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NORTHERN STAR

Magazine for HQ JFC Brunssum – December 2015 - January 2016



- NATO Signal Battalions

- FA Community Shield

- RAFA WINGS Appeal

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COMMAND GROUP CORNER

Story by Air Marshal Graham Stacey

I have an odd sense of satisfaction sitting in a tent in Zaragoza, Spain, writing this, my final contribution to the Northern Star, whilst taking part in Ex TRIDENT JUNCTURE 15. I enjoy deployments and I enjoy working within an organization that is at the top of its game – and our performance here shows that we are exactly that.

What our people are achieving whilst also preparing for LIVEX and undertaking real life Afghanistan, RAP and GRP activity is superb. I was recently reminded that I had passed my 1000th day at Brunssum as DCOM and every day I have been impressed by what Brunssum delivers. In this I do not mean Brunssum the badge, the buildings or even the process but, of course, the people that make up our HQ. We really have responded to world changing events, not least Ukraine, proved our relevance every day and have a reputation second to none.

I am often asked what my big take away from this tour as DCOM is. After quite a lot of reflection I find myself drawn to the simple notion that “leadership matters”. Of course it does I hear you say. Yet in a HQ environment, NATO or National, I am convinced that many uniformed personnel think they have the luxury of being managers or staff officers rather than true leaders. I do not accept that premise, to be honest I am not even sure what just being a staff officer means. It has been observed that “management is doing things right, leadership is doing the right thing”. There is such a moral, ethical and human dimension to everything we do and there is such a need to create vision, energy and solutions that we need strong leadership from the top to the bottom of the organization. As I sit in this tent, currently acting as the commander of a large (computer generated) multinational force in Africa I remember the quote from Steven Pressfield in his book *Gates of Fire: An Epic Novel of the Battle of Thermopylae*, which incidentally should refer not just to ‘Kings’, but equally to ‘Queens’ as well!

“A king does not abide within his tent while his men bleed and die upon the field. A king does not dine while his men go hungry, nor sleep when they stand at watch upon the wall. A king does not command his men’s loyalty through fear nor purchase it with gold; he



Air marshal Stacey salutes his JFC Brunssum staff for the last time.

earns their love by the sweat of his own back and the pains he endures for their sake. That which comprises the harshest burden, a king lifts first and sets down last. A king does not require service of those he leads but provides it to them...A king does not expend his substance to enslave men, but by his conduct and example makes them free.”

I consider that I have had the huge privilege to be the DCOM to a COM who is not only a leader but who has constantly set the conditions for all those under his command to lead. My departing message to all is to grasp that opportunity. Your role at Brunssum may require different leadership from that required when you were commanding companies, platoons, squadrons, squads or ships but it still requires leadership. The world has not become a more stable place over the last 3 years and NATO, and thus Brunssum, remains as important as ever.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank everyone I have had the honour to serve with over the last few years. Your friendship,

loyalty, support and comradeship has been outstanding; you have taken my challenges, advice, energy and humour with good grace and have never failed to meet or surpass my expectations. I depart but will still be within the wider NATO family and hopefully will be able to bring your operational focus to ACT. Of course none of what we do would be possible without the love and backing of our families and I personally would like to thank them all but especially my partner Maria who really is the other half of Team DCOM.

My final thought joins together one of the things that the COM and I have often considered and mused over in the quieter hours of some long days and a quote from a favoured narrator. The question is how to create positive momentum in a large multinational HQ. A quote from Winston Churchill seems an appropriate observation to leave you to consider.

The pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.

Per Ardua

Graham Edward Stacey, CB MBE

Colophon

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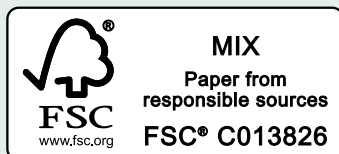
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About the Cover

Soldiers in the Polish Multi-role exploitation Reconnaissance Team (MRT) conduct a security check of the a building suspected of having hazardous material in Lisbon, Portugal on October 29, 2015 during NATO exercise Trident Juncture 15.

Photo Polish combat camera.

Contents

- 3 Command Group Corner
- 4 About the cover
- 5 NATO Signal Battalions
- 7 Afghan Officials Engage with NATO
- 8 RAFA Wings Appeal 2015
- 11 AFNORTH Terry Fox Run
- 12 Everybody Can Make a Contribution

- 13 FA Community Shield 2015
- 16 Movie Schedule
- 19 One of Us
- 20 Did you Know?
- 23 Circle 100
- 26 Book Review

NSB Civilians – Home and Away

Story by Mr. Neil Henly

Last month Mr Ian Querat of the NATO CIS Group HQ (NCISG) contributed a fascinating piece about the Group's NATO International Civilians (NICs) and their work alongside military colleagues.

This article shines a light on the life and work of the NICs in the three NATO Signal Battalions (NSBs), which form the main deployable capability of the Group, in support of NATO exercises and operations.

The 1st NSB is based in Wesel, Germany where we moved in 2010 after many successful years in Maastricht. We have been around in various guises since the Cold War era and seen involvement in every major NATO operation in one form or another since then. In our current structure we are made up of six Deployable CIS Modules (DCMs) (equivalent to field CIS companies) with a Battalion HQ and a Maintenance and Support Company. Altogether we have troops from ten different NATO nations stationed in four countries across Europe; from Denmark in the north to Croatia in the south. Our capability range is enormous and we can support everything from a small three or four member liaison team all the way up to a huge HQ of 1000 staff as we did in EX TRIDENT JUNCTURE 2015.

In any one year the NSBs deploy on significant numbers of exercises and operations in support of ACO and NRF components. This requires a considerable commitment from all the military staff and the NICs who work alongside them. Certainly we get to see all corners of Europe and some manage to get even further afield on courses, planning meetings or operational deployments.

