



**Exercise Steadfast Jazz 2013
– JFC Brunssum Is Ready to
Assume Command of NRF**

- The Big Picture – Interview with Commander JFC Brunssum
- Did You Know - Limburg a Dutch Province since 1839
- A Civilian Operational Analyst's Deployment to Afghanistan
- Circle 100 – Bokrijk Open-Air Museum





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About the Cover



Over 100 Distinguished Visitors travelled to Latvia, 6 Nov, to observe Exercise Steadfast Jazz 2013. The Alliance was represented by the NATO Secretary General Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen.
Photo by Emily Langer

Command Group Corner

Sometimes milestones emerge that cause you to stop what you are doing, reach for a cup of coffee, sit down, and take a little time to consider what is happening around you. Such milestones prompt you to consider what has been achieved, lessons that have been learned, and identify what needs to be done next if your vision is to become a reality. Writing this short article prompted me to do just that as it barely seems possible, on 14 December, I will have been your Commander for an entire year.

Last month, in Riga, at the conclusion of Exercise Steadfast Jazz, the Political Advisor quoted that great British statesman, Winston Churchill: "Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning." This captures our situation, and my thinking, perfectly.

You see, at Joint Force Command Brunssum, we are embarked upon an exciting journey. That journey started just over a year ago with the introduction of Allied Command Operations' new command structure (01 December 2013). Implementation led, this year, to HQs at Heidelberg and Madrid closing, LANDCOM standing up at Izmir, and Lisbon shifting to a new role. Of course some of this is prompted by the economic climate but out of diversity opportunities arise – in this case the opportunity for ACO to adopt an increasingly deployable posture within a leaner, more effective, construct.

Having just achieved Initial Operating Capability and NATO Response Force 2014 certification JFC Brunssum is well on-track to the attainment of Full Operating Capability, following Exercise Trident Juncture, in 2015.

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General Hans-Lothar Domröse, Commander Joint Force Command Brunssum

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But, again, this will be just one more single milestone on the way towards the attainment of a military structure for 2020 and beyond - a force structure that will be heavily integrated with partners; where NATO exercises are viewed as the training platform of choice; where outstanding deployability challenges (primarily computer information systems and real life support) have been resolved; where the NRF will fully embrace the capabilities of 'modern warfare'; and where the Alliance's relevance will, yet again, be underscored by a NATO Strategic Concept that counters evolving security threats.

The bottom line is that the Alliance is continually changing but the pace of change is increasing. Here, at Brunssum, it has given me great pleasure to see you embrace that change and concentrate on the opportunities that appear rather than the challenges in your path - keep it up.

2014 will not see my priorities change. In order of importance they will remain support to ISAF (and its follow-on mission - Resolute Support), the NRF

and Regional Focus. You can anticipate challenges with our Afghanistan mission as ISAF comes to an end but try to identify where difficulties might arise, and develop mitigation plans as you go; the unexpected will take a little longer to resolve but I am confident that you will resolve whatever emerges.

Our Standby NRF task for 2014 is something we must take seriously. Every day the news is full of security and humanitarian crises; an NRF mission is a real possibility. Together with SHAPE we will monitor areas where it is possible an NRF mission might be activated so that we are not caught by surprise. But each of you must ensure you remain fully qualified for deployment as that is a personal responsibility.

On my side, I will ensure a sustainment exercise is added to the 2014 training programme to ensure perishable skills are maintained. You can expect to find Exercise Trident Joust appear in your 2014 diaries and the introduction of monthly Table Top exercises, in which I will engage and help strengthen professional development.

In taking forward Regional Focus I, and other members of the Command Group,

have been very active in visiting northern European CHODs, national operational centres, and so forth, over the past year. We are fast establishing the network we need with member and partner nations at the operational level, so that we can work together, as necessary. And this very much bolsters activities designed to operationalise the Connected Forces Initiative. But, having established the necessary links, I look to you, my staff, to assist in their sustainment.

To conclude, a busy year embracing a huge staff rotation is fast coming to an end. Our exercise in Riga was highly successful but noticeably of great help, especially in team building. Enjoy the Christmas break with your families but also spare a thought for colleagues who are deployed at this precious time and, where you can, support their loved ones. Return to work in January refreshed and ready to confront the opportunities that arise. Wherever possible work in the spirit of Mission Command.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

ANSF Destroy 14 IEDs in Kandahar

Story and photo by Staff Sgt Brandon McIntosh, Combined JSOTF Afghanistan

Afghan National Security Forces found and destroyed 14 roadside bombs during a two-day clearing operation that concluded, Nov. 11 in Kandahar province's Shah Wali Kot district.

Afghan National Army Special Forces, Commandos of the 3rd Special Operations Kandak, and local police targeted Taliban strongholds and cache sites along the Arghandab River Valley in an area known locally as "The Jungle."

Insurgents use the area to conduct attacks against security forces throughout northern Kandahar, said Maj. Abdul Manan, 3rd SOK commander. Afghan Commandos train hard to eliminate the insurgent threat throughout the district, he added.

The operation began early Nov. 10 in the district's Toombay and Khawajazai villages. Due to their proximity to The Jungle, residents there often receive the worst of Taliban harassment.

During the operation, Afghan Special Forces and Commandos maneuvered their vehicles to shield civilians working in a nearby pomegranate field from insurgent attacks.

"The Taliban will not hesitate to kill some man, woman or child," explained an ANASF team leader. "And extra care has to



An Afghan National Army commando takes cover during a firefight against Taliban while a fellow commando fires back with machine gun fire near the Arghandab River Valley in Shah Wali Kot district, Kandahar province, Afghanistan.

be taken to protect innocent lives." That is why ANSF work with local leaders to conduct these and similar operations to drive the Taliban out of the villages, said Manan.

"My wish is to bring peace and security to Shah Wali Kot and make it a better place for its citizens," said district police

Chief Bacha Khan, who is always eager to support operations in the district.

"I would like to see a representative from every tribe and every family take an active part," he said, explaining the importance of forces like the Commandos and Afghan Local Police.

US Air Force Units Combine to Create 48th AEG in Iceland

Story by Airman 1st Class Dana J. Butler, 48th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Keflavik, Iceland - Members of the 48th Air Expeditionary Group arrive at Keflavik International Airport, Iceland, Nov. 4, 2013, to conduct air surveillance and policing missions.



Senior Airman Kyle Eisler, 493rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron crew chief, marshals an F-15C Eagle piloted by Lt. Col. Mark Sadler, 493rd EFS commander, Keflavik International Airport, Iceland, Nov. 4, 2013, to conduct air surveillance and policing missions.

The group, which is made up of U.S. Air Force and other North Atlantic Treaty Organization personnel, is a specialized team prepared to ensure Iceland's air sovereignty. Air policing encompasses radar surveillance and identification of objects in the airspace. "We are committed to supporting NATO by conducting air surveillance and policing missions to contribute to its collective defense," said Lt. Col. Lendy Renegar, 48th AEG commander.

More than 200 Airmen are deployed from around the globe to make up the 48th AEG.

Airmen from Royal Air Force Lakenheath, RAF Mildenhall, Spangdahlem Air Base, Ramstein AB, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Tinker AFB and Robins AFB have come together to police the skies of Iceland in support of the U.S.-Iceland bilateral Defense Agreement of 1951.

Required fighter aircraft such as the F-15C may be employed to assist in identification, interception and escort of

aircraft during this rotation and are on 24-hour alert.

During the 24-hour alert period, aircrew will scramble to get F-15C's up in the air in a matter of minutes to intercept unauthorized aircraft flying through Iceland's sovereign air space. The KC-135's from RAF Mildenhall provide tanker support to extend the effective range of fighter aircraft; the C-130J from Ramstein AB works closely with the Icelandic Coast Guard to deliver combat search and rescue support with a Guardian Angel team on board.

