crisis period, when UN and RUF were clashing with each other at other places in the country, the Indian’s managed to control the surrendered RUF personnel effect. Emotions were always high in the camp. It had RUF ex–rebels living in a CDF territory and a small incident could have un-done all the efforts of months of hard work. But it is to the credit of the Indian troops that the Daru DDR camp was fully functional even at the height of the crisis.

News of the good work being done by the Indians spread into rebel held territory and a number of rebel soldiers sneaked in, smuggling their weapons with them, to surrender and start their lives afresh. Daru DDR camp was the only one which had a fully functional school run by the Indians, for the children of the ex–combatants. However, when the NGOs responsibilities for feeding the people of the camp fled the scene the situation in the country turned bad. The Indians took on the responsibilities of feeding the ex–combatants also though it was not part of their charter of duties. It was this human touch that made the Indian DDR camp at Daru a resounding success story.

† In the process of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, the rebels were encouraged to come and disarm at a UN disarmament center and get demobilization, thereby officially joining the peace process. Thereafter, they were to stay in a designated DDR camp, to learn vocational skills required to lead a normal life and at the same time, mentally to reintegrate into a society that they had left years ago.
On 1st May 2000, the peace process suffered a severe blow when the RUF, without any provocation, reneged on the ceasefire and attacked the UN Camp at Makeni, held by troops from Kenya. This incident started a chain of events, which was to threaten the very existence of the mission. 2nd May 2000 dawned as any other day in Kailahun. The two companies i.e. Mechanised-1 and Motorised–1, although temporary billeted in the ruins of the local hospital, were busy preparing their selected camp site on a small hillock at the other end of the town. After the morning Physical Training (PT), most of the troops went for preparation/repair of residential buildings at the new camp site. A few people were left at the hospital for routine work, under Major Murali (RMO). He got busy with his local patients who used to come every morning.

Unaware of the events that took place in Makeni the previous day, the two Company Commanders, Major RP Punia and Major Sunil Nair accepted an invitation from the RUF for ‘talks on disarmament’ at the town hall. Both were accompanied by one company officer each (Captain P Sunil Kumar of Mechanized 1 and Captain AK Thapa of Motorised–1). The leader and deputy leader of the observer mission (MILOBs), Lieutenant Colonel H Dwi (Indonesia) and Major Andy Harrison (UK) too were invited for the same and were also present. After some rousing speeches regarding the previous day’s incident in Makeni, the local RUF Commanders very calmly informed the Indian officers that they were being detained to send a message to the UN HQ in Freetown†. While all the others including the two Company Commanders, their drivers and the two MILOBs were taken away in the UN vehicles seized by the RUF, Captain P Sunil Kumar managed to stay back citing overcrowding in the vehicle. This movement proved very useful in the days to come. The officers were straight away driven to a village called Genema, located approximately 16 km away and were kept in an ‘open custody’ kind of arrangement. Captain P Sunil Kumar was taken to the building where rests of the MILOBs were staying, near the Kailahun town center. The officer was subsequently used by the RUF as a link with the besieged company, who had taken an aggressive posture under Capt Sudesh Razora and Capt Prashant Dahiya.

Meanwhile, at the new camp location Capt Sudesh Razora sensed that all was not well when he noticed movement of a large number of armed cadres around the camp. Quickly appreciating that something was severely wrong but not knowing exactly what was going on, he nevertheless warned the troops and got them into a stand to mode. In the absence of any prepared defence, the troops took up positions behind natural cover, using the ground effectively. Captain Sudesh Razora and Capt Prashant Dahiya then went around the camp and adjusted the defence layout. At the hospital location, Major Murali noticed that the patients had suddenly disappeared to be replaced by armed cadres who had taken up positions around the hospital. Left with a very small strength, Major Murali quickly withdrew into the hospital building and contacted Captain Sudesh Razora on Motorola and apprised him about the situation. It was then that Captain Sudesh Razora got a positive indication that the rebels had some bad intentions against the Indians.

† The Indians were told that once the UN promised impartiality they would be free to go. Suddenly, a number of armed militias appeared on the scene and asked the Indians to accompany them. Incidentally, the Indians were not carrying any weapons as part of their confidence building measures else a blood bath would have ensued there itself. Taken totally by surprise, the UN persons were left with no option but to comply.
Immediately, the officer spoke to the JCO at the hospital location and took stock of the strength and weapons available there. He briefed the JCO regarding the situation and the actions to be taken. On his part, Major Murali dug deep into his experience of service with Infantry battalion and carried out the co-ordination of the defence of the hospital complex. Thus started the stubborn resistance put up by the Indian troops in a small, remote and non-descript town in a forgotten corner of the world, in a country that most had not even heard about. Emboldened by their success in the opening phase of their ‘operations’, the rebels started testing the Indian troops in the two camps. Vehicles mounted patrolling of the rebels started driving right up to the camp gates, as if challenging them. Unaware of the status of the Indians who had gone for talks with the rebels, the Indians were forced to wait and watch – and wonder as to what was happening, but nevertheless, instincts and training took over and Captain Sudesh Razora decided to adopt a no-nonsense stance, came what may. Tucking a 9 mm Beretta pistol into his trouser waistband, he stopped the rebel ‘Patrolling vehicles’ near the camp gate and calmly told them that if they had came that side again, he would kill them. The cool, deliberate and serious manner in which the message was conveyed the rebels knew that the Indian officer was not joking. Thus, they could not afford to take chances with this guy. Their patrolling towards the Indian camp immediately ceased.

As luck would have it, a UN pay helicopter, carrying pay of the MILOBs appeared at that time and came into land at an open corner of the new camp location. The Indians tried desperately to warn it away with field signals but the helicopter, flown by Russian pilots, nevertheless came in and landed. The rebel soldiers, who had positions closest to the helipad, were quick to come and board the helicopter. After searching the helicopter, they seized the crew and took them away to the building where the MILOBs and Captain P Sunil Kumar were being held†. For the next 15 odd days, till the time the situation didn’t stabilize Captain Sudesh Razora kept the rebels at bay through a show of bravado, despite the precarious state things were in. He rallied the troops and took control of the half prepared camp, improving on it day and night. Also, he kept the Battalion HQ informed regarding the situation on ground.

During one of his visit to the company location to convey some message Captain P Sunil Kumar managed to hide a Motorola radio set and a 9mm Pistol on his person and went back to the rebels. While the Motorola was used to inform the camp regarding rebel activities/plans, the pistol was for use if things deteriorated. On 8th May, Captain P Sunil Kumar was summoned to the RUF HQ. While walking to the rebel HQ, he noticed that approximately 200 fully armed rebels were milling around restlessly nearby as if preparing for some mission.

† During talks with the disoriented crew Capt P Sunil Kumar learned regarding their mission and about the $60,000 that was lying inside the helicopter (the rebels had not discovered the money in their hurried search). During his next visit to the company to convey some message, Capt P Sunil Kumar info Capt Sudesh Razora about the money. In a carefully planned and executed operations the same night, Capt Sudesh Razora started a lot of commotion and movement in the far corner of the camp, thereby drawing the attention of the rebels deployed near the helipad towards that area. Using that as a cover, he quietly entered the helicopter and took out the money, which was kept in one corner, thereby preventing $60,000 from falling into rebel hands.
At the rebel HQ, Captain P Sunil Kumar was asked by the rebel commanders to walk in front of them to the Indian camp and ask the Indian troops in Kailahun to lay down their arms, in the interest of avoiding bloodshed in Kailahun. **Without a second thought, Capt P Sunil Kumar drew his pistol and declared that such a movement was unthinkable for an Indian soldier. He said that he would rather go down fighting saving the last bullet for himself than ask his troops to disarm which he said was worse than dying in Indian traditions.** Once he was dead, he said, the RUF could expect the Indian troops, who had been patient till then to come out of the camp and create mayhem in Kailahun, not sparing a single living soul.

The theatrical dialogues went down well with the RUF Commanders and after a long and animated debate they decided to set aside their plans to storm the Indian camp. Appreciating the brave stance taken by Captain P Sunil Kumar, the Paramount Chief of Kailahun conferred the title of ‘Fatorma Mbakor’ on him, which was the name of a legendary warrior of the local mended tribe. After that, Capt P Sunil Kumar was accepted as one of their own and was granted the freedom of movement within the town of Kailahun. **The Indian Quick Reaction Company (QRC) located at the entrance to Freetown also dug in to deny the approaches. At the same time, a mounted column led by the unit BMP-2 marched 250 km overnight to Makeni and Magburaka towns where the Kenyan contingent was under attack. The gallant action of Capt SV Sharanappa in the leading BMP in fearlessly breaking through multiple road blocks of the RUF and charging head long into their RPG fire saved the day for the UN and QRC came back to Freetown after 14 days. The world press hailed it as the first successful offensive action by the UN till then. This action was a watershed event because thereafter the RUF went on the defensive and stopped attacks on the UN.**

The situation that ensued in Kailahun after outbreak of hostilities had many complexities. After the concern of security of the two surrounded camps armoured persons, the important issue was supply of rations to the besieged company. Negotiation skills exhibited by Indian officers both at Kailahun as well as at Daru, that an arrangement to transport rations in own vehicle was agreed upon, with a guarantee from the RUF that the convoy which would be operated from a humanitarian angle would not be harassed. To ensure that no such incidents took place, the Indians managed to talk to the RUF into providing security staff (Major Tom Sandy, CMP Commander of RUF), their resident represent with INDBATT - 1, as escort for the ration convoys. Careful wording and deft handling by the Indians ensured that the local RUF Commanders were forced to agree to a number of Indian demands on various occasions. As the days passed by and negotiations failed to obtain release of the Bn 2IC, the point surrounded by the RUF rebels at Kuiva, a standby contingency extrication plan was put in place. A patrolling of ICVs was kept ready at 5 minute notice along with a platoon of 5/8 Gorkha Rifles under the command of Major A Joshi of 5/8 GR. Since the Battalion HQ was in radio communication with the patrolling stuck in Kuiva, signal had been tied up in case there was to be a change in the status quo. As in the case with the company in Kailahun, arrangement had been made to supply food to the patrolling from Daru. The only hitch was the fact that in case operations were to be launched to extricate the Kuiva platoon, it would foreclose the supply route to the besieged company in Kailahun. Hence, twice Major A Joshi and his team were activated but were held back at the last minute.
In Kailahun, another issue which propped up a little later was the requirement of a Sat phone – both for secure communication between the besieged Kailahun Company and the Battalion HQ/Force HQ as well as for the troops to speak to their near and dear ones. The real problem in this was transporting of the same from the Battalion Headquarter at Daru to the company in Kailahun, without it falling into the hands of the RUF since they had a habit of carrying out random checks of ration vehicles to ensure that no weapons were being brought in besides, of course taking away the Old Monk rum! Once again, the ingenuity of the Indian mind came into action and a hollow compartment under the co-driver seat of a TATA 2.5 ton vehicle was cut and the phone was placed inside. Thereafter, the plate was welded back and painted. Needful to say, the Sat phone reached Kailahun undetected and proved very useful both from the operational point of view as well as from the troops mental well being point of view. The British also tried the same stunt without the necessary concealment and planning, with the end result that the Sat phone intended for Major Andy Harrison (the British MILOB) was caught and ended up with Major Kupoi of the RUF.

The two-month stand off that took place in Kailahun was unparalleled in the history of the Indian Armed Forces. While any less trained and less motivated Force would have broken down under the intense mental pressure and physical hardship that accompanied the siege, the Indian troops rose up to the challenge and faced it robustly. The Officers understood the importance of keeping the troops motivated and busy so as to ensure that no negative energy made inroads into the camp. Stand to, maintenance/improvement of defenses, inter platoon sports competitions and regular mandir parades etc. ensured that morale among the troops was always high. A study in contrast was the condition of the MILOBs staying inside the Indian camp. With each passing day, they edged towards a total mental breakdown. Despite the talks given by the Indian officers from time to time they were a dejected lot almost akin to condemned prisoners on the death row, awaiting the noose or the electric chair. But there were exceptions the British Army Officers, Major Andy Harrison, the Russian Naval Officers, Commander Andreiy and the Pakistani Army Officer, Major Mushtag Mohammed were quite spirited and faced all situations in a much more mature manner. They played games i.e. basketball with the Indian officers and also took keen interest in the defence of the camp. Plans were now being formulated at the UN HQ as well as in India, to extricate the 223 peacekeepers and 11 international UN military observers from Kailahun camp and bring them to the safety of Daru garrison. For this to take shape, the Indian Forces were augmented†.

With regard to contributions by 14 Mechanized elements in Op Khukhri, the BMPs of Mechanized - 2 Company under Major BS Sambyal led the advance towards Pendembu from Daru. The advance involved breaking through the RUF forward defence lines and capturing their two Battalion HQs at Kuiva and Mobai enroute, clearing and securing the RUF Brigade HQ at Pendembu and finally effecting a link up with the Kailahun force before last light. The elements of the RUF, although caught unawares at first were quick to pass information regarding the advance of the Daru column to their HQ. As a result, the column started attracting heavy automatic fire the moment it entered rebel territory.

† This included the arrival of a flight of Attack Helicopters (MI – 25), one Mech Company ex 11 Mechanized Infantry, one Artillery Battery, one Special Force Company (ex 2 PARA) and one Infantry Battalion (18 Grenadiers). The British had one mil observer stuck in Kailahun; they were ready to help with two Chinook Helicopters of the SAS.
Not to be cowed down after preparation for months for the action, the Indian troops gave back with all their might. The BMPs (Photo-58) were lethal in their effect, blowing entire ambushes away. It was indeed a fearsome sight to see the trees being cut down in shreds by the 30 mm cannon fire. The total secrecy of build up and rapid advance of mechanized columns from Daru, quickly brushing aside the rebel resistance took the RUF by surprise. Their confused cadres ran into the jungles after suffering heavily at the hands of the Indian BMPs in the first few engagements. The rebels in Pendembu tried to put up a fight but once again were blasted away to oblivion by the BMPs and the town was finally cleared by 1700 hours the same day. Link up was affected with Major RP Punia’s Kailahun column, north of Pendembu by Lt Dipu Sirohi’s BMPs by 1800 hours. Once contact was established, Pendembu town was secured, both the column took def position around the town and kept engaging rebels forces who tried to venture close through out the night, making full use of the long range of the cannons. It was in one multiple ambush by the RUF that Hav Krishan Kumar of 14 mechanized unit was hit by a RPG rocket and was seriously wounded in the abdomen. Although, immediate evacuation by helicopters to Daru and attended to by Indian surgeons, he could not be saved (Photo-59). His last rites were conducted as per Indian tradition. Captain SV Sharanappa, who was in the leading BMP, was also wounded in a gallant action while breaking ambush cum roadblock. Captain Dipu Sirohi too was wounded; when his ICV fought its way out of an ambush in Kuiva town.

However, the intense, accurate and devastating firepower of the BMP cannons soon broke the morale and will of the rebels. It also shattered the myth of the RUF’s ability of laying impregnable ambush a fact that had over the years made the RUF undisputed rulers of the jungles. During the operations, Captain MP Bhattarai chased a fleeing RUF Truck in his ICV and captured a massive arms cache including an anti aircraft gun besides mortars, MMGs and RPGs and a large number of AK / M-16 rifles. By 1500 hours on 16th July 2000 the road bound column from Pendembu returned to Daru to a hero’s welcome by the citizens of the town. To commemorate the event and to honour the Indians, the citizens named the main road in their town as ‘India Road’ and another residential lane as ‘Major BS Sambyal Lane’. The said officer brought pride to the 14 Mechanized. Needful to state that, Op Khukri has been a very successful operation by UN Forces in the history of UN as it brought the belligerent RUF to their knees and subsequently back to the negotiating table. It was a success that the UN badly needed to retain its credibility. In this operation, a few persons of 14 Mechanized Infantry were awarded for their gallantries†.

Major BS Sambyal was the force behind the success of the Daru DDR camp, for which the INDBATT earned a lot of good name in the country as well as in the UN circles. A large number of visiting dignitaries were brought to Daru DDR camp so to project the success story. It was in re-organisation of his efforts to keep the camp running when all the other DDR camps collapsed during the crisis that the locals named a street in Daru after him. During Op Khukri, the officer led his company from the front and was instrumental in success of the operations.

† These included Major RP Punia, Yudh Seva Medal, Hav Krishan Kumar, SM (Posthumous), Sub Deewan Singh, COAS Commendation Card. However, the real heroes who were left unsung but do deserve to be mentioned are Major BS Sambyal, Capt SV Sharanappa, Capt Sudesh Razora and Capt P Sunil Kumar.
Captain SV Sharanappa, as the Mechanized Component Commander of the QRC, exhibited exceptional personal courage, great tactical acumen and professional competence of an extremely high order. The Indian QRC was the most visible part of the Indian contingent and Capt SV Sharanappa, with his daring BMP charged against many rebel ambushes brought glory to the Indian flag in an international environment. Despite getting wounded during Op Khukri, he acted with utter disregard for his personal safety, thereby defeating the ambushes laid by the rebels. Capt Sudesh Razora took command of the Kailahun camp after Company Commanders, Major RP Punia and Major SR Nair were taken hostage by the RUF, by deceit. He marshaled the troops and kept the RUF rebels at bay for 15 crucial days through a show of bluster and daring acts which made the RUF hesitate in launching an attack on the half prepared Kailahun post. He also managed to take out $ 60,000 from a UN pay helicopter that had erroneously landed and was grounded by the RUF and thereby prevented the money from falling in rebel's hands.

Capt P Sunil Kumar played an important part in stabilizing the situation when things were bad and was an important link between the rebels and the Indians, all throughout the course of the crisis. His bravery and presence of mind and daring attitude under intense pressure in hostile conditions helped overcome a potentially dangerous situation, more so when the rebels were planning to storm the camp, to disarm the Indian soldiers.