Just like the rest of the Battalion, the unit's NICs are primarily concerned with delivering CIS capability wherever and whenever it is required. To do this we have a very strong core of specialists in the various fields that have extensive military and commercial experience in the CIS area, whether in logistics, finance, transmission, networks or information services and functional applications. It is said, though written nowhere, that there are three chief reasons for employing NICs



One part of the DNOC established in a CP156 tent for EX COBALT CLOUD 15

in these roles: They bring the bonus of continuity to a complex machine of many moving parts as they do not rotate with the frequency of their military colleagues; they are less expensive to the nations than the burden involved in supporting an equivalent from the various armed forces, with all the incumbent costs of housing, medical and schooling, etc; lastly, they are the only actual NATO employees as the military personnel are still members of their respective national forces. Our NICs come from seven different countries and each of them brings their own attributes, work culture and contacts to add to the wealth of the NSB family as a whole.

This year 1st NSB is in the preparation cycle for the lead NRF standby NSB role throughout 2016, alongside all the other components that make up the force. Just like them this has involved us in a host of meetings and conferences to plan and execute the long series of exercises which go into achieving eventual certification. The NICs, especially the Engineers, play

a major role in this effort. Particularly, we bring our knowledge to bear in meeting the users' requirements by manipulating and configuring the wealth of technology at our disposal and managing the art of the possible.

Apart from providing the CIS elements to support the HQs in the field, for 2016 1st NSB forms the bulk of the Signal Support Group (SSG) and within that the technical effort of the Deployed Network Operations Centre (DNOC). This is where most of us NICs find ourselves employed, bringing the value out of the investment that NATO has made in each of us. This year we have conducted three large exercises to achieve a high standard of proficiency so that we can meet the expectations of the NRF community. This started in February in the Naples area with EX COBALT CLOUD. That exercise sought to familiarise us all with our DNOC roles by establishing baselines, writing SOPs and running through a welter of scenarios to bring us back up to speed. For most of us this was the first time we had seen the, by now famous, CP156



A High level view of part of the EX STEADFAST COBALT travelling show

tentage in the field and it was a pleasant surprise. Although not ideal (What is?) it provides a good stable environment for conducting operations in a rear area. The exercise itself was only ten days long, but it was the first of approximately one hundred nights spent away from home on NATO exercises this year alone. The coffee, as ever, was indescribably delicious and we were well looked after by our counterparts from the 2nd NSB who had the role the year before.

From a CIS perspective the most interesting exercise each year is the huge movable feast that is EX STEADFAST COBALT, which this time took place during May in Walcz, Poland. The main thrust of this event is to bring together the components that will form the NRF in the following year, along with many units that participate regularly to keep their skills and configurations up to date. It is like an enormous travelling show of military CIS technology, with each of the participating nations and components bringing along some of the most modern equipment available, albeit mostly in big green boxes. Over a four week period, all the technologies and services that are needed for NRF undergo close checking and scrutiny by a combined NCIA and NCISG team. Our role, this time around,

was to run the DNOC for the whole exercise, integrating all the systems and services from twenty different components in support of the Test Directors, who conduct the rigorous testing regime to ensure the exacting standards required for NRF certification can be met. As in previous years, all the battalion's technical NICs were deployed for this, and as ever, it provided a fantastic opportunity to not only capture new knowledge but also impart our own to the participating units. Many of the faces are the same each time and some very strong working relationships and friendships have developed over the years. Similarly, it provides a fantastic opportunity for the NICs from all three NSBs to get together to harmonise our standards and approach to NATO CIS in line with ever-changing technologies and standards. As a technically concentrated exercise, with barely any users, this is probably our favourite deployment of the year, but as big as this may have been, it was all just the technical warm-up for the main event from August to November in Spain.

On returning from Poland at the beginning of June we found that the summer was upon us, but not yet time for a break. There were the last two conferences for TRIDENT JUNCTURE to be dealt with, including the

Technical Coordination Conference (TCC) which for us is by far the most important. After a lot more planning and re-planning and then planning again, there was just enough time for a short summer holiday before the run-up to the Autumn exercise, starting with a two week FLASH exercise in barracks, during which all the equipment is configured and the final (Hopefully) details are added to the technical aspects of the design. With the DCMs deploying to their exercise locations in August, time was very tight and some long hours and a lot of dedication were required from our logistics NIC to get everything where it needed to be.

TRIDENT JUNCTURE is worthy of an article all of its own. Once again though it was a major event involving all but one of our dozen NICs, for whom it lasted anywhere up to ten weeks of long days and sometimes nights. Arriving weeks before the staff and departing long after they were safely back in their home bases. This exercise is the conclusion to a year of many and sometimes lengthy deployments. Next year should hopefully be a little quieter for us, but for our counterparts in the 3rd NSB, it will be time to take over where we left off for NRF 2017.

Afghan Officials Engage With NATO on Security Challenges and Governance

Story by Amanda Sellers NATO HQ

A delegation of senior Afghan government representatives engaged in discussions and critical assessment of interagency security cooperation during a week-long NATO seminar from 9 to 13 November 2016.



Lieutenant General Janusz Adamczak, Chief of Staff JFC Brunssum, with Afghan Officials Participating in the NATO/Afghanistan Defense Education Enhancement Program

Part of the NATO-Afghanistan partnership and Defense Education Enhancement Program (DEEP), the Afghanistan Seminar on Interagency Coordination (ASIC) was held at JFC Brunssum in the Netherlands and NATO HQ in Brussels, Belgium.

The seminar and table-top exercise were jointly taught by the U.S. Army War College, the Marshal Fahim National Defense University and the U.S. European command. Representatives of the Afghan General Staff, National Directorate of Security and Ministries of Defense, Interior and Foreign Affairs examined inter-ministerial processes with senior NATO officials at this event. Discussions focused on identifying best practices from experience with civil-military cooperation, including in the context of the Resolute Support Mission.

"This program is beneficial in gaining more traction between the civilian and military

sides, and in helping to advance priorities for interagency governance," noted Mr. Farid Ahmad Jalali, a DEEP ASIC Participant. "The Comprehensive Approach has allowed us to instill enhanced cooperation between civilian and military entities. The generational gap – central to address in moving forward – can be bridged by bringing civilian and military leadership together through seminars like this one."

"If we work as a team, everyone achieves more," said DEEP participant Mr. Ekhtiar Walli, Manager, Security Sector, General Directorate of the Budget, Ministry of Finance. "This program allows us to draw useful points from NATO's experience and learn from the mistakes."

