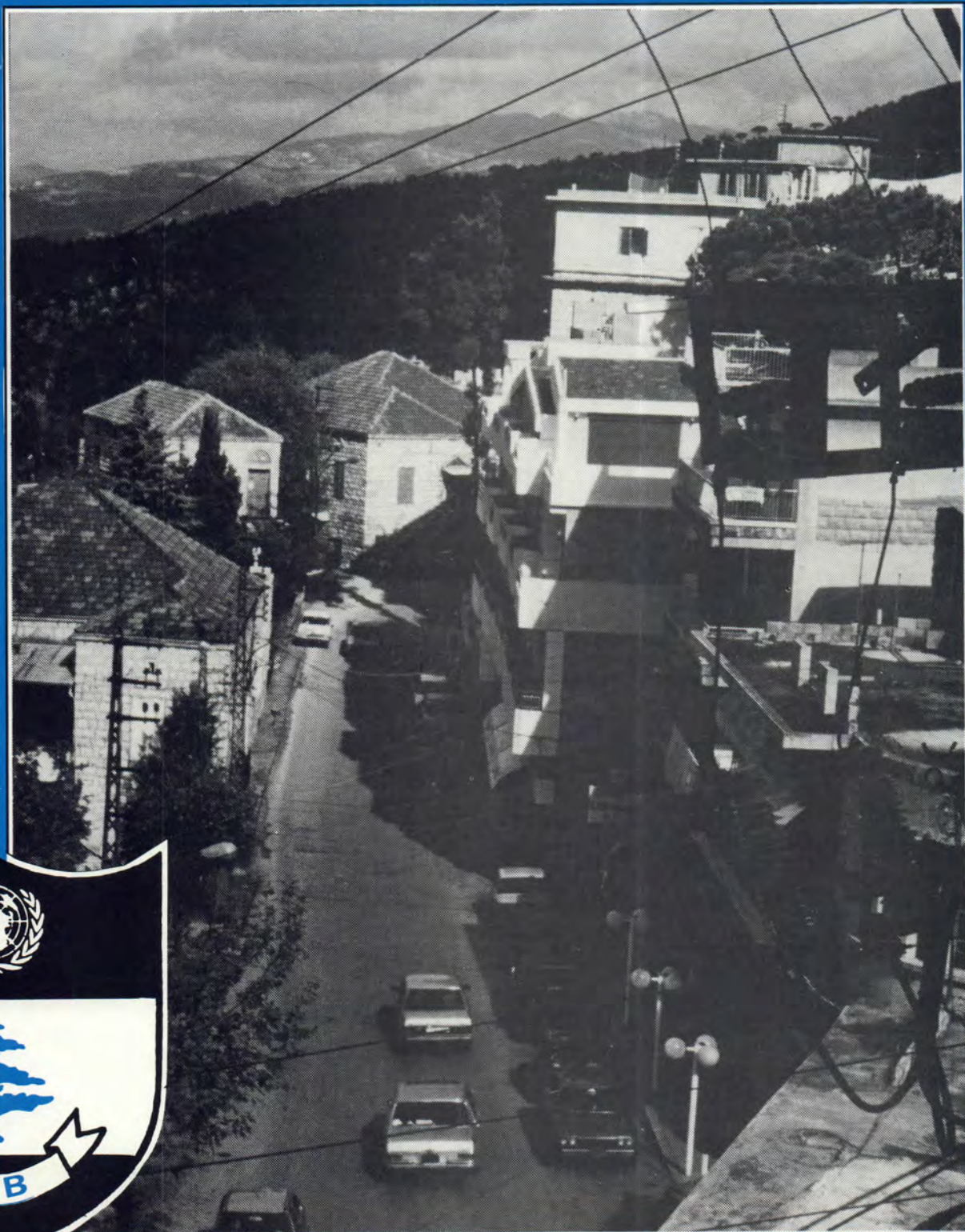




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UNITED NATIONS TRUCE SUPERVISION ORGANIZATION



"From Broummana, where the staff members have their homes." (see p. 4)



THE PRICE OF PEACE

by Maj. Robert B. Adolph Jr.

Major Robert B. Adolph Jr. from US Army arrived in the Mission Area on the 9 of June 89 and was initially assigned to OGE and 4. of December transferred to OGL.

In this letter to UNTOSO News' readers Major R.B. Adolph unveils his thoughts before taking up a UN assignment.

In October 1988 I remember reading about the United Nations Peace Keeping Forces winning the Nobel Peace Prize. I also noted that over 700 members of those forces had died as a result of accidents, shootings and natural causes in the last four decades while serving the cause of peace. This figure had an effect on my wife, family and friends. You see, in August of 1988 I volunteered to serve with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in the Middle East. At this writing I am half way through my tour and have just been reassigned to Observation Group Lebanon from Egypt.

The recurring question that I am asked by family, friends and associates alike is why did I volunteer? Although my wife is understanding and supportive of my desire to serve, even she questions the wisdom of my choice and the choice of thousands of other professional soldiers from dozens of countries who have volunteered for duty in the tempestuous Middle East and other hazardous regions of the globe. After all, danger in UN duty comes not only from a recognized potential for death or dismemberment, but from a very real possibility that a UN member, might find himself the target of hostage-taking although the odds are against anything like that, still the possibility is a very real one. While I would never presume to speak for the hundreds of soldiers who have laid down their lives, I believe that there is a commonality shared by those who volunteer for the hardships of family separation, harsh climatic conditions and the possibility of treat to life and limb. These reasons are not heroic but could most probably be described as idealistic and maybe even romantic.

In my experience I have found soldiers to be just such an idealistic lot. I guess it comes with the job description. The possibility of death is never really very far from our minds. That fact alone colors our thinking about how we perceive our own demise and what our potential death might mean. Most people don't think in terms like this, but soldiers sometimes do. If we are to die then we desire most of all that the sacrifice has meaning. It is important to me that my son know his father not only through his words but through his deeds as well. Better than any other segment of society soldiers know the horror of war. It is also true that no group better appreciates the blessings of peace. Nobody in their right mind wants to die. But to risk death for peace is worthy.

Professional soldiers the world over share in a kind of brotherhood that only those who have drunk from the same cup would fully understand. The sacrifice that those who have gone before must not be in vain. UN soldiers have died and continue to risk death so that others might live in peace. It is a noble goal, many would call it an unrealistic one, yet it is an objective that these soldiers of many nations paid a dear price for. Is it worth the price? The dead can't speak, but I believe their actions state more than volumes about honor, commitment and what they believed. Their sacrifice is only in vain if others fail to recognize the value of what they did.

Peace will not come to man of its own accord. It must be fought for. But this is a different kind of war. It is war without ships, tanks and armed aircraft. It is a war for people's minds and hearts. Its weapons are symbols. Soldiers of many countries who go into harm's way symbolize the desire of all peoples for peace and security. For the soldiers who serve here is a worthy goal and one worth the risk. Soldiers accept this premise almost without question, nothing of genuine worth comes without sacrifice.

Although the work is sometimes dangerous and often boring, men from all over the world continue to volunteer for this duty, which, until recently, was a near totally thankless job. This is all the more remarkable when one considers that in the vast majority of cases these men have no personal stake in the potential outcome of these wars.

Even a cursory review of world history teaches us that peace, arguably, is not the natural state of mankind. Peace has a price. That price is being paid daily by a group of anonymous men who often have little in common except for the fact they wear the uniforms of their respective nations, and almost to a man, believe that what they are doing is important to mankind as a whole.

Great ideas often start as footnotes in history. UN soldiers may be some of the world's greatest romantics, and, for myself, I'm proud to be one of them.