2 PARA SF (SPECIAL FORCES )

Nature of the Mandate

A team of 2 PARA (SF) went to Sierra Leone on UN Mandate as a part of UN Peace Enforcement Mission (UNAMSIL) and was specifically tasked for the following:-

- Rescue of 21 Indian Army persons held as hostages by rebels at Kuiva (later Pendembu) in Eastern Sierra Leone.

- Extrication of two Companies of INDBATT-1 (Indian Battalion-1) from Kailahun in Eastern Sierra Leone.

- Extrication of Force landed MI-8 helicopter of Indian Air Force from rebel territory near Makeni in Central Sierra Leone.

Brief of the Unit Action During OP KHUKRI

On 15th July 2000, before first light, 80 Commandoes† of the Special Forces Team were sent into the enemy territory by two British CH-47 Chinook Helicopters.

† With regard to their distribution, 40 Commandoes were inserted close to village in Jimila, 34 commandoes were landed at Bandajuma track junction and the balance 6 Commandoes were landed inside Kailahun defended locality.
After an intense firefight, 40 commandoes cleared the road axis and secured till the town center of Kailahun. Half of the other 34 commandoes secured the bandajuma junction, while the other half advanced and cleared the road axis till Kenewa. Six Commandoes guided the detainees and enabled a foolproof linkup with the team at the town center as planned. At approximately 1020 hours, nearly four hours ahead of time, the column reached Geihun. The Force Commander landed at Geihun to congratulate the Team for the remarkable success and speed of operation. By last light on 15th July 2000, overcoming enemy roadblocks and ambushes, the entire foot column from Kailahun had reached Pendembu without even a single casualty to the detainees who were then airlifted from Pendembu to Daru the next day.

**Important Achievements**

Daredevilry of the team by insertion in darkness in spite of inclement weather and unknown territory without any physical reconnaissance, air photos or fire support on CH-47 Chinook Helicopters had indeed been remarkable. More so, maintenance of complete surprise by resorting to complete radio silence before insertion as well as negligible radio transmissions on radio during the planning stage was yet another feather in the cap of these specialized forces. 233 personnel of UNAMSIL troops and 11 Military Observers were successfully rescued and there were only two wounded persons with splinter injuries of a RPG rocket attack during de-induction from the operation which itself speaks about the fine work done by the rescue teams. The sense of devotion to duty was very well appreciated and Major Harinder Sood, Team Commander, was awarded Yudh Sewa Medal for planning and smooth conduct of this successful operation.

**11 MECHANIZED INFANTRY**

The Indian Mechanized Quick Reaction Company, (A company of the 11th Battalion, the Mechanized Infantry Regiment) to function directly under the UNAMSIL Force Headquarters moved into the mission area at Sierra Leone soon after the Crisis of May 2000. The Company had moved in with its own equipment at a very short notice. The Company was redeployed at MILE 91, northeast of the capital Freetown on 12th August 2000. After conducting three months of operations in Rogbere, Masiaka and Bendum (during Op ‘Khukri’), Mile 91 posed a new kind of challenge for this company. While operations and security still remained priority one, it soon became evident that the people of Mile 91 required as much humanitarian assistance as possible.

**Operations Undertaken**

The Company had performed, professionally in all the operations that it had undertaken since its induction in the oversea mission. Some of the important operations are discussed highlighting unit’s achievements.
Occupation of Roghere

In this operation, in June 2000, the Company exhibited good fire control and ensured rapid capture (which included clearing of minor opposition near the junction itself) and deployment at the strategic location of Rogbere thereafter. The Company was deployed there till it finally handed over the location to a Nigerian battalion. This was the first military operation after the crisis of May 2000 that dealt a blow to the myth of invincibility of the RUF (the rebel outfit at Sierra Leone) and instilled ‘Fear of God’ in the rebels towards the BMPs. The company during the return from Rogbere had demolished a rebel roadblock short of Magbuntoso and had ensured a secure passage for the column that consisted troops from INDBATT-2 also. This was the first operation conducted by the company at the soil of Sierra Leone and indeed proved to be a major success.

Occupation of Masiaka

The Company captured the rebel held location with ease†. The Company got orders for mobilization late at night and was at Masiaka before noon the next day after a formal briefing by the Force Commander Major General VK Jetley, UYSM at Magbuntoso. This joint operation with the Jordanian Battalion was launched on 28th June 2000 to evict the rebels who had moved into Masiaka and pushed back the Jordanian peacekeepers. The company stayed there for four days and after handing over the location to Jorbatt-2, it fell back to the base at Aberdeen. The operation also paved way for the joint operation ‘Op Thunderbolt’ that was conducted to evict the westside boys from the locals of Okra Hills, near Masiaka.

Occupation of Benduma

During ‘Op Khukri’ in July 2000, the Company was airlifted to Daru and it adjusted to a new task, in an infantry mode, to capture and hold this location of Benduma (Northwest of Daru) and secure routes to Daru from the North. The company executed this task much before the expected time and in a true professional manner which assisted the speedy execution of the overall conduct of the operation.

‘OP MILAP - I’

This operation launched on 13th December 2000, involved a 50-kilometer move till Magburaka in the RUF held area. The aim of this operation was to facilitate another round of talks between UNAMSIL and the RUF and also effect the recovery of UNAMSIL equipment that were captured by the RUF rebels from KENBATT and ZAMBATT. The Company led the advance and was tasked to secure the place mentioned and the helipad. The BMPs assisted the recovery operation in which they retrieved four BRDMs of Kenya and Zambia that were towed and loaded onto a MI-26.

† There had been continued unease prevalent at this township since the deployment of the Sierra Leone Army. The Company had earlier carried out reconnaissance mission termed as a ‘Fighting Patrol’ to Masiaka. Soon after this patrol, the SLA vacated this strategic location that lead to Port Loko in the West and Bo to the East from Freetown. JORBATT-2 QRC and also the QRC of INDBATT-1 recaptured the territory.
The speedy executions of all the tasks in this operation were attributable to the good training and drills of the company. Brigadier RK Mehta, VSM, Sector Commander Kenema, was also present at the meeting and held the fort while the Force Commander went for a reconnaissance to Makali that day.

‘OP MILAP - II’

The Company was yet again summoned to assist in the security of the place for the meeting between the UNAMSIL Force Commander and the RUF leader and also to carry out a speedy recovery of Zambian and Kenyan equipment from Makali. This operation on 29th December 2000 marked the resolute professional outlook of the Company that was appreciated by Brig RK Mehta, VSM, the Commander Keneema Sector Headquarters and other senior officers.

**CIVIC ACTION PROJECTS**

Apart from the professional role of peacekeeping, the INDMECH QRC launched itself whole-heartedly into the humanitarian work, which added a new dimension to the traditional roles of peacekeeping and proved a point that humanitarian assistance is definitely a step towards peace building. Sierra Leoneans are very hard working by nature but had suffered indeed by the civil war. With a little organisation, assistance and leadership, they could work miracles. The company worked towards Humanitarian Projects with the Key Result Areas (KRA) for the people of Mile 91, given here under.

**Education**

Education was felt to be the foundation for lasting peace in this war torn country. The company had worked on three (two at Mile 91 and one at Aberdeen) projects of education; the same are deliberated upon in succeeding paragraphs. The skilled labour of the township assisted these projects.

**Sierra Leone Muslims Brotherhood (SLMB) Primary School**

The Company adopted the SLMB Primary School. The roof of the school building had been partially destroyed and needed immediate repair. School teachers and parents of its students were mobilized to assist in cutting wood from the forests. NGOs donated plastic sheets as an interim relief measure. A project report was submitted to the UNDP for assistance. In the meantime, the huge 250 by 40 foot section of roof was restored with old tin sheets and plastics to beat the deadline of 11th September 2000 i.e. the start of new session. The school was formally re-opened on 18th September 2000. In view of the increase strength of the students of the school because of IDPs, the Company had also constructed an extension of ten more classrooms, called ‘South Extension’, which was dedicated to the community by HE Behrooz Sadry on 30th September 2000. The Company had also taken it as a challenge to construct four proper concrete-walled classrooms with zinc roofing within the SLMB School Complex with the material assistance provided by the UNICEF†.

† Lieutenant General DI Opande, the Force Commander of UNAMSIL formally inaugurated this ‘Kofi Annan Block’ on 8th January 2001.
Raghukul Kindergarten School

Mile 91 did not have a nursery or a Kindergarten school and it was seen that a lot many children between the age group of 3 to 5 years were idling on the streets. In order to minimize this, a demonstration project had been undertaken to build a Kindergarten School in a destroyed house practically at no cost, using only the local resources. This school later did provide an opportunity to prepare the children aged between 3 to 5 years for ensuing studies in a Kindergarten school. The school commenced on 18th September 2000. The school was the First Kindergarten in the region and had a faculty of good teachers and study materials (which had been donated by the UNICEF and UNAMSIL). The Company had constructed all basic facilities within the school. This Kindergarten could boast of having the only swimming pool, ‘Splash’ amongst the school there.

Construction of Cape Sierra Preparatory School

The INDMECH QRC together with the British High Commission assisted the people at Aberdeen with the construction of this school. The Company facilitated the procurement of raw materials from UNICEF besides the British High Commission for this school. Creation of this school marked the co-operation between the Indian and British military unit as also the synergy between UNAMSIL and the British working towards peace in Sierra Leone. The facility was formally inaugurated by HE Alan Jones, the British High Commissioner at Sierra Leone on 18th January 2001 at a ceremony organized by the Company at Aberdeen.

Agriculture

Company identified farming as the vocation with the potential to provide employment to thousands of displaced persons, as hundreds of acres of fertile land was lying uncultivated around Mile 91. As part of ‘Op Goodwill’ program, the Company had cleared over 30 acres of land of which 25 acres had already been planted since the launch of the project on 18th August 2000. The farmers had been organized into associations and provided with free seeds and implements that were procured for them with the help of local NGOs, government officials and resident farmers. The project benefited over 300 families of displaced persons. To nurture prosperity and ensure a balanced diet for the people, the company started a vegetable nursery along the Magburaka road called ‘Millennium Vegie’ which was yet again a pioneering endeavor in the region.

Health and Hygiene

The Company also undertook the task to encourage the people to clean their surroundings, dig garbage disposal pits, repair roads, clean hospitals clean the water wells, spray disinfectants etc.

† The Under Secretary General of the UNO, Mr Jean Marie Guhenno launched the school on the 9th September 2000.

‡ Brigadier RK Mehta, VSM, Commander Kenema Sector and Colonel Khushal Thakur, YSM, Commanding Officer of INDBATT-2 were also present for the inauguration ceremony.

†‡ Mr Okere Adams, the Minister for Agriculture and Marine Resources inaugurated the ‘Millennium Vegie’ on 7th October 2000.
This reduced the ill effects of congestion at Mile 91. Awareness had been generated in the locals to keep their surroundings clean. The cases of mass-diseases had been reduced in the town. The Company was sought by the NGOs to help distribution and transportation of stores. The Company voluntarily conducted spray of chemicals, cleaning of water resources and maintenance campaigns in its area of responsibility, besides creating the ‘Raghukul Water Point’, a non-perennial hand pump operated water well for the community with the assistance of UNICEF Representative Ms. Joanna Van Garpen. This facility was dedicated to the community of Mile 91 by Colonel Kushal Thakur, YSM, the Commanding Officer, and INDABATT-2 on 24th December 2000.

Community Welfare

The company identified that there were many people especially women within the influential age of 18 to 35 who had been traumatized by the war days and needed to be uplifted in terms of finding means for generating income as well as utilizing the time fruitfully. Keeping this in mind, the company started an organisation of the people called ‘Raghukul Community Education Center’, within the premises of the Raghukul Kindergarten School. Classes were held in the evening to teach about baking, soap making, adult education and other small skills. The Raghukul Community Education Center† was inaugurated and dedicated to the community of Mile 91 by the HE Oluyemi Adeniji on 25th October 2000. It had been an endeavor to get this organisation sponsored by the Sierra Leone government to allow rapid growth and sustenance.

Construction Sports Complex

The Company constructed sports complex called ‘Mahatma Gandhi Sports Complex’ to promote sports in the region. HE Behrooz Sadry inaugurated this facility on 31st September 2000. To give a further impetus to sports activities especially football, the company had raised a Football Club Called ‘Raghukul United’ with the aim to unite people and wean them away from gun culture and other vices.

Needful to state, humanitarian Projects undertaken by the INDEMECH QRC at Mile 91 had a very positive effect on the residents as they started helping themselves. As a Sierra Leone’s old man put it, the change is most evident on the faces of the children, who have begun to smile, laugh and play a lot now. Now, they call the Indian troops ‘Paddy’ (friend) rather than ‘Apoto’ (white man) as they used to call them when they had just arrived a Mile 91. The security situation has improved dramatically too. A policeman was fortunate and happy that he had slept through the night for the first time in ten years. The INDMECH QRC had understood the realities of life, the sufferings of the common man, expectations of this nation and as part of UNAMSIL, was sure that with all the help rendered by this Company, time will enable all of us to ‘see the light at the end of the tunnel’. There was no doubt that the peace will announce its arrival soon and prevail in this beautiful country forever. It may, thus be summed up that all ranks of 11 Mechanized Battalion had a very satisfying and memorable tenure and they cherish these everlasting memories with a great sense of pride.

†The income generated by this center was thus used to sustain ‘Raghukul Kindergarten School’, the ‘Raghukul Bakery’, ‘Raghukul Soap Factory’ and for the general welfare of the community.
UNITED NATIONS INTERIM FORCE IN LEBANON
UNIFIL : NOVEMBER 1978 - TO DATE

Lebanon is located on the Eastern shore of Mediterranean area. It is bounded by Syria to North and by Israel to South (Map-4). The area of the country is approximately 10400 square km. Before proceeding further it is important to highlight the historical background of United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Needful to state that Lebanon is a small multiracial State of the Middle East. The sectarian conflict in Lebanon can be traced back to the French Mandate when the Country was divided into several States based on religious and sectarian considerations. The French authorities considered Israel and Pam Arabic movement as a threat to Maronities and since then the Maronities had developed this fear of being subjugated by Muslims which was the root cause of the conflict and tension prevailing in Lebanon in 1978. This forced the Security Council to adopt Resolutions† with a view to position a peace keeping force in South Lebanon. The UN Interim Force in Lebanon was sent to monitor Israeli Defence Force (IDF) withdrawal, maintain peace and security in Southern Lebanon and assist Lebanese Government in its effective functioning. The UNIFIL has provided much needed relief to the population in these areas.

2/4 GORKHA RIFLES (GR)

After a prolonged stay at Delhi, the much awaited historical moment finally arrived when on 4th November 1998 the advance party led by Colonel Guru Sahay Batabyal departed for Beirut and the entire Battalion Group got inducted into Lebanon by 23rd November 1998 in three different flights‡. It was a singular honour bestowed on the Battalion to represent INDIA as after independence it was for the first time 4 GR was taking part in any UN mission. At this historic moment 22 officers of the Battalion and 13 officers from all around services were attached to the unit formally, forming the part of Infantry Battalion Group.

The tasks assigned to UNIFIL were confirming the withdrawal of Israeli Forces from Lebanon territory; restore international peace and security in its area of operations by supervising the cessation of hostilities, ensuring the peaceful character of its area and take all measures deemed necessary to ensure effective restoration of Lebanese sovereignty over its area. Israel, however, continued to retain a degree of military power in the area by operating with the irregulars called De-Facto Forces (DFF), the so called ‘South Lebanese Army’ and continued its fight against Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and its Lebanese allies. The Palestine Liberation Organisation for its part tried to retain and strengthen its political and logistical bases in the area. UNIFIL was not only prevented from deploying fully in area that had been occupied by the Israeli Forces but also could not deploy down to the Armistice Demarcation Line (Lebanon–Israel border). However, both sides tried constantly to encroach on or infiltrate in the area where UNIFIL was deployed to carry their fight against each other.

† Resolution Numbers 425 and 426
‡ 2/4 Gorkha Rifles Infantry Battalion Group was inducted in Lebanon as part of United Nations Peace Keeping Force in November 1998. The unit was the first Indian Battalion to be deployed for peace keeping in South Lebanon since the establishment of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in 1978.
The Second Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June 1982 changed UNIFIL’s situation drastically and for three years UNIFIL in its entirety remained behind the Israeli lines. Its role was limited to providing humanitarian assistance to the local population to the extent possible. The Force was nevertheless kept in place with the hope that it might play an important role in the eventual withdrawal of the Israeli Forces. On 14th January 1985 the Government of Israel announced its own plan for the redeployment of Israeli Forces in phases. In the last, these Forces were to deploy along the Armistice Line while maintaining a ‘Security Zone’ where local Forces the so-called SLA would function with Israeli backing. This was the situation prevailing when the Second Battalion reached Lebanon. For map of Lebanon showing UNIFIL Area of responsibility and the ‘Security Zone’ occupied by the SLA refer map (Map-5). UNIFIL has been a multinational entity†. Each Infantry Battalion was addressed by using Suffix ‘BATT’ that is to say the Norwegian Battalion was called NORBATT. Hence, when Second Battalion reached Lebanon, it was addressed as INDBATT and it was to replace Norwegian Battalion.