"The Icelandic Coast Guard is one of the best rescue organizations in the world, and with our help, we provide further long range detection capability," said Renegar. "We can extend the range of the fighters with the KC-135 refueling aircraft and also provide an airborne search and rescue team that can go out with us. We have doubled the range of the rescue capability with those two things."

Members of the Icelandic Coast Guard

met with the 48th AEG on Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2013 to discuss mission goals and plans.

"On behalf of the Icelandic Coast Guard and the government of Iceland we are happy to host the U.S. Air Force, our friends and neighbors of NATO," said Jon Gudnason, Icelandic Coast Guard manager of operations at Keflavik Air Base. "Our goal is a successful completion of this mission with our NATO partners."

Renegar explained the importance of working together in financially restraining times.

"In fiscal times such as these, it helps when we have all NATO forces working together. Our top priorities are to build relationships, trust, confidence and experience while safely and successfully completing the mission," said Renegar.

Headquarters Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum - Visits and Activities

Prepared by MSgt Jan Hecht, 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 by taking a quick look at a few selected events.

October 2013



17 October, Naples / Brunssum Staff Talks

The first of many Bi-JFC staff talks (Naples/Brunssum) was conducted 17 Oct as the operational level of the ACO military structure seeks to share lessons, experiences

and ideas as NATO begins to shift from a 'deployed' to 'ready' posture.



11 November, General Domröse Participates in Latvian Army Day

In 1919 the Russian Army was driven from Riga during the Latvian War of Independence. Each year, on Lāčplēšis Day, Latvian Freedom Fighters are honored. The day is named after the Latvian epic hero

Lāčplēšis who reputedly had the strength of a bear. He has become a symbol of heroism and devotion to the state. The Remembrance Day starts with the laying of flowers at Riga's Brethren Cemetery; a military parade follows in front of the Monument of Freedom. In the evening, thousands of people light up numerous candles to commemorate the Latvian Army's victory.



14 November, General Domröse Participates at Leudal Remembrance Day.

The International Commemoration at the Monument of Tolerance takes place on the Thursday closest to November 17th (Liberation day of the Leudal Area). The monument of

Tolerance is situated in front of the Leudal Museum in Haelen, Limburg. Veterans, relatives of fallen soldiers, children and local people come to this annual event to thank the veterans and commemorate the fallen soldiers that fought for our freedom in the area of Leudal during WWII. The highlight of the commemoration is the joint laying of a wreath by German, English and Dutch veterans. General Hans-Lothar Domröse, Commander of JFC Brunssum together with Ambassadors of the UK and New-Zealand, as well as Governor Frissen of Limburg, were present. The Mayor of Leudal, Mr. A.Verhoeven, provided a speech on the significance of the monument and the Remembrance Ceremony in Leudal, to prevent war in the future. It is very important to remind the younger generations how many soldiers and civilians have fought and fallen in War and that we never want to go to war again.



19 November, JFCBS hosted Members of the Polish Parliamentary Commission of National Defence.

The Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Richard Tieskens, led briefs that touched upon a variety of issues but served to underscore

the role and responsibilities of JFC Brunssum. These included the post-ISAF Resolute Support Mission, JFC Brunssum's standby command role for NATO Response Force 2014 and Regional Focus. Poland's contribution to the NATO mission in Afghanistan is greatly valued; continued support will send a strong message of Alliance cohesion and unity.

25 October, Visit by Provincial leaders

The Governor of Limburg's representative, 10 Mayors and the Regional Director of Parkstad visited JFC Brunssum. A programme was provided designed to enhance comprehension of the history, role and responsibilities of this operational headquarters. Follow-on briefings included the economic impact of this NATO site on the region. The event provided the opportunity for visitors to engage in open dialogue with the Commander of JFC Brunssum, General Hans-Lothar Domröse. Of particular interest to participants was the economic impact of this NATO headquarters and its footprint that, in accordance with current intentions, is destined to grow.



11 November, Brunssum Remembers the Fallen

On a beautiful sunny autumn day a service of remembrance was held at the Brunssum War Cemetery. Attended by representatives of the council of the city of Brunssum, the Deputy Commander and service personnel from JFC Brunssum, relatives of those buried in the cemetery, and many local people, this moving event was a fitting tribute to those who had paid the ultimate sacrifice so that we might live in peace today. The melancholy sound of bagpipes, so often heard on the battlefield in olden days, served to underscore the gravity of the occasion.



18 November, General Hans-Lothar Domröse Visited the Joint Warfare Centre

During the visit the JWC team provided background information on their role and responsibilities. Challenges, following the introduction of the latest command structure, particularly those associated with an increased training and exercise requirement, were also touched upon. For his part, General Domröse emphasized that NATO is evolving ever more quickly. "We are paving a road but, at the same time, driving on that road", he said. He went on: "However, we are from the same NATO family and have to overcome critical training and exercise adjustments together: teamwork is key!" General Domröse also took time to discuss the important roadmap towards the execution of Exercise Trident Juncture 2015.



December 2013

A Civilian Operational Analyst's Deployment to Afghanistan

Story and photo by Dr. Gary Harless, JFCBS Joint Assessments Branch

As a NATO Civilian Operational Analyst I recently deployed for six weeks to Headquarters International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Afghanistan in Kabul where I worked in the Afghan Assessment Group (AAG). While at Joint Force Command Brunssum (JFCBS) I spend much of my time working directly with the ISAF AAG on topics associated with the ISAF mission, therefore I am able to quickly contribute to the AAG when I deploy even if it is for a short time. This was my seventh deployment of four to six weeks to the ISAF AAG.

The AAG is responsible for assessing the progress of the ISAF mission on a periodic basis and is responsible for answering many campaign related questions from senior leaders on a routine basis. Mission progress is measured by assessing how much progress has been made in creating the changes that are required in order to reach a situation that is acceptable. In other words, when we have changed the situation sufficiently to reach what is called the NATO end state then we have reached a situation that is acceptable. In the NATO Comprehensive Operational Planning Directive (COPD) these changes are referred to as "effects" while in ISAF the "effects" are written into what ISAF calls "strategic questions."

The AAG is made up of approximately 20 personnel, half of which are military staff officers and the other half civilian analysts. Most of the civilian personnel have an Operational Analysis background which means that they have studied quantitative techniques associated with data analysis and problem solving. These quantitative skills are a skill set that is rarely available in military officers, although the United States Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps do have officer specialties or "functional areas" known as an Operations Research Systems Analysis (ORSA) which equates to a NATO Operational Analyst. The civilian and military personnel in the AAG require complementary skill sets since creating assessments requires a combination of both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The civilian analysts primarily analyze the quantitative data while the military personnel generally focus on the qualitative data. Together the civilian and military personnel work together as



a team to create a holistic assessment of mission progress.

During my most recent deployment to the AAG even though I am a civilian I wore two hats: One as an Operational Analyst and the other as a liaison to the JFCBS Joint Assessment Division (JAS) which is normally filled by a military staff officer. As an Operational Analyst I worked on detailed analysis of the mission such as analyzing local village uprisings against the Taliban. As the liaison to the JFCBS I worked on reports that are sent up to

the higher headquarters and the United Nations. The JFCBS JAS is responsible for creating the initial drafts of two separate NATO reports, one called the Periodic Mission Review (PMR) which is sent to the highest levels of NATO and the UN Quarterly Report from NATO to the Secretary General of the United Nations (UN SECGEN). The PMR informs the NATO nations on mission progress, while the QRUN is sent to the UN SECGEN. As the in theatre liaison I was required to draft and coordinate certain portions of the reports.



