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NORTHERN STAR

Magazine for HQ JFC Brunssum – May 2015



- Coordination and Interoperability – Ten NATO Allies and two Partners Participate in BRTE 20

- The Dutch Armed Forces, forces with a mission
- Exercise Red Flag



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COMMAND GROUP CORNER

By Major General Hans van Griensven, Deputy Chief of Staff PLANS JFC Brunssum

Time flies when you're having fun. How true is this statement? At least it is for me. It's a little over a year ago that I assumed this job by having my 'first day in office' in Tartu, Estonia, 25 k's from the Russian border. As of then I jumped on the fast moving NATO train that hardly stops at any station.

I must say and reconfirm that it's a privilege to work within NATO at a time I believe the Alliance is as relevant as it was in the old days. If there was any doubt with regard to the ongoing purpose and need for NATO, the past 14 months or so have served to prove the contrary. Or to speak with the words of SACEUR "We are implementing the greatest change in approach to collective defense since NATO's inception. We are doing it deliberately and correctly." (Commander's Weekly Communication Guidance 6-12 Apr 15). We are at the right time in the right place. I'm looking forward to having the T-shirt in the end! But before that there is still a lot of work to be done now and into the future as the Alliance seeks to protect its members against evolving security challenges.

Although we are pretty much occupied in day by day business, 'Planning' is about looking ahead. That is what we try to do. The Contingency Plans (COPs) for the three Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (nations we collectively like to call the 3 Bs), Poland and Norway are still 'warm' and we now start thinking about Graduated Response Plans (GRPs). More actionable graduated response plans articulate greater detail on deploying the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), NATO Response Force (NRF) and follow on forces, heavily supported by the new NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs) and Multi National Corps North East (MNC(NE)). That is the new 'plans'-challenge and it will take a lot of resources and energy to make those documents acceptable to the nations involved. However, this constitutes a highly rewarding task that will remain on our agenda for the upcoming years alongside planning for assurance measures, other adaptation initiatives and exercises. It's all about de-confliction, prioritization and hard work.

Recently I was in Ulm at the Main Planning Conference for the TRIDENT JUNCTURE 15 LIVEX and had the opportunity to address 800 colleagues from all over the world. Apart from that attendance figure telling us something about the amount of TDY being undertaken in the military domain, it also proves that everybody wants to be part of this huge high visibility exercise. With 34 nations, 320 units and over 25.000 soldiers, airmen, sailors and civilians involved, this will be an exercise, the scale of which, we didn't experience for many years. There are no existing documents or blue prints for an exercise of this magnitude and that makes it an even more challenging endeavor for those involved. Although there are still some obstacles to breach, we are on track and will prove to the world that NATO is ready to deploy and employ its capabilities to assure member states and deter possible adversaries. JFCBS is leading the way!



Major General Hans van Griensven, Deputy Chief of Staff Plans

There is a lot of talk about Hybrid Warfare and you might argue that this is nothing new. The way Russia plays it at least is an eye opener for some. By analyzing what exactly is going on we also realize more and more that the current NATO is not well equipped to counter this kind of threat. That is not strange since the military side of NATO has always been a defensive military organization based on the use of military capacity to deter and, if necessary, physically defeat the enemy: but only after there is an article 5 declaration by all member states. What if the art. 5 threshold is not breached? We have to find new ways to address this new challenge in the so-called 'phase 0'. Hybrid Warfare is about using all available means of power to undermine the opponents' will and ability to react and, in so doing, destabilize the country – an act which eventually might lead to defeat.

We realize that NATO is not designed to react to this in all domains; the Alliance has to adapt and find ways to better apply its capabilities in this insecure, volatile and fast changing environment - hence the words of General Breedlove. It also underlines the notion that a crisis cannot be solved by military means alone. Our outreach to non-NATO members, non-military partners and other international institutions, such as the EU, are of utmost importance offering new possibilities and new friendships. In this respect JFCBS is forward leaning and at the forefront of exploring the vast array of possibilities that continue to arise. We have an excellent reputation to uphold, are broadly perceived to be adding value in all domains and, in doing so, stay relevant within our Alliance. It is good to be part of this. PLANS are ready to take it on. Let's make it happen!! Together.

Colophon

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About the Cover



One of many US F-15's takes off from Nellis Air Force Base, Las Vegas Nevada, USA, taking part in Exercise Red Flag 2015, from February 27 to March 17 2015. In total, more than 2,500 participants and more than 100 aircraft from 13 different U.S. Air Force squadrons; C-130Js and F-16s from the Royal Norwegian Air Force; E-3 Sentry's of the US Air Force and E-3As from NATO were involved.

The exercise provided the crews and pilots, in one of the air forces premier air-to-air combat exercises, the opportunity to enhance their skills and experiences.

More info on the exercise can be found further in this edition.

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Coordination and Interoperability – Ten NATO Allies and two Partners participate in BRTE 20

Story by HQ AIRCOM PAO

The 20th Baltic Region Training Event (BRTE 20) was held on 21 and 22 April 2015 bringing together flying assets, air command and control centres and Forward Air Controllers (FACs) from NATO Allies Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, the United States, and Partners, Finland and Sweden, and a NATO Airborne Early Warning (AEW) platform.



A Norwegian F-16 overhead the Adazi training area during BRTE 20. In total ten NATO Allies and two Partner nations conducted interoperability training in the Baltic Skies on 21 and 22 April. Photo by Cynthia Vernet, HQ AIRCOM Public Affairs Office

Most of the training took place invisible from the ground up in the Baltic air space. Fighter aircraft conducted intercept and air-to-air training as well as air-to-air-refueling with United States and German tanker aircraft. NATO AEW and Control and Reporting Centre Karmelava, Lithuania, ensured control of the training event that was overseen by Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC) Uedem, Germany, and organized Allied Air Command (AIRCOM) at Ramstein, Germany.

The Latvian training range at Adazi east of the capital Riga was the venue for Close Air Support (CAS) training of FACs from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The FACs coordinated and controlled CAS missions of Norwegian and Swedish fighter aircraft during realistic simulated scenarios.

“Headquarters AIRCOM began organizing the BRTE series in 2008. These two-day training events have been a long-standing routine for the headquarters and CAOC Uedem helping to further cooperation and interoperability in the Baltic Region,” says

Greek Air Force Major Dimitrios Koukaras, the BRTE project officer at AIRCOM. “This time we have successfully brought together Allied and Partner aircraft to train tactics, techniques and procedures such as air-to-air-refueling, CAS, Dissimilar Air Combat Training, and Search and Rescue. I am very pleased with the outcome. We were able to achieve our training objectives and I look forward to the continuation of the BRTE series in early June at Āmari Air Base, Estonia.”



The BRTE project officer, Greek Air Force Major Dimitrios Koukaras from HQ AIRCOM, answering media questions during BRTE 20 at Adazi training range. Photo by Cynthia Vernet, HQ AIRCOM PA Office

NATO JAZZ NIGHT on 20 June 2015

Military music returns to Kaiserslautern

A blue poster for the NATO Jazz Night event. The central graphic is a large white speech bubble containing the text 'NATO' in a simple sans-serif font, 'JAZZ' in a large, bold, stylized font, and 'Night' in a cursive script. Below the speech bubble, the date and venue '20. JUNI 2015 / KAMMGARN' are printed in white. Underneath that, the names of the performing bands are listed: 'U.S.AIR FORCES IN EUROPE BAND', 'HEERESMUSIKKORPS KOBLENZ', and 'DIXIE-GROUP MUSIQUE MILITAIRE LUXEMBOURG'. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for the NATO-Musikfestival-Stiftung, which includes the NATO star and a stylized 'KL' for Kaiserslautern.

The last NATO Music Festival took place at the Fritz-Walter stadium in 2011; now military music is back in town. The venue for the 2015 event will be the Kammgarn centre at Kaiserslautern.

Three well-known bands from the United States, Luxembourg and Germany will come to the Kammgarn Kasino and present a lively and varied Jazz night. What is special about this event is that for the first time the United States Air Forces in Europe Band, the Big Band of the Koblenz-based army band and the

Dixie Group of the Musique Militaire Grand-Ducale de Luxembourg will be on stage for joint performances.