On arrival at Beirut the Indian troops were moved by road to the Logistic Base of the Norway Battalion located at 4-1‡ in the heart of Ebel-es-Saqi a small but modern village in South Lebanon. The Battalion Headquarters was located at 4-2 a post two kilometers North East of 4-1. From there the troops were organized into Company Groups and moved to respective posts. The INDBATT’s area of responsibility was located completely with in the Israeli Controlled Area (ICA/Security Zone). The Battalion was based in the most dramatically beautiful and the most politically difficult area of UNIFIL operations in South Lebanon. Located at the Eastern extremity of the UN buffer Zone, the Battalion held stretch of territory with rolling green and traced hills, rocky outcrops falling away to rushing rivers, red roofed villages perched on steep mountain sides. But this idyllic enclave was surrounded entirely by Israel’s boomrang – shaped occupation zone, which ran East to West 15 to 6km wide, North of Lebanon’s border with the Jewish State. The two major rivers of Lebanon, Litany and Hasbani both flowed through the Battalion area of responsibility. The local inhabitants comprising of Sunni Muslim, Druze and Marinate Christians were fairly rich and hospitable. The Battalion was organized on three rifles Company groups†‡. In addition to camps the Battalion was responsible for managing 9 check posts and 8 observation towers round the clock. A map showing the Battalion Area of Operations is placed opposite (Map-6).

† It consisted of six Infantry Battalion Groups one each from Norway, Finland, Ireland, Ghana, Nepal and Fiji. Poland (POLLOG) provided the logistics and Italy (ITALAIR) provided the helicopter flights. France provided heavy maintenance and repairs.

‡ Here the number prefix indicates the battalion and the suffix number indicates the position/post

†‡ A Company commanded by Major Rajiv Mankotia with Company Headquarters at 4-3, B Company commanded by Major SK Singh with Company Headquarters at 4-11 at Rachaiya and C Company commanded by Major Rahul Sharma with Company Headquarters at 4-7 at Sheeba.
Though Major Kuldeep Ahlawat and his logistic team was working round the clock in taking over an array of stores, equipment and assets since their arrival in advance party, the pace increased with the arrival of main body on 23rd November 1998. With only five days remaining to take over the operational responsibility from Norwegian Battalion the handing/taking over reached a very fast pace. Constant visits by Commanding Officer to UNIFIL Headquarters became order of the day to ensure a smooth transition. On the job training with Norwegian soldiers was a wonderful experience and our troops surprisingly picked up the job very fast and confidently.

Finally, the Battalion took over the operational responsibility in Lebanon from the Norwegian Battalion on 28th November 1998. The transition between NORBATT XLI and INDBATT-I was marked by a spectacular parade at the Battalion parade ground at 4-2, where Major General JK Konrote the Force Commander UNIFIL handed over the UN flag to the battalion to start its mission as ‘peacekeepers’ in South Lebanon. As the smartly attired Gorkhas stood in the center of the Parade Ground, the Indian Tricolour went up. With the tune of the National Anthem being played in a foreign land the heart of each and every member of the contingent swelled with pride. The Force Commander took the salute. Besides, there were host of dignitaries who graced the occasion, which included His Excellency Shri Ajai Choudry, Indian Ambassador to Lebanon. To commemorate the event, an impressive trophy was presented by the Battalion to the Commanding Officer of NORBATT XLI which had the ASHOKA embossed on top and engraved on the trophy the National, Army and Regimental flags.

Peacekeeping operations in an international environment are radically different from Conventional/Counter Insurgency operations conducted by the Indian Army. Thus, in order to make the troops understand the gospels of peace keeping, the unit indeed had to put in considerable efforts. All ranks of the Battalion Group displayed high degree of enthusiasm towards learning and adapting to the new role of peace keeping. The guiding principles communicated to all ranks were, be fair and impartial, be firm yet tolerant, maintain good relations with the public and treat women with dignity. Various operational activities were undertaken. Patrolling was the most effective means of dominating the area of operations. The aim was to detect the presence of various groups and to deter them from undertaking any activity that could jeopardize peace. Most patrols were led by JCO/NCOs and were equipped with an effective communication system. This provided a good exposure to them in executing the mission independently. Manning of check posts was another important task. The high standard of professionalism and conduct displayed by the Junior Leaders and men in executing their task was highly appreciated by the locals in South Lebanon.

† The Force Commander in his speech complemented each and every member of the contingent for the professional manner in which the handing/taking over was carried out, as also adopting to the new role as peacekeepers in a very short span of time.

‡ Check posts were established on all road axis leading into the AOR and manned 24 hours by NCOs and men with a view to prevent influx of arms and ammunition.
The unit was responsible for manning eight Observation Posts round the clock. Observation Posts had strength of eight soldiers with the task of monitoring all activities within and around the AOR as also the air space. The men enjoyed the privilege of using sophisticated devices which were deployed in the Observation Posts. The concept of ‘tailing’† was new to all ranks. Over a period of time, the men had mastered the art of tailing leaving no room for the personnel being tailed to carry out any unauthorized activities unnoticed.

The Battalion Group had relieved the Norwegians who had formed part of UNIFIL for the past 20 years. This transition had instilled apprehensions in the minds of the locals as regards the conduct and capabilities of the Indian Contingent. To dispel all fears the unit decided to refine the existing lacunas and evolve a process which would guarantee peace and instill confidence amongst the people of South Lebanon. The first two months of December 1998 and January 1999 had everyone working overtime to adapt to the new working environment, to achieve complete familiarization with the roles as well as build a close rapport with the local population. The firm, positive and unbiased attitudes of the Gorkhas won many accolades from one and all. National and international media paid special compliments on Indian methods of functioning‡.

The Battalion Group was visited by a number of dignitaries, however, the notable out of these visits were two. The first by His Excellency Shri Ajay Choudry, the Ambassador of India to Lebanon on 28th December 1998 and the Second by Mr Choi Young June, Assistant Secretary General (Planning and Supports) of the United Nations who was highly impressed by the high standards of INDBATT and conveyed the same to the Force Commander. An interesting incident, which happened during the visit of Indian Ambassador, is worth mentioning.‡ In addition to interaction with local population, the Battalion also developed good rapport with Israeli Army. Frequent meetings were held with IDF to sort out any working problems in the AOR. The IDF was kind enough to host the Battalion officers on number of occasion and organize guided tours to places of historical importance like Golan Heights. By now recreation visits to Tel-Aviv and Beirut were also organized and the troops were fortunate to visit places like Beka Valley, Jaita Caves, Tripoli and Jerusalem.

† Tailing was conducted for certain categories of people/groups that were authorized limited access inside the AOR. Tailing were carried out in specially designated vehicle with strength of 2 or 3 soldiers. The aim of tailing was to observe the activities of the concerned personnel and to ensure that the locals were not harassed. What was required was a foolproof communication system, quick reactions, driving skills and quick reporting.

‡ As a result of it, soon the Battalion was termed as the model Battalion by the UNIFIL Headquarters.

‡‡ On 28th December 1997, 4-7 CP at Sheeba (‘C’ Company) stopped a couple of SLA soldiers trying to smuggle their weapons in Sheeba and confiscated the weapons. A few hours later the DFF post N-339 halted the UN Convoy consisting of the Ambassador and Commanding Officer’s vehicles and demanded the rifles of the escort party. True to the customs of Indian Army the soldiers refused which caused a standoff. Things got cooled down only after intervention of Israeli Army and the convoy proceeded with out handing over any weapon.
Having settled down, the Battalion started planning for the Regimental Day. To make it a historical occasion the award of the UN Peace Keeping Medals to the Battalion personnel were also scheduled on the same day. It was felt that it would be an honour for All Ranks if Colonel 4 Gorkha Rifles graced the occasion and it was heartening to learn of the Colonel's acceptance of the invitation. Lieutenant General Chandra Shekhar, PVSM, AVSM, ADC, Vice Chief of Army Staff (VCOAS) and Colonel 4 GR reached Beirut on 9th March 1999. The Colonel reached the Battalion Headquarters at 4-2 on 10th March 1999. On 11th March 1999 Colonel inaugurated the 'Regimental Mandir' which was constructed by the Battalion in record time of one month on self–help basis (the temple had a seating capacity of 300 persons). This was followed by an impressive ceremonial Parade to commemorate the award of UN Peace Keeping Medals. In addition to the Colonel of the Regiment there was a galaxy of special dignitaries†.

During the ensuing months a special effort was made by the Unit to provide Humanitarian Aid to the local population. 20 years of war had adversely affected the development process in South Lebanon. Most of the infrastructures facilities were damaged or not functional. The Battalion Group took up various humanitarian projects on a war footing, which not only earned accolades from the Lebanese Government but also enhanced the National image. Since medical cure was compromised in the area, the Battalion Medical Team headed by Major Sanjan Talwar carried out extensive humanitarian assistance programs for the local population. The Battalion liaised with UNICEF and Lebanese Red Cross for provision of Polio drops to the children. There being no emergency medical aid facilities available locally; the Medical Team assisted emergency treatment and evacuation of patients.

The Unit also took up various other projects as part of humanitarian assistance with close co-operation with the locals. Certain villages did not have the facility of safe drinking water and people had to collect water from far flung areas. Unit undertook the responsibility to supply drinking water by trucks. Assistance was also provided in installation and repairs of computers in the school. The farming in the region was mainly machinery intensive but no repair facilities existed for the equipment. The Battalion workshop provided assistance in the repair of equipment too. Major General JK Konrote, Force Commander, UNIFIL, visited the Battalion on 11th May 1999 for his pre-summer inspection (akin to Indian unit's annual administrative inspection). He was thoroughly impressed by the profession standards of the Unit. After the visit, reports came from the UNIFIL HQ that the visit to INDBATT was the best so far in UNIFIL. Back home in New Delhi Major Vikal Sahni and Captain Rajesh Mehta‡ were managing the rear, which had 350 troops and 60 families. The Commanding Officer took up a case with the records 4 GR and with the persuasion of Colonel 4 GR, all persons of the Battalion serving on Extra Regimental Employment (ERE) were reverted back to proceed to Lebanon in the second phase. Major Vikal Sahni and Captain Rajesh Mehta did a commendable work of preparing the troops for the second phase all by themselves i.e. a job which was earlier performed by almost 30 officers.

† The important dignitaries included Major General JK Kornote, Force Commander and His Excellency Shri Ajai Choudry, Indian Ambassador to Lebanon besides high-ranking UN and Lebanese Government Officers and important local leaders.

‡ These officers were in constant touch with the Battalion thorough phone and fax. Routine Battalion activities like PT, Games, Training, Firing and Family welfare activities were going on in the unit rear location.
Finally, on 19\textsuperscript{th} May 1999 the first flight of troops returning home left Beirut and the turnover started for the Second Phase\textsuperscript{†}. With the turnover of troops, the process of training and adapting to the new role started all over again. Good work done by the troops also continued in the second phase. The Battalion continued to be ever vigilant operationally and helpful to the local population on the humanitarian aid front\textsuperscript{‡}. On 9\textsuperscript{th} June 1999, Colonel GS Batabyal accompanied by Majors Rajiv Mankotia and Sukumar Vinod and Captain Shiel Joshi proceeded to United Kingdoms for attending Remembrance Day celebration at Stoke Pages. The group returned back on 17\textsuperscript{th} June. The Battalion participated in various professional competitions conducted by UNIFIL\textsuperscript{‡‡}. The reputation and the professional excellence achieved by the Battalion was evident by the fact that on his farewell, Major General JK Konrote, Force Commander, UNIFIL expressed his desire to spend a weekend at INDBATT. The Force Commander visited the Battalion on 17\textsuperscript{th} September 1999 and took a special Sainik Sammelan\textsuperscript{‡‡}.

On 28\textsuperscript{th} September Brigadier General Peter James Sreenan visited the Battalion for pre-winter inspection (administrative inspection). At the end of his tours to the other battalions also this battalion was once again declared as the best Infantry Battalion Group serving in UNIFIL. It is heartening to note that most of the officers and men frequently visited Beirut as well as Israel for ‘Rest & Recoup’ tours. Officers even went on tours to Europe and the Middle East countries like Jordan, Syria and Egypt. Thus, the dream of watching and visiting Pyramids and Leaning Tower of Pisa came true for many. Colonel Guru Sahay Batabyal meanwhile perceived the idea of constructing ‘Mahatma Gandhi Park’ in Ebel –es – Saqi as a gesture of peace, goodwill and friendship towards the people of South Lebanon. The case was taken up with the Ministry of External Affairs through Indian Embassy at Beirut and funds were released for the same. It was decided that the Park be inaugurated on 14\textsuperscript{th} October 1999 the day the Battalion was holding its second ‘Medal Day Parade’. Among various dignitaries present for Medal Day Parade was His Excellency Shri Ajai Choudry, Indian Ambassador in Lebanon and Brigadier Peter James Sreenan, Acting Force Commander who also took the Salute.

\textsuperscript{†} The Battalion thus accomplished the rare distinction of having given an opportunity to All Ranks of the Battalion, whether in the unit or on ERE. This opportunity was given to those who met the requirements laid down by the Army Headquarters to serve with the Battalion on this mission with UNIFIL.

\textsuperscript{‡} The unit took initiative of spreading environment cleanliness, culture and literacy amongst the people of South Lebanon. The Battalion organized camps in which the local Guides and Scouts groups and students helped in cleaning up of garbage dumps with our garbage trucks.

\textsuperscript{‡‡} It was a rare experience for the officers and men to compete with the soldiers belonging to different armies of the world. The unit had the distinction of winning the Infantry Run Competition twice with a thumping margin each time. Rifleman Saroj Gurung came first on both occasions thereby breaking the dominance of IRISHBATT. The unit also stood second in the Inter Contingent Firing Competition with Lt KB Gurung winning the Gold Medal in Rifle Firing.

\textsuperscript{‡‡} The Force Commander said that he was glad to have the Second Battalion under his command and that the association with the Battalion was the Best amongst all Battalions he had ever served with through out his entire service career.
After an impressive Medal Parade his Excellency Shri Ajai Choudry inaugurated the Mahatma Gandhi Park in Ebel–es–Saqi, dedicating it to the people of South Lebanon. On 17th October Major General Arvind Sharma, General Officer Commanding 57 Mountain Division and ex–Commanding Officer of the Battalion arrived from India. The day also happened to be the auspicious occasion of ‘Kalratri’. Back home in India the Battalion rear under Major SK Singh celebrated Dassera with same gusto and josh. Lieutenant General Chandra Shekhar, PVSM, AVSM, ADC, VCOAS, Colonel 4 Gorkha Rifles was the chief guest. In addition to providing humanitarian assistance the Battalion also organized sports and cultural programs for the local population†. The beginning of November 1999 saw the Battalion gearing up for handing/taking over with 2 MADRAS. The locals who by now could not perceive the idea of staying without ‘Gorkha Troops’, organized a host of farewell visits. On 11th November 1999 His Excellency Shri Ajay Choudry visited the Battalion for his last visit to INDBATT–1‡.

On 15th November 1999 the advance party of 2 MADRAS led by Colonel CKS Mann, the Commanding Officer arrived in Lebanon. The handing/taking over between the two battalions started soon as the time was at premium and a colossal inventory to go through. The second batch of troops left for India on 21st November under Lieutenant Colonel Dinesh Sharma. On 27th November Colonel GS Babatyal went to Hasbaya to attend the farewell ceremony hosted by the Druze Community in South Lebanon. In a rare gesture, the Durze society expressing their love and admiration presented Colonel GS Babatyal with their black ‘Clock’ and accorded him the title of ‘Sheikh’†‡. Finally on 30th November 1999 Colonel GS Babatyal along with 19 Officers and 199 Other Ranks left Lebanon and returned to India in the last flight, thus, marking an end to an eventful tenure of the proud Gorkhas at Lebanon.

2 MADRAS (GOONDAS)

The unit was raised in 1776 as 15th Carnatic Infantry at Tanjore(1950), was re-designated as 2/4th Madras Native Infantry in 1796, 15 Madras Infantry in 1885 and 75 Carnatic Infantry in 1903. The unit formed into 1st (Malabar) Territorial Battalion, 75 Carnatic Infantry in 1921 and 12 Malabar Battalion in 1922. The Battalion was renamed as 11th Madras Battalion in 1939 and became regular Battalion as Second Battalion ‘The Madras Regt’ on 15th September 1941. The Battalion further converted into MG Battalion in January 1945 and Second Parachute Battalion in April 1946.

† Keeping in view the local fondness for football the Battalion organized South Lebanon Football Championship for the region. 8 teams including the Battalion team participated. The organisation of this championship earned a lot of good will. The Battalion also organized fun and food festivals and such endeavors made the Battalion very popular amongst the local population.

‡ Shri Ajay Choudry addressed a special Sainik Sammelan and commended the Battalion on its fine performance and said that the name of the Battalion has been etched forever in the hearts and minds of the people of Lebanon.

†‡ This was the highest honour which could by given by any Druze to anyone outside their community. This was a true indicator of the bonding of the civilians with the Battalion with in a short span of one year.
The Battalion finally reverted† to its present status. 2 Madras Infantry Battalion Group was inducted into Lebanon as part of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in November 1999 for a historic tenure of a year‡. Naturally, the Battalion’s operations felt the reverberations of the said events. It is a tribute to the adaptability and undying spirit of Indian Soldier that the Battalion Group completed its UNIFIL tenure with a sense of achievement for a job well done. In the process, it has left back in the Mission indelible impressions of professional conduct, empathy and compassion.

Operational Activities of the Battalion

INDBATT II took over the operational responsibilities from INDBATT I on 28th November 1999. Prior to Israeli Defence Forces withdrawal from South Lebanon, INDBATT was the only battalion deployed completely within the Former Israeli Controlled Area and did not share a boundary with any other unit in UNIFIL. Due to this peculiar deployment, the sensitivity of the area, the operational responsibility was completely different from that of other battalions. The battalion witnessed historic moment of Israeli Defence Forces withdrawal during May 2000 and then underwent a re-deployment in an enlarged area of operations during July-August 2000 when the battalion’s area of operation increased to more than 175 square kilometers. The terrain in INDBATT area of operations was hilly with heights ranged from 350 meters to 1700 meters. Further, the area was also interspersed with numerous water sources†‡.