DEEP is a tailored program through which the Alliance advises partners on how to build, develop and reform educational institutions in the security, defense and military domains. The program for Afghanistan focuses on

building the faculty and developing the curriculum at national education institutions, covering areas such as teaching methodology, leadership and operational planning.

"I am grappling with interagency challenges on a day-to-day basis. DEEP is foundational to our work in this regard," commented Colonel Ghulam Jilani Sayad, an instructor who co-taught ASIC, from the Marshal Fahim National Defense University.

The programme was conducted by NATO's Political Affairs and Security Policy Division with the support of Joint Force Command Brunssum, the NATO International Military Staff and NATO's Public Diplomacy Division. "We benefitted greatly from this seminar and would like to see this level of interaction with civilian agencies replicated in other efforts in the future," said Brigadier General Niquibullah Rahsepar, Strategic Analysis Information Director, Ministry of Defense of Afghanistan.

RAFA WINGS APPEAL 2015

Story by CPL Zoe Fowler

This year's fundraising for the Royal Air Force Association (RAFA) Wings Appeal at NATO Joint Force Command Brunssum kicked off with a Charity Whisky Tasting Night, followed by the Warrant Officers & Sergeants Mess Battle of Britain 75th Anniversary Dinner.



Top left: Cpl Zoe Fowler, SSgt Lou Parker, Flt Lt Mike Shaw, Sgt Aaron McKay, FS Nicci Burdett, Cpl Kerry Morris & Cpl Sarah Proffitt

Top right: Mike Shaw, Sgt Aaron McKay, Cpl Zoe Fowler, FS Nicci Burdett, Cpl Kerry Morris, Cpl Sarah Proffitt & Gp Capt Neil Cummins

Bottom left: Warrant Officers & Sergeants Mess Battle of Britain 75th Anniversary Dinner

Bottom right: Sgt Kevin Heatley performing his whisky duties

Attendees of both events generously contributed to the final total. In addition, a Charity Cake Sale and Raffle was conducted on Friday 18th September 2015 at the Miners Rest in the Main HQ. Delicious homemade cakes, kindly donated by the British Community local businesses,

made this event the massive success it was; as demonstrated by the speed at which the cakes disappeared!

The raffle itself was carried out by Gp Capt Neil Cummins and Flt Lt Mike Shaw. Members of the committee included Sgt Aaron McKay, Cpl Zoe Fowler, Cpl

Kerry Morris and Cpl Sarah Proffitt. Special thanks go to our volunteers FS Nicci Burdett and SSgt Lou Parker. In all, the events raised a total of €1840 – an amazing achievement for such a small RAF contingent, well-supported by the NATO Community.

PRIZE	WINNER	SPECIAL THANKS TO
IPAD MINI	MICHEL KREUKNIET	RAFA AMSTERDAM
€100 VOUCHER	MICHELLE WARD	ROERMOND DESIGNER OUTLET
3 COURSE LUNCH FOR 2	ANIKO, LIBRARY	KASTEEL TERWORM
AFTERNOON TEA FOR 2	AMANDA BROWN	CHATEAU ST. GERLACH
2 COURSE LUNCH	EMIRA DAHMANI	HOTEL WINSELERHOF
DINNER FOR 2	AMANDA BROWN	RESTAURANT THE DUCHESS
€50 VOUCHER	MATT THURLOW	RESTAURANT MAMMY TWO SHOES
2 X ENTRY TICKETS	KADIR YALCIN	RIJKS MUSEUM AMSTERDAM
2 X THEATRE TICKETS	DAVE HOLMES	PARKSTAD THEATRE
€40 VOUCHER	JIM HOLE	BELGIAN BEER FACTORY.COM
€25 VOUCHER	CALUM FERGUSON	RESTAURANT DOWN UNDER
€37.50 VOUCHER	KATH SKILLERN	RESTAURANT CANADIAN CORNER
€22 VOUCHER	LOUISE PARKER	CAFÉ FRATELLIS, BRUNSSUM
4 x CINEMA ENTRY TICKETS	MICHAEL, MINERS	FSMW, JFC BRUNSSUM
1 X FREE HAIRCUT	CHARLEY MAURER	KELLY'S HAIR LOUNGE, BRUNSSUM
5 X ENTRY TICKETS	WENDY CARLSON	BLOTEVOETEN PARK
5 X ENTRY TICKETS	ANN-MARIE LAFFERTY	BLOTEVOETEN PARK, BRUNSSUM
4 X ENTRY TICKETS	EDWIN ALTENA	KINDERSTAD, HEERLEN
4 X ENTRY TICKETS	SANDY SPRAY	KINDERSTAD, HEERLEN
5 X ENTRY TICKETS	EMMA NEAL	BALLORIG SOFT PLAY, SITTARD
1 X MALE AFTERSHAVE	DAVE CANN	RAFA AMSTERDAM
1 X FEMALE PERFUME	CHARLEY MAURER	RAFA AMSTERDAM
HALF PRICE MANI OR PEDI	HELEN BAXTER	ESSENTIAL ON SKIN, BRUNSSUM
€10 VOUCHER	HELEN BAXTER	ABSOLUTE BEAUTY, HEERLEN
DISPOSABLE JACK DANIELS BBQ	BEN BRAMWELL	B&S STORE, JFC BRUNSSUM
ESTEE LAUDER GOODY BAG	ROBERTO BODELON	B&S STORE, JFC BRUNSSUM

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AFNORTH Terry Fox Run

Story by Mr. Erich Remisch, photos by Mr. Erich Remisch and Mr. Erië ten Doesschate

AFNORTH held its' annual Terry Fox Run on September 24th, raising over € 6500 in the process. This year was the 35th anniversary of the run, which is held each year in September across Canada and over 60 other countries across the world.



Canadian students and staff at the Terry Fox run on 24 Sept.



From left to right: Dr. Uwe Bettscheider (International director), Mr. Peter Friedrich (German principal), Mr. Erich Remisch (Canadian principal), Ms. Marlies Deckers, Mr. Philippe Lajoie (Canadian Section – Organizer) and Ms. Marianne van Haren (Dutch Cancer Society)

The event is held to honour the memory of Terry Fox and raise money for cancer research. Terry Fox was 18 years old when he lost his leg to cancer.