Net proceeds from the event will go to the NATO Music Festival Foundation, a non-profit organization that provides support to families in need and to young musicians from the Kaiserslautern area.

When? Saturday, 20 June, 20:00

Where? Kammgarn Kaiserslautern, Schoenstr. 10, 67659 Kaiserslautern

Tickets available at: www.eventim.de

USAFE Band
<http://www.usafeuropeband.af.mil/>
(English)

German Army Band Koblenz
<http://bit.ly/1ABJCEo> (German)

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Headquarters Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum - Visits and Activities

Prepared by Adjutant Edwin Tromp, photos by PAO JFCBS

Headquarters Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum major activities are depicted along five lines of effort within the Brunssum Campaign Plan. Each of these activities requires an ambitious level of attention and effort. Beside routine staff work we plan and conduct special activities in the form of visits and training, as well as, social events on a regular basis. We would like to provide you an overview of those activities.

March 2015



Higher Command and Staff Course of the German Armed Forces Command and Staff College Visit Joint Force Command Brunssum

19 March, the Higher Command and Staff Course of the German Command and General Staff College in Hamburg conducted their annual visit to the Joint Force Command in Brunssum. The purpose of the visit was to gain insight of the JFCBS role, responsibilities, planning processes and current challenges confronting NATO.



First Northern Headquarters' Conference Held at JFC Brunssum

18-19 March, Joint Force Command Brunssum had the honor to host the inaugural Northern Headquarters' Conference. The aim was to provide a forum for the 'northern family' of operational headquarters to: discuss issues of common interest; to promote cooperation with Northern Allies and Partners; to develop better networks; and to increase situational awareness. Together with JFC Brunssum senior staff, the Conference was attended by more than 27 flag officers (officers of General rank and equivalent from Naval, Air Force and civilian life).



Commander JFCBS Visits U.S. forces in Latvia

General Hans-Lothar Domröse, Commander JFC Brunssum, visited U.S. forces in Latvia 22 March to commemorate the opening of Operation Summer Shield-XII at Adazi military camp and the arrival of U.S. Army vehicles and soldiers to the Latvian capital of Riga as part of the Dragoon Ride road march.



Estonian Policy Delegation visits JFC Brunssum

23 March, a delegation from Estonia led by Mr Sven Sakkov (Undersecretary for Defence Policy) held talks with General Hans-Lothar Domrose, Commander JFC Brunssum and his team on 23 March to exchange views on the current security context and challenges facing NATO in the light of the Russian annexation of Crimea and aggression in Eastern Ukraine. Discussion focused on the detailed operational work to implement the decisions taken at the 2014 NATO Summit in Wales on the Readiness Action Plan. General Domrose set out the rapid progress made and welcomed Estonia's support for ongoing planning and implementation tasks.



Senior members of Polish Parliament visit JFC Brunssum

Senior Members of the Polish Parliament met with the JFCBS Command Group on 23 March. General Domröse briefed the Polish Parliamentarians on his Command Vision, specifically our role in the implementing the Alliance Assurance Measures. The Parliamentarians were keen to remark on the overall strength of the Alliance and cohesion and wanted to know how they, at the political level, could make the Alliance and JFCBS more productive in its mission of Collective Defense.



Exercise Trident Juncture 2015 - Main Planning Conference

Ulm (Germany) - From 25th to 27th March the Multinational Joint Headquarters Ulm (MN JHQ Ulm) in Germany hosted the Main Planning Conference (MPC) for NATO's upcoming exercise Trident Juncture 2015 (TRJE15), the largest NATO exercise in recent history. General Hans-Lothar Domröse addressed more than 800 participants from 37 nations in his welcome remarks, stressing the importance of TRJE15 as a clear demonstration the Alliance's commitment to deterrence and assurance. "We need to demonstrate that NATO really matters" he stated.



NATO Force Integration Units – Concept to Realisation

As part of the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) agreed to at the 2014 NATO Summit in Wales, the Military Committee recommended (November 2014) that NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs) be established on the territories of requesting Eastern European Allies. Their primary purpose being to facilitate the rapid deployment of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) and additional high readiness elements in order to enhance Alliance responsiveness.



Combined Joint Force Command Brunssum and Multinational Corps Northeast Team Visits Hungary

The Hungarian Defence Forces welcomed a team of 14 Subject Matter Experts from Joint Force Command Brunssum (JFCBS) and Multinational Corps Northeast (MNC-NE) as part of continued planning for a NATO Force Integration Unit (NFIU) to be located in Hungary.

The combined JFCBS and MNC-NE team, led by U.S. Navy Captain Elizabeth Jackson, engaged with Hungarian senior leaders and functional counterparts in Budapest at the Hungarian General Staff, in Székesfehérvár at the Hungarian Joint Forces Command, and at other key military locations including Combat Training Center Bakony, Pápa Air Base and Kecskemét Air Base.



JFC Brunssum Commander Visits Spanish Chief of Defence

Monday April 13, General Hans-Lothar Domröse (Commander JFC Brunssum) accompanied by Major General Hans van Griensven (Deputy Chief of Staff (Plans) JFC Brunssum) visited the Spanish Chief of Defence, Admiral Fernando Garcia Sánchez, in Madrid. The following day the generals went to Portugal to visit the Portuguese Chief of Defence, General Artur Neves Pina Monteiro, in Lisbon.



Netherlands' Defense College visits JFC Brunssum

17 April, JFC Brunssum hosted a party of approximately 50 Belgian, Dutch, German and Norwegian officers participating in a professional development course at the Netherlands' Defense College. Visitors received a series of briefings focusing on the Headquarters' role, responsibilities and planning processes with the objective of familiarizing them with operational challenges confronting the Alliance.

May 2015

The Dutch Armed Forces, forces with a mission.

Article by Colonel Wouter Sleurink, Dutch Senior National Representative JFC Brunssum



HNLMS Karel Doorman replenishing HNLMS Tromp - Photo courtesy NLD Ministry of Defence

The main tasks of the Dutch Armed Forces, as depicted in our constitution, are threefold:

- **Protection of own and allied territory, including the Netherlands Kingdom in the Caribbean;**
- **Advancement of international law and stability;**
- **Support to civil authorities by law enforcement, disaster relief and humanitarian aid, both national and international.**

The Dutch Military consists of around 42.400 military (9.300 Navy, 19.100 Army, 8.100 Air Force, 5.900 Marechaussee) and 17.000 civilians. At this very moment, around 1600 Dutch military men and women are conducting military operations around the globe. In recent years, while having big tasks in for example the ISAF mission, this figure was tripled. These operations are under a UN, EU or NATO flag, and total around 20. Of course, the actual number of personal involved changes daily, as the number of missions also fluctuates regularly. This article intends to give you an oversight of the missions in which the

Dutch military participates.

Before moving to the international missions, first some words about the national tasks. These have been growing in number and importance over recent decades. In 2014 some 2500 missions were undertaken under this umbrella. These include Coast Guard both in the Netherlands and the Caribbean, explosive ordnance at sea and on land, availability of a calamity hospital, Air Policing and Search and Rescue. The Royal Marechaussee, the Military Police, protects the Royal House, civil air traffic, provides boarder control, police duties on airfields, protection of transport of valuables by the Dutch National Bank and specialised support units of different kinds. Some 3000 personal are always available for general support to the national civil authorities, for example to secure an area in case of a calamity or to fight against rising water. These missions are highly appreciated by the Dutch population and add to the visibility of the military.

Somalia – Ocean Shield and Atalanta. The Dutch Royal Navy participates in anti-piracy operations in front of the coast of East-Africa, operations Atalanta (EU) and Ocean Shield (NATO). The navy vessels are intended to enhance security along

the sea lines of communications and discourage and disrupt piracy activities. To protect very vulnerable and large Dutch sea convoys against pirates, Defence also provides Vessel Protection Detachments civilian ships as they navigate the most dangerous piracy-affected waters.

Mali – Minusma. Operation Minusma (UN) tries to restore security and stability in Mali. This is currently the biggest Dutch participation in a mission, with, since April 2014, around 450 personal, 4 Apache and 3 Chinook helicopters. The main task for the Dutch contingent is collection and analysis of intelligence.

Baltic States – Baltic Air Policing. In an established rotation, the Dutch Air Force contributes 4 F-16s to the Baltic Air Policing mission (NATO).