INDBATT OPERATIONS

The peculiarities of the INDBATT area of operations were that entire INDBATT area of operations was within the Israeli Controlled Area. It did not share boundary with any other battalion of UNIFIL and was the only battalion which shared the International boundary with Israel‡‡. Most difficult posts of UNIFIL were located within the INDBATT area of operations including the area of Cheeba which remained snow clad for three-four months in a year. Also the highest post in UNIFIL (4-14 Observation Posts) existed within the INDBATT area of operations.

† The Battalion got the present designation as Second Battalion the Madras Regiment in December 1950.

‡ This period witnessed momentous events not only in Lebanon but also in the whole of Middle East. The withdrawal of Israeli Defence Forces from South Lebanon ending an occupation of 22 years, the death of the Syrian President Hafez-Al-Assad and his succession by his son Bashar-Al-Assad, the failed Camp David – II Summit, and then, the renewed violence between the Israelis and the Palestinians in West Bank and Gaza; all these events unfolded in one year, the complete canvas of the unpredictability of the Middle East.

‡‡ There were two major rivers namely Litani and Hasbani, both flowing from North to South, the former into Mediterranean Sea and the latter, into Israel. These rivers remained dry during summers but drained water during the rainy season in winters (November – March). The area also received snowfall during the months of November – March.

‡‡ The battalion was farthest from UNIFIL Headquarters (approximately 100 kilometers). More so, it was required to keep a physical presence in important and sensitive towns like Marjayoun and Hasbaiya even though they were outside the area of operations.
The battalion was deployed on three-company basis. The designation of all INDBATT positions was pre-fixed by the digit of four (4). The battalion Headquarters, logistics base and the company locations were suitably located so as to ensure effectiveness of their presence while conducting the assigned tasks.

- Battalion Headquarters at 4 – 2.
- Logistics Base at 4 – 1.
- Alpha company was deployed West of Hasbani River with its company Headquarters at 4 – 3.
- Bravo Company was deployed between Hasbani River and the line-joining village Hebbariye and Kafer Chouba with its Headquarters at Rachaiya-el-Foukar 4 – 11.
- Charlie Company was deployed in general area of Cheeba town with its headquarters at Cheeba 4 – 7.

**Tasks**

The tasks of the battalion as spelt out by the Force Commander in his directive were:-

- Secure INDBATT area of operations.
- Maintain UNIFIL presence in the Israeli Controlled Area and outside battalion’s area of operations at 4 – 18 Observation Posts.
- Maintain contact on the ground with FINBATT.
- Maintain UNIFIL freedom of move on the main road to Metulla gate (international border crossing between Israel and South Lebanon).
- Be prepared to reinforce/support OP Khiam (Observer Group Lebanon post located in village Khiam) as and when required.

**Execution**

The operations were carried out in accordance with UNIFIL operational orders and executed by patrols, manning of static observations posts, check points and by establishing mobile check points on required basis. A mobile reserve was maintained to reinforce any checkpoint or post at short notice. The liaison was executed by the employment of Observer Group Lebanon, Liaison Teams from UNIFIL Headquarters and by the unit itself. Also, a mobile reserve was maintained at the company and battalion level. **It is to be noted that since 1978 UNIFIL’s efforts to implement United Nations Resolutions† did not meet any significant success because Israel continued to occupy a self-declared security zone or Israeli Controlled Area.**

† Resolutions number 425, 426 and 511
Since June – July 1998 mounting Israeli Defence Force casualties, a growing sense of purpose lessness, increasing grass root protests and the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak’s election campaign promise, led to the Israeli Defence Force withdrawal from South Lebanon. The Israeli Defence Forces of approximately 1500 troops withdrew from the former Israeli Controlled Area on 24th May 2000. It vacated 34 positions and destroyed some of their compounds†.

Enlarged Area of Operations and Redeployment

After the Israeli Defence Forces withdrawal, INDBATT area of operations increased from approximately 75 square kilometers to 175 kilometers. The area was increased to the South upto the Blue Line and the towns of Marjayoun, El Qlaiya and Dibbine were included in the area of operations. INDBATT now shared a common boundary with FINBATT. To cater for the changed situation INDBATT Armoured Personnel Carrier component was increased to an additional strength of 41 crew and 10 maintenance personnel arrived in the Mission area on 5th September 2000. A fourth rifle company of 118 personnel too was sanctioned and arrived in the Mission area on 18th November 2000. INDBATT Contingent stood at the strength of approximately 800 personnel. The enlarged area of operations combined with the change in operational tasks prompted UNIFIL redeployment. INDBATT too was affected. Three new positions were created and occupied one on 30th July and others on 5th August 2000‡.

A United Nations verification line (Blue Line), accepted by both Lebanon and Israel, was identified and marked on ground at various points by a United Nations cartographic team†‡. Post Israeli Defence Forces withdrawal; the major task of the battalion was observation and reporting of violations of the Blue Line from either side (Photo-60). Each position had an integral observation post as also, capability to establish a mobile checkpoint. Two Armoured Personnel Carriers for conduct of mobile patrols also supported each position. The area of operations was dominated by patrolling of sensitive areas and the Blue Line.

Important Incidents

On 9th December 1999 at 1610 hours one M 113 Armoured Personnel Carrier belonging to De-Facto Force entered 4–2B check point from the wrong side and did not halt in spite of being asked to. All the checkpoints of ‘A’ Company were immediately closed and the Armoured Personnel Carrier was halted at 4–26 checkpoints. Company Commander Major AS Walia arrived at the scene and after intense negotiation the Armoured Personnel Carrier was escorted back to 4–2 B checkpoint. Subsequently, after the arrival of De-Facto Force Chief Operations Officer Colonel Sofi Saheed the Armoured Personnel Carrier was released.

† The Israeli Defence Forces are currently deployed on the Israeli side of the Blue Line and continue to be controlled by Israeli Defence Forces Northern Command located at Zefat. Any ground operation conducted by the Israeli Defence Forces across the United Nations verification line is considered a violation on the Lebanese territory.

‡ In addition to this status, 10 new positions were augmented and 12 positions were vacated.

†‡ The Blue Line serves the purpose of confirming Israeli Defence Forces withdrawal from Southern Lebanon and does not constitute the international border.
In May 2000 a civilian by the name of Kamal Hassaniye entered 4-2 B check point at 1345hours and denied possessing any weapon. However, on being checked an AK-47 rifles and two magazines with 40 rounds of ammunition were recovered (Photo-61). In the process of recovering the weapon the individual snatched the weapon, cocked it and threatened to fire the weapon pointing at checkpoint commander Naib Subedar Ambujan. The platoon commander Captain NK Das intervened and tried to negotiate. The individual threatened to fire at the officer. The officer immediately closed the checkpoint and asked for reinforcements. **Lieutenant Colonel Shufi Saheed, Chief Operations Officer of De-Facto Force was called, the individual was pacified and after individual apologized he was handed over to De-Facto Force.**

Again during the same month an INDBATT patrol discovered two unidentified dead bodies. These bodies were badly mutilated due to helicopter fire and had arms and ammunition with them alongwith live grenades. Live Improvised Explosive Devices were also recovered from the haversacks of the individuals, on further search of the area. Subsequently, more Improvised Explosive Devices were recovered in the vicinity of this area (Photo-62). On 23rd May 2000 the Israeli Defence Forces commenced their withdrawal from the vicinity of INDBATT area of operations. Armed Elements stormed the prison in the town of El Khiam and the relatives of prisoners and 160 prisoners were released from captivity.

**Humanitarian Activities**

South Lebanon had suffered the brunt of war and has been in a state of turmoil and instability during the last about three decades. Basic infrastructure, medical and health facilities either non existent or were in shambles. Accordingly, INDBATT – II (2 Madras Infantry Battalion Group) carried out a study to reach out to the poor and needy and ameliorate their sufferings. It thereafter set about executing its humanitarian assistance programme in a systematic and well-planned manner†.

**MEDICAL, DENTAL AND VETERINARY SUPPORT**

This had been the mainstay of the humanitarian assistance provided by INDBATT-II. The medical team comprised of two Medical Officers, one nursing officer, nursing and laboratory assistants. The assistance provided by this team had been as spelt out in the succeeding paragraphs.

**Establishment of Clinics**

Over and above treating civilian patients at the INDBATT hospital, INDBATT-II established and ran nine medical clinics in the villages‡. Free consultation, medicines and treatment were provided to all.

† The Humanitarian Assistance Programme basically consisted of activities related to provision of medical, dental and veterinary support, health education, engineer support and ancillary support projects.

‡ The villages namely Cheeba, Hasbaiya, Hebbariye, Kaukaba, Burhoz, Ebel-es-Saqi, Blatt Halta and Oleyya. The medical officers attended to these village clinics once a week on designated days. These clinics catered for the treatment of patients not only from the villages where the clinics were established but also from other neighbouring villages.
The battalion medical teams had also very actively participated in the Polio Immunization Campaigns from time to time and this aspect was much appreciated by the local population. The medical teams were also actively involved in educating the young school children on aspects of health, hygiene, human anatomy and physiology.

**Medical Camps**

The medical teams organized regular medical camps for one and all including visit to schools and rendering advice and free medical check ups†.

**Dental Treatment**

The dental team comprised of the Dental Officer and an assistant. Dental treatment primarily was provided at the INDBATT hospital, which was well equipped with the state of the art gadgetry and dental chair. Dental clinics were also run on once in a fortnight basis in the villages of Hebbariye and Ebel-es-Saqi. The dental team also contributed towards the fluoridation Programme in schools.

**Veterinary Assistance**

The Veterinary Officer of the battalion, who also happened to be the only veterinary doctor in UNIFIL was the most sought after person. His selfless and relentless efforts at treating animals found great praise all over. He provided veterinary treatment at the battalion veterinary clinic during house calls and also while he accompanied the medical patrols to remote villages outside the INDBATT area of operations.

**ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERS SUPPORT**

**Recovery Cover**

The village of Cheeba during winters is invariably snow clad thereby affecting routine vehicular road traffic to and from the village. The INDBATT recovery team suitably equipped with recovery and snow vehicles had been providing the recovery support and keeping the road open throughout the winters. Further, the Indian Battalion workshop had been the sole agency to recover vehicles in the hilly terrain of INDBATT area of operations. It recovered 186 civil vehicles during the entire year (Photo-63).

**Computer Classes**

The workshop had also conducted a three week computer training capsule on Fundamentals of Computers for school children of INDBATT area of operations during their summer vacations. The teachers and principals of the Government schools appreciated this aspect.

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† The battalion medical team had also been accompanying the Observer Group Lebanon during the fortnightly medical patrols to the remote village of Arab-al-Wazziani. This gesture of treating the poor at their door step by the Indian Battalion was highly appreciated by the locals.
Ancillary Support

INDBATT workshop also provided ancillary support to locals by providing welding facilities and services of equipment like the fork lifter and cranes. It also extended support for repair of tractors and provided lighting connections during various functions in the INDBATT area of operations. The engineer team had very actively contributed towards helping the civilians of the area by undertaking various humanitarian tasks as mentioned here under.

Construction and Maintenance of Football Grounds

The playground in the village of Rachaya had a perpetual problem of water logging during the rainy season leading to differential settlement. This prevented the school children from using the ground for almost five to six months in a year. More so, the school ground of the Government public school Ebel-es-Saqi was in state of disuse because of thick undergrowth, undulating ground and piles of rubble. The engineers employed heavy engineering plants and machinery to clean the area and level it so that the ground could be gainfully utilized.

Road Block Clearance

In hilly terrain, it is vital to keep the road communication open as there are hardly any alternate roads available. The crowded town of Cheeba with a population of around 16,000 where only one INDBATT Company was deployed faced a recurring problem of roadblocks due to landslides and sliding mud. The engineers had supported the civil administration by locating and operating their engineering plants to keep the road clear of landslides and sliding mud. Further, torrential rains completely paralyzing the road traffic towards Hasbaiya had washed the road near the Hasbani Bridge away. INDBATT engineers restored the same.

Restoration of Water Supply to Burhoz Village

Repair and restoration of water supply in Burhoz village was carried out. It included construction/repair of a water tank (concrete), repair of main pipeline, replacement/repair of water distribution system in 16 houses. The area in front of Kaukaba village town hall was also enlarged and leveled by the engineers. This task entailed rock blasting, excavation and dozer work. The water supply system of area was also improved by the INDBATT.

Visits by VIPs/Dignitaries

A number of dignitaries (Military and Civil) visited INDBATT area of operations. All the visiting dignitaries praised the dedication, sense of purpose and devotion to duty displayed by the Battalion in its quest for peacekeeping. Over their one year stay the Battalion had won richly deserved accolades and appreciation from the local civil population as well as the Arab and International media. The UNIFIL Headquarters had also shown its appreciation of the efforts made by the battalion to bring back normalcy in the war torn region.

† The engineers undertook this task and developed a drainage system all around the football field. This project received wide media coverage and was also applauded by the locals.
The exemplary and professional conduct of all ranks and humanitarian assistance rendered by the battalion was instrumental in winning the hearts and minds of people of Lebanon. Some of the letters of appreciation received are well on record.

2 Madras Infantry Battalion Group was in UNIFIL, Lebanon from 15th November 1999 to 4th December 2000, and a momentous period in the History of the region. Amidst all the above, the Battalion did what it was sent to UNIFIL for i.e. it kept its area free from hostilities thereby reducing the risk of wider conflict in the region. Displaying professionalism of the highest order, it excelled in all spheres of UNIFIL activities ranging from operational to professional sports competitions and humanitarian projects. For its performance, it was widely adjudged the ‘Best Battalion’ in UNIFIL (Photo-64), and won accolades from the UNIFIL Headquarters, the United Nations Headquarters, New York and all visiting dignitaries which is well reflected in letters of appreciation and media reports.

The unit would certainly like to applaud itself for the trust and confidence that it could win of the local Lebanese people. It was achieved through gentle behaviour, respect for local customs, traditions, elders, women and a genuine empathy with their state. The seriousness of purpose with which the battalion group committed its human and material resources towards ameliorating the problems of the locals, won it fond appreciation and gratitude of the people. As a symbol of the Indian presence in UNIFIL, Lebanon as also a souvenir for the people of Lebanon, the Battalion constructed the ‘Ashoka Stambh’ in its Headquarters at Ebel-el-Saqi. This replica of the Indian National Emblem, made in Balbek Stone from within the Battalion’s own resources is a masterpiece of architecture and was dedicated to the eternal friendship between Lebanon and India.

During it’s stay abroad, the Battalion had contributed immensely to enhancing the professional image of the Indian Army and won for India and its people, the appreciation, gratitude and good will of not only the people of Lebanon but also of the Member States of the United Nations. The year will go down in the history as a memorable one not only for the Battalion but also, for the Indian Army. Needful to highlight that the one year as United Nations Peacekeepers in Lebanon was an opportunity of a lifetime for all ranks. It was a privileged exposure to the functioning of United Nations as also an opportunity to observe at close quarters the professional abilities equipment and ethos of many foreign armies. This also enabled Indians to put into perspective their own strengths and shortcomings. On 4th December 2000, the brave and smart soldiers of 2 MADRAS Battalion (Photo-65), finally handed over its operational responsibility to 5/9 GR which was another illustrious battalion of the Indian Army and was sure to continue in the best traditions of India’s UN Peacekeeping efforts in due cause.
1/11 GORKHA RIFLES (GR)

1/11 Gorkha Rifles was nominated in March 2001 to be inducted to UNIFIL mission as INDBATT-IV for duration of one year. The battalion was ordered to move to Delhi to concentrate all elements that would constitute INDBATT-IV, to train for the operational tasks in the mission area and to carry out preparatory activities for smooth induction into mission area. Based on the directions received from Army HQ, the Battalion Group was organised for induction into the mission area in three flights†. The main body of the battalion reached Delhi on 6th July 2001. However, attachments and detachments which were to form part of INDBATT IV kept reporting gradually and the last detachment married up on 6th October 2002.

Due to meticulous planning and flawless execution of a preparatory schedule the battalion was well prepared in all aspects for a smooth induction and comfortably settled down in its new operational role when it took over operational responsibility from 5/9 Gorkha Rifles Infantry Battalion Group (INDBATT-III) on 5th December 2001. Needful to state that this period also witnessed momentous events not only in Lebanon but also in the whole of Middle East. The complete canvas of unpredictability of Middle East unfolded during this period, which included a spate of suicide bombings by Palestinian militants in Israel. Consequently detention of Chairman Yasser Arafat in his HQ in Ramallah and operations by Israel into West bank and Gaza attack by armed elements on IDF positions in INDBATT area of responsibility did effect operations of the battalion and it certainly felt the reverberation of these events.

The Battalion took over op responsibility of INDBATT area of operations on 5th December 2001. Primary task at this stage was to orient the battalion in terms of operations and logistics in the changed scenario. The battalion immediately got down to a rigorous and punishing orientation schedule for two weeks. It is because of sincerity of purpose shown by all through the preparation and training that the last few months had seen the battalion earning accolades for the proficiency with which it handled the vital task of peacekeeping.

Israeli Defence Forces (IDF)

The IDF was deployed on posts constructed on the Israeli side of the ‘Blue Line’ and controlled by IDF Northern Command. It had constructed wire fencing all along the ‘Blue Line’ to prevent infiltration by the Armed Elements (AEs). The fence was highly technical with electronic sensors and kept under physical surveillance.

† Flights: The first flight led by Colonel Amul Asthana comprising 245 all ranks arrived in the mission area by a special UN chartered flight of Kampuchean Airlines on 23rd November 2001. Further a total of 247 personnel were inducted on 30th November 2001 and a total of 246 personnel were inducted on 6th December 2001.
Armed Elements (AE)

With the IDF withdrawal the armed elements mainly the Hizbullah gained prominence in the area and controlled their activities. The Hizbullah had taken a stand to liberate certain areas from Israel which they perceived as part of Lebanon. In view of this, the area remained alive to exchange of fire from both sides. The movement of AEs was open and frequent in the area. They had made certain hideouts and caches from where they carried out their operations. There had been incidents where in, AEs had tried to establish their positions close to UN position for inherent protection from IDF retaliation. The AEs had easy access to imported arms and ammunition required for their activities. Locals support the Hizbullah and often express their anger against Israel by stone throwing incidents towards the Israeli posts at various places close to the fence.

Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF)

The LAF had approx 65,000 strong personnel in the Army and a 15,000 strong Lebanese Security Force (LSF) known as the ‘Gendarmerie’. On 8th August 2000, a 1200 strong Internal Security Force was deployed in South Lebanon with its HQ in Marjayoun. This Force was headed by a Major General and comprised of Lebanese Army and Lebanese Police (Gendarmerie). On 18th September 2000, Lebanese Army also deployed a company minus strength in Jezzine. UNIFIL was expected to support the LAF in establishment of Lebanese Govt auth in South Lebanon.

Syrian Forces

An estimated 20,000 Syrian Forces were deployed in Lebanon mainly in the Bekka Valley. They were well equipped with armourer and artillery weapons. Since they had not posed a threat to UNIFIL in the past, it is assumed that they will not be a threat to UNIFIL in the future as well.

UNIFIL Mandate

According to Security Council Resolutions† UNIFIL was established to carryout multifarious tasks‡.

Tasks

The tasks of the battalion broadly were to ensure effective deployment into INDBATT Area of Operations (AOR) within boundaries, observe and report any violation of the Blue Line, dominate AOR by mobile and static patrolling in strength, conduct confidence patrolling in village within AOR, provide humanitarian aid to civilian population within AOR, be prepared to reinforce OP KHIAM and OP MAR and be prepared to undertake any other tasks in support of UNIFIL.

† Resolutions 425 (1978) and 426(1978) of 19th March 1978,

‡ Tasks namely, confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Southern Lebanon, restore international peace and security, assist the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area and to prevent recurrence of hostilities.
Flash Points

Chebaa Farms

The area of Chebaa Farms is approximately 25 Square kms, at an altitude of roughly 1400 meters above Mean Sea Level†. The dispute over the region has its roots in the Lebanese claims that the area has been ceded to Lebanon by Syria. Israel does not recognize this claim and had asked for documentary evidence for the same‡.

Firing Incidents

The IDF operation in West Bank in April 2002 triggered a sympathetic action by the Hizbollah along the Northern borders of Israel. For almost 13 consecutive days the Hizbollah engaged IDF positions all along the Blue Line in the Chebaa Region. During the period of this firing, a noteworthy point was the fact that bulk of the firing was restricted to the ‘Chebaa Region’. However, on a few occasions some elements did engage IDF positions and at times even civilians in areas outside the Chebaa Region. This led to increased tension in the region. It required intervention by the Force Commander himself to control the situation and ensure that the situation did not get out of hand. On 6th April 2002 a few Palestinians who had entered the area targeted rockets towards some houses in the Southern (Israeli) side of the village of Rajhar. The rocket hit a building that had at that time about 15 children. Some of the children suffered injuries however there were no fatalities. The IDF immediately reacted by firing tank rounds at the spot where they suspected the rockets to have been fired from. The issue had the potential of flaring up into a major incident due to the fact that civilians were involved†‡.

† The area is considered fertile where potatoes and fruits are grown in abundance and supplied to Lebanon. In 1967, Israel occupied this area when it occupied Golan Heights of Syria and continues its occupation. The area is claimed by Lebanon as their territory, a claim that Syria supports. However, there is no documentary evidence to this effect and Israel considers it as Syrian territory. The occupation of the farms by Israel in 1967 resulted in a displacement of about 1200 families. The Israelis have over the years settled Falasha brought in from Ethiopia into the area.

‡ Lebanon claims that the withdrawal of the IDF from South Lebanon is not complete till the IDF withdraws from Cheeba Farms. The IDF contests this and says that the dispute would be settled with Syria under Resolution 242 and is not an issue under Resolution 425 (Resolution pertaining to UNIFIL).

†‡ So as to handle the situation, Force Commander flew into the area and visited the village of Rajhar alongwith Commanding Officer INDBATT. The visit by the Force Commander was successful in cooling the tempers and resulted in de-escalation. The presence and prompt response of UNIFIL no doubt averted what would surely have been a major crisis. Throughout the incident the IDF wanted to retaliate into the village of Arab El Louizeh (from where the attack had originated). However, sensing this, the Commanding Officer INDBATT had positioned his vehicle in such a manner as to be visible to all and this resulted in buying of time and subsequent de-escalation.
Incident at Halta on 4th April 2002

On 4th April 2002 near Halta in the Cheeba Area of South Lebanon, a patrol of three unarmed officers of ‘Observer Group Lebanon (OGL) were being brutally assaulted by a heavily armed group of the Hizbullah’. A routine INDBATT-IV Mobile Patrol saw the incident and rushed to their rescue. Though badly outnumbered and also restrained due to the Rules of Engagement, the Gorkhas rescued the Observers from almost certain death and the assailants broke contact hastily. The fleeing ‘Hizbullah Fighters’ were quickly surrounded in a brilliant dragnet swiftly placed by the Battalion Mobile Reserve, Battalion QRT, and the A and D Company QRTs besides the COs Group. This facilitated their arrest by the Lebanese Authorities, while at the same time it avoided any chance of their escape after assaulting UN troops. Maintaining strict command and control and keeping just the right distance; a delicate balance and no mean feat scrupulously avoided exchange of fire†.

Units Reaction to the Incident

On hearing of the news a cordon was immediately thrown around the area using the Company Mobile Reserve as well as the Battalion Mobile Reserve. This prompt action prevented the escape of the assailants and facilitated their arrest by the Lebanese Authorities. The Commanding Officer immediately rushed to the site and was in location by 1130 hours and commenced directing the operations from the spot. The Battalion QRT and BMR (Battalion Mobile Reserve) rushed to the general area and were deployed into positions to block the move out of the AEs from the general area. The CMR (Company Mobile Reserve) of ‘D’ Coy and ‘A’ Company from Rachaiya and 4-28 respectively, moved into positions to further strengthen the blocks, simultaneously to prevent the incident from escalating into the area to apprehend the miscreants. While the operational aspects were being executed UNIFIL HQ was kept informed of the incident and developments. The CO contacted the Force Commander and matter was raised at the highest level with the Lebanese Authorities as well as with the leader of the Hizbullah, Sheikh Nassrallah.

Indian Medicos immediately swung into action. The Senior Medical Officer, Maj (Mrs.) Shashi Shukla who had gone to conduct a medical clinic in the village of Hebbariye (on a totally different axis) cut short her clinic and rushed to the UN position of 4-30 where the OGL personnel had managed to reach. The other doctors Maj P Pandit and Maj ID Roy who were present in the Battalion HQ moved to the area of Halta where own troops had been injured. The casualties were then evacuated by road to the INDBATT Hospital at 4-2. The weather during the whole incident was extremely bad with heavy rains and did not permit helicopter evacuation of the injured soldiers‡. Stops established by ‘A’ Company, under the Company Commander Maj Manish Choudhry spotted the AEs in a hideout. This information was passed on to the Commanding Officer, however the

†The gallant action of saving UN international observers, the delicate yet firm message conveyed by the swift isolation of the assailants and avoidance of a fire fight have all been universally appreciated.

‡Prompt action by the INDBATT Senior Medical Officer helped in stabilizing the condition of those officers whose condition had otherwise started deteriorates.
Company Commander decided not to close in but kept the Armed Elements under close observation from a distance so as not to provoke the AEs into taking a step that may aggravate the situation. OC 'D' Company, Maj RP Singh in the process of trying to locate the AEs inadvertently came upon the AEs in their hideout. He immediately ordered his column to deploy at a distance and while covering the AEs, went ahead along with Capt Pranav Kumar and spoke to the AEs. This action was undertaken by Indian officers despite the fact that the AEs were all heavily armed and could well have opened fire on the Peacekeepers. Through out the incident one single over riding thought in everyone's mind was to trap the miscreants as per UNIFIL Rules of Engagement on one hand while at the same time consciously keeping a tight control over the situation and not permitting the incident to spin out of control†.

**Islamiyā Incidents**

The Halta-Islamiya Bowl in the INDBATT area of responsibility had remained in focus due to sustained AE activities. During the exchange of firing between IDF and Hizbullahs from 30\(^{th}\) March to 13\(^{th}\) April 2002, the area had taken the maximum fire from IDF in retaliation to the AE firing on IDF posts. The positions used by the AEs in the Islamiya area were temporary. Since 17\(^{th}\) May 2002 INDBATT positions 4-30 has been hearing a number of controlled blasts from the area of Islamiya Bowl. The blasts varying in number had generally occurred in a short span of half a minute to three minutes duration. No flash or smoke had been observed by the multiple Ops placed to observe the blasts, since the position was defiladed from observation. A total of 420 blasts had been observed. Based on the observation inputs a report was prepared by the battalion which was appreciated by the Force Commander and Senior Advisor UNIFIL‡.

**HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES**

People of South Lebanon particularly the villagers in INDBATT Area of Operation had braved the vagaries of war for over 30 years. Due to being in the occupation zone, developmental and social welfare activities had come to a standstill. After the withdrawal of IDF, the people were looking for assistance in multifarious fields to earn their livelihood and rebuild their society. Though previous INDBATTs had done commendable humanitarian activities it needed to be restructured towards post withdrawal scenario.

Some of the humanitarian operations conducted by the battalion are given in succeeding paragraphs.

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† The operation was finally called off by 1400 hours after assurances were received from all quarters that the culprits responsible for the assault would be tracked down, arrested and that they would be tried under the law of the land.

‡ The remarks of the Senior Advisor to UNIFIL quote, *The report by INDBATT on islamia is excellent and far above anything produced by this Force on a similar issue in last two decades. Please convey my sincerest compliments to the battalion* unquote.
Medical Clinics

It was felt that medical clinics had to be focused to the villages nearer to Blue Line in view of the changed operational scenario. Medical and dental clinics were organised by medical detachment in the villages namely Cheba, Hebriye, Halta, Elmeri, Ei Wazani, Eladeisse and Cre†.

Blood Donation Camp

In an effort to show solidarity with the people of South Lebanon, a blood donation camp was organized on the raising day of the battalion. Lebanese Red Cross collected 67 units of blood, a highest ever collected in a camp till then in Lebanon.

Veterinary Assistance

Veterinary Officer of INDBATT was the only qualified veterinarian in the entire UNIFIL Area of Operation. He displayed tremendous compassion for treating animals. He was always available to the owner of any animal in distress on call. For this, a cell phone was procured for the officer to remain in touch. In addition to routine veterinary assistance Programme, the veterinary officer in co-operation with Department of Agriculture undertook a massive vaccination programme against foot and mouth diseases for all the cattle in the Area of Operation.

Agriculture Assistance

Olive plantation is the major cash crop for the people of South Lebanon. However, due to high cost of labour and competition with cheap olive market of Syria people of the region were not able to market their olive products. The battalion carried out a research for alternate cash crops and other agriculture related projects and had forwarded a number of project reports to the Department of Agriculture‡

Assistance to Educational Institutions

The battalion in its Area of Operation launched a ‘Back to School’ programme. With assistance from Humanitarian Section of UNIFIL HQ, eminent educationists and staff of various embassies keen on donating material support to the schools were invited to visit the school in the Area of Operation. As a result of these efforts adequate books, computers, stationery and furniture were donated to six schools in Area of Operation of the INDBATT.

† Mobilization of Medical Clinics:-In addition to above where 13525 numbers of patients had been treated, the medical detachment also carried out a number of mobile clinics in few villages especially immediately after each exchange of fire between AEs and IDF.

‡These project reports included Agriculture Awareness Centre for alternate cash crops like seedless grapes, figs and cactus fruits, livestock, Sustenance Demonstration Centre and rainwater Harvesting Project, in efforts to green area around.
Disaster Management Assistance

Due to heavy snowfall in the winter months all roads leading to the village of Cheeba were cut off which isolated the villagers from their essential needs. While the engineer section put in all its efforts and resources to clear the roads, a foot column was dispatched to the villages with a medical team and Lebanese bread. This gesture was highly appreciated by the villagers of Cheeba. During the same period due to heavy winds, lot of trees fell on the electric cables and number of villages in the Area of Operation were cut off from electric supply. The recovery detachment of INDBATT maintenance workshop had carried out a large number of recovery operations to extricate vehicles which often went off the roads in the mountainous terrain. During the summer months dry grass in the countryside often caught fire which threatened to destroy the olive orchards of the village. Fire section of INDBATT provided immediate assistance in containing and controlling the fire before civil defence forces of Lebanon arrived.

Environment Awareness Assistance

The entire countryside of South Lebanon gives a dry and desolate look due to constant felling of trees and gross neglect in spreading environment awareness programme. There was only one patch of forest cover available in the village of Ebel-es-Saki in the whole Area of Operation. A detailed study of this forest was carried out and a project was conceived to create Environment Regeneration Centre in this place. The proposal was presented to Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Agriculture. All appreciated the idea. It had already received assurances from a number of donors and they had hired two environment consultants to carry out advance study of the projects. In efforts to green the area around the battalion had carried out plantation in all the posts.

Physically Challenged Rehabilitation Rally

The battalion had identified the physically challenged people of the area as a target for providing assistance since no aid agencies were willing to come to South Lebanon to care for this section of the society. The battalion interacted with the only aid agency called Contact and Resource Centre (CRC), who was willing to help. The battalion organized a physically challenged Rehabilitation Rally in its HQ where in all the physically challenged persons of the Area of Operation were brought together under one platform. CRC was invited to attend the rally and register the entire physically challenged persons for further care and assistance. Major General Lalit Mohan Tiwari, Force Commander UNIFIL addressed the rally. A lot of fun and games were organised for them to give them the feeling that everyone cares for them. Since then, CRC had opened one of its centers, the only one in South Lebanon in Marjayou to look after physically challenged persons.

† The maintenance workshop of INDBATT swung into action and helped the villagers in clearing and cutting the branches of trees, thereby assisting in the restoration of electric supply in the area.

‡ Medical assistance was provided to them during the rally. All participants were introduced to the facilities available in the Battalion Enrichment Center. A basketball match was organized between battalion team and physically handicapped team of Lebanon, where in units team played sitting on wheel chairs.
The battalion organized a medical clinic at this center once a week. It was a matter of pride for all ranks of the unit that during its tenure of one year the battalion was successful in keeping the area free from hostilities and controlling the level of violence in its area of operations thereby reducing the risk of a wider conflict in the region. The Battalion displayed professionalism of the highest order in executing its professional task and all other tasks assigned to it. The Battalion also won a number of inter-battalion sports and other professional competitions, thereby displaying the strength of the Indian Army. For its excellence in professional field and over all performance, the battalion set very high standards of professionalism in UNIFIL and earned appreciation from UNIFIL Headquarters, United Nations Headquarters, New York and many other military and civilian dignitaries. This fact is amply reflected in the various media reports and letters of appreciation received by the battalion. In a short span of time the battalion was able to develop a unique rapport with the local people of all religious communities. This was achieved through gentle behaviour, respect for local customs and traditions especially women, children and elders. The battalion achieved great success in planning and executing ingenious humanitarian aid projects. The genuine concern for the people and sincerity of purpose displayed by the battalion won the hearts and minds of the local people. The humane and courteous behaviour of the battalion was much appreciated by people from all religious communities living in the area.

During its tenure, the battalion undertook many construction projects. The battalion meticulously planned and smoothly executed the handing over to the relieving Indian Battalion. The concern to explain all the details exhibited by the battalion and the manner in which the handing over was conducted was highly appreciated by the Commanding Officer of 8 SIKH Infantry Battalion Group. Performance of 1/11 GR, the Indian Battalion in UNIFIL has been widely appreciated. The battalion greatly enhanced the professional image of the Indian Army and has created a great deal of goodwill for India in the international environment.

23 MECHANIZED INFANTRY

Lebanon, situated on the threshold of Europe, Middle East & Asia has seen the rise & fall of many civilizations. From the Phoenicians to the Romans, the Egyptians and the Arabs all have contributed to making Lebanon a multi ethnic and religious country populated by enterprising and hospitable people. For much of its recent history Lebanon has been rocked by endless strife and civil war. Though the civil war officially ended in 1976, however sporadic fighting between Christian militias backed by Israel and the Lebanese National Movement, a loose association of Muslims & Leftist parties supported by the PLO, continued till 1978.

After a lull from 1978 to 1982 during which the Israeli Forces partially withdrew from Lebanon, Israel again invaded and occupied South Lebanon. In 1984, under international pressure Israeli Forces withdrew partially to their own territory. Finally in 2000, the Israeli Forces unilaterally withdrew from South Lebanon completely. The UNIFIL at the behest of the Lebanese Govt has continued to be deployed in Lebanon ever since 1978 and has been instrumental in keeping peace to a large extent.
Indian Army in UNIFIL (INDBATT)

The INDBATT was deployed in the Southern most part of Lebanon with the overall responsibility of monitoring the Blue Line and to carry out patrols all along it in its area of responsibility. The deployment is shown as per map, placed opposite (Map- 7).

THE STRIKERS IN LEBANON

The troops of INDBATT were a mix of all arms and services of the Indian Army, including those from the Mechanized Infantry Regiment. The Strikers had the unique privilege to be the Torch Bearers of the Mechanized Infantry Regiment and were the first from the Mechanized Infantry Regiment to be inducted as Peace Keepers for Lebanon, where they were tasked to carry out round the clock patrolling of the Blue Line, while the Infantry manned the posts all along it. To perform this task, the Strikers were equipped with SISU APCs (Photo-66), which is a six wheel drive vehicle of Finland origin; very similar to the equipment held with Reconnaissance and Support units in no time, to the amazement of the Finland, the Strikers showed their worth by being out on active operation within 24 hours of arrival.