He began his run on April 12, 1980 at the age of 21. His goal was to run from the east to west coast of Canada, a distance of almost 8000 km. He ran 42 km a day - the equivalent of a marathon - each and every day, rain or shine. Unfortunately, after 143 days and 5 373 km, or roughly the distance between Brussels and the Chinese

border or further than the distance between New York City and Los Angeles, Terry's cancer returned and he was unable to finish his run. Terry passed away on June 28, 1981 but millions of people around the world were inspired and have adopted the cause; each autumn a huge number of people run in Terry's memory to help find a cure for this terrible disease. At AFNORTH, the American, British, Canadian and German sections all participated enthusiastically in the event, which included students from pre-kindergarten to grade 12. Parents,

family, and friends from Geilenkirchen Airbase, JFC Brunssum and the US Army garrison at Schinnen turned out to support the event and help make it a memorable day for a worthy cause. As a result AFNORTH International School was able to present a large cheque to the Dutch Cancer Society on Friday, 30th Oct. Thanks to all those who participated to make this possible.

Everybody Can Make a Contribution

Story by Anthony MacLean and Peer Jürgens

Five students from AFNORTH International School Brunssum wanted to act on their words. Through a successful bake sale, they raised a commendable € 900. With the cooperation of Herzogenrath Library, the funds were used to buy books to help teach German to refugees.



The Bake Sale was a great success!

“How to make a difference?”

This is a current topic in English at AFNORTH International School Brunssum, a school mainly for military children.

Lea, Peer, Amelie, Brian, and Anthony, students of the 10th Grade German Section, decided, together with their English teacher, Cornelia Gröbner, to make a difference, and organize a bake sale. Donations were to be used to aid the European Refugee Crisis. As Amelie, 15 years old, put it: “The campaign was an important experience for us – anyone can talk about helping – but actually doing something? That’s something completely different.”

German, Canadian, British, and American families all contributed in efforts to help bake, sell, and promote the cause. Through generous donations and great salesmanship, a total of over 900 Euros was gathered. Mediated by Dr. Uwe Bettscheider and Mr. Peter Friedrich, contact was established between the Library and the School.

Librarian, Sigrid Hamann, is happy about the unexpected aid: “The library is a place of information and education. We have also thought about how we could improve the teaching material for our German Language class. Knowledge of the language is very important for integration into a new society.” Through the donations of the AFNORTH Students, 77 new books could be bought, which were immediately available for loan.

Mayor Christoph von den Driesch is thankful for the special commitment of the students: “This is an exemplary action. I am especially glad for the Library-Team in Herzogenrath, which will profit, and allow German education to be easier.”

The importance of mediation is stressed by the voluntary German teacher for refugees, Gertrud Elsenbruch: “I appreciate the help of the library. Especially picture books are valuable aids for the teaching of the refugees.” Brothers Mehamad and Kusai Alobeid, two Syrian refugees, currently studying a crash course in German state: “the beginning is hard, but language is the basis for our continued integration in Germany”.

FA Community Shield 2015

Story and Photos by Sergeant (OR-6) Fabian Boettcher, German Air Force, Business Information Management, JFC Brunssum

The Football Association (FA) Community Shield is the annual pre-season match in England between the League Champions and the winner of the FA Cup. Traditionally, this takes place at the Wembley Stadium, in London. This year, the two opponents were Arsenal and Chelsea. It was a duel between two city rivals. Additionally, the Women's FA Cup Final took place on the same weekend.



SGT Boettcher at an empty Wembley Stadium



Wembley Stadium

As a little thank-you to the Armed Forces, serving members of the British Army, Royal Air Force, Royal Navy and a number of foreign military reps are invited to do a flag parade before the game starts.

From JFC Brunssum, a little detachment was there, including me. As a non-British native, it was a extra honour, to participate in the parade. On Friday 31 July we started the necessary training with our banner. Indeed it wasn't so easy to act in the right way. On the next day we joined the crowd to watch the Womens' FA Cup Final between Chelsea and Notts County where the outcome was a successful end for the ladies of Chelsea.

On Sunday we were tasked to be quite early at Wembley; 10 AM we started the necessary preparations for the match. This included a walk around the pitch, a final rehearsal and of course changing to Service dress. At 1:45 PM we entered the pitch and unveiled our banner as we had

been trained two days earlier. Unfortunately we weren't allowed to take pictures during the ceremony. After the players left the catacombs, the National anthem of Great Britain was performed by a famous singer and fireworks were launched. Afterwards we left the pitch and changed our clothes.

With a little hurry, we managed to enter our seats in the stadium 20 minutes after the start of the game. The match ended with a victory for Arsenal in front of 85000 people in the stadium. All in all, it was a unbelievable interesting experience.



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KRAMPUS

Adam Scott
Toni Collette

-- min

1900



18 DEC 2015 FRI

STAR WARS: THE FORCE
AWAKENS

Harrison Ford
John Boyega

136 min

1900



05 DEC 2015 SAT

THE GOOD DINOSAUR

Jeffrey Wright
Frances McDormand

100 min

1600



19 DEC 2015 SAT

ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS:
THE ROAD CHIP

Jason Lee
Justin Long

86 min

1300



05 DEC 2015 SAT

THE LAST WITCH HUNTER

Vin Diesel
Elijah Wood

106 min

1900



19 DEC 2015 SAT

STAR WARS: THE FORCE
AWAKENS

Harrison Ford
John Boyega

136 min

1600



11 DEC 2015 FRI

ALLIANCE PLAYERS Presents:
Christmas Carol

-- min

1900



19 DEC 2015 SAT

IN THE HEART OF THE SEA

Chris Hemsworth
Benjamin Walker

121 min

1900



12 DEC 2015 SAT

ALLIANCE PLAYERS Presents:
Christmas Carol

-- min

1900



25 DEC 2015 FRI

CLOSED



13 DEC 2015 SUN

ALLIANCE PLAYERS Presents:
Christmas Carol

-- min

1500



26 DEC 2015 SAT

CLOSED

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We wish you a Merry Christmas