Middle-East – Fight against ISIS. The Dutch Air Force participates with 6 (plus 2 reserve) F-16s and 250 personnel in the air attacks on ISIS forces in Iraq. Furthermore, up to 130 PAX are supporting Iraqi and Kurd forces with training and advice.

Furthermore, the Dutch Armed Forces participate in other operations in the Balkans, Africa and the Middle-East,



Dutch Army during exercise - Photo courtesy of NLD Ministry of Defence

sometimes with only a few persons. Also smaller but not less important tasks such as the following constitute normal daily business for Dutch military forces: the repatriation mission in East-Ukraine to recover as much as possible of the shot-down flight MH-17 (mostly MP); and Coast Guard activities, which operates under command of the Navy, conducting patrols in the Mediterranean to find boat-refugees from North-Africa trying to reach Europe. None of these missions is a Dutch only mission. As mentioned before, the Dutch tend to operate either under UN, EU or in a NATO context. Therefore it is essential to be prepared for multinational cooperation. This is an important criterion when purchasing equipment, but also in the training of personnel, in posting many people abroad for a posting and staying focussed on enhancing language skills. Although most foreigners think our language skills are good, we think we need to enhance our skills when we want to be effective in a multinational environment.

‘Train as you fight’ is a much heard mantra.

Therefore the Dutch military participates in multinational rotational forces like the NRF, the EU Battlegroup, the Standing Naval Forces, and participates in bigger multinational exercises, or even organises them like currently the Air Force exercise Frisian Flag from Leeuwarden Airbase. We also participate in many Centres of Excellence and are the home for the C2 CoE, the CIMIC CoE and the Cyber CoE. Cyber is one of the spear points anyhow, as proven by organising the international Global Cyber Conference recently in The Hague.

Another way of preparing yourself for multinational operations is through close cooperation already during peace-time. As this cooperation also seeks to find efficiency, save money, it is obvious that the first to look at are once direct neighbours. Successful cooperation in the First German-Netherlands Corps is a long lasting example: not only together with staff from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Turkey, the UK and the US in the barracks

in Munster, Germany, but also on mission to ISAF for several times. The Dutch Air-Mobile Brigade is since last year part of the German Quick Reaction Division.

There are several more examples of our effective cooperation and we are still building! One that really needs to be mentioned is the Admiralty BeNeLux, located in Den Helder in the Netherlands. Belgium and Dutch frigates stationed at Den Helder, all minesweepers in Zeebrugge, Belgium. One staff, mixed crews that, when needed but not reflecting the normal, can be divided into national crews again.

For different obvious reasons multinationality is the way to go. It brings political multinational authority, it allows the efforts of single nations to generate broader effect and, importantly, it generates an economy of scale i.e. reduces budget expenditure. The NATO Command Structure of course reflects multinationality in all its veins! And therefore the Netherlands is proud to be the home for one of its major headquarters!



2 Dutch F16's - Photo courtesy of NLD Ministry of Defence

NATO Standing Naval Forces visit Scotland for Exercise Joint Warrior

Story by HQ MARCOM Public Affairs Office

Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) and Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Groups ONE and TWO (SNMCMG1, SNMCMG2) ships recently visited Scotland for the UK-led Exercise JOINT WARRIOR 15-1.



Three of NATO's Standing Naval Forces in Scotland taking part in the UK-led exercise Joint Warrior. The exercise included 13,000 personnel from 13 countries - Photo courtesy of HQ MARCOM Public Affairs Office.

SNMG2, led by U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Brad Williamson, comprised of the flagship USS VICKSBURG, HMCS FREDERICTON, TCG GOKSU, and FGS SPESSART called into Faslane. Whilst SNMCMG2, led by Italian Navy Captain Giovanni Piegaja, comprised of the flagship ITS EURO, TCG ANAMUR, and FGS BAD BEVENSEN visited Glasgow. SNMCMG1, led by Dutch Navy Commander Peter Bergen-Henegouwen, comprised of flagship FGS DONAU, BNS LOBELIA, FGS AUERBACH, HMS PEMBROKE, ORP MEWA, HNLMS WILLEMSTAD, and HNOMS RAUMA also visited Glasgow.

HQ MARCOM Northwood  Northern Star 12

"This exercise was a unique opportunity for us to work with our Allied shipmates," said Lieutenant Commander Matthew Hamm, USS VICKSBURG's operations officer. "For most U.S. Sailors, our training and qualifications are normally achieved/maintained whilst working with other U.S. Navy ships; multinational exercises like this help our Sailors learn how to cooperate and excel with other navies in a challenging and multidimensional environment."

Exercise JOINT WARRIOR ran until 24 April. Three of NATO's Standing Naval Forces consisting of 14 ships joined more than 40 other warships and submarines

together with 70 aircraft to participate in the exercise. In total, around 13,000 personnel from 13 countries took part.

The exercise provided complex coordinated training at the joint level, increasing interoperability between Allied forces and providing valuable experience integrating land, air, and maritime forces. NATO's Standing Naval Forces tested their anti-air and anti-submarine warfare skillsets whilst, at the same time, conducted mine countermeasures training in advance of amphibious landings.



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Eleven Allies Test NATO 'Spearhead' Alert Procedures on EX NOBLE JUMP

Story by SHAPE Public Affairs Office

EINDHOVEN, The Netherlands - NATO assessed its alert procedures for the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) for the first time during Exercise NOBLE JUMP from 7-9 April 2015, involving over 1,500 personnel from 11 Allied nations. Germany, Poland, Norway, Denmark, Hungary, Lithuania, Croatia, Portugal, and Slovenia tested their Headquarters' response to alert procedures and high-readiness units from The Netherlands and Czech Republic physically deployed equipment and troops to airports and railheads.



Czech Soldiers from the 43rd Airborne Battalion, 2nd Company wait in line to load equipment in a shipping container during Exercise Noble Jump in Chrudim, Czech Republic, April 8, 2015. Exercise Noble Jump marks the first time that high-readiness units have physically tested their response to rapid 'orders to move' under the new VJTF framework. The training event marks a learning process that will allow NATO military staff to identify both successes and shortfalls as the Alliance continues to refine its high readiness capabilities. - Photo by Staff Sgt. Andrew Davis, USAF.

This activity represents an important milestone as NATO continues to respond to emerging security challenges. The exercise has its origins in last year's Wales Summit, where NATO leaders collectively agreed to establish the VJTF, or what some call the 'NATO Spearhead' force. These developments are part of wider enhancements to the NATO Response Force in order to address instability on NATO's southern and eastern flanks.

"NATO military planners have been working tirelessly to enhance NATO's Response Force and implement the Very

High Readiness Joint Task Force, and today our progress is manifested in the rapid deployments we see happening in locations across the Alliance," said General Philip Breedlove, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR). "These measures are defensive, but are a clear indication that our Alliance has the capability and will to respond to emerging security challenges on our southern and eastern flanks," he said.

For the last several months, NATO has been developing the concepts behind the VJTF and established an interim force early in 2015. Exercise NOBLE JUMP marks the first time that high-

readiness units have physically tested their response to rapid 'orders to move' under the new VJTF framework.

The training event marks a learning process that will allow NATO military staff to identify both successes and shortfalls as the Alliance continues to refine its high readiness capabilities.

Czech and Dutch High-Readiness Troops Put to the Test

In the afternoon of 7 April, the 11th Air Mobile Brigade in The Netherlands and the 4th Rapid Reaction Brigade in the

Czech Republic were given orders to rapidly prepare to deploy their troops and equipment.

"In the hours that ensued, Dutch and Czech formations recalled their military personnel to base, conducted hasty movement planning, briefed personnel, prepared and verified equipment, weapons, supplies, and vehicles," said Colonel Mariusz Lewicki, the head military planner for the VJTF at SHAPE. "The lead troops were able to move in under eight hours, with all elements moving in under 48 hours, so our initial impression is we are very pleased with the results," he added.

The Commander of the Dutch 11th Air Mobile Brigade, Brigadier-General Kees Matthijssen, also felt that Exercise NOBLE JUMP achieved its aims.