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The Albanian Armed Forces - Forcat e Armatosura të Republikës së Shqipërisë

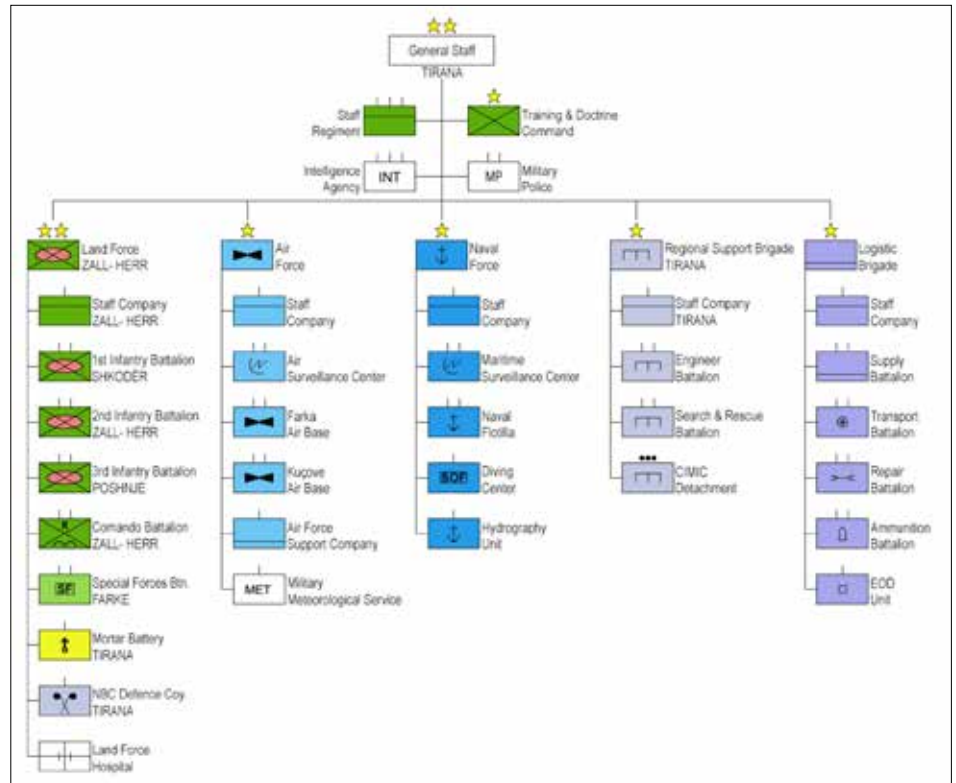
Story prepared by LtCol Cuni, BSG, Albanian Senior National Representative

The Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) were formed after the declaration of independence in 1912 on 4th of December 1912. Today it consists of: the General Staff, the Albanian Land Force, the Albanian Air Force, the Albanian Naval Force and the Training and Doctrine Command

Albania joined NATO at the Strasbourg-Kehl summit that took place in April 2009; this historic event was the climax of long-held national aspirations with regard to north-atlantic organization membership. Behind the scenes there were a lot of important measures undertaken, especially in the defence and the security sector.

The roadmap that culminated in Albania joining the Euro-Atlantic family was quite long, embracing numerous reforms dealing with personnel, infrastructure, legal frameworks, as well as the political approach underpinning the broad reform programme. In 1994 Albania became a Partnership for Peace (PfP) member and set out on the long path to membership. The official invitation to become a fully fledged Alliance member came in 2008 and, as we all now know, accession quickly followed in 2009. The full integration period was agreed to be 2009-2013, a four year period full of challenges that ended successfully in October during the final integration conference in Tirana.

Shortly after gaining NATO membership, the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) developed a plan that supports integration with a NATO Integrated Work Programme. This was drawn up on behalf of the Alliance by Joint Force Command Naples in the first phase and by Allied Command Transformation in the final phase. The goal of both programmes was to enable full interoperability of the Armed Forces of Albania with NATO.



Major achievements during the integration process include the finalization of the Strategic Defence Review (SDR), Military Strategy and the completion of a Long Term Development Plan for the Albanian Armed Forces. The overall process was underpinned by the desire to transition from a purely national to integration within the NATO Defence Planning System. This meant implementing the NATO Defence Planning Process; introducing new Capability Targets (Blue Book) that were integrated in the SDR and effecting their implementation through Modernization Programmes. The same importance was afforded the establishment of a Standardization System and engagement in the "Smart Defence" initiative, both regionally and under a NATO framework.

Albania is playing a very important role

with regard to regional cooperation, in order to provide security and stability throughout the Balkan region. The combination of a "US-Adriatic Charter", South East Defence Ministerials (SEDM), and the Balkan ChoD's Initiative appears to be very productive and successful. The objective of these initiatives is to bring Balkan countries closer together, share common values, encourage good neighbourly relations, share experiences and raise the quality of overall reform in order to attain NATO and European Union standards.

Albania intends to pursue a robust modernization programme of the Armed Forces. Current equipment programmes include the introduction of multirole helicopters (Eurocopter AS532 Cougar) in the Air Force, modern Patrol Boats (Damen Class Stan Type 047)

in the Navy, a C4I System, a Logistics Database and Control Reporting Centres (CRCs) - NATO Integrated Air Defense System (NATINADS).

High priority was given to demilitarization of excess munitions. The Albanian government increased efforts to finalize demilitarization in factories and store depots and are on-track to complete the entire process by the end of 2013.



Over many years the Albanian Armed Forces have made a significant contribution to NATO, EU & UN Operations. This engagement started in 1996, with the very first mission in Bosnia & Herzegovina (IFOR, SFOR, and EUFOR). This engagement came to an end in 2013. Over that time a total of 1473 military personnel were engaged in these missions.

In accordance with UN mandates, Albanian military personnel served successfully in Georgia, under the UNOMIG mandate, from 1994 until 2009. In July 2009, the mission was completed – records show that the Albanian Armed Forces participated with 39 military personnel.

A historic chapter of Albania's engagement in Peace Support Operations is, without any doubt, our contributions to missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. In April 2003, the AAF was engaged as part of coalition forces in Operation Iraqi Freedom. This engagement ended in December 2011 with a total of 1377 Albanian military personnel having served in Iraq.

In July 2002, AAF personnel joined

coalition forces in the ISAF operation in Kabul. Over time, Albania's contribution gradually increased in both size of representation and diversity in tasks. Furthermore, an AAF presence was established in almost all the Regional Commands throughout Afghanistan: Herat (West), Mazar-e Sharif (North), ISAF Headquarters in Kabul, the NATO Training Mission in Kabul and Herat, OMLT teams in Kabul, Special Forces

in Kandahar (South) and Special Forces Trainers in Wardak (East). To date, 2944 AAF personnel have participated in this operation.

Albania was also engaged in a European Union mission in Chad – MINURCAT - from 2008 to 2010. Three AAF contingents, consisting of 63 military members, participated. Albania is proud to have contributed to these missions and assist the bringing stability to areas of crisis. Mission participation has also helped us develop our experience and assists in the implementation of NATO standards and procedures.

Currently, Albania's mission commitment continues in ISAF (Afghanistan), KFOR (Kosovo) and ALTHEA (Bosnia-Herzegovina), with a total of 219 military personnel deployed, as follows:

- ISAF, Afghanistan, 211 military personnel:
- KFOR, Kosovo, 2 military personnel.
- ALTHEA, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 6 military personnel.

A permanent challenge will be the

achievement of standards maintained by Alliance member countries. In this context, special attention is devoted to the process of standardization, compilation and publication of doctrine, and further development of the "lessons learned" process.

The vision of the Albanian Armed Forces leadership is to embrace modern operational capabilities and



interoperable systems that are utilised by a highly motivated and capable professional force.

In order to achieve the stated capacity AAF will continue without the support of NATO and the programme will be part of the work process, in accordance with the plan of the Armed Forces in support of the defined goals of the Alliance and Albania.