One of Us

Colonel Hans Houf - Belgian Army

Country	: Belgium
Capital	: Brussels
Location	: Western Europe
Land Boundaries	: 1.297 km
Coastline	: 67 km
Population	: 11,239,755 (2015 Estimate)
Area	: Total 30,528 km ² , water 11%

Geographical regions:

Belgium has three main geographical regions: the coastal plain in the north-west, the central plateau, and the Ardennes uplands in the south-east. The coastal plain consists mainly of sand dunes and polders. Polders are areas of land, close to or below sea level that have been reclaimed from the sea, from which they are protected by dikes or, further inland, by fields that have been drained with canals. The second geographical region, the central plateau, lies further inland. This is a smooth, slowly rising area that has many fertile valleys and is irrigated by many waterways. Here one can also find rougher land, including caves and small gorges. The third geographical region, called the Ardennes, is more rugged than the first two. It is a thickly forested plateau, very rocky and not very good for farming, which extends into northern France and in Germany where it is named Eifel. This is where much of Belgium's wildlife can be found. Belgium's highest point, the Signal de Botrange is located in this region at only 694 metres (2,277 ft). Belgium has relatively few natural lakes, and none of any great size.

Economy:

GDP	: \$527.8 billion (2014 Estimate)
GDP per Capita	: \$50,510
GDP per sector	: agriculture 0.8%, industry 21.1%, services 78.1%, (2014 est.)

Budget:

Revenues	: \$227.3 billion (2012 est.)
Expenses	: \$243.2 billion (2012 est.)
Currency	: Euro (€)

Main Industries : engineering and metal products, motor vehicle assembly, transportation equipment, scientific instruments, processed food and beverages, chemicals, basic metals, textiles, glass, petroleum

Exports : \$314.6 billion (2012 est.)
machinery and equipment, chemicals, finished diamonds, metals and metal products, foodstuffs

Imports : \$325.2 billion (2012 est.)
raw materials, machinery and equipment, chemicals, raw diamonds, pharmaceuticals, foodstuffs, transport equipment, oil products

When did you arrive in the Netherlands?

I arrived in the Netherlands in February 2014. Actually this is my first position in Allied NATO structures. At the beginning everything was really new for me and I had to learn a lot.

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

I arrived in the Netherlands on the 2nd of June 2013 and was posted as the J35 Section Head Targeting with additional duties as HQ JFCBS Senior Land Staff Officer and Senior Belgian Staff Officer. Since the outbreak of the crisis in Ukraine I was appointed one of the JFCBS NATO Forward Integration Team (NFIT) leaders. In this position I am responsible for engagements with the three Baltic States and, as of early 2015, as the JFCBS NATO Force Integration Unit (NFIU) Programme Manager, for all six Host Requesting Nations (HRN). In my function as JTF HQ Chief Targeting, I participated in two major NATO exercises, Ex STEADFAST JAZZ 13 in Riga, Latvia, and more recently, Ex TRIDENT JUNCTURE 15 in Zaragoza, Spain.

Tell us about your military career

My military career started at the age of 17 at the Royal Military Academy in Brussels. On receiving my commission in 1988, I started my professional military education as a Field Artillery Officer and was also introduced to the HAWK and GEPARD Air Defence systems. My first assignment was with 6th Artillery Regiment in Germany, where I served as a Battery Firing Director, Firing Battery Commander and HHQ Battery Commander. In 1994, the 6th Artillery Regiment withdrew from Germany and I was reassigned to the Artillery School – 6th Artillery Regiment in Brasschaat, Belgium. At this location, I was the first Commanding Officer of the Charlie Firing Battery and Operations Officer at battalion level. In 1997-1998, I completed the Advanced Staff Course at the Royal Institute for Defence Studies in Brussels and was appointed afterwards to the Staff of the first Belgian Mechanized Division, where I served as G3 Operations and Operations Officer Field Artillery. In 2002, I was selected to attend the Canadian Command and Staff Course (CSC 29) in Toronto, Canada, where I graduated with a Masters degree in Defence Studies. In mid 2003, I returned to Belgium to attend the Belgian Advanced Studies for Security and Defence course in Brussels. In mid 2004, I was appointed to the Department of Strategy, Division Land Capabilities, Combat Support in Brussels where I directed the development of multiple concepts for the Belgian Land Forces capabilities. From May 2007, I assumed duties at the Staff of the Land Component in Brussels, as Chief 3D/Field Artillery and acting Chief 3D. In May 2009, I took command of the 2nd Field Artillery Battalion, and as of 1 July 2010, of the newly established Artillery Regiment as the first Commanding Officer. From 06 September 2012 till the end of May 2013, I was working in the Defence Policy branch of the Belgian Department of Strategy as the National Relations Manager responsible for the cooperation with other Federal Public Services. Early 2012, I was selected by the Belgian MOD to attend the Higher Studies for Security and Defence in Brussels.



Do you have any experience with other international missions?

I have participated in four missions abroad till now. My first experience was in the 1994 UNPROFOR mission as Belgian Liaison Officer to BRITBAT in Vitez, Bosnia. This was followed by two missions to Kosovo. For the first one in 1999, I was stationed in Mitrovica as J3 Current Operations working at the Headquarters of the French Multinational Brigade North and for the second one, in 2009, I was operating out of Pristina, as Belgian National Contingent Commander and HQ KFOR J5 Plans. In 2011, I also deployed to Afghanistan as Belgian Senior National Representative and Force Protection Group Commander on Kabul International Airport.

What do you like in your job?

What I like the most in my job is having the opportunity to work together with many professional and competent people, military and civilian, from within HQ JFCBS as well as from other NATO bodies and the NFIU HRNs of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. Hereby, I would like to take the opportunity to attribute the success of our targeting, NFIU and NFIU missions to all the people who have supported me in these undertakings. Working at HQ JFCBS is in fact all about serving the entire NATO community and its 28 Nations. And as Albert Einstein said: "We have to do the

best we can. This is our sacred human responsibility". And together, we can achieve great things!

What are your hobbies?