"So far we are satisfied, our men and women responded well to the alerting and we managed to send off the first troops as scheduled. We are sure that we will be able to meet our goals, which

were to move all troops and equipment within 48 hours," said Brigadier-General Matthijssen. "Of course, we have noted some things to improve during the exercise, but this will definitely lead to further refinement and improvements of our high readiness plans," he said.

A total of 900 German soldiers were also recalled to their units in Marienberg, Gotha, Idaroberstein and Bad Salzungen during Exercise NOBLE JUMP. These troops conducted similar planning and alert verifications in their respective garrisons.

The overall aim of Exercise NOBLE JUMP was to improve and refine alert and deployment procedures for the VJTF. In the coming weeks NATO military staff will conduct an analysis of the results from this exercise and Allied units will refine their tactical procedures. Lessons will be shared and NATO will continue to refine the overall alert and deployment process, and ensure it is integrated in overall plans for the NATO Response Force.

"Moving military units at short notice is

a highly complex process that requires careful planning and constant refinement and practice to maintain capability," said Colonel Lewicki. "We've had a very good start this week, but much work remains and we will continue exercising these concepts throughout 2015 and 2016," he said.

Increasingly complex exercises, trials, and evaluations will be conducted in order to develop, refine and implement the VJTF concept into the framework of the Readiness Action Plan and the NATO Response Force. Examples of future training activity include part two of Exercise NOBLE JUMP, 9-20 June 2015, where units assigned to the VJTF will deploy to the Zagan Military Training Area in Western Poland, as well as Exercise TRIDENT JUNCTURE 2015 in Italy, Spain and Portugal from 21 Oct – 6 Nov 2015.



Dutch Soldiers from the 11th Air Mobile Brigade in The Netherlands take part in Exercise Noble Jump on 9 April 2015 in Eindhoven, The Netherlands. Exercise Noble Jump marks the first time that high-readiness units have physically tested their response to rapid 'orders to move' under the new VJTF framework. - Photo courtesy of the Dutch Ministry of Defence

Exercise Red Flag

Story and photos by Chief Master Sgt. Michael Moeller

The NATO E-3A Component participated with significant success in Exercise Red Flag 15-2 from February 27 to March 17, 2015, at Nellis Air Force Base, Las Vegas Nevada, USA.



One of many US F-15's takes off from Nellis Air Force Base, Las Vegas Nevada, USA, taking part in Exercise Red Flag 2015, from February 27 to March 17 2015.

The Component deployed two aircraft and Component members from 11 Component nations including all personnel necessary to operate and support two aircraft in flying successful missions. The deployment was organized in combination with the Components exercise "Magic Wicking" followed by a real deployment to the southwestern United States.

In total, more than 2,500 participants and more than 100 aircraft from 13 different U.S. Air Force squadrons; C-130Js and F-16s from the Royal Norwegian Air Force; E-3 Sentry's of the US Air Force and E-3As from NATO were involved. The exercise provided the crews and pilots, in one of the air forces premier air-to air combat exercises, the opportunity to enhance their skills and experiences.

For the first time ever, crew members from Romania actively participated in a Red Flag

exercise.

Captain Bogdan Drelciuc, ROM SNR stated, "Eugene and I are the first Romanians ever actively participating in a Red Flag! It was really challenging but I think both of us managed to be at least at the level of expectations. Eugene was awarded as 'Superior Performer' and I received good feedback for my performance. In my opinion, during the entire exercise, I had never the feeling that we were representing any other flag than the NATO one and we did it well!"

The exercise is an advanced training program administered at Nellis AFB and on the Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR) by organizations assigned to the U.S. Air Force Warfare Center.

Red Flag is a realistic combat training exercise involving air-, space-, and cyber forces of the United States and its allies. It is hosted north of Las Vegas, at the U.S. Air Force's premier

military training area with more than 15,000 square miles of airspace and 2.9 million acres of land. With 1,900 possible targets, realistic threat systems and an opposing enemy force.

More than 100 aircraft took off from Nellis AFB and several other U.S. air bases to support and provide Red Flag participants with valuable training in planning and executing a wide-variety of combat missions.

Additionally, for the first time during a Red Flag exercise, hundreds of virtual participants in simulators at their home stations or in simulators, at the Distributed Mission Operations Center in New Mexico, participated in taking down enemy Forces by providing ground surveillance to support attack operations and targeting to delay, disrupt and ultimately destroy the opposition.

"During the actual flying, a rich cocktail of all the available capabilities was served in a compressed execution window, requiring



B-52 taking off

everyone's full attention and the professional dedication of our E-3A crewmembers paid off. At the completion of Red Flag 15-2, we succeeded to meet the ultimate objective of the mission commander, "to be awesome" said Major Kris Luyckx, Tactical Director.

The great success of flying all scheduled missions is a result of all participants as well as the great professionalism of the components logistics and maintenance team. This success would not have been possible to achieve without their contribution and dedication to the mission.

"We were told during our in-brief, that this training was 'second to none'. Red Flag 15-2 lived up to that claim. The schedule was demanding, the missions were challenging and the debriefings provided crews with honest feedback, that they were able to use

to improve their planning and performance in the next mission. The experience our crews gained here is invaluable," said Major Jeff Cranford, deployment commander.

This year also marks the 40th anniversary of Red Flag! In early 1975 it was proposed to develop an exercise that would pit student Forces against dedicated aggressor piloted Forces in a series of combat scenarios over the vast Nellis Range in Nevada. Final orders to conduct Red Flag were given in July 1975, and in December 1975, a squadron of F-4 Phantoms were the first aircraft arriving for this kind of exercise. Since then, Red Flag expanded in the following years. Simulated electronic threats like jammers, simulated surface-to-air missiles and anti-aircraft artillery guns got more and more involved. Attack packages became more complex and airframes from all services including 28

partner nations' units from around the world got involved and participated.

Red Flag allows participants to be trained on a myriad of aircraft at a very fast pace that they would not get at their home stations. Additionally the cyber and aviation areas are giving participants various opportunities to practice their skills.

Since 1975, Red Flag has provided training for more than 440,000 military personnel, including more than 145,000 aircrew members flying more than 385,000 sorties and logging more than 660,000 hours of flying time.



Two E-3A AWACS on their ramp at Nellis Air Force base.

SACEUR Discusses Co-operation and Readiness during Visit to the Netherlands

Story by SHAPE Public Affairs Office

NATO's current efforts to address two different forms of strategic competition - one from the East and one from the South - were a focus of discussions between General Philip Breedlove, Supreme Allied Commander Europe and General Tom Middendorp, the Chief of Defence Netherlands Armed Forces in The Hague, Netherlands, March 25 and 26, 2015.

During the visit, General Breedlove provided remarks to senior military and political leaders as well as strategists and media, followed by a question and answer session as part of the Future Force Conference 2015 hosted by General Middendorp at The National Military Museum in Soest, Netherlands. Main areas of discussion included the importance of intelligence sharing, the ongoing adaptation of the NATO Response Force in response to hybrid threats, and the importance of investing in the modernization of military forces.

"NATO nations are responding, nationally, multi-laterally, and collectively, to address the risk of Hybrid Warfare in its various forms. Implementing and operationalizing the Readiness Action Plan is fundamental to our security and addressing the evolving strategic security environment, as are the multiple lines of work NATO has initiated since the Wales Summit," said General Breedlove. "Combined, these Alliance actions will make us more prepared for Hybrid Warfare and more secure in this very challenging and dangerous 21st Century."

During the visit, SACEUR also discussed the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) and the significant role the Netherlands Armed Forces have in developing the VJTF test-bed, cyber defense strategies and the importance of using the budget wisely for future investments in military capability.

General Breedlove also thanked the Netherlands officials for their continued support to NATO operations.

"Your ongoing efforts in Afghanistan on RESOLUTE SUPPORT as well as other NATO operations and exercises reflect your strong commitment to our collective security," he said.



General Tom Middendorp, the Chief of Defence Netherlands Armed Forces, The King of the Netherlands, Willem-Alexander and General Philip Breedlove, Supreme Allied Commander Europe - Photo courtesy of the Dutch Ministry of Defence



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Netherlands US Military Community Pays Tribute to Volunteers

Story by Katrin Galeano

The US military community in the Netherlands recently honoured their volunteers. In this article Katrin Galeano – her husband, Major Rick Galeano, works at JFC Brunssum - would like to share a story of one particular volunteer - her daughter Anna.