Steadfast Jazz 2013 at Sea

Story and photo by Lt Peter Wojtas (Polish Navy)

Steadfast Jazz was designed to be the final exam for the staff of people working for Joint Force Command Brunssum before the next year's mission to oversee and command over the NATO Response Forces. The process of planning of the entire scenario took almost two years, the exercise was preceded by numerous single-component exercises like Brilliant Mariner in the Mediterranean (26 September - 5 October this year) and now it was time to put all forces to the test at once. The exercise was taking place between November 2 and 9 in Latvia, Poland and on the Baltic where the maritime portion of the Steadfast Jazz 2013 was staged.



First row from left to right: HNLMS De Ruyter Commanding Officer: Cdr Harold H. Liebreghs, Polish Maritime Operations Center/Maritime Component Commander vice admiral Stanislaw Zarychta, SFJZ13 Maritime Livex Commander Capt Mariusz Koscielski.

The ships arrived in Gdynia (Poland) to prepare for the serialized part of the exercise a week in advance. Aside from the host nation units (submarine ORP Sokol, OHP frigate ORP Kosciuszko and minehunter ORP Czajka) Gdynia welcomed the Italian destroyer ITS Caio Duilio, the flagship of the exercise Dutch frigate HNLMS De Ruyter and six ships tied within the Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group One (SNMCMG1) followed by the British minehunter HMS Ledbury. Together with the ships under the NATO flag: ORP Czernicki (Poland), BNS Narcis (Belgium), ENS Admiral Cowan (Estonia), FGS Dillingen (Germany), HNLMS Makkum (Netherlands) and HNOMS Rauma (Norway) the Maritime Live Exercise was attended by twelve ships from eight countries.

During the pre-sail conference Maritime Command Northwood representative

Capt. Hakan Ercan shared his belief that 'this Maritime Live Exercise constitutes a clear example of diversity across the Alliance by including Staff and units from the Mediterranean, Atlantic and the Baltic Region. I think it is a very good opportunity to train and improve interoperability as well as to practice air-sea integration'. And just as planned the ships went underway on November 2 dividing into two groups simulating a real life situation in which the area where the main maritime coalition forces are to conduct their operation needs firstly to be checked if it is safe and free from mines. This task was placed before the Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group One adjoined for the duration of the exercise by two minehunters from Poland and the UK.

Since the Steadfast Jazz 2013 was designed to enhance and test the cooperation between different

components, the air wing and maritime assets got their chance to do so. The 'big ships' (Italian destroyer along with Dutch and Polish frigates) sailed up north just outside the Gulf of Gdansk to cooperate with the air force during coordinated air-defense exercise. For several hours the fast aircrafts claimed the sky and all ships of the Maritime Livex were subjected to simulated air strikes. That allowed their crews to train the evasive maneuvering and practice air-defense procedures while the pilots were training in combat against the ships at sea. During the training the aircrafts were directed to the targets from the flagship to ensure the proper targeting procedures and attacks coordination. This type of cooperation is especially important in the view of possible joint operations in the future, for the air assets can easily act in support of the maritime operations on a broader scale.

The maritime aviation was also an important part of the exercise. The coordinated search for the submarine proved that the anti-submarine capable organic helicopters from the ships (NH-90 from ITS Duilio and SH-2G from ORP Kosciuszko) are as important to the success of the mission as the level of training of the crewmembers manning the Combat Information Centers on board the ships. The Polish submarine (playing an opposing unit) was tasked to force the blockade made of three ships and the helicopter but thanks to the highly coordinated effort of the coalition forces, the submarine was tracked and detected in due time to prevent her from breaching the perimeter.

After six days and nights at sea the Maritime Live Exercise concluded with all the ships entering Gdynia for the second time. During the meeting with the crews shortly after, called the hot-wash-up, the commander of the Task Group Capt Mariusz Kościelski (Polish Navy) summarized the exercise saying: "I need to admit that commanding this group was a privilege to me and a great opportunity to learn some new things as well. I believe that we all had a fruitful exercise and we will all benefit from this experience in the future. Within last six days we have proven that we can provide NATO with a capable force ready to be used on a short notice and that is exactly what this exercise was supposed to validate".

It was the 18th edition of the Steadfast series of exercises being a part of NATO's efforts to maintain connected and interoperable forces at a high-level of readiness. Their goal is to make sure that NRF troops are ready to deal with any situation in any environment. The event involved about 6,000 personnel from many Allied and partner nations. Around 3,000 headquarters personnel from Joint Force Command Brunssum and other headquarters were involved in a command & control exercise on the Adazi Base near Riga, Latvia and at several other headquarters locations across the Alliance. In addition, multinational troops participated in a live-fire exercise at Poland's Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area. Air, land and special forces have also participated from several locations. At the conclusion of the exercise, the headquarters staff from Joint Force Command Brunssum was officially certified to lead NATO joint operations in 2014.

The NATO Response Force is a highly ready and technologically advanced multinational force made up of land, air, maritime and special forces components that the Alliance can deploy quickly wherever needed. The force gives NATO the means to respond swiftly to various types of crises anywhere in



Two Polish Mi-14 PL (HAZE) helicopter approaching the Dutch frigate HNLMS De Ruyter after completing their task during SFJZ 13 Maritime Livex.



The crew of Polish SH-2G (Dragonfly) helicopter on the helo pad of HNLMS De Ruyter during Steadfast Jazz 2013 Maritime Livex.

the world. It is also a driving engine of NATO's military transformation through expanded education and training, increased exercises and an improved use of technology.

There are two joint force commanders in Europe based in Brunssum (The Netherlands) and Naples (Italy). Each of them take one-year turns to command the NRF. They lead their respective forces throughout the whole process of their formation and stand-by periods. Participation in the NRF is preceded by an extensive NATO Exercise program in order to integrate and standardize the various national contingents. The force

is then held on stand-by to deploy on operations for 12 months.

The NATO Response Force will become more important post-2014, after the NATO-led International Assistance Force (ISAF) has completed its mission and transitioned into a non-combat and advisory role in Afghanistan. The NATO Response Force is at the core of the Connected Forces Initiative which aims at maintaining NATO's readiness and combat-effectiveness through expanded education and training, increased exercises and an improved use of technology.

The Big Picture – Interview with Commander JFC Brunssum



Steadfast Jazz was the first exercise in the series since 2006 to include a live-exercise component and to have a Collective Defence scenario. Why, after a 7-year break, has NATO incorporated a live-exercise?

NATO is gradually reducing its presence in Afghanistan, and therefore, our efforts are starting to shift to a contingency posture. Thus, it is imperative that NATO remains vigilant and prepared to meet future challenges and threats with agile, capable and interoperable military forces. NATO has achieved an unprecedented level of cohesiveness among Allies and partner forces in the past decade of combat operations and is operating as a seamless integrated team. The Alliance intends to maintain this level of cohesion by intensifying education, training and exercises. Steadfast Jazz 2013 is one of the first steps towards achieving this aim.

What challenges do you see as a Joint Force Commander, concerning the responsibility of commanding and leading multinational NATO forces during the Exercise and in real life if NRF 2014 is activated?

We live in a dynamic world, which is why NATO places great importance on ensuring that its forces are trained,

equipped and prepared, should they be called-upon at short notice to deal with an emerging disaster or crisis situation – that's probably the greatest challenge, to provide timely and effective assistance whenever needed.

In the face of economic crisis were there troubles with planning and preparations for the exercise?

We have been planning this exercise since 2011 and took under consideration all aspects and challenges. Let me stress that Steadfast Jazz is an exercise implementing our Connected Forces Initiative (CFI). One of the pillars of CFI is an enhanced and broader training programme including live and command post exercises where NATO, Partners and other nations participate.

What will be the next steps in NATO forces under your command in terms of training and development after Steadfast Jazz 2013?