As life isn't about reaching a destination, I'm trying to enjoy the journey every single minute wherever I am. Winston Churchill said once that "no hour of life is wasted that is spent in the saddle". In my case this is the saddle of my BMW motorbike of course. On top of that, I like a lot of sports, such as running, biking, playing soccer, squash, downhill and cross-country skiing. I also enjoy to spend quality time back at home with my spouse Francine, our twins Sarah and Thomas (22 years old), our Cocker Spaniel dog and three cats. I consider my family as being the stable factor in this rapidly changing world. A place to feel safe and relaxed, a place to cherish the small things of life.

What are your future plans?

In the professional domain, I'm open to many things, but my preference goes to an operational or planning function in a NATO or other multinational environment. On top of that, I would like to find some time for deepening my knowledge of old gnostic, hermetic and sufi writings and for further improving my calligraphy and illuminating skills for developing medieval type illuminated manuscripts.

Did you
know



Tulips from Amsterdam ...or?

Composed by Ed Frieser.

Sources: Keukenhof Webpage and press department; Holland.com; China.org.cn; All aboutturkey.com; Tulipfestival.com.au; Tulipfestival.ca; Tuliptown.com; Fullstopindia.com; Wikipedia.

When entering the Netherlands via Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, souvenirs and enormous billboards show Dutch tulips welcoming you to the Netherlands. The song 'Tulips from Amsterdam' and the logo of the Dutch National Tourist Board let us believe that tulips are really our national symbol and originate from the Netherlands.



Keukenhof, the world largest flower exhibition and park attracted 1.2 million visitors last year.

History

It is true, Dutch tulip growers earn some 2 billion Euro's annually. And some 80% of Dutch tulips are exported. Most of these go to France, Germany and Great Britain. Freshly picked tulips can even be bought in New York the same day. Making tulips one of Holland's best export products. No wonder that Aalsmeer houses the world's largest flower auction. The world's largest flower exhibition 'the Keukenhof' just south of Haarlem near Amsterdam attracted over a million visitors last year. And let's not forget the Bulb flower Parade during the month of April in the urban agglomeration of Western Holland also regularly attracts some 1.2 million tourists. At present the TV soap the 'Black Tulip' runs on Dutch TV. But is the tulip really of Dutch origin and is it only the Dutch that are so proud of this beautiful flower?

Tulip History

Actually it is hard to find its native land. Some say it comes from Central Asia. Seljuk Turks introduced tulips to Anatolia in the 11th Century. The tulip was commercially

cultivated during the Ottoman Empire. Also in Turkish history tulips played an interesting role. The period in Turkish history - 1718-1730 - is called the "Tulip Era" under the reign of Sultan Ahmed III; making the tulip perhaps an even bigger national symbol for the Turkish than for the Dutch. It was in the 17th Century that the tulip was introduced to Europe. The Manisa tulips, which still can be found in the Spil Mountain National Park in Turkey, were taken to Europe. They became so very popular that in 1630 a true tulip mania erupted in the Netherlands. In 1637 some single tulip bulbs were sold for more than 10 times the annual income of a skilled craftsman. During the Dutch 17th Century, or the Golden Age, Dutch people bought up bulbs and they became so expensive that the tulip was even used as money until the market eventually crashed. The first economic bubble!

Iran

Probably lesser known but Iran can be seen as a native land of the tulip. Iranians are so proud of this that tulips are depicted on the Iranian Rial currency. In ancient Persia laudatory tulip

poems were written, many are still read today. Also the shape of the official Iranian emblem resembles a tulip. To memorialize people who have laid down their lives for Iran it is an ancient belief in Iranian mythology that if a young soldier dies patriotically a red tulip will grow on his grave.

Kazakhstan

The Karatau Mountains in southern Kazakhstan Central Asia are home to some of the most beautiful wild species. Over 36 different tulip species grow in these mountains but that figure may reduce as some become extinct. A famous location in Kazakhstan is the so-called Red Hill, where in spring thousands of red wild tulips are blooming. The Kazakhstan people claim that the tulip grew here even earlier than in Iran or Turkey but it is difficult to find out who has it right.

Canada

The tulip also became a symbol for the Dutch relationship with the Canadians. During World War II the Dutch Royal Family

lived in exile in Canada. Princess Margriet, daughter of former Princess Juliana and Prince Bernhard, was born in the Ottawa Civic Hospital on 19 January 1943. The Government of Canada temporarily declared the hospital room extraterritorial, several weeks before the birth of Princess Margriet, to ensure the princess would hold exclusively Dutch- rather than dual-nationality. Princess Juliana stayed until the end of the war in Canada. And immediately following the liberation of the Netherlands Princess Juliana sent one hundred thousand tulip bulbs to Ottawa in a display of gratitude for the Canadian hospitality and to commemorate the important role the Canadians played in co-liberating the Netherlands in 1944 / 1945. Since then each year ten thousands of bulbs are sent to Ottawa of which 3000 are for the Ottawa civic Hospital. The Canadian Capital also buys half a million tulips annually, making it one of Holland's most important tulip customers. This has led to the first annual tulip festival in Ottawa in 1953 and since then

comprises an abundance of tulip fields forming an enormous tourist attraction.

History Keukenhof

The history of Keukenhof, meaning "kitchen garden", goes back to the 15th Century. Countess Jacqueline of Bavaria, Jacoba van Beieren (1401-1436) gathered fruit and vegetables from the woods and dunes for the kitchen of Teylingen Castle. Keukenhof Castle was built in 1641, and the estate grew to an area of over 200 hectares. Landscape architects Jan David Zocher and his son Louis Paul Zocher, who also designed Amsterdam's Vondelpark, redesigned the castle gardens in 1857. That park, in the English landscape style, still forms the basis of Keukenhof. In 1949 a group of 20 flower bulb exporters came up with a plan to use the estate for a permanent exhibition of spring-flowering bulbs, signaling the birth of Keukenhof as a spring park. The park opened its gates to the public in 1950 and was an instant

success, with 236,000 visitors in the first year alone. Not all the flowers at Keukenhof grow outdoors: the pavilions are also packed with flowering bulbs, cut flowers, pot plants and shrubs. In the Orange Nassau Pavilion you can enjoy colourful floral displays that change every week. The Willem-Alexander Pavilion shows more than 115,000 tulips in over 600 varieties. During the last ten days of the season it is home to the world's largest lily show, a true spectacle. For eight weeks the Beatrix Pavilion offers the chance to enjoy a mass of orchids, anthuriums and bromeliads. Do not miss the Tulpomania exhibition in the Juliana Pavilion.