Anna is what we lovingly call an Army Brat. She is ten years old and has moved six times. Her dad is her hero in combat boots. He has deployed multiple times during her life. Anna has been living in the Netherlands for the past two years. She has been attending the German section of the local International School where she learned how to read and write in German. She likes to mingle with students in the US section and acts as an international ambassador by helping US children who start in the German section.

You can sometimes find Anna at the US nurse's office escorting a German child who needs medical attention. She will readily assist with any translation needs here and also on the playground where sometimes misunderstandings, because of language barriers, can be quickly taken care of by accurate translation. Anna participates in extracurricular activities such as rock climbing and horseback riding, just like any other child. But Anna has another passion - she is a volunteer. This past year, she volunteered for several organizations.

Anna volunteered at the JFC Brunssum library during the summer. After completing training that required her to learn the library's Dewey Decimal system used to organize library collections, she was shelving books, maps and other media. Anna also volunteered for the Alpha Company, AFNORTH Battalion Soldier and Family Readiness Group. In addition, she spent hours making bracelets out of materials she purchased with the money she made by selling cherries she picked from our trees. She brought these bracelets to the local 4th



Anna received the nomination certificate for Youth Volunteer of the Year

of July celebration where many people donated to the SFRG fund because of these bracelets. She also helped bake treats that were sold at the event. In addition, she attended orientation meetings and helped with the set-up of the food tent as well as the sale of goods during the event.

In October last, Anna volunteered at the Trunk-or-Treat celebration at USAG Schinnen. There, she passed out candy to hundreds of visitors instead of filling her own candy basket. She also completed the regular training any adult should complete. Last, but not least, she volunteered at her school.

She was elected class president and is performing various duties associated with that position. Anna did all this last year when she was only nine years old. Yesterday, Anna received the golden President's Volunteer Service Award for having volunteered more than 100 hours this past year. She was also nominated as Youth Volunteer of the Year. Her story may inspire others to volunteer as well no matter what their age and background is.

AFNORTH - Cadet Corps

Written by Raymond A. Robidoux Jr., Colonel (R), USAF

Photographer: Cadet TSgt Jessica Gullledge



Cadet 2LT Kianni Martinez receives the Outstanding Performer Award from Maj (Ret) Don Bailey of the AFJROTC HQ Staff, Maxwell, Alabama. The AFNORTH JROTC unit was inspected by the HQ and received an "Exceeds Standards" in all graded categories. Col (R) Ray Robidoux and SMSgt (R) Dennis Parise expressed great praise for all the cadets as they worked very hard to prepare and excel in the inspection.

Our Cadet Corps just completed its HQ Compliance Inspection, and we were evaluated in 5 major areas: Cadet Operations, Instructor Performance, Logistics Management, Curriculum Prep & Delivery, and Financial Accountability. Each of these areas has sub-categories that drive to specific regulatory mandates.

In all 5 major areas we received "Exceeds Standards"; the highest possible grade. Needless to say, SMSgt (R) Parise and I are very proud of our entire Cadet Corps. The old axiom: Practice-Makes-Perfect is so true.

Many thanks for the graciousness of our teachers who gave up their academic time (with the cadets) to allow

preparation for a very complex briefing and demanding drill inspection. The cadets stepped up to their challenges with the confidence and poise that only comes from repetition and hard work. Maj (R) Don Bailey, the inspector, was also impressed with the school and very appreciative of the support he received.

Of special note: Cadet 2LT Kianni Martinez was recognized by our AFJROTC Director, Col Bobby Woods, as the NT-941 Outstanding Performer!

Kudos to:

1. Parents of the cadets who gave of their time supporting AFJROTC.
2. Admin & Staff for their support throughout the process.

3. Teachers for their academic time allotted to the cadets.

4. Stephanie Laird for breaking through bureaucratic hurdles to get our JROTC link on the school ePortal. Check it out!

5. The Maintenance Staff for getting our new AV stuff up & running.

6. Martin & Barbara in the cafeteria for their continued contributions to the Corps.

7. Cadets Molly Riebling and Kianni Martinez for their leadership and professionalism.

8. and to all of you who make AFNORTH International school a great place.

Brunssum International Art Event

May 30 and 31, 2015, the 5th iteration of the Brunssum International Art Event (BIAE) will take place. The BIAE is an annual event for all ages. In the exquisitely beautiful surroundings of the Schutterspark participants amuse the visitors with their show. In 2015 we want to pay more attention to the artists, craftsmen and music; and, for the first time, a historical village will be constructed. BIAE slowly begins to gain more recognition across the region. This is clear to see as steadily increasing numbers of artists and visitors make their way to the event each year.

For children there is plenty of entertainment and short workshops in which they can participate.

The event will take place at the Heidestraat 20 6443 VZ Brunssum.

Do you want to visit the BIAE?

We are a low-threshold event and charge no entrance fee. We hope that we can welcome you.

On behalf of the organization

Jos Conjour
Secretary
jos@biae.eu



THE XVII EDITION OF THE TRAIL "LXVII ROMAN MILES"

Story by Juan Carlos Antunez Moreno, Socio-Cultural Analyst, JFCBS OPS J2 IKAP Analysis Section

On 10 and 11 April 2015 I took part in the XVII Edition of the Trail "LXVII Roman Miles". This trail, which distance is approximately 101 kilometers, is organized in Merida, Spain.

'It always seems impossible until it's done.'
- Nelson Mandela

Mérida is the capital of the autonomous community of Extremadura. The Roman colony of Emerita Augusta (present day Mérida) was founded in 25 BC by Augustus, to resettle emeritus soldiers discharged from the Roman army from two veteran legions of the Cantabrian Wars: Legio V Alaudae and Legio X Gemina. The city was the capital of the Roman province of Lusitania. Today the Archaeological Ensemble of Mérida is one of the largest and most extensive archaeological sites in Spain and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1993.

I raised some money by collecting donations for walking 101 kilometers in this trail. Because the place where the event would take place and its relation with veterans soldiers, I decided to fundraise for the Association "Project to Help Paratroop Veterans" (Proyecto de Ayuda a Veteranos Paracaidistas, PROAVEPA). This association intend to help and provide aid to former members of the Spanish Paratroop Brigade who are suffering from traumatic physical and emotional wounds, or those who are living in a dramatic socio-economic situation.

During the trail I did what I thought I could not do: I walked a 101- kilometer trail. Now, I'm certainly not the first to walk a race like this — thousands of other stronger, tougher marchers have done it. I'm not even one of the faster ones to walk this kind of race (22 hours 09 minutes) — I was so slow I almost didn't make the official cutoff time (24 hours). So I don't take any special credit for walking the trail. If anything, most of the credit belongs to my friends, Luis Gonzalez, Isidro Lara, Eva Marquez y Diego Martin, who encouraged me to walk it and then played a huge role in getting me to the finish.

There's a lot to say about the race, which started at 9 p.m. in warm, raining conditions ... and continued for nearly 20 hours in beautiful weather up and down endless hills in the gorgeous area surrounding Merida. Seriously, it's extremely beautiful country and you should hike it if you're ever in the area. But instead of walking you through a boring recap of my race, I'll share some knowledge about Merida and Extremadura, the region I am originally from.



Part of the route - photo by Luis Gonzalez

Extremadura is an autonomous community of western Spain whose capital city is Mérida. Its component provinces are Cáceres and Badajoz. It is bordered by Portugal to the west. To the north it borders Castile and León; to the south, it borders Andalusia; and to the east, it borders Castile-La Mancha.

Extremadura is an important area for wildlife, particularly with the major reserve at Monfrague, which was designated a National Park in 2007, and the project of the International Tagus River Natural Park (Terreno Natural Río Tajo Internacional). It is also important to highlight the Cornalvo Nature Reserve. Roman remains, local biodiversity, Mediterranean vegetation... These are just some of the attractions offered by this park, where you can lose yourself in nature very close to Mérida.