It's a natural cycle. After certification within Steadfast Jazz 2013 Joint Force Command Brunssum is ready to assume command of the NATO Response Force 2014 if it is activated; in 2014 we will continue to maintain/test our ability to respond by participating in a range of exercises (CPX, CAX, etc) in order to sustain the high level of force readiness that is necessary. Following that, in 2015,

we'll embark upon preparations for our role as Standby NRF Command for 2016 with a similar large-scale exercise at the end of 2015. The NATO Response Force itself provides visible assurance of NATO's cohesion and commitment to deterrence and collective defense.

Could you tell us something about the large scale exercise at the end of 2015?

The large scale exercise in 2015 will be the first multilevel, multinational live joint command exercise that will launch and test CFI implementation. It will examine all levels of command from strategic to tactical, and will also support the Allied Command Operations' new structure in achieving full operational capability. Importantly, it will embrace a new level of cost effectiveness. This will be derived as a factor of it being offered to nations to participate in full, in part, in just one or many environments i.e. a sort of plug in and play option will be available. Thus, as many nations may choose to take advantage of this opportunity, single nation, bi or tri-lateral exercises may be reduced generating a financial saving and improving NATO force integration at the same time.

Commander JFC Brunssum interviewed by Lt Cdr Greg Lyko



Jazz Ends on a High Note

Story by LtCol Jay Janzen, SHAPE PAO

Multinational forces conduct complex and highly integrated operations on land, sea, and in the airspace over Europe during Exercise Steadfast Jazz 2013.

Exercise Steadfast Jazz concluded successfully on Nov. 8 after two weeks of intense multinational joint military training in locations across Europe. About 6,000 personnel from 28 NATO member nations as well as three-partner nations (Sweden, Finland and Ukraine) trained together in a combined multinational setting.

Joint Force Command Brunssum Headquarters succeeded in meeting a host of demanding training objectives and will be officially certified at a future ceremony to lead potential NATO Response Force missions in 2014.

"As the ISAF mission winds down, NATO's challenge is to maintain the cohesiveness and compatibility it has achieved through the years," said Commander Joint Force Command Brunssum, General Hans-Lothar Domröse. "Exercise Steadfast Jazz was an important step in building and maintaining that high level of effectiveness and interoperability," he said.

The NATO Response Force is the 'tip of the spear' in terms of NATO's ability to respond to an emerging crisis, which is why realistic and demanding exercises like Steadfast Jazz are essential in maintaining and enhancing the effectiveness of Allied deployable forces.

"The multinational soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines that I saw during the exercise demonstrated an exceptionally high level of skill and prowess," said General Philip Breedlove, Supreme Allied Commander Europe. "The opportunity for troops from 28 different member nations, along with Alliance partners, to train and operate together is invaluable. Steadfast Jazz is what NATO is all about, our ability to defend ourselves together with a high-level of skill and effectiveness," he added.

NATO places great importance on ensuring that its forces are trained, equipped and prepared should they be called-upon at short-notice to deal with



an emerging disaster or crisis situation.

"Steadfast Jazz was based on a scenario that allows NATO forces to train for all possible missions the Alliance might face," said Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, General Jean-Paul Palomeros. "A wide variety of scenarios were added to the exercise including humanitarian missions, cyber defense, anti-missile defense, and collective defense operations. Realistic, combined multinational training helps ensure that the Alliance is prepared to meet the threats of the future," he said.

While headquarters staffs wrestled with 'big-picture' operational challenges, NATO troops deployed in the sea, land, and air honed their abilities to work together in a comprehensive multinational environment. Naval vessels deployed in the Baltic Sea, aircraft took to the skies of central Europe, and land forces participated in a live exercise in western Poland. The exercise culminated in a firepower demonstration attended by senior NATO officials, members of the diplomatic corps and invited observers from Russia and China.

"I am fully satisfied that our combined joint force met all of our training objectives,

and I commend all the troops that were under my command for a job well done," said General Domröse. I would also like to thank Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania for the outstanding support they provided to the exercise over the past number of months. Without their efforts, resources, and hospitality we would not have been able to achieve the results that we see today," he added.

Exercise Steadfast Jazz was designed to test and certify elements of the NATO Response Force, which is the Alliance's quick reaction force of up to 13,000 troops, which can be deployed anywhere, in different configurations, to perform a wide range of missions all on short notice.

NATO military commanders will now turn their attention to capitalizing on the lessons, experience and knowledge gained from Exercise Steadfast Jazz to ensure that the Alliance continues to build upon its capabilities, interoperability, and experience. NATO will conduct several exercises in 2014 to certify NRF forces and headquarters, and will conduct a significant combined live exercise in 2015.

Exercise Steadfast



Steadfast Jazz 2013 the biggest NATO exercise for almost a decade, gathered a lot of attention. Distinguished Visitors Day combined with Media Day was one of the most challenging episodes of the SFJZ13 story.



The Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTF) is the standard NATO Response Force camp.



Within the live part of the exercise a wide variety of activities were held. The air element supported land and naval forces and conducted their own task over Polish and Baltic Sea military areas.



The multinational land force was exercising in Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area, Poland. From 28 October until 8 November troops exercised at company and battalion level. One of the high peaks of the training was the LIVEX Demonstration presented to Distinguished Visitors and Media on 7 November.

Jazz 2013



JTF HQ was placed in Adazi Base near Riga (Latvia). The staff worked in CP156.



Naval forces were the first to actively participate in Exercise Steadfast Jazz 2013. They arrived in Gdynia in October and conducted maritime activities between 2-8 November. This multinational force consisted among others of an Italian Destroyer or Dutch Command and Control vessel or Polish Frigate and Submarine and Standing NATO Minecountermeasures Group 1.



From 2 until 8 November the JTF HQ staff was conducting the full scale operations Battle Rhythm. Starting with individual tasks, through branch assignments and finishing with HQ wide coordination and decision meetings.

People behind Steadfast Jazz 2013

Exercise Steadfast Jazz 2013 finished with a tremendous success. Joint Force Command Brunssum has since been certified to lead the NATO Response Force 2014. We can honestly say that we are ready for the potential challenges. It was possible thanks to a group of people, subject matter experts that worked on the exercise design, planning and preparations for many months, starting already in 2011. Some of them already left Brunssum, some of them began preparations for future exercises, all of them devoted last months of their professional (and often personal) lives to deliver exercise Steadfast Jazz 2013. To prepare SFJZ13 was of course a team effort and in the end almost the whole Headquarters worked with it, however each team needs a leader. We asked them all, what they saw as the most challenging in their job.



LtCol Ruud Middelhoven (J7) was the Officer Primary Responsible for the exercise Steadfast Jazz. He was responsible for exercise delivery. Everybody (and not only in JFC Brunssum) knows him as “Mr Steadfast Jazz”.

“Exercise Steadfast Jazz 2013 for me was contributing to NATO’s future, but also about achieving something which has not been done before within NATO; to plan and execute a 4-level major NATO Response Force certification- and HNS exercises through a CPX and LIVEX in the Baltic States and Poland at the same time. It was a great adventure and experience!”

LtCol Andrzej Lewandowski (J7) was responsible for Live Exercise (LIVEX) part of Steadfast Jazz 2013. He coordinated planning and preparations for Land, Air and Maritime activities within the exercise. During the exercise he was the chief of Joint LIVEX Coordination Element Command Group in Drawsko Pomorskie, Poland.

“All my efforts were focused on completing my task and I wasn’t thinking if the task was difficult or not. I knew that lack of coordination could have a huge impact on soldiers who were conducting all sorts of activities, including live fire exercises.”



LtCol Artur Bogowicz until June 2103 was the first LIVEX OPR and responsible for the whole setup of this part of the exercise – simply from nothing to full scale Live Joint Exercise.