In conclusion, as the song implies 'Tulips from Amsterdam'... yes, but the tulip is also a part of the culture of many countries and became a symbol of world friendship.



Tulips facing the Aya Sofia Mosque in Istanbul. The period in Turkish history between 1718-1730 is called the "Tulip Era".

transferring the parks and flowerbeds in the National Capital Region and Quebec Region into Dutch tulip fields with more than 3 million tulips.

Keukenhof Spring Garden

There are many more fantastic tulip parks and festivals in the world such as in Sasebo and Tonami Japan, Taeon Nature World in South Korea, the Tesselar Tulip Farm close to Melbourne Australia, Tulip Town in the Skagit Valley close to Mount Vernon in the US State of Washington, Giverney Monet's Garden in France and Parc L'Indépendance alongside Lake Geneva in Switzerland and the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden Asia's largest tulip garden in Srinagar India. The world's largest tulip exhibition however is Keukenhof in Lisse, south of Haarlem, in the Netherlands. More than 7 million bulbs will be in bloom this coming spring, with a total of 800 varieties of tulips. The spacious 32 hectares of flowers comprise spectacular flower shows, surprising inspirational gardens, unique artwork and wonderful events. The "Bollenstreek" or Bulb Region between Amsterdam and The Hague

The park Keukenhof is open from 24 March 2016 - 16 May 2016
from 08.00 - 19.30. The ticket office is open from 08.00 - 18.00.

Address

Keukenhof (office)
Stationsweg 166a
2161 AM LISSE

Contact

www.keukenhof.nl
Telephone +31 (0)252 465 555
Fax +31 (0)252 465 565
Email: info@keukenhof.nl

By car

Keukenhof is located in an area known as the 'Bollenstreek' (Bulb growing region) between Amsterdam and The Hague and is easily accessible via motorways A4 (exit Nieuw-Vennep) and A44 (exit 3, Lisse). 'Keukenhof' is well signposted after the exit. There are plenty of parking spaces at Keukenhof.

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Nowadays, Rolduc Abbey is a hotel, restaurant and conference centre. It's situated in the hart of the 'Euregio'. Surrounded by the beautiful nature of the 'Worm' valley, the 'Anstel' valley and the 'Brunsummerheide' and only minutes away from the centre of Kerkrade and from cities like Heerlen, Brunssum, Valkenburg, Maastricht and Aachen, the abbey offers a perfect combination of silence and adventure. While some guests can enjoy the peace and quiet inside the abbey's walls during an overnight stay or a conference, others can take part in the numerous activities the surroundings have to offer.

Rolduc Abbey has 160 hotel rooms in three categories: economy rooms with shared bathroom, standard rooms with private bathroom, TV and telephone and comfort rooms with private bathroom, TV and telephone.

In the abbey's stylish restaurant 'Kloosterbrasserie de Kanunnik' you can enjoy lunch, a la carte dinner or a weekly menu. Our kitchen chef also prepares delicious buffets and dinners for groups



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Must See, Arts Highlight: Ceramix

A blockbuster exhibition on the use of ceramics by 20th and 21st Century artists. A selection of over 250 top pieces from international museums and private collections, works by over 100 artists incl. Matisse, Rodin, Picasso, Thomas Schütte and Ai Weiwei. With a varied event programme with lectures, tours and activities for children. Check out the film on www.bonnefantenmuseum.nl for an impression.

Art and ceramics from Rodin to Schütte Under the title CERAMIX, the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht, Cité de la céramique in France and la Maison Rouge (Paris also in France) are presenting a huge exhibition about the use of ceramics by artists of the 20th and 21st century.

Until January 31st, 2016 the Bonnefantenmuseum will be showing a selection of over 250 top pieces from international museums and private collections (including Victoria & Albert Museum in London, Museo Internazionale della ceramica in Faenza, Petit Palais in Paris, Marck Larock-Granoff, Isabelle Maeght, Alain Tarica and Luciano Benetton). It is a unique selection, with works by more than 100 artists, including Matisse, Rodin, Picasso, Thomas Schütte and Ai Weiwei. It is the very first exhibition to focus on the relationship between art and ceramics from the early 20th

century to the present. The premiere of this exhibition will take place in Maastricht, after which it will travel on to Paris and Sèvres in the spring of 2016.

Through more than 250 artworks, Ceramix tells the story of ceramic art from the beginning of last century to the present, with a strong focus on the post-war production of artistic ceramics and the contemporary art of Europe, North America and Asia. The artists selected have used the material in a variety of ways: from paintings and sculptures to installations in mixed techniques.

Ceramics are an important factor in the history of Maastricht as the ceramic industry played a prominent role in the economic development of Maastricht. Its pioneer was Petrus Regout who founded a modern, mechanised earthenware factory in 1836 which - from 1899 onwards under the name of Sphinx - grew into the most important pottery factory in Maastricht.

If you decide to go to Maastricht to see this exhibition you can easily park your car in the Ceramix car park near the library. This is less expensive than in the centre of town. The car park is within walking distance of the historic centre though.

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van Rodin tot Schütte

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Win Tickets for Arts Highlight: Ceramix

- We have 3 x 2 tickets for Ceramix in Maastricht until the 31st of January 2016.
- In order to win the tickets, please answer the following question:
- **Quiz Question: Who are the guest curators that selected the works for this exhibition?**

Fill in this coupon and send it to PAO, or send an e-mail to pao@jfcbs.nato.int, before December 17, 2015.