Extremadura, Spain, is known for its different ways of preparing the Iberian pork and mutton. The main characteristics of the traditional Extremaduran cuisine are its simplicity, its lack of clutter and its low cost. It is also a cuisine reflecting a generous spirit, for many of its preparations

used to be cooked in large pots to share with visitors, friends and neighbors. The resulting dishes are eaten with local bread. The preferred spices in Extremaduran cuisine are pennyroyal, garlic, bay leaves and anise. Olive oil is used for frying and as an ingredient in many dishes.

Many legendary Spanish conquistadors hailed from Extremadura, including Vasco Núñez de Balboa the first European to lead an expedition to reach the Pacific from the New World, Hernando de Soto the first European to lead an expedition to the territory of the modern-day United States, and Hernán Cortés and Francisco Pizarro, who conquered the Aztec and Inca empires respectively.

Anyone who would like to know Spain must visit Extremadura. It is not possible to understand Spain without knowing the history of Extremadura. Thanks to its vibrant past, the impressive and lush countryside, an excellent gastronomy and especially its inhabitants, Extremadura has been transformed into a magical tourist attraction. Extremadura is the ideal spot for those who enjoy calm destinations.

Specialist Joshua Smith Awarded Alliance's Highest Honour – the NATO Meritorious Service Medal

Story by Paul Cunningham – NCI Agency sector Brunssum

Specialist Joshua Smith distinguished himself while performing preventive and corrective maintenance on deployable Satellite Based Transmission Systems while supporting NATO operations in Kosovo and NATO Communications and Information Agency supported locations.

His understanding and adherence with the CIS Sustainment Support Centre scheduled maintenance program enabled him to identify possible problem areas to implement the necessary actions prior to any critical failures.

His abilities as a technician supported corrective maintenance activities which involved the replacing of various Communications and Information System components to realign Radio Frequency and Satellite Communications. This enabled the operational theatre commander to transmit and receive mission critical information.

His detailed inspections and understanding of lifecycle management revealed a vulnerability in the Radio Frequency High Power Amplifier, thus mitigating any system failure.

Additionally, Specialist Smith in close coordination with the Radio Frequency and SATCOM Project Manager assisted in the development, redesign, installation, and new configuration of the Radio Frequency Power Cabinet.

These achievements reflect great credit upon himself, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the NATO Communications and Information Agency, and his National Delegation.



Specialist Joshua Smith receives the NATO Meritorious Service Medal from Mr. Koen Gijsbers, General Manager

MGEN (Rtd.) Koen Gijsbers, General Manager

Story by Paul Cunningham

On 1 July 2012, MGEN (Rtd.) Mr Koen Gijsbers became the first General Manager of the newly established NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCI Agency).

As General Manager of the NCI Agency, Mr Gijsbers brings over 35 years of service, gained from various military command appointments, as well as his position as Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the Netherlands Ministry of Defence, and Assistant Chief of Staff for NATO's Allied Command.

Before heading up the NCI Agency, Mr. Gijsbers was appointed the Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the Netherlands Ministry of Defence, where his main focus was the rationalization of all IT services (i.e. operational, personnel, logistic, financial). During his service, he was a member of the National Cyber Board, and the National CIO Board, where he was responsible for the information security policy for the entire Dutch government.

In 2006, he was appointed Assistant Chief of Staff (ACOS) for Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence (C4I) of NATO's Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, VA, USA. During his post as ACOS, Mr Gijsbers lead NATO's network centric innovation. He also guided and oversaw NATO's Co-operative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (COE) in Estonia, and the Command and Control COE in the Netherlands.

Throughout his career, Mr Gijsbers has assumed command over several military units. In 1999, after commanding 11 Combat Engineer Battalion for 2.5 years, Mr Gijsbers was promoted to Colonel and deployed to Kosovo as commander of a regimental task force. The task force – consisting of infantry, engineers and logistical units – provided security and humanitarian aid to the suffering



Major General Mr. Koen Gijsbers, General Manager NCI Agency

local population. Subsequently, he was appointed the Chief of Operations and Plans for the Netherlands Army Training and Doctrine Command, and the Chief of the General Policy Department.

In 2003, he took command of 11 Air Manoeuvre Brigade (Air Assault) consisting of 60 assault and transport helicopters; infantry; and supporting troops. Under his command, units participating in the NATO Response Force were deployed to Iraq. In addition, he prepared units for deployment to Afghanistan (ISAF), Congo and European Union Battle Group.

Mr Gijsbers (1958) attended the Royal Military Academy in 1976. In 1980 he was commissioned into the Corps of Engineers. He initially commanded a combat engineer platoon and then a field engineer company. He was assigned as a project manager at the Netherlands Infrastructure Directorate, before attending the General Staff Officers Course. As Major and Lieutenant

Colonel, he was assigned to the Army Staff at several positions in the policy and plans department, and instructed strategy and joint operational warfare at the Netherlands Defence College.

MGEN (Rtd.) Gijsbers holds a Master's degree in Military Art and Science of the US Army Command and General Staff College (Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas).

In 2001, MGEN Gijsbers was knighted in the Order of Orange Nassau (with Swords), awarded by the former Queen of the Netherlands, Her Majesty Queen Beatrix. While attending the Royal Military Academy, Mr Gijsbers was a distinguished athlete, and competed in the 400m and 800m sprint. In 1980, he attended the Olympics in Moscow. Mr Gijsbers still holds the Dutch Record for the 4*400m relay.

MGEN (Rtd.) Gijsbers is married to Rixt A. Meines.

Inauguration ceremony of the German Office of Defence Administration

Story by Anke Gieseler-Jabczynski, Head of German Office of Defence Administration.

The German Office of Defence Administration is responsible for the administrative and economic support of all German soldiers in the Netherlands. It also leads the German kindergarten in the AFNORTH International School (AIS) and supports the German section of the AIS. For the implementation of these tasks 34 employees are available.

On 1 June 1963 the German Office of Defence Administration was established in Budel. After the site was abandoned for military use, the German Office of Defence Administration was moved from Budel to Brunssum with effect from 01 January 2006.

Unfortunately there was not enough office space available at JFC HQ Brunssum for the entire staff so a location was found outside of the Headquarters in the Officecenter Chevremont, St. Pieterstraat 143, 6443 in Kerkrade.

Through intensive contact with the Base Support Group Headquarters Brunssum in 2013 adequate office space for the accommodation of the German Office of Defence Administration was identified. After obtaining all permits the move was planned and implemented in close coordination with all concerned in the following year. On 05 November 2014 all employees moved into their new offices based in Brunssum.

On 26 March 2015 the inauguration ceremony of the German Office of Defence Administration took place in Brunssum. The President of the Bundesamt für Infrastruktur, Umweltschutz und Dienstleistungen der Bundeswehr, Federal Office of Bundeswehr Infrastructure, Environmental Protection and Services, Mr. Matthias Leckel, welcomed numerous guests from the Netherlands and the German Armed Forces community together with the head of the German Office of Defence Administration, ROAR'in Anke Gieseler-Jabczynski.

Mrs. Gieseler-Jabczynski thanked all the staff and supporters of the move, especially the Rijksvastgoedbedrijf, the



Colonel Klaus Bücklein, head of German Delegation in Brunssum, Anke Gieseler-Jabczynski, Head of German Office of Defence Administration and Mr. Matthias Leckel, President of the federal Office of Bundeswehr Infrastructure, Environmental Protection and Services.

Dutch military engineering administration. Colonel Bücklein, the head of the German Delegation in Brunssum expressed his great joy about the administration and military now moving even closer together, so that the daily interaction will lead to even faster results.

In excited conversations at the small opening ceremony the intensive cooperation was sealed.

The German Office of Defence Administration has arrived in Brunssum.

Staff Sergeant (Polish army) Piotr (Peter) Bartniak

Country: Poland
Capital: Warsaw
Location: Central Europe
Land Boundaries: 3.582 km
Coastline: 770 km
Population: 38.483.957
 (2014 Estimate)
Area: Total 312.679 km²

Location:

Poland, officially the Republic of Poland is a country in Central Europe bordered by Germany to the west; the Czech Republic and Slovakia to the south; Ukraine and Belarus to the east; and the Baltic Sea, Kaliningrad Oblast (a Russian exclave) and Lithuania to the north.