“The most challenging task during SFJZ 13 LIVEX preparation was to build up joint, modern and large enough forces from different services and countries to create valuable exercise on the sea, the land and in the air in support of Visible Assurance to provide a right message to all our Nations.”

Maj Dita Frankova (J7) I was an Exercise Fund Manager. She was responsible for planning, executing and reporting overall STEADFAST JAZZ 13 Military Budget. Monitoring the allocated funds, collecting all requirements, entering purchase request and receiving invoices, informing and advising the affordability within the recourse allocation.

“To organize SFJZ 13 Budget was a challenge for two reasons. The first was collecting and costing of the requirements and the second one was question of affordability and eligibility. However this was a team work and the team had the same goal not only to make it happened but also to do it well.”



LtCol Digno Palma (BSG) was responsible for Real Life Support to the deployed Joint Task Force HQ in Adazi Base, Latvia

“Firs in last out – that is our motto. Preparations were challenging, however some of the real life issues appeared to be unique in nature. The exercise will finish for my team just before Christmas.”

Maj Rune Kvam was responsible for manning of the exercise. His list was the basis for few others like CIS or RLS.

“The most challenging part for me as a J1 representative was to get the CE structure manned, and to communicate with all the entities supporting JTFHQ with augmentees. Before SFJZ 13 I spend a lot of time coordinating the manning both inside this HQ and with other entities.”



LtCol Jo Schepers (J4) was Baltic Host 2013 Officer Primary Responsible within JFC Brunssum J4.

“I had to assure that exercise Baltic Host 2013 was perfectly integrated for movements and logistics within exercise Steadfast Jazz 2013. Making sure that the Joint Logistic Support Group would provide a good link between both exercises.”

Jazz 2013



Col Mark Hirschinger (J35) was responsible for preparations and coordination of all operations activities within the exercise play.

"Steadfast Jazz 13 was an ambition effort for our headquarters, especially considering the timing (before our IOC), and the number of newcomers on the staff. The team work displayed during the planning conferences and exercise execution was the difference maker. The success of Steadfast Jazz 13 gives us the confidence to pursue the Exercise Series to the fullest extent, setting the stage for complete JFCBS FOC."

Maj Michael Vermeire (J4) was responsible for the coordination of all support requirements between the Host Nation (Poland) and the participating nations and HQs.

"It took a lot of effort to coordinate the whole logistics, so the most challenging part was the on-time submission of completed and detailed Statements of Requirements from all participating nations and HQs to the Host Nation."



LtCol Rene Orleana (J5) was Deputy Joint Operations Planning Group (JOPG) Leader. He organized and synchronized the planning efforts of the Friendly Forces (Blue Team) Planners, the Opposing Forces (Red Team) Planners, and the Non-military Actors (Green Team) Planners.

"The planning effort required in support of the NRF certification exercise, SFJZ13 was protracted. It began in January with the Commander's Conceptual Discussion and continued through spring and summer with, TOPFAS training, Crisis Response Planning, Final Campaign Synchronization Meeting and Battle Staff Training. Maintaining momentum with the JFCBS Staff writ large and the Component Commands to complete the planning through this extended period, I think was the biggest challenge we faced."

Col Martin Klein is the JFC Brunssum Public Affairs Advisor and was responsible for preparations, planning and coordination of all Public Affairs activities for the exercise.

"As the biggest NATO exercise for almost a decade, media attention for Steadfast Jazz stretched Military Public Affairs significantly. The most challenging was the vertical coordination of Public Affairs among NATO HQ, SHAPE, JFC Brunssum, Component Commands and of course Host Nations and Troop Contributing Nations. Not mentioning the logistics aspect of media representatives movement between all exercise locations."



Lt Col Nikolas Kleffel is the Branch Head Protocol JFC Brunssum and therefore was chief of Visitors and Observers Bureau in Riga.

"The exercise gathered a lot of attention, so the most challenging for us was the organizing of the DV Day. 250 VIPs and among them the three Presidents of the Baltic, several Ministers and 4 Four-Star-Generals. Two DV Days in two countries within two days!!"

Maj Frank Boehmer until September 2013 was the Branch Head Protocol JFC Brunssum.

"The most challenging was my own Information Management; the challenge to keep all stakeholders and all members of the great NATO Protocol Family all time correctly informed about the most current planning status and newest requirements all time."



LtCol John Grant (J6) was responsible for monitoring and managing real life communications during the exercise. The J6 is the enabler to provision for other's systems, primarily Functional Area systems, to interoperate and communicate.

"It was a complex challenge integrating the multitude of Functional Area Systems and then, coordinating and verifying the appropriate connectivity amongst all the players in order to enable interoperability for systems to communicate."

Mr Sebastian Gawlas (J6) was responsible for provision of Communication and Information Systems for different exercise elements. In particular implementation of Functional Systems architecture.

"This was the first exercise in new JFCBS structure therefore the most challenging part in SFJZ 13 preparations was definition of detailed CIS requirements and their further translation to networks and systems architecture."



**Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year!**



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Sittard Remembrance Day - 10 Nov 13

Story and photo by Fleur Phijffer, JFCBS PA Office

Veterans, relatives of the fallen, local people and their children, attended the annual Remembrance Ceremony at St. Peter's Church, Sittard, to remember British soldiers who died in the local area during WWII who are laid to rest at the Sittard War Cemetery.



Lieutenant General Richard Tieskens, Chief of Staff JFC Brunssum, accompanied by representatives of the Royal Navy, British Army, and Royal Air Force were in attendance.

Other guests included the Governor of Limburg (Theo Bovens) and Mayor of Sittard-Geleen (Sjraar Cox).

The bilingual Service started at 10:00, jointly led by Dean W. van Rens and the Reverends J. Pridmore and I. Pluim. The church's choir led singing of the anthems whilst the Philharmonie Sittard provided musical support.*

On completion of the memorial service at the church there was a short break whilst attendees made their way to the Sittard War Cemetery. Once there, the Governor of Limburg, Theo Bovens, and Lieutenant General Tieskens led the laying of wreaths at the Cross of Sacrifice. On completion, local children

laid poppies at the graves. Two minutes of silence were then observed. The famous epitaph authored by John Maxwell Edmonds: When you go home, tell them of us and say, For their tomorrow, we gave our today, was articulated by Colonel Tim Wildish. As in previous years, both ceremonies were supported by the poignant sound of bagpipes, a sound so often heard on battlefields in olden days.

The War Cemetery at Sittard is a small but extremely well cared for final resting place for British soldiers killed in the local area during WWII. 239 soldiers rest at peace in this location of which six remain unidentified. Of these 239, all bar one are from the British Army, the exception being one sailor from the Royal Navy. The Sittard War Graves Committee is responsible for the upkeep of the cemetery and their significant behind-the-scenes efforts are greatly appreciated. Mr and Mrs

Graham officially represented the Committee on this occasion.

Notably, Dennis Donnini is buried at Sittard War Cemetery. His outstanding gallantry and self-sacrifice in drawing enemy fire on himself enabled his platoon to capture an enemy position, overcoming opponents more than twice their number in the process. In doing this he sacrificed his life. He was awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest and most prestigious award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces. Donnini, at 19, was the youngest soldier to be awarded the VC in WWII.

** Philharmonie Sittard has supported this memorial service every year since 1967.*

*** It should be noted that the Governor represented the King of the Netherlands at this event.*

Poland Celebrates Independence Day

Story and photo by Lt Cdr Greg Lyko

Poland celebrated its Independence Day, 11 November. Ninety-five years ago, after 123 years of being out off the map of Europe, Poland regained sovereignty. The Polish JFCBS community celebrated this day in a very subtle and poetic way.