FMR PATROLLING IN VALLEY AND ALONG THE BLUE LINE

The Strikers formed mobilization reserve for the INDBATT termed as the Battalion Mobile Reserve (BMR). These troops performed the vital task of information gathering and monitoring the Blue Line in the form of continuous round the clock patrols. These patrols also formed a vital link between the posts along the Blue Line. The BMR also conducted depth area patrols as a confidence building measure ensuring safety and security of the local population. The main task of the BMR however, was to act as reserves to INDBATT in case of any emergencies and contingencies. Besides the Battalion Mobile Reserve, the Strikers were also part of the Force Mobile Reserve (FMR). The FMR acts as the reserve for the UNIFIL for any kind of emergencies and is also tasked to carry out mobile patrols in the entire area of operations of the UNIFIL (Photo-67).

The Strikers were witness to a tumultuous time in the history of Lebanon during the period when the IDF were withdrawing and the Hizbollah were re-occupying South Lebanon. The Grit, Determination and Sangfroid displayed by the Strikers were instrumental in preventing many difficult situations from turning into armed clashes. The withdrawing IDF was engaged in running battles with the Hizbollah and the Strikers on their mission of peace were witness to the same.

Lebanon in a Glimpse

Lebanon in spite of its strife torn history is blessed abundantly with tremendous amount of natural beauty. The white sea-shores, snow-clad mountain tops and the green valleys make Lebanon a favourite destination for tourists all around the world. The rise and fall of many civilizations in Lebanon has also contributed to the numerous historical sites around it.
UNIFIL, because of its presence has the unique advantage of visiting these places and enjoying the hospitality of the wonderful people of this country. Few of the places of interest are worth mentioning. Lebanon with its varying geography from deep blue sea to snow capped peaks, dusty rugged mountains to green grooves of trees, offers a varied range of climate, culture and ethnicity. The Indian Army is one of the few armies in the world which can adapt to such an array of climatic conditions, cultures and ethnic walks of life. The troops of INDBATT have played a magnanimous role in restoring normalcy and ensuring peace in the war-torn areas of Lebanon. The sight of a soldier with a Blue beret (Photo - 68) or the sight of a SISU with the UN Flag fluttering even while patrolling in the beautiful Valley of Hasbani (Photo - 69), brings hope to millions and sense of security to many whom peace has evaded since long. These blue berets of the Indian Army have not only made the Indian Armed Forces proud but have also kept the Tricolour flying high (Photo-70).

15 PUNJAB

The 15th Battalion of the Punjab Regiment, a highly decorated battalion of the Indian Army left in December 2006 for Lebanon on UN peacekeeping duties to replace 4 Sikh . i.e. yet another Indian unit that had performed extremely well there in the recent conflict between the Hezbollah and Israel. Baba Alla Singh, founder of the erstwhile Princely State of Patiala, had risen what is now 15 Punjab on April 13, 1705. It is also one of the highest decorated battalions of the Indian Army with 362 gallantry awards, 22 battle honours and one theatre honour 'Punjab' that was conferred upon it for the battle of Hussainiwala where it stalled three successive attacks by a Pakistani Brigade supported by tanks in 1971. 15 Punjab holds the record of having won the maximum number of eight Maha Vir Chakras and 18 Vir Chakras in a single operation in Zojila in Jammu and Kashmir in 1948.

Apart from the peacekeeping operations of military nature such as patrolling, security of UN personnel and installations, protection of civilians, observation and reporting; the Indian contingent like earlier one’s is also involved in humanitarian and reconstruction activities. These include medical aid camps, veterinary services, computer education, construction work by engineer teams, provision of the Jaipur foot for victims of mine blasts and restoration of essential services.

† Baalbeck, a city in the Bekaa Valley, for its towering structure of the Roman civilization. The Cedars, a unique tree found only in the show capped mountain tops, which has also found its place in the national flag of Lebanon. The Caves of Zeita Grotto for its spectacular structures of stalactites and stalagmites of intricate designs, Beirut, the capital city, for its ultra modern shopping malls, discotheques, bars and casinos. These are just a few of the great destinations of Lebanon which makes this country one of the most visited, by people round the world.
The contingent in Lebanon also won praise from the UN during the month long bitter fighting between Israeli Forces and Hizbollah in July-August 2006. For this, the **Fourth battalion of the Sikh regiment** which was posted in the area at the time and has now returned home was presented the **UNIFIL Unit Citation**. In addition, **73 personnel of the unit were awarded the UNIFIL Force Commander's Special Commendation for outstanding performance during the conflict**. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and UN under Secretary General Jean Marie Guehenno separately visited the battalion after the conflict ended. It is hearting to cast a glance on UN Secretary’s remarks which bring pride to every Indian soldier and citizen. It reads, ‘**This Indian battalion of UNIFIL has once again, in the most challenging circumstances, shown that the Indian Army will always be a strong pillar for UN peacekeeping,**’ he wrote in the visitors' book.

**UN MISSION IN ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA**

UNMEE : MARCH 2001 TO DATE

Needful to state that when viewed at a glance the UN mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea was basically established to setup a buffer zone called the **Temporary Security Zone (TSZ)** with a view to maintain a secure environment and assist an independent boundary commission in speedy detestation and demarcation of the inter State boundary between the two countries. With regard to **Indian contributions**, to start with an Indian Infantry Battalion Group i.e. **12 Maratha Light Infantry** was initially deployed in the central sector in the UN mission in Ethiopia-Eritrea in relief of the Shirbrig in June 2001†.

**AN OVERVIEW OF THE MISSION AREA**

Ethiopia and Eritrea are located in the Central East Africa alluring the exotic title **Horn of Africa**. Ethiopia is a land locked country whereas Eritrea enjoys over 1000 kilometer long coast line with the Red Sea where strategically important ports of Massawa and Assab are located. Both countries have been affected by the long famine and the armed confrontation over the border dispute.

† Later, **27 Rajput replaced 12 Maratha Light Infantry**. The Indian contribution to this mission included a **Force Reserve Company and an Engineer Construction Company**. **India had also a substantial representation on the staff of HQs UNMEE.**
Eritrea - An Overview

Eritrea derives its name from Erythaeo meaning ‘red’ in Greek, adopted from the Red Sea, which lies to the East. Eritrea was a synonym for War in Africa till it attained independence in 1991 and became the newest addition to the Horn of Africa. Asmara is the capital of Eritrea. Eritrea’s government is a unitary State. Following a successful Referendum on independence for the Autonomous Region of Eritrea in April 1993, a National Assembly composed entirely of the People’s Front for Democracy and Justice Front was established as a transitional legislature†.

Ethiopia - An Overview

Ethiopia derives its name from Greek which means ‘Land of the Burnt Faces’. Ethiopia has the largest land area in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia’s independence was unique to Africa where it was the only country not to be fully colonized during the race for Africa in the 18th century. Ethiopia does not have access to Sea. The Capital of Ethiopia is Addis Ababa, meaning ‘New Flower’ in Amharic. Ethiopia, formally known as the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, came into being in August 1995. It consists of a Federation of nine States governed by a bicameral legislature‡. The real power however lies in terms of Foreign and Economic Affairs in the hands of the Ethiopian People’s Republic Democratic Front which is nothing but the erstwhile TPLF (Tigray People’s Liberation Front) in a new garb.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE AND GENESIS OF THE CONFLICT

Modern Eritrea dates from establishment of an Italian Colony at the end of 19th century i.e. in 1885. In 1923, Emperor Haile Selassie, called Lion of Judah, succeeded in getting Ethiopia admitted as an independent country to the League of Nations. In 1936, Italians re-captured Eritrea. Subsequently, during the World War II, the British defeated the Italians and drove them out of Eritrea.

†The People’s Front for Democracy and Justice was a new name for the erstwhile Eritrean People’s Liberation Front. The transitional legislature elected Isaias Afwerki as President. The Eritrean constitution adopted in 1997 established a presidential regime with limited political pluralism. Isaias Afwerki had been in power since 1993.

‡The 548 Members, Council of People’s Representatives is the executive arm and the smaller Federation Council serves as the Senate with mere supervisory role. The Ethiopian People’s Republic Democratic Front which evolved from the coalition of armed groups that overthrew the Derg in May 1991 holds 90% of the Council of People’s Representatives seats and its members control all the major state councils. Federal Govt is under Prime Minister Meles Zenawi (elected in 1995). The President has mainly a ceremonial role and the Prime Minister appoints the 16 member cabinet.
At that time, Ethiopia laid claim over Eritrea†. Successively, the victorious Allied Powers and the UN discussed the future of Eritrea whereas Ethiopia pressed its territorial claims and mobilized support. The strategic interests of the USA resulted in federation between Eritrea and Ethiopia through a UN General Assembly Resolution dated 2nd December 1950. There was, however, no provision for proper federal institution. Emperor Haile Selassie, an autocratic ruler helped by British in 1941 to regain control from Italians, set about stifling Eritrean autonomy and its status. In 1962 when Ethiopia imposed direct rule over Eritrea; a resistance movement took birth.

In the later times, in 1991, London Conference was established in which both USA and Ethiopian delegations accepted the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front as the provisional government and agreed to hold a referendum on independence in 1993. Ethiopia agreed that Eritrea could become independent provided Ethiopia could retain access to seaports. During 23rd-25th April 1993, a UN supervised referendum took place in which 99.8% Eritreans endorsed national independence. The Independence Day was proclaimed as 24th May 1993 and on 28th May; the State of Eritrea formally attained international recognition. Following Eritrea’s accession to independence, a four year transitional period was declared. Issaias Afwerki, the Secretary General of the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front, was elected the Head of State.

**Genesis of the Current Conflict**

The relationship between the two Countries remained good till 1998. Eritrea and landlocked Ethiopia entered in an Agreement to allow Ethiopian access to the two ports of Massawa and Assab, now under Eritrean control. The relationship soured in 1998 mainly due to certain contributory factors‡.

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† The basis of the claim was that Eritrea had been an integral part of Historic Ethiopia. There were also religious beliefs and practices common to Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox Church and that Tigrinya, an Ethiopian language, is spoken both in Highland Eritrea and Ethiopian Province of Tigray.

‡ Access to Ports. Ethiopia, a landlocked country, was using ports and transit facilities at Assab and Massawa as per bilateral Agreement. However, Eritrea unilaterally raised the tariff for use of port facilities.

**Nakfa** Ab initio, both Countries had agreed to a common currency (BIRR - Ethiopian currency). However Eritrea unilaterally changed their currency to Nakfa and insisted on tariff payment by Ethiopia in hard currency, i.e. US Dollars.

Border Dispute at the time of Eritrean independence, the border was not clearly demarcated. Based on colonial maps, Eritrea laid claims to Badme in the West and Zala Ambessa in the Centre and area around Bure on approach to Assab, which was otherwise being administered by Ethiopia even after Eritrea’s independence.
The Armed Struggle

On 6th May 1998, the border dispute led to armed clashes along the border centered in Badme Area. Eritrean Forces took Badme, which had hitherto been under Ethiopian administration. Fighting quickly spread to other disputed areas over the 970 km border out of which, 390 km was disputed. The military casualties were high and were estimated at 50,000-70,000 from both sides. There was also considerable displacement of civilian population of both countries. In mid May 1998, first initiative at mediation came from the US - Rwanda Facilitation Team. OAU also offered to mediate. On 5th June 1998, Eritrean aircraft bombed Mekelle, killing 44, including children. Ethiopia retaliated by bombing Asmara Airport. On 15th June 1998, Ethiopia and Eritrea accepted a US-brokered agreement to halt air strikes against each other. The summer rainy season brought a lull in the fighting. This lull lasted until early 1999. An OAU Peace Plan, The Framework Agreement, was produced in December 1998, but did not prevent the resumption of fighting in February 1999 during which, Ethiopia retook Badme. Zala Ambesa, another area of extensive fighting, remained in Eritrea. Throughout the summer of 1999, considerable OAU effort under its Algerian chairmanship was made to bring about a ceasefire, but without any success†.

On 12th May 2000, following the Eritrean refusal to withdraw to its 1998 pre-conflict positions, Ethiopia launched an all out offensive with the stated aim of ‘recovering the lost territory and destroying Eritrea’s capacity to wage war against Ethiopia’. Ethiopia claimed it was aimed to achieve a decisive end to a war which it cannot support given its other problems of drought and famine.’ Ethiopian Air Force bombed Massawa while Ethiopian Armed Forces attacked around Badme on the Mereb - Setit Front and around Zela Ambessa in the Central Front. Fighting also broke out near the Eritrean port of Assab‡.

On 15th May 2000, Ethiopia conducted a pincer movement from West and East. Using donkeys and mules to cross the mountains, they attacked Mendefera - Shambiko Road linking Eritrea’s Western and Central Armies at the town of Mulki. By 17th May 2000, Ethiopian Armed Forces was in the outskirts of Barentu, 60 km North of Shambiko‡. In April-May 2000, extensive fighting broke out once more during which Ethiopia took Zala Ambesa and advanced to about half way between Bure and Assab. During this fighting, Ethiopia advanced deep into Eritrean territory elsewhere, as far as Tesseny in the West and to Medina and near Mendefera in the Centre. Ethiopia quickly made a partial re-deployment from these deep advances but retained all territory which had been under its administration prior to 6th May 1998. On 21st May 2000, Ethiopia captured Omhajer, a crossroads town in Southwest Eritrea. Ethiopia also bombed the Eritrean Military Training Centre in Sawa Western Eritrea.

† United Nation Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1297 dated 12 May 2000 and 1298 dated 17 May 2000 were passed, calling on both parties for immediate cessation of hostilities.
‡ UNSCR 1297(2000) called upon the parties to stop the fighting within 72 hours.
‡‡UNSCR 1298 (2000), clamped arms embargo on both parties.
Peace Process

On 25th May 2000, Eritrea announced withdrawal from Zela Ambessa. On 1st June 2000, Ethiopia declared war over and agreed to direct talks with Eritrea for the first time.

The Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (ACH)

Proximity talks in Algiers again broken by OAU, led to the ACH signed on 18th June 2000 at Algiers†.

Evolution of the Mission

UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) deployed in the Mission Area in two phases:-

- **Phase-I‡**: Authorized the deployment of up to 100 UN Military Observers (UNMOs) and the necessary civilian support until 31st January 2001 in anticipation of a Peacekeeping Operation (PKO), subject to a future Security Council Resolution, with Mandate to:-

  - Establish and maintenance of liaison with the parties.
  - Visit the parties’ military HQ and other units in the AOR of the Mission deemed necessary by the UN Security General.
  - Establish and put into operation the mechanism for verifying the cessation of hostilities.
  - Prepare for the establishment of the Military Co-ordination Committee provided for in the ACH.
  - Assist in planning for a future PKO, as necessary.

- **Phase-II†‡**: Authorized the deployment of up to 4,200 troops, including 220 UN Military Observers and the necessary support units, to undertake the following Mandate:-

† Salient aspects of the Agreement were: **Ethiopia, following deployment of a UN Peacekeeping Mission, would re-deploy to positions it had held before 6th May 1998 and verification of Ethiopian re-deployment by the UN Peacekeepers. Eritrea will re-align its forces so as to remain 25 kilometers from the Ethiopian positions, thereby creating a 25 kilometer demilitarized TSZ.**

‡ UNSCR **1312** (2000) of 31st July 2000

Monitor the cessation of hostilities.

- Assist, as appropriate, in ensuring the observance of the security commitments agreed by the parties.
- Monitor and verify the re-deployment of Ethiopian troops from positions taken after 6th February 1999, which were not under Ethiopian administration before 6th May 1998.
- Monitor the positions of Ethiopian Forces once re-deployed.
- Simultaneously, monitor the positions of Eritrean Forces that were to remain at a distance of 25 kilometers from positions to which Ethiopian Forces shall re-deploy.
- Monitor the TSZ to assist in ensuring compliance with the ACH.
- Chair the Military Co-ordination Committee to be established by the UN and the OAU in accordance with the ACH.
- Co-ordinate and provide technical assistance for Humanitarian Mine Action activities in the TSZ and the areas adjacent to it.
- Co-ordinate the Mission’s activities in the TSZ and areas adjacent to it with Humanitarian and Human Rights Activities of the UN and other organisations in those areas.

Peace Agreement. Ethiopia and Eritrea signed the Peace Agreement on 12th December 2000, formally bringing an end to the conflict. Salient aspects of the Peace Agreement are as follows:-

- Agreement called upon both Parties to release and repatriate all prisoners of war immediately and unconditionally.
- Neutral Boundary Commission (Ethiopian-Eritrean Boundary Commission) established to delimit and demarcate the border, based on the pertinent colonial treaties and applicable international law; due to deliver verdict by March 2002 (Delimitation decision announced by the Ethiopian-Eritrean Boundary Commission on 13th April 2002).
- Neutral Claims Commission (Ethiopian - Eritrean Claims Commission) established to decide all claims for loss, damage or injury; due to deliver verdict by March 2004.
Political Situation in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has a Parliamentary form of governance. Ruling Ethiopian People’s Republican Democratic Front is a coalition of various political parties. The Ethiopian People’s Republic Democratic Front (the Ethiopian Govt) is dominated by Tigray people. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, Foreign Minister Seyom Mesfin, Chief of the Army Staff, and six out of nine Corps Commanders have been Tigray; despite the fact that the Tigray people form only 9% of the Ethiopian population and Tigray Region is the most under developed region in Ethiopia. Tigray domination has led to polarization on ethnic basis.

Political Turmoil in Ethiopia

In August 2001 President Negaso Gidada an Oromo, called for democratization of the Government and objected to the Prime Minister’s autocratic/undemocratic style of functioning. In September 2001 Ethiopian Army Chief Lt Gen Tsadkan Gebretensai; Air Force Chief Maj Gen Abeded Teklehainamanot; besides a number of senior military officers and political opponents considered to be close/sympathetic to the President, were sacked and arrested*. Major General Abdela Gemeda, an Oromo, resigned from the Army to join active politics. He replaced President Gidada as Chairman of the Oromo People’s Democratic organisation (OPDO).