Climate:

Poland's long-term and short-term weather patterns are made transitional and variable by the collision of diverse air masses above the country's surface. Maritime air moves across Western Europe, Arctic air sweeps down from the North Atlantic Ocean, and subtropical air arrives from the South Atlantic Ocean. Although the Arctic air dominates for much of the year, its conjunction with warmer currents generally moderates temperatures and generates considerable precipitation, clouds, and fog. When the moderating influences are lacking, winter temperatures in mountain valleys may drop to a minimum of -20 °C (-4 °F).

Economy:

GDP : \$894.6 billion
 GDP per Capita : \$23,649
 GDP per sector : agriculture: 3.5%;
 industry: 34.2%;
 services: 62.3% (2012)

Budget:

Revenues : \$89.47 billion (2012 est.)
 Expenses : \$99.54 billion (2012 est.)
 Currency : Zloty

Main Industries: machine building, iron and steel, mining coal, chemicals, ship building, food processing, glass

Exports:

€152.78 billion (2013)
 Export goods: machinery and transport equipment 37.8%, intermediate manufactured goods 23.7%, miscellaneous manufactured articles 17.1%, food and live animals 7.6% (2011)

Main Export partners: Germany 26.0%, United Kingdom 7.0%, Czech Republic 6.5%, France 6.0%, Russia 5.2%, Italy 5.0%, Netherlands 4.6% (2012 est.)

Imports:

€155.09 billion (2013)
 Import goods: machinery and transport equipment 38.8%, intermediate manufactured goods 21.0%, chemicals 15.0%, minerals, fuels, lubricants and related materials 12.6%, miscellaneous manufactured articles 9.0% (2011)

Main Import partners: Germany 27.3%, Russia 12.2%, Netherlands 5.9%, China 5.4%, Italy 5.2%, Czech Republic 4.3%, France 4.2% (2012 est.)



When did you arrive in the Netherlands and which position have you taken?

I arrived in the Netherlands in July 2012 and filled the NATO Secret Registry Head post in the Base Support Group. Currently I am the Database Manager in J7 TREX-DRT section, but I am probably more known as the JFC Brunssum POC for NATO School Oberammergau.

Tell us about your military career.

I joined the Polish Artillery NCO Academy in October 1999. Promoted to my first NCO rank in 2000 I was then assigned to the 25th Air Cavalry Brigade. During my 12 years of duty in this elite Polish Brigade I climbed the ladder of my NCO career-from team to deputy platoon leader and, finally, to Anti-Tank Guided Missiles - battalion instructor. Thanks to the Polish Military Language Education System I was able to attend a few courses and significantly increased my language skills. However, the first serious challenge came with the number of US Army training serials: Warrior Leader Course, BNCOC, SLC, Battle Staff Training, C-IED Master Trainer and Combat Life Saver. Each training was an invaluable experience for me. This knowledge has helped me to communicate effectively with Allied Forces during mission execution in Iraq and Afghanistan. Currently in J7, I have the pleasure to work with a group of fantastic people from different countries. The professional knowledge I have gained from the most experienced officers is exceptional and certainly will be fruitful throughout my future military career.

For over two years I was part of the JFC Brunssum Joint Mobile Training Team (JMTT). The JMTT visits PfP Countries (such as Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan etc.) to demonstrate how NCOs from NATO member countries train and work in their respective militaries and within the Alliance. They also assist in the transformation and professionalization of host nation NCO systems.

What are your hobbies?

I am a freak for fine scale modelling. A few years ago I built a lot of flying models (helicopters and planes). Currently I am focused on Tanks from World War II. Construction of each tank is not simply the gluing together of hundreds of parts but, usually, it requires some historical research to reproduce the finest details and colours of the tank.

What are your future plans?

Once I finish my three years tour in Brunssum, in August 2015, I would like to continue my military career in one of the NATO Units in Poland. Of course I am looking forward to come back to the Netherlands one day. I have had a wonderful time here and met a lot of kind people. This is definitely great place to live.



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WHEN YOU PLAY, WE WORK HARDER



08 MAY 2015 FRI

Alliance Players Spring
Production Presents:

ALADDIN

-- min

1900



22 MAY 2015 FRI

HOT PURSUIT

Reese Witherspoon
Sofia Vergara

-- min

1900



09 MAY 2015 SAT

Alliance Players Spring
Production Presents:

ALADDIN

-- min

1900



23 MAY 2015 SAT

TOMORROWLAND

George Clooney
Hugh Laurie

-- min

1600



10 MAY 2015 SUN

Alliance Players Spring
Production Presents:

ALADDIN

-- min

1400



23 MAY 2015 SAT

THE GUNMAN

Sean Penn
Jasmine Trinca

115 min

1900



15 MAY 2015 FRI

MAD MAX: FURY ROAD

Tom Hardy
Charlize Theron

-- min

1900



29 MAY 2015 FRI

ALOHA

Bradley Cooper
Emma Stone

-- min

1900



16 MAY 2015 SAT

THE SECOND BEST EXOTIC
MARIGOLD HOTEL

Judi Dench
Maggie Smith
Richard Gere

122 min

1600



30 MAY 2015 SAT

TOMORROWLAND

George Clooney
Hugh Laurie

-- min

1600



16 MAY 2015 SAT

THE AVENGERS:
AGE OF ULTRON

Robert Downey Jr
Chris Evans

159 min

1900



30 MAY 2015 SAT

SAN ANDREAS

Dwayne Johnson
Carla Gugino

-- min

1900

Did you know?

The Tapijn Casern

A momentous former military complex in Maastricht

Composed by Ed Frieser, Photo's by Ed Frieser

Maastricht, the Province of Limburg and local entrepreneurs have started the transition of the former Tapijn Casern in Maastricht, once a NATO / JFC Brunssum Caserne

Five years ago Col Francis Caponio, Cdr Headquarters Support Group JFC HQ Brunssum, signed the documents on behalf of NATO to officially hand over the Tapijn Casern to Col G.C.A. van Langen, Director DVD South (District South of the Dutch Engineers). On 24 June 2010 the 1st NATO Signal Battalion (1NSB) said farewell to the Tapijn Casern. On Friday 1 October 2010 the JFC Brunssum and NATO flag were lowered and Lieutenant Colonel Coberg, Commander 1st NATO Signal Battalion, handed over the flag to the Mayor of Maastricht. Subsequently, led by the last Commander of the Tapijn Casern Major Zeller, the buildings and terrain were vacated and the last military left the casern. A historic moment that marked the end of over 40 years of NATO presence in Maastricht. But also marked the end of the important military history of this complex after 94 years, and more than 443 years having served as military stronghold.

History and Architecture

The Tapijn Casern was built between 1916 and 1919 at the corner of the St Hubertuslaan and the Prins-Bisschopsingel in the Jeker district and the Jeker Valley. An area known as 'de Kommen', which served as a wet defense line of Maastricht's fortification system along the south side of Maastricht since the seventeenth century until 1876. In 1934 the casern was named after Sebastiaan Tapijn, who in 1579 heroically yet unsuccessfully sought to defend Maastricht against the Spanish besiegers and who also died in that effort. In 1864 this area was made available to the Dutch Cavalry. The casern design was



In the back a characteristic momentous building. At the front the Grave Monument of Lt General Baron Bernardus Johannes Cornelis Dibbets, Commander of Maastricht in 1831. His monument was a gift of King Willem I, that was relocated to the Tapijn Casern in 1927. His remains were not found and could not be relocated. The monument is thus a cenotaph: Grave without remains.

based on a so-called 'Pavilion System', where buildings with different purposes were spread over a larger area. The Tapijn Casern initially included three pavilions. But also a gym and fencing building, a swimming pool, a kitchen facility, a drill building, a dining hall, an army depot, two sanitary buildings, a stable, a garage, a guard building, an engineering corps building and two double homes. About one year after the base's completion, a sickbay was added. In 1953 and 1955 two more buildings were erected: a dining hall and a building housing instruction rooms, sleeping quarters and an officers' mess.

From 1967, various NATO departments used this army base, including AFCENT, AFNORTH and JFC Brunssum. More buildings were added in the course of the 1980s, including a bunker building. Opposite the barracks and main building a sports complex could be reached via an underground passageway underneath the Prins Bisschopsingel. This road splits the casern into two parts.