The event was organized in Club 13 on Sunday, 10 November, by the Polish School in Brunssum and the Polish National Delegation by JFC Brunssum. The Independence Day Celebration was not only for JFC Brunssum community but also for Polish people working in different NATO units and institutions like NCI Agency in Brunssum and Geilenkirchen Air Base. Additional representatives of Polish civilian community participated in the celebrations.

The event was opened by the Polish Senior National Representative, JFC Brunssum ACOS J6 Colonel Marian Matoszka. The main attraction of the afternoon was the patriotic concert of young artist Piotr Kajetan Matczuk and the show prepared by the children studying in the Polish School in Brunssum.



But the weekend wasn't all about history. Part of the performance was referring to the near future.

A group of children gave a pledge to become students of the first class of Polish School in Brunssum.



"I was able to download coursework and presentations, enabling me to complete assignments in non-traditional settings."

—Michael Sedovic, Bachelor of Science in Aeronautics with Minors in Management and Aviation Safety

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Closed: 25th – 28th Dec & 30th Dec

Holiday Hours: 29th 1300-1700 & 31st 1000-1400

Closes 1st & 2nd Jan

Car Craft Center:

Holiday Hours: 21st Dec 0900-1300

Closed: 22nd & 23rd, 25th & 26th

Holiday Hours: 24th, 27th, 28th Dec 0900-1300

Closed: 29th-1st

Holiday Hours: 2nd-3rd 0900-1300

Fitness Center:

Closed: 21st & 22nd

Holiday Hours: 23rd & 24th 0900-1400

Closed: 25th & 26th

Holiday: 27th 0900-1400

Closed: 28th, 29th & 1st

Holiday Hours: 30th, 31st, 2nd & 3rd 0900-1400

International Conference Center:

Holiday Hours: 23rd & 24th 0900-1300

Closed: 25th -29th

Holiday Hours: 30th & 31st 0900-1300

Closed: 1st & 2nd

Holiday Hours: 0900-1300

Library:

Closed: 22nd-26th Dec

Holiday Hours: 27th 1000-1500

Closed: 28th-1st

Sports Complex:

Closed: 21st & 22nd

Holiday Hours: 23rd 0900-1100

Closed: 24th -26th

Holiday Hours: 27th, 30th & 2nd 0900-1100

Closed: 28th, 29th, 31st 1st, 3rd

Swimming Pool:

Holiday Hours: 23rd 0630-1400

Closed: 24th- 26th; 30th & 31st

Holiday Hours: 27th 1200-1800; 28th & 29th 1200-1600;

30th 1200-1400; 2nd & 3rd 1200-1800



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Country: Albania

Location: South-eastern Europe, bordering the Adriatic Sea and Ionian Sea, between Greece in the south, Macedonia in the east and Montenegro and Kosovo to the north.

Land Boundaries: Greece 282 km, Macedonia 151 km, Kosovo 112 km and Montenegro 172 km.

Coast line: 362 km

Population: 3,011.405 (July 2013 est.)

Capital: Tirana

Head of State: President Bujar NISHANI

Area: 28,748 square kilometres; 11,100 square miles.

Climate: Albania has a mild, Mediterranean, climate. The country enjoys a good deal of sunny weather, with an average of around 300 sunny days each year. Average temperatures range from 7°C in winter to 24°C in summer.

Economy:

GDP (PPP): \$29.86 billion (2012 est.)
GDP per capita: \$9.600 billion (2012 est.)
GDP by sector: agriculture: 20.4%,
industry: 19.1%, services: 60.5% (2012 est.)

Budget:

revenues: \$3.262 billion (2012 est.)
expenditures: \$3.669 billion (2012 est.)

Currency: Lek (ALL)

Industries: Food and tobacco products, textiles and clothing, perfumes and cosmetics, lumber, oil and diesel, cement, chemicals, mining, basic metals hydropower and tourism.

Agriculture: Wheat, corn, potatoes, vegetables, olives, olives oil, fruits, melons, water-melons, sugar beets, grapes, meat, dairy products.

Exports: Textiles and shoes, bitumen, metals and minerals, crude oil, vegetables, fruits, tobacco.

Imports: Machinery and equipment, food-stuffs, textiles, chemicals, etc.



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

I arrived in the Netherlands end of July 2013 and since that time I have been working as Branch Head, Base Support Management Branch (BSM), at the Base Support Group (BSG).

Tell us about your military career

I started my career at the age of 15, in 1984, as a Cadet; I graduated from the Army Military Academy as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Armor unit, in July 1992. After that I held various command positions including Company Commander and Battalion Commander, until 2003. After tank troops were removed from the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) structure I was appointed to the infantry as Deputy Commander, 1st Battalion, Rapid Reaction Brigade, until 2007. I attended the General and Admiral Course, with international participation, at the General Staff College Germany, from 2007-2009. Subsequently, I served for two years as Deputy Commander of the Military Academy and for one year as Commander of the Military Academy "SKENDEBEJ". From Oct 2012 - Jul 2013 I was docent for the Senior Officer Course at the Academy of the Armed Forces before I came to Brunssum.

Do you have any experience with other international missions?

Besides the excellent opportunities to attend courses at military schools in Germany, I was also deployed to SFOR/EUFOR, in Bosnia. I spent almost 10 months in Bosnia and Herzegovina as the head of the Albanian Contingent which was under German Command.

Tell us about your job and what kind of challenges you face

As the BSM Branch Head I have responsibility for all function and quality aspects of support services, equipment requests and other administrative services. This includes the provision of reprographics services, verifying that registry functions are carried out efficiently, ensuring that transport and travel activities are performed in an efficient and timely fashion. Last but not the least I'm responsible for the funds and accounting cell which is dealing with planning, coordination and monitoring of all matters concerning International Funds.

Is your family here with you?

Yes, my wife Eglantina (Ina) is here with me. She enjoys living in the Netherlands. My daughter goes to the 7th grade and my son goes to the 4th grade of AFNORTH Int. School.

What are your hobbies?

I like history, especially military history. Therefore, I like to read historical books and journals. I make the most of the excellent opportunity offered by the Base Library with its huge archive of books and magazines. I also like popular music and, during my spare time, I prefer to hear music from my country.

What do you like in your job?

I enjoy being a part of the JFCBS community, which is a big team of civil and military personnel from all over the world. It is very interesting from the relatively new NATO member perspective to see how different nations conduct their tasks in the international environment. Another aspect is the highly professional staff in BSM which makes me proud and happy to work with them.

Can you shortly describe your country?

Albania is a land with a good reputation for its great natural beauty and romantic remoteness. It is one of the few countries that combine an unspoiled environment of long diversified beaches, extensive wilderness areas, mountainous forests and picturesque villages. Albania is famous for its vast and magnificent archaeological heritage.

Your future plans?

I hope to become a Colonel in 2014 or 2015. With this promotion I would achieve a main objective in my military career. When I return to Albania, in July 2016, one of my priorities will be to share the knowledge I gained here.

Did you know? Limburg a Dutch Province since 1839

Story by Ed Frieser

Recently I wrote about the Kingdom of The Netherlands and its 200th Anniversary (see Northern Star October 2013). Since you live and work in the Province of Limburg you might be interested to learn more about this Province and how it evolved to its present form.

Today Limburg is the southernmost of the twelve provinces of the Netherlands. It is located in the southeastern part of the country, where it borders the Dutch provinces of Gelderland to the north and North Brabant to the north and northwest. To the east it borders the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia, to the west the Flemish province of Belgian Limburg, and to the south the French-speaking Belgian province of Liège.