Prime Minister Re-elected for Another Five Years Term.

In September 2001, ruling coalition partners of the Ethiopian People’s Republic Democratic Front held a congress, strengthening the position of the Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi. Meles was re-elected as the Prime Minister for another term of five years. President Gidada was effectively isolated. In October 2001, 61 years old and sick Girma Wolde Giorgis, an Oromo, was elected as the new President of Ethiopia. Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) intensified its anti-government campaign, demanding independence of Oromiya Region from Ethiopia. Reports of clashes between the government Forces and the OLF continue to increase day by day.

Diversionary Tactics

In October 2001, to divert public and international attention from the internal political problems, Ethiopian Government leveled serious allegations against the UNMEE for policy of appeasement towards Eritrea, by neglecting to report massive Eritrean build up adjacent to the Northern Boundary of the TSZ for attack on Ethiopia. Ethiopia dared Eritrea to attack it. (UNMEE found no evidence of any Eritrean build up in the vicinity of the TSZ, for possible offensive against Eritrea).

Ethiopian Opposition Parties

Ethiopian Opposition Parties wrote to the UN Secretary General, stating that the delimitation decision (by the Ethiopian-Eritrean Boundary Commission) should not be based on the colonial treaties as it would go against the interests of Ethiopia. The letter also claimed that Assab had always been part of Ethiopia and no decision by the Ethiopian-Eritrean Boundary Commission can negate the ground reality.

* Lieutenant General Tsadkan Gebretensai, ex Army Chief, was arrested on corruption charges (money for purchase of 400 armed vehicles from Ukraine just disappeared from the Govt coffers, though no vehicles were ever purchased); and for causing death of 10,000 Ethiopian soldiers in the Battle of Tsorena in 1998 due to Error of Judgment.
Political Situation in Eritrea

Eritrea has a Presidential Form of Governance, with a single party system. In September 2001, Group of 15 (G15), reformists, objected to the President’s (President Isayas Afwerki) obstacles to the transition of power to people. 11 of the 15 members of the Reformist Group were arrested for anti-national activities and for trying to overthrow the Government. Hundreds of Asmara University students and some Journalists were arrested for putting at risk unity and interest of the country and were later released. Italian Ambassador to Eritrea was expelled being person non-grata. Italy retaliated by expelling Eritrean Ambassador to Italy. European Union Ambassadors were recalled for consultations, but later returned. Italy (largest donor to Eritrea) and Denmark (largest contributor to Eritrean Agriculture Industry) suspended aid to Eritrea. European Union rescheduled funds for Eritrean Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program (ERRP) for violation of human rights by Eritrean Government; consequently jeopardizing the ERRP. It is most unfortunate that the Horn of Africa remains one of the most under-developed regions in the world, with frequent famine and paucity/absençe of basic amenities. The problems were further compounded due to the prolonged civil war from 1974 to 1991 and border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea between 1998 and 2000, which rendered a large segment of populace homeless. INDBATT, as part of Indian Army’s policy of winning hearts & minds of local populace through soldiering with a humane face, initiated a number of humanitarian operations in the Mission Area to bring succor to the underprivileged, deprived lot in the strife torn region.

INDBATT carried out a survey to identify the major problems faced by the local populace and initiated a number of humanitarian operations with focus of main efforts being the remote, inaccessible areas. In addition to initiating the humanitarian operations with its integral resources, INDBATT also coordinated execution of humanitarian activities carried out in the Central Sector by the Force HQ, UNMEE and other NGOs†. Majority of the humanitarian operations undertaken by the INDBATT were from within its own resources. INDBATT’s perseverance and dedication to the cause of humanitarian aid particularly in the remote areas has contributed immensely towards projection of humane face of the Indian soldiers and the apathy Indians share with the underprivileged lot in the Horn of Africa. INDBATT humanitarian activities won accolades from various quarters including the UN Security Council during his visit to the mission area in October 2001, besides the host nations and HQ UNMEE.

Immediately on deployment in the mission area, INDBATT embarked upon the task of identifying the humanitarian problems in the Region particularly in remote, inaccessible areas and villages/ populace affected by the conflict more severely. Data collected during the survey formed the basis of the humanitarian activities initiated by INDBATT. Situation was thereafter reviewed periodically and the priorities adjusted accordingly

†It is pertinent to state that projects beyond the INDBATT capability were executed as Quick Impact Projects, with the financial assistance from HQ UNMEE as part of the CIMIC (Civil Military Coordination) Policy. Projects beyond the quick impact projects capability were projected to the NGOs.
HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS

‘UN PEACE KEEPERS SHOULD UNDERTAKE HUMANITARIAN RELIEF MISSIONS WHILE CONDUCTING PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS’.
- BOUTRAS BOUTRAS GHALI

Humanitarian situation in the Mission Area on deployment of INDBATT was gloomy at best. Border conflict had rendered thousands homeless. Border towns of Serha, Zela Ambessa, Senafe and Tsorena had been devastated during the conflict stark reminders of the bloody war in the Horn of Africa. Majority of the roads and tracks were in poor state of maintenance and in disuse rendering a number of villages inaccessible by road. Potable water was a scarcity in most remote villages, in some case nearest source of water being as far as 10 kms. Health care in remote areas was almost non-existent. Malnutrition and diseases were rampant. Most of the school buildings in the border areas had been completely destroyed. Civil administration was, more or less, non-existent (Photo-71). Having surveyed the area of its maladies, INDBATT decided the priority areas for humanitarian operations†.

INDBATT CIMIC Policy

INDBATT evolved a CIMIC Policy, laying down the guidelines for the conduct of the humanitarian operations‡.

Health Care

INDBATT medical staff included two medical officers (including one lady medical officer), one dentist, four nursing assistants, one operating room assistant, one lab assistant and one dental operating room assistant. INDBATT medical staff was deployed over an area of 350 kms, to provide medical cover to INDBATT personnel at 15 vastly dispersed posts. Notwithstanding the existing constraints, the medical staff besides making provision of medical cover to the INDBATT personnel embarked upon the honours task of providing immeasurable medical aid to the poor and needy local populace†‡. Various medical activities conducted by INDBATT are covered in the succeeding paragraphs and may well be seen in action as per the existing photo records.

†Focus of main efforts of INDBATT was on health care, improvement of communication network, provision of potable water, literacy Drive, rehabilitation of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and people to people Contact.

‡Highlights of the CIMIC policy were, co-terminus with Force Commander’s objectives, harmonies the politico-military objectives and humanitarian components of the Mission, improve community relations with local population, consent, impartiality and force protection, identify and execute quick impact projects, enhance image of UNMEE and help civil administration in restoration of normalcy.

†‡Over 100,000 locals were treated by INDBATT at various posts and during medical camps held in remote areas. Medicines were provided to the patients free of cost.
Medical Camps

Majority of the villages in remote areas and even some towns in both Eritrea and Ethiopia lack basic medical and health care facilities. INDBATT concentrated on reaching out to this segment of the under privileged and deprived lot through medical camps at regular intervals. Patients were examined, treated and provided medicines free of cost. Response to the INDBATT medical camps was overwhelming.

Treatment at INDBATT Posts

Besides provision of medical support to the local populous during medical camps, locals were treated at various INDBATT posts regularly†. **Major (Mrs.) Anupama Parashar**, through her selfless devotion to duty, by treating thousands of locals, was nicknamed **Mariam of Adi Grat** by the locals. Patients arrived from as far as 200kms away (**Photo-72**).

Emergencies / Referral of Civil Hospitals

Emergencies were attended to round the clock. Serious cases/cases requiring specialized treatment were referred to the civil hospitals. At times, patients were evacuated by INDBATT ambulance. INDBATT medical officers in order to review the progress even visited patients referred to the civil hospitals.

Manning of Civilian Health Centers

INDBATT medical officer at May Mine visited May Mine Health Centre twice a week, as the local Health Centre did not have a doctor posted. Maj Anupama Parashar visited Tsorena Health Centre and Adi Grat Civil Hospital periodically. Adi Grat Hospital did not have a lady doctor.

Health Inspection of School Children

INDBATT medical officers inspected the school children and school staffs on regular basis. (**Photo-73**) During the health inspection, following activities were undertaken:-

- Checking height and weight, ear, nose, throat and eye examination and inspection of skin, hair and nails.
- Screening for contagious diseases for early detection & treatment of diseases amongst school children.
- Imparting health and hygiene education.

† INDBATT posts Adigrat, Senafe, May mine, Monixito and Bada provided Out Patient Day care to the civilian population everyday. At INDBATT Level I Medical Hospital at Adigrat, every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday were observed as civilian Out Patient Days, during which an average of 300 patients were examined and treated on each of these days.
Visits & Donation to Charity Organisations

INDBATT medical officers visited various missionary and charity institutes at Adigrat, Senafe, Mekele, Adwa and Gola. During these visits, patients were examined and certain amount of medicines and dressing material were donated.

Visits to Refugee Camps in Adigrat

The INDBATT doctor along with the CIMIC officer visited the refugee camp in Adigrat regularly and carried out treatment of patients in the camp pertaining to all common ailments. Follow up on treatment was provided to the inmates of the camp on a regular basis.

HIV / AIDS and Health Awareness Campaigns

INDBATT medical officers also conducted exhibitions, lectures, distributing leaflets, and organizing demonstrations in remote areas to spread health and hygiene awareness as well as AIDS awareness amongst the locals. More so, World Health Day was also celebrated on 7th April 2002 and INDBATT medical officers organized a health exhibition-cum-health awareness campaign at Adigrat. World Tuberculosis Day was celebrated on 24th March 2002. An Exhibition was organized by INDBATT during which charts, posters and booklets in English and Tigrinya were displayed giving out the causes, cure, prevention and precautions to be taken against Tuberculosis. A lecture was also delivered on Tuberculosis, general health and hygiene, HIV/AIDS and eye care. The INDBATT medical officer medically examined school children too.

Life Saving Evacuations

On number of occasions, expeditious evacuation of the patient to the civil hospital by INDBATT after first aid by INDBATT medical staff saved few lives.

Medicines

Since INDBATT was not mandated to provide medical cover to the local populace as per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), no additional medicines for the purpose were carried. However, in keeping with the Indian Army’s policy of soldiering with humane face, a portion of the medicines were utilized for humanitarian operations. Since the requirement of medicines could not be met within INDBATT resources, Force HQ was requested to arrange for supply of additional medicines.

† The most common ailments encountered in the Region were Conjunctivitis/eye infections, Dermatitis/scabies/skin infections, gastroenteritis, bacillary dysentery, anemia, upper respiratory track infection, gynecological / genital infection / Sexually Transmitted Diseases, antenatal cases, fever, ear infections, snake, dog and scorpion bites.

‡ During the Exhibition, posters, leaflets and video movies were displayed/ screened, with an aim to spread awareness on HIV/ AIDS, Tuberculosis, and general health and hygiene. Response to the Exhibition was overwhelming.

†‡ On Indian request a large quantity of medicines were received through the Force HQ, UNMEE, i.e. seven tonnes of medicines were received from Holland. Maj Gen Patrick Cammaert, Force Commander, UNMEE, on being informed of the shortage of medicines faced by INDBATT for humanitarian operations, organized supply of these medicines through donations from Holland and also released USD 15,000 for purchase of medicines.
Development of Infrastructure

INDBATT Engineer Platoon also assisted the civil administration of Senafe, Adi Quala and Adi Grat towns in improvement/repair/maintenance of roads/tracks within the town and improvement of sewerage/drainage system. Civic action projects conducted/carried out in these towns speak for themselves as per the available records (Photo-74). In addition to the above miseries pertaining to health hazard, a large number of villages in the remote areas in both Ethiopia and Eritrea were also found to be very poorly connected by roads/tracks. Condition of the existing tracks, particularly during the monsoons got deteriorated rendering some villages inaccessible by road. Some tracks had remained in a state of disuse for a long time. INDBATT Engineer Platoon did a yeoman’s job in periodic maintenance of tracks to remote areas† (Photo-75).

Leveling of Low-lying Areas in Senafe

Eritrea experiences very heavy rainfall during the monsoons, leading to flooding/water logging in some parts of the town. INDBATT Engineer Platoon with assistance from the town administration leveled the low-lying areas.

Clearing Rubble

During the border conflict the Ethiopians captured Senafe Town. A large number of buildings/structures were destroyed and plundered. Rubble blocked most roads and access to various places within the town. INDBATT helped town administration in clearing the rubble, thus expediting the process of normalization.

Drainage System

Town Administration, Adigrat requested INDBATT to improve the drainage system inside the town as the absence of proper drainage system, besides being breeding place for insects and mosquitoes had led to water logging of certain fields and residential areas. INDBATT engineers, in conjunction with the civil administration, improved the drainage system.

Adiquala Town

Based on the request from the town administration, a link road was constructed by INDBATT, with assistance linking the town with a local school.

Water Supply

Paucity/absence of potable water in remote areas and inside the towns even, was a major problem faced by the local populace.

† A number of roads and tracks were repaired/maintained with the help of INDBATT, i.e. wheeled dozer and JCB (equipment for digging). Maintenance of tracks facilitated flow of civilian traffic, besides enabling movement of INDBATT patrols for operational activities. Over 200kms of roads/tracks were repaired/maintained by INDBATT.
In some cases, locals had to walk up to 10 kms to the water point, which, invariably, the human being shared with animals†. INDBATT also resorted to water supply through water trucks to remote areas, during emergency. Desisting of ponds in some villages was also carried out (Photo-76).

Literacy Drive

Young students are future of the nation. Though primary education was mandatory in both Ethiopia and Eritrea, some schools had been destroyed during the border conflict and computer awareness amongst the students/ youth was almost absent due to non-availability of computers. INDBATT assisted the re-building of certain schools and imparted computer training to a large number of youth. INDBATT, with its limited resources, with some assistance from the Force HQ, UNMEE, undertook various activities spelt in here after.

Construction of Playgrounds

Playgrounds were constructed at Secondary Schools, Senafe, Monixito, Senafe and Zigfet.

Computer Education

In the absence of computer equipment and suitable instructors, most youth in Ethiopia and Eritrea lacked even the basic knowledge of computers. INDBATT, within its own resources, started computer classes for the local youth at Adi Grat. The response was overwhelming, with a large number of youth seeking computer training. First batch of ten young boys and girls finished their month long course on 1st January 2002 (Photo-77) they were awarded certificates of merit by the civil administration at a ceremony organised by the INDBATT. In order to meet the aspirations of the local youth, in both Ethiopia and Eritrea, INDBATT requested Force HQ, UNMEE to provide additional computers. Despite concerted efforts by INDBATT, Force HQ provided only six computers on loan in June 2002‡.

School Feeding Scheme

Malnutrition is rampant in the Horn of Africa, particularly amongst children. INDBATT organized school feeding programmes for the children of selected schools with one meal a day, with an aim to provide diet high in nutrition. Idea was much appreciated by all. To overcome shortage of plates and spoons, Force HQ, UNMEE provided money for local purchase of paper plates and spoons. Over 100,000 students had benefited from this scheme.

† INDBATT established water points at Adi Grat, Aromo, Monoxito and May Mine. Since INDBATT did not have adequate equipment, Force HQ, UNMEE and various NGOs were requested to pitch in. UNMEE established three water wells and twelve hand pumps.

‡ Over 100 students had been imparted basic training on computers. Students were awarded and are also being awarded certificates on successful completion of the computer courses. It had been reliably learnt that some of the students who qualified on the computer courses conducted by INDBATT had been provided jobs in civil / government offices in due course.
Construction of Children’s Parks.

Most schools in the Mission Area lacked any recreation facilities for children. Since recreation forms an important part of the overall development of a child, INDBATT decided to fill the void through construction of children’s parks from within its own resources *(Photo-78)*. Four children’s parks were constructed in Adigrat town and one in Senafe town†.

Miscellaneous Activities

Flood Relief at Bada.

In the month of August 2001, Bada, over 100 metres below the mean sea level, was affected by flash floods. A number of houses were marooned and belongings were washed away. INDBATT Bada post, helped the locals retrieve their belongings and help those marooned by the floods a move much appreciated by all. *(Photo-79)*

Recovery of Civilian Vehicles

Due to lack of resources to recover vehicles, which had over turned or met with an accident, the civil administration had been approaching INDBATT to recover such vehicles. INDBATT had been assisting the civil administration and the locals in recovery of such vehicles.

Repatriation of Prisoners of War/ Refugees

INDBATT monitored repatriation of Prisoners of War/ Refugees from Ethiopia to Eritrea and vice versa through Mereb Bridge.

Distribution of Clothes

On 4th July 2002, approximately 500 poor and needy young children were distributed clothes brought by INDBATT from India. Clothes distributed to children included T shirts, frocks, shorts etc.

People to People Contact

Winning Hearts and Minds of the Local Populace is an important facet of peacekeeping operations. India has enjoyed a very warm and cordial relationship historically with the Horn of Africa. India also shares a common culture with the people of the Horn. People on the two sides of the border still view each other with suspicion. Scars of war are still fresh. As part of confidence building measures, INDBATT embarked upon the mission of establishing rapport with the local populace through cultural exchanges and other confidence building measures.

†Her Excellency Jordana Diengdoh- Pavel, Indian ambassador to Ethiopia, inaugurated one of the children’s parks on 2nd June 2002, during her visit to HQ INDBATT. On 14th June 2002, His Excellency Joseph Legwaila inaugurated children’s parks at Senafe and Adi Grat.
Confidence Building Measures

Exercise ‘RAINBOW’ was conducted on 8th September 2001 with the aim to bring together the people of Eritrea and Ethiopia residing along the Southern Boundary of the TSZ, in Irob region, to help resolve the local disputes amicably. Ethiopian and Eritrean locals along with their government representatives in the civil administration participated in the exercise. Minor issues like cattle rustling, civilians straying across the Southern Boundary of the TSZ and allegations of abductions and harassment, were resolved amicably.