Use

The Tapijn Casern was used as training centre for the 13th Infantry Regiment between 1919 and 1940. It became a German army camp from 1940-1944. Following WWII it was used as training centre for the troops sent to former Dutch-Indies (1945-1950). Then the casern housed the Mortar Regiment Menno van Coehoorn (1950-1953), and Infantry Regiment Chassé (1953-1967). Finally in 1967 the Tapijn Casern was made available to NATO when former HQ AFCENT was forced to leave Fontainebleau, France. The Tapijn Caserne became the Annex to the three subsequent NATO Headquarters, AFCENT (1967-2000), AFNORTH (2000-2004), and JFC Brunssum (2004-2010). It provided office space and facilities to the staff and its NATO Communication Assets. However with the reorganisation of NATO's Command structure in 2000 and 2004, an end came to the presence of NATO in Maastricht. Also the Joint Operations



The Tapijn Casern has become a public place. The former garage building is adapted into a building for special craftsmen. It is now called "Het Werkgebouw"



This building near the main entrance, provided office space for the Commander Tapijn Casern. The last Commander was Major Zeller who vacated the Tapijn Casern with the last troops on 1 October 2010.

Centre “de Cannerberg”, once the static war headquarters for 2ATAF (Second Allied Tactical Air Force) and NORTHAG (Northern Army Group), was returned to the Dutch Authorities in 2012. For a visual impression of the Tapijn Caserne history use this link to a Youtube video: <https://youtu.be/Uq325eWcpDk>

Concept Vision

The local authorities plan to keep some of the most characteristic buildings in its original state. The main buildings are therefore put on the national monuments list. Plans were described in the concept vision Transformation Tapijnkasernen 2014 – 2023. Today Maastricht University, the Province of Limburg and the City of Maastricht own the Tapijn Casern per 1 October 2013. While the University and the Province co-own the buildings, the city owns the property's vacant land. The

grounds of the former Tapijn Casern were made accessible to the public and added to the adjacent city park. The casern's less valuable buildings will be demolished and replaced by new buildings. The former monumental buildings will eventually be used for teaching, research and interrelated functions like student housing. New cycle- and walkways will create a good linkage between the Tapijn complex and the adjacent City Park.

New initiatives

The Tapijn has been officially opened on 13 September 2014. Several new initiatives have been put in place. Maastricht University has just established 200 temporary study bays for their students in barrack V and two buildings are meanwhile taken into use for education and research activities. Newly established small businesses have found office space.

One building houses a creative- and art gallery. The municipality has transformed building M into a facility for amateur art in Maastricht. This summer an art, food and music Supermarket takes place every last Sunday of the month from 12.00 – 18.00 hrs. In 2014 also a series of concerts under the name Tout Maastricht were started in building M. Furthermore a biological vegetable city garden has been created. On the fertile soil of the Jeker river delicious vegetables, herbs and eatable flowers are growing and can be tasted at the Tapijn City Garden. And last but not least a new restaurant “Tapijn Brasserie” has recently been opened. It has been furnished in such a way that the original ambiance was kept. The Tapijn Brasserie is open 7 days a week from 11.00 – 23.00 hrs.

In Conclusion

As Maastricht Alderman Gerdo van Grootheest stated: “ With the opening of a large part of the Tapijn area a long and standing wish of the municipality has become reality. We have chosen to complete this project as soon as possible...”. The project should therefore be completed by 2023. See and experience how this historic place has been given a new purpose.

Sources:

Website: www.jfcbnato.int
Northern Star May 2008
Maastrichts Silhouet: De Tapijnkasernen
Visie Transformatie Tapijnkasernen 2014-2023 (Gemeente Maastricht)
Maastricht University,
kunstergoedcommissie
Tout Maastricht
1 Limburg Nieuws
Rijksmonumenten.nl
ZuidLimburg.nl
Mestreechtersterke.nl



One of the buildings has already been transformed into a “Brasserie” where one can drink a beer and food items are served.



King Willem I decided by official decree on 24 September 1934 that the Maastricht casern should be named the Tapijn Casern.



Wellness resort & Hampshire Hotel Fitland XL Sittard

The luxurious beauty and wellness resort Fitland XL Sittard has everything needed to provide a wonderful day of relaxation. Enjoy the many wellness facilities, from saunas and steam cabins to the indoor/outdoor swimming pool, whirlpool, herb temple, cooling zones, plunge pool and foot bath. You can also reserve a professional treatment or massage by the specialists of Sanavisie Beauty. Of course there is also a wellness restaurant. This restaurant has a fantastic view, the very reason it's called Panorama restaurant. Open all day for your culinary delight.

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Reservations:

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F: +31 (0)43 328 25 26
E: wellnesssittard@fitland.nl

Pricing

	Normal	NATO
Day ticket	€ 31,50	€ 18,95
Evening entrance	€ 19,95	€ 18,95
Weekends entrance	€ 31,50	€ 24,50

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Opening hours:

Sunday till Thursday	13:30 / 22:30
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Extra information:

on Tuesday swimwear is allowed

Anyone who loves wellness and sports will love the Hampshire Hotel - Fitland Sittard, which is located right next to the Fortuna Sittard football stadium. The sports-related facilities are exceptionally impressive. For instance: a Topsports center, climbing wall, fitness area and bowling center. There's a luxurious beauty and wellness resort on the third floor of the hotel: Wellness Sittard.

NATO Corporate price 2015 (Normally €99):

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Conditions

- Prices include VAT and however exclusive tourist tax € 1,80 p.p.p.n.
- Prices are available Last Room Availability
- Parking € 4,50 p.c.p.n.
- Cancellation Policies: Reservation should be canceled 24 hours in advance before the day of the arrival day.
- If a 2nd person is staying in the room Hampshire hotel Fitland Sittard charge the breakfast of € 14.50 p.p. and tourist tax € 1,80 p.p.
- For NATO ID card holders only

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We have 3 x 2 tickets for Wellness Fitland XL Sittard

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Quiz Question: How many wellness resorts has Fitland in The Netherlands?

Fill in this coupon and send it to PAO, or send an e-mail to pao@jfcbs.nato.int, before 23 May 15.

For NATO ID card holders only
The winners will be announced in the next edition of the Northern Star.





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- In order to win the tickets, please answer the following question:
- **Quiz Question: How many wellness resorts has Fitland in The Netherlands?**
Fill in this coupon and send it to PAO, or send an e-mail to pao@jfcbs.nato.int, before 23 May 2015
- For NATO ID card holders only
- The winners will be announced in the next edition of the Northern Star

Answer:

Division:

Full name:

Extension:



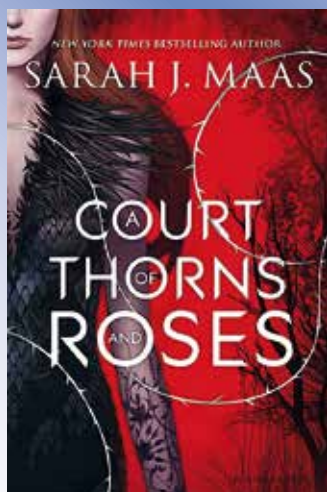
Winners Alfa Brewery

The Northern Star congratulates the lucky winners of the last contest.

Tickets won by:

Danny Kisters	JFCBS J1
Wilbert Pacheco	JFCBS BSG
Ian Mullaney	JFCBS HQIM

Book Review



A Court of Thorns and Roses

By Sarah J. Maas

A thrilling, seductive new series from New York Times bestselling author Sarah J. Maas, blending Beauty and the Beast with faerie lore.

When nineteen-year-old huntress Feyre kills a wolf in the woods, a beast-like creature arrives to demand retribution for it. Dragged to a treacherous magical land she only knows about from legends, Feyre discovers that her captor is not an animal, but Tamlin—one of the lethal, immortal faeries who once ruled their world.

As she dwells on his estate, her feelings for Tamlin transform from icy hostility into a fiery passion that burns through every lie and warning she's been told about the beautiful, dangerous world of the Fae. But an

ancient, wicked shadow grows over the faerie lands, and Feyre must find a way to stop it ... or doom Tamlin—and his world—forever.

Perfect for fans of Kristin Cashore and George R. R. Martin, this first book in a sexy and action-packed new series is impossible to put down!



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¹ the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

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