Evolution

The first inhabitants in South Limburg for whom traces have been found were Neanderthals. In Neolithic times flint was mined in underground mines. In Roman times Limburg was thoroughly Romanized and many existing towns and cities like Mosa Trajectum (Maastricht) and Coriovallum (Heerlen) were founded. Bishop Servatius introduced Christianity

in Roman Maastricht, where he died in 384. After the Romans had departed the Franks took charge. The area flourished under Frankish rule. After the partition of the Frankish empire the current Limburg belonged, like the rest of the Netherlands, to the Holy Roman Empire. The territory of Limburg was from the early Middle Ages usually divided between the Duchy of Brabant, Duchy of Gelderland, Duchy of Jülich, the Principality of Liège and the prince-bishop of Cologne. These dukes and bishops were nominal subordinates of the Emperor of the Roman Empire, but in practice they acted as independent sovereigns who were often at war with each other. For centuries, the strategic location of the current province made it a much-coveted region among Europe's major powers. Romans, Habsburg Spaniards, Prussians, Habsburg Austrians and French have all ruled Limburg. Their conflicts were often fought in the Limburg area, contributing to the fragmentation of the region. Therefore, Dutch Limburg didn't always have its present shape. In past centuries it looked more like a patchwork quilt. Many different smaller territories owned by different rulers.

Treaty of London

Finally in 1815 Limburg became a province of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. At that time Limburg consisted of a Dutch but also a larger Belgian part. When the Catholic and French-speaking Belgians split away from the mainly Calvinist northern Netherlands in the Belgian Revolution of 1830, the Province of Limburg was at first almost entirely under Belgian rule. However, by the 19 April 1839 Treaty of London, the province was divided into two parts, with the eastern part going to the Netherlands and the western part to Belgium. Here it was also decided and accepted by the Dutch that Belgium would be an independent nation. The Meuse River formed the border with Belgian Limburg, except in Maastricht, the present Limburg Capital. Although the Dutch Province of Limburg exists in this form since 1839 it took another thirty years or so to formally end the awkward situation that Limburg has been a part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, as well as a part of the German Confederacy, an Alliance of smaller German States. This



double status is hard to understand. With the Treaty of London 11 May 1867 this all came to an end.

The name Limburg

Limburg's name derives from the fortified castle town known as Limbourg, situated on the River Vesdre near the High Fens, currently in the Belgian province of Liège. It was the seat of the medieval Duchy of Limburg, which extended into the Meuse region north of the city of Liège. However, most the area of the current Dutch Limburg was not part of this polity but was divided among several states including the Duchy of Brabant, the Duchy of Jülich, and the Duchy of Gelderland. The political connection to Limburg was that much of the southern part of Dutch Limburg, specifically the lands of Valkenburg, Dalhem, and Herzogenrath (known collectively as the lands of Overmaas), was united into one province with the old Duchy within the so-called Seventeen Provinces. This particular area was therefore referred to as Limburg.





Open-Air Museum in Bokrijk

Address: Bokrijklaan 1, 3600 Genk, Belgium

Open: 26 to 30 December 2013, from 1600 to 2100 (special event of "Winter Evenings")

29 March – 28 September 2014, from 1000 to 1800

Closed on Mondays (except on public holidays and Jul/Aug)

Prices: Adults 10 Euro or 15 Euro (incl. "The Sixties"), children (3-12) 1 Euro or 2 Euro (incl. "The Sixties")

Family Pack for 1 year 95 Euro, special group and school rates, parking 5 Euro.

More on: www.bokrijk.be

Bokrijk – Experience 100 Years During One Day!

Prepared by Jaroslava Augustinova and the Bokrijk Open-Air Museum

The month of December is finally here. Christmas holidays bring a nice opportunity to spend romantic moments with our families and friends, listen to Christmas carols and enjoy warm Christmas drinks or special sweets. On the other hand, for many people this time means lot of stress and tension, when trying to prepare everything perfectly for the Christmas dinner and rushing from one shop to another to get all presents for loved ones. If you want to stop for a while to relax and experience something very traditional and unique, we would like to invite you to the Bokrijk Open-Air Museum in Belgium.

The Bokrijk Domain

The Bokrijk Domain (550 hectares) is an ideal place for walking, biking and enjoying many other outdoor activities. You can admire various trees and plants in the Arboretum or try out the natural adventure trail with rope constructions, large stones and tree trunks. Children can play in the country's largest free outdoor playground and everybody can appreciate delicious menus in lovely restaurants.

If you want to experience a trip back in time, you can visit the Bokrijk Open-Air Museum. The beautiful Flemish countryside, with its more than 100 historical houses, is unforgettable. With all your senses you can explore how

people used to live in the past. Actors will introduce you to the daily life of our predecessors. Don't expect boring history lessons! You can meet farmers, a blacksmith and a shepherd, participate in a school's lesson, visit a mass in church or talk to the lady doing laundry without a washing machine. You can be involved in many activities and learn a lot about traditional crafts and trades in an interactive way.

You can also get a taste of the turbulent atmosphere of Sixties – stories and events from this era are brought to life in the real-life settings: living room, cinema, hairdressing salon or home appliance store. The various testimonials, video and audio clips make this an interesting experience.

Nostalgic "Winter Evenings"

Every year, the Bokrijk Domain prepares several large events. Amongst the most popular are the nostalgic "Winter Evenings". You can suddenly find yourself in times of your grandparents, enjoying old carousel, cabinet of curiosities, cabaret or a real fire show. The stalls will offer you snacks and drinks and the atmospheric lights ensure that you and your family can enjoy walking through the park. **This year, the "Winter Evenings" will welcome the visitors from Thursday 26 to Monday 30 December (opening hours 1600 to 2100).**





Win Tickets for Open-Air Museum in Bokrijk

- We have 5x2 tickets
- In order to win the tickets, please answer the following question:
- **How many historical houses can you find in Bokrijk?**
- Fill in this coupon and send it to PAO, or send an e-mail to pao@jfcbs.nato.int, before 26 January 2014
- For NATO ID card holders only
- The winners will be announced in the next edition of the Northern Star

Answer:

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Winners The Eaters

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

Tickets won by:

Matthias Rossmann, BWVSt Kerkrade

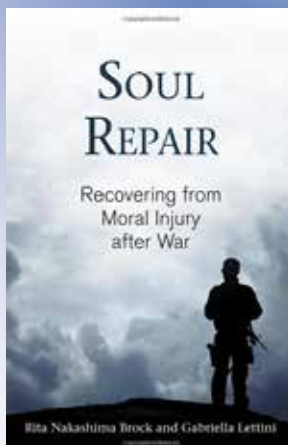
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Book Review



Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War

*By Rita Nakashima Brock
with Gabriella Lettini*

Prepared by : MSgt Jan Hecht

The first book to explore the idea and effect of moral injury on veterans, their families, and their communities

Although veterans make up only 7 percent of the U.S. population, they account for an alarming 20 percent of all suicides. And though treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder has undoubtedly alleviated suffering and allowed many service members returning from combat to transition to civilian life, the suicide rate for veterans under thirty has been increasing. Research by Veterans Administration health professionals and veterans' own experiences now suggest an ancient but unaddressed wound of war may be a factor: moral injury. This deep-seated sense of transgression includes feelings of shame, grief, meaninglessness, and remorse from having violated core moral beliefs.

Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini, who both grew up in families deeply affected by war, have been working closely with veterans on what moral injury looks like, how veterans cope with it, and what can be done to heal the damage inflicted on soldiers' consciences. In *Soul Repair*, the

authors tell the stories of four veterans of wars from Vietnam to our current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan—Camillo "Mac" Bica, Herman Keizer Jr., Pamela Lightsey, and Camilo Mejía—who reveal their experiences of moral injury from war and how they have learned to live with it. Brock and Lettini also explore its effect on families and communities, and the community processes that have gradually helped soldiers with their moral injuries.

Soul Repair will help veterans, their families, members of their communities, and clergy understand the impact of war on the consciences of healthy people, support the recovery of moral conscience in society, and restore veterans to civilian life. When a society sends people off to war, it must accept responsibility for returning them home to peace.

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