Visit of the Indian Ambassador to Adi Grat (Photo-80)

Her Excellency Jordana Diengdoh Pavel, Indian Ambassador to Ethiopia, visited HQ INDBATT, Adi Grat on 1st-2nd June 2002. During the visit, the Ambassador reviewed the humanitarian activities carried out by INDBATT and the rapport which the Battalion had established with the locals. The Ethiopian Administration and locals warmly received the Ambassador. The Ambassador inaugurated a children’s park on 2nd June 2002 in Adi Grat Town, where the Ambassador was welcomed in the traditional Ethiopian style. The Ambassador later presented certificates of merit to the students who successfully completed computer courses conducted by INDBATT. INDBATT had also organized a school feeding programme.

Results Achieved

As a result of the humanitarian activities undertaken by INDBATT, locals had developed tremendous amount of trust and confidence in Indians and in the UNMEE. Humanitarian operations had supplemented the military operations for restoration and maintenance of peace in the strife torn region. Return of normalcy had manifested itself in number of ways, like almost all schools became functional, markets vibrant, civic amenities had been restored and living conditions had improved since a portion of the destruction caused by the war had been repaired. More so, a large number of IDPs had returned home and farmers had returned to their fields. Most important fact is that civil administration had resumed smooth functioning.

INDBATT had received appreciation and gratitude from the locals and the civil administration on numerous occasions. Humanitarian operations undertaken by INDBATT had been widely covered in UNMEE and local press and on the National TV and Radio. Visiting dignitaries (Photo-81), Secretary General and Force Commander UNMEE and the Indian Ambassador to Ethiopia had also conveyed their appreciation. Press coverage of INDBATT Humanitarian Activities and Letters of Appreciation, along with the photographs, are well on records.
Deployment of UNMEE

Mission Area had been divided into three Sectors, i.e. Western, Central and Eastern. 4,200 UN personnel, including 220 UNMOs, had been deployed as highlighted in the map placed opposite (Map-8).

Composition of INDBATT

An Infantry Battalion Group comprising of 1206 personnel including mechanized elements, elements from Engineers, Corps of Signals, Electrical & Mechanical Engineers, Army Medical Corps, Dental Corps and Army Education Corps (Photo-82).

Implied Tasks

- Monitor the Ethiopian re-deployment.
- Monitor the Eritrean Forces remaining at a distance of 25 kms from the Ethiopian re-deployed forces.
- Provide security by occupying and/or establish posts in key and sensitive areas.
- Control Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) by established Check Points and patrolling.
- Any additional task as directed by Force HQ.
- Preliminary Tasks.
- Conduct Peace Keeping Operations within sector boundaries.
- Monitor the redeployed Ethiopian Forces within sector boundaries.
- Control the TSZ by Check Points, established posts and patrols.
- Monitor the TSZ within boundaries (particularly key and sensitive areas).
- Ensure the TSZ is demarcated on the ground.
- Monitor and report any violation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities within sector boundaries.
- Assist in the coordination of humanitarian and human rights activities in the TSZ and areas adjacent to it within sector boundaries.
- Be prepared to escort and provide security for Military Co-ordination Committee meetings on order.
- Other tasks as directed by the Force Commander.
In general, prevailing situation in the mission area had been felt to be calm and all parties more or less co-operated with UNMEE. Both parties maintained a defensive military posture on either side of the Temporary Security Zone and no major changes in Force level since redeployment had been reported. Routine military training were underway on both sides with the Ethiopian Armed Forces undergoing a major transformation from a Guerilla Force to a conventional organized military. Ethiopia is also undertaking a massive demobilization and restructuring plan which provides for the recruitment and creation of a national reserve of volunteer citizens to support a significantly downsized regular army. According to available information, Eritrea’s military stance remains substantially unchanged.

**Trans Border Incursions**

The number of border incursions by Ethiopian herdsmen who entered the Temporary Security Zone to graze their livestock had increased noticeably, especially in Sector Centre. Because these herdsmen accompanied by armed men compete for the dwindling drought affected pastures within the Temporary Security Zone, the risk of armed clashes had increased. In view of the seriousness of this matter, UNMEE had raised the issue with the Ethiopian military authorities at the highest level and had received assurances that steps would be taken to control these incursions before they escalate.

**Investigational Records**

Two alleged shooting incidents in the area of the Mereb River (Sector Centre) and at Mukutis (Sector West), on 17th and 24th April 2003 respectively, had been reported and investigated to UNMEE by the parties. There is no evidence to support the involvement of either the Eritrean Defence Forces or the Ethiopian Armed Forces in these incidents. Instead, it is likely that, if they indeed occurred, they took place between local groups and militia. Investigations were also progressed into the fatal shooting on 18th May by the Ethiopian Armed Forces of a 15-year-old Eritrean boy who had crossed into Ethiopia near Humera (Sector West) in pursuit of his camels. This was the fifth shooting incident for which the Ethiopian Armed Forces were responsible at Humera Bridge since 1st January 2003 and the third ending in a fatality, which could suggest a propensity to use excessive force in this locality. UNMEE had raised this matter with the Ethiopian Ministry of Defence, which had given assurances that it will take action to remedy the situation. Meanwhile, following a number of incidents earlier in Sector West, involved mines suspected to be newly laid. As a result, the occurrence of mine incidents in this sector decreased significantly. Nevertheless, the threat of mine attacks in Sector West remains ever high.

**Freedom of movement**

Restrictions continue to be imposed on UNMEE freedom of movement in the areas adjacent to the Temporary Security Zone, especially in Sector Centre. On the Eritrean side, access to Eritrean Defence Forces positions was frequently denied.

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1 **UNMEE and the Armed Forces on both sides of the Temporary Security Zone, as well as militia and the police had intensified their patrolling in an effort to curb the activities of the groups believed to be responsible for laying mines in the area.**
These restrictions seem to result from a failure to communicate to the local level commitments that have been made at the strategic level. Both parties have been trying to resolve some of the existing difficulties between UNMEE military observers and Eritrean or Ethiopian military liaison staff. The continuing absence of a direct high-altitude flight route for UNMEE aircraft between Asmara and Addis Ababa, UNMEE continued to fly between the two capitals via the Red Sea and Djibouti, with the additional operational and safety burdens this entails for the mission. These longer and more complicated flight routes had so far imposed additional costs on the mission, as well as a higher safety risk. The parties lack of interest in offering UNMEE a rapid and pragmatic solution to this issue is regrettable and remains a source of considerable frustration.

**Military Co-ordination Commission**

During various meetings, both parties agreed to do all in their power to prevent the laying of mines in the Temporary Security Zone and the areas adjacent to it. The parties also assured UNMEE that they would cooperate in the recovery and repatriation or burial of mortal remains lying within the Temporary Security Zone, particularly in Sector East. In addition, in both Military Coordination Commission meetings, the parties discussed their provision of security for the Boundary Commission’s staff and contractors operating in the Temporary Security Zone and the adjacent areas during demarcation. Both parties provided assurances in this regard and committed themselves to working on more specific proposals once demarcation begins.

**Deployment of the Mission**

As of 16th June 2003, the total strength of the military component of UNMEE stood at 4,038 personnel, comprising 3,716 troops, 107 headquarters staff officers and 215 military observers. On 15th June, peacekeepers from Finland replaced the Irish contingent as the Mission’s Headquarters and Guard Company. UNMEE continues to encounter difficulties with the Government of Eritrea on the issue of the Mission’s national staff. The Eritrean authorities have maintained their position that such staff must discharge their national service obligations and there have been additional cases in which local staffs were detained. The detention of national staff on the basis of their religious affiliation also been detained on the basis of their religious affiliation. UNMEE has continued as stipulated in resolution 1430 (2002) of 14th August 2002, to provide administrative, logistical and de-mining services in support of preparatory work for demarcation being carried out by the Boundary Commission. Costs related to civilian de-mining contractors and the provision of administrative and logistical support to the field offices are being funded from the United Nations Trust Fund for the Delimitation and Demarcation of the Border.

† This is a long-standing issue in which the Mission and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been involved since the beginning.

‡ Eritrea now requires that its nationals working for international organisations, including for the United Nations, register with the Government, which also demands that UNMEE should only recruit those nationals approved by its Ministry of Labour.
Voluntary contributions and pledges to the Trust Fund totaled some $10.8 million. The cost estimate based on the demarcation contractors’ proposals indicated that at least an additional $4.1 million were required to complete the demarcation of the whole boundary.

**Mine Action.**

Landmines and unexploded ordnance including those in the Temporary Security Zone continue to constitute a major threat to the population of both countries, as well as to United Nations staff and humanitarian personnel operating on the ground. The works of UNMEE de-mining companies continue to produce encouraging results (Photo - 83). As at the end of May 2003, UNMEE de-miners had destroyed 510 mines and 4,627 items of unexploded ordnance, and cleared over 12.4 million square metres of land and 1,919 kilometers of road. In addition, UNMEE had carried on its de-mining activities in support of demarcation. Good progress continues to be made in clearing all routes in the Temporary Security Zone of mines and unexploded ordnance, and clearance of pillar sites were to commence as soon as the Boundary Commission confirmed these sites. In late May, the Government of Eritrea requested the British mine action non-governmental organisation (NGO) namely HALO Trust, to depart from the country by end of June 2003, leaving only one international demining agency in Eritrea.

**Humanitarian Developments**

The United Nations country teams and their partners even today continue to work together to address the urgent needs of over 2 million people in Eritrea and 12.6 million in Ethiopia. According to humanitarian agencies, the lives of these people are threatened by the consequences of war and the devastating drought which has affected the two countries for several years in a row†. Although there have been additional bilateral pledges outside the Consolidated Appeal Process framework, only 69,337 tons of food out of the required 476,000 had actually reached Eritrea. This is believed to be one of the main reasons for the significant deterioration in the nutritional status of children. Owing to the inadequacy of resources, the United Nations agencies and their partners decided to focus on urgent priority requirements, such as food, water and medical assistance, until the end of 2003‡. The troops of INDBATT II had made significant contributions towards alleviating the sufferings of the people in the region by regularly attending to the sick and ailing patients visiting the medical facilities at the Sector HQ and various posts as also in the hinterland by holding medical camps.

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† The 2003 mid-year review of the Consolidated Appeal Process for Eritrea indicated that just over $60 million had been received against a revised appeal figure of over $157 million.

‡ In Ethiopia, there has been a positive response to both the joint Government-United Nations appeal and the subsequent addendum, which was issued in March 2003 to draw attention to the urgent needs arising from the drought emergency. As of early June, food aid pledges amounted to 1.33 million tonnes out of a required 1.52 million tonnes, leaving a shortfall of 11 per cent. Non-food pledges totaled $65.5 million out of a required $81.1 million, leaving a shortfall of 19 per cent. There is still a need, however, to resource a significant amount of food and non-food requirements especially to address the effects of a dramatic deterioration of the humanitarian situation in southern Ethiopia.
Human Rights

During the year a number of civilians/PWs/refugees were repatriated†. UNMEE met with Eritrean government officials to discuss allegations of ill treatment by Eritrean officials made by persons of Ethiopian origin who were recently repatriated. The UNMEE Human Rights Office continued to investigate reports of cross-border incidents involving civilians, the incidence of which had increased in recent months. UNMEE continued to prepare for the humanitarian and human rights consequences of the eventual transfer of territorial control that would follow demarcation of the border, in accordance with article 4.16 of the Algiers Peace Agreement of 12th December 2000. Initial UNMEE analysis identified a number of issues which could possibly be involved‡.

The peace process has been at a critical juncture. In general, the parties cooperate well with UNMEE and respect the integrity of the Temporary Security Zone. Their efforts in this connection are highly welcome and are essential to maintaining short-term stability in the region. However, lasting peace cannot be built on the basis of temporary arrangements. Delays in the peace process would be contrary to the wishes of the parties themselves, as manifested in letter and spirit of the Algiers Agreements. In the absence of significant forward movement, precious momentum could be lost and prove difficult to regain, which in turn could impact on the long term goals of reconstruction and development.

3 GRENADIERS

One of the oldest Indian Army battalion, 3 Grenadiers, that traces its roots to the year 1768 left for Ethiopia-Eritrea to replace an Indian contingent of the 13th battalion of the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles that has served there on UN peacekeeping duties for a year. The 850-strong battalion includes elements of the Corps of Signals, the Corps of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Army Medical Corps, Army Ordinance Corps, Army Education Corps and the Remount and Veterinary Corps. Needful to state that 3 Grenadiers has participated with distinction in almost all pre and post-Independence Indian operations and earned the Theatre Honour ‘Rajasthan’ during the 1965 war with Pakistan and was again awarded the Battle Honour ‘Jarpal’ in the 1971 conflict.

Current Status

The battalion is currently serving under a Chapter Six mandate, which means the troops or moving columns (Photo-84) cannot open fire unless threatened with bodily harm unlike Chapter Seven mandate, under which Indian troops are presently serving as peacekeepers in Sudan and Congo, were they get the right to fire at will. The current total strength of this mission as on 31st January 2007 is 2,278 military personal, including, 2,057 troops and 221 military observers, as well as 149 international civilians, 194 local civilians and 46 UN volunteers.

†Ethiopia had repatriated 1,574 (1,130 PWs, 219 Civilians and 225 refugees) and Eritrea had repatriated 1,327 (279 PWs, 1,033 civilians and 15 refugees).

‡Nationality/citizenship rights: protection from statelessness; property rights; family rights/avoidance of family separation; protection of children’s rights; immigration and residency rights; avoidance of forced migration and population movements; rights of return of previously displaced persons; resettlement/reintegration possibilities; and cultural rights and traditions of communities in border areas.
It is indeed pitiable to note that nearly four million people have been butchered since 1994 and the signs are all too evident. For instance, in the airport in Goma where the Indian Air Force operates, skulls and bones had been discovered in the area where it was trying to set up a small structure. It is a war that is almost unheard of in India. However in far away Congo, i.e. Africa, Indian peacekeepers who have been fighting for the United Nations are in fact instrumental in restoring democracy to the country. Further, in the military action which has been recognized by UN, the Indian Army and Air Force have prevented a major military attack by rebel forces. Thus, in the process they have saved the lives of thousands of people in the town of Goma in Eastern Congo.

Needful to further highlight that, the Indian soldiers fighting under the UN flag have been instrumental in thwarting a major attack by soldiers of the 83rd Brigade who are loyal to General Laurent Nunda. This General Officer is wanted internationally for crimes against humanity. Indian soldiers had been forced into action when Congolese Army soldiers deserted their positions and Nokoda’s Forces directly threatened the town of Goma, the capital city of the volatile North Kivu Province. If the town of Goma had fallen, the future of the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo would have indeed been threatened.

Thus, Indian Armoured Personnel Carriers attacked Congolese positions on a hillside near the town of Goma. It was in this fighting that ensued, Indian soldiers held their positions while Indian Air Force Attack Helicopters destroyed enemy positions. Practically, there have hardly been any Indian casualties, though at least 75 Congolese soldiers and 20 civilians have been believed to be wounded. Needful to further state that the Indian Army and Air Force contingents deployed in the Congo are part of a multinational force in the volatile North and South Kivu provinces ever since 2003.

Impressive performance

The Indian Brigade, composed of three battalions of 850 men each, is deployed in North Kivu, while the Air Force Helicopters are based in both North and South Kivu. Recognizing the role of Indian Armed forces in thwarting the attacks, the Brigadier General in charge of UN operations in the region told the Indian Commander, quote, ‘This was an impressive performance, indicative of a highly trained, resolute and professional brigade, you have every reason to feel extremely proud of your troops, they are a credit to you being their Commander, to their Nation and to the United Nations,’ unquote.

Even as 9,000 Indian soldiers and paramilitary personnel serve on UN peacekeeping missions in Africa and Asia, over 4,000 army officers and troops have now headed for Congo and Sudan to relieve an equal number serving there. Of them, 2,770 have gone to Congo, where they are deployed in the restive Katanga province, while 1,660 have travelled to Sudan for deployment in the Malakal sector of the Darfur region. Apart from these hot spots, the Indian ‘Blue Berets’ as the peacekeepers are termed, also serve in Ethiopia/Eritrea, in Lebanon, and on the Golan Heights.
Current Status

While the current deployment has been termed a 'routine turn around', this is the first time such a large number of soldiers have been rotated at one go. In a unique gesture, earlier President of India A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces also addressed them before their departure. As on date, out of 9,000 serving under the UN flag, 8,265, including 26 women, are from the Indian Army, 500 from the Indian Air Force and 125 Indian women troopers of the Para military Central Reserve Police Force.

Of the army troops, 3,707 serve in Congo, 2,385 in Sudan, 971 in Ethiopia/Eritrea, 835 in Lebanon, and 172 on the Golan Heights. This apart, the army has also deployed 169 officers and observers at different UN missions. The Air Force contingent, which includes about a dozen Mi-17 and Mi-35 Attack Helicopters, has been deployed with the Indian troops in the Congo. The women troopers have been deployed in Liberia.

Of all these missions, the one in the Congo is perhaps the most taxing as the troops serve under Chapter Seven of the UN charter, which means they are permitted to launch a first strike. All the other missions are under Chapter Six of the Charter, meaning the troops can only fire back in self-defence. It is pertinent to state that the Congo contingent had won accolades during two rounds of presidential elections in the year 2006 and also when the Indian Brigade responsible for this volatile region of Congo launched operations for countering the intent of the rebels and ensuring the safety of the two towns.

‘WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH - THE TOUGHB GET GOING’

THE BRAVE INDIAN SOLDIERS CONTINUE THEIR MARCH ON THE MOST DIFFICULT PATHS TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOAL OF UNIVERSAL PEACE