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

Answer:

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Full name:

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Winners

Brad Mehldau Trio

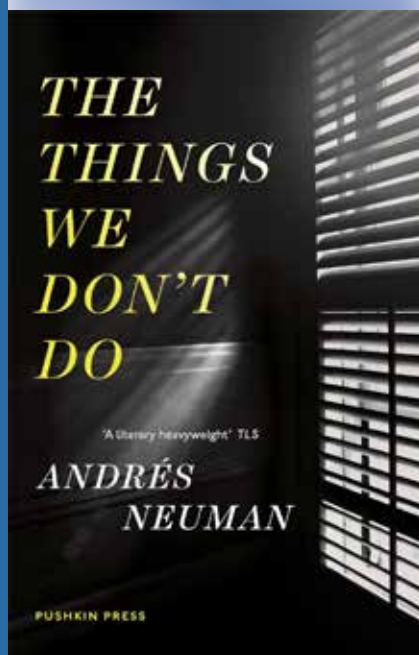
The Northern Star congratulates the lucky winners of the last contest.

Tickets won by:

Piotr Lisowski	NCIA
Tilemachos Tziatziafis	J7/TREX
Jean-Jacques Socasse	COS Office

We apologize for not being able to announce winners for "Battle – the show in Maaseik". Due to our absence we weren't able to pick winners. The show was in October and therefore there is no need to still pick winners.

Book Review



Things we don't do

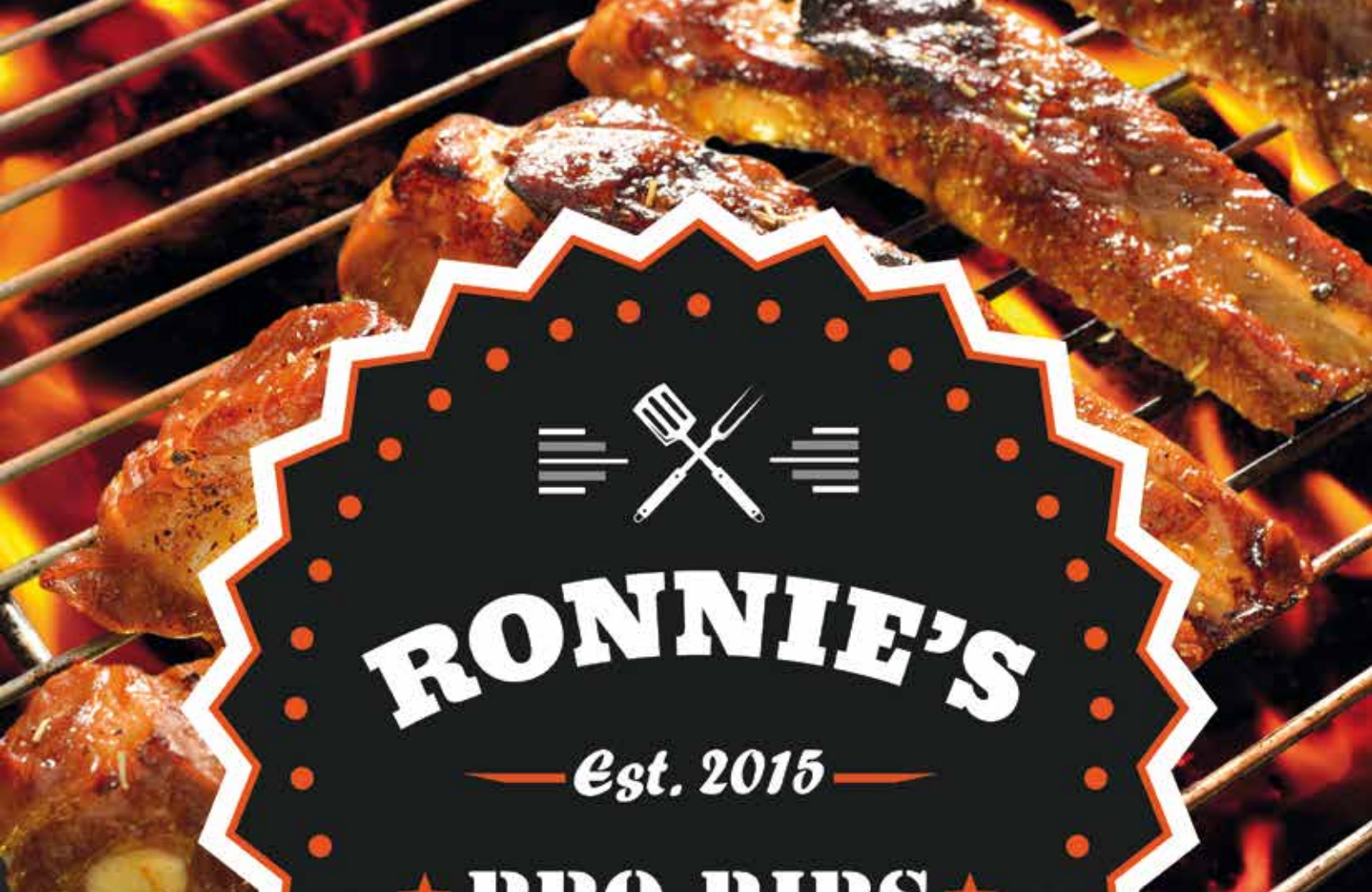
Anders Neuman
(Translated by Nick Caistor and Lorenza Garcia)

This is the first of Neuman's short story collections to be translated into English. A varied collection dealing with the break-down of relationships, the decision to end a life, and making friends with long held enemies, what powerfully strikes the reader is the beauty of this translation. Language springs from the page vitally, and each word finds its place in the story.

The title story is wonderfully short, each line adding to the creation of this world in which two lovers constantly make plans that never come to fruition. It is in these private hopes and dreams, these 'hypothetical languages' that the narrator finds something that defines love. Elsewhere in the collection, Neuman teasingly looks at the art

of translation itself, viewing it as a chain in which meaning is lost, then rediscovered in 'The Poem-Translating Machine'.

What sustains throughout the book is the skill with which the very best short fiction writers are endowed; the ability to twist these amusing stories into something quite dark with the turn of a phrase. In 'Mr President's Hotel' we begin with an obscure message in a hotel guest book and end with a character lurking in our peripheral vision, controlling the President's every move. The Things We Don't Do is an entertaining and profound collection which makes the reader consider the world in a new light.



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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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