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Brunssum Host
Try-a-Triathlon**

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The female winners of the Sprint Triathlon which was part of the JFC Brunssum Try-A-Triathlon 2013 at Geilenkirchen Airbase, 2 July 2013.

Photo by Jaroslava Augustinova, Public Affairs Office

Command Group Corner

As many of you may know, I will relinquish my responsibilities as your **Command Senior Enlisted Leader on the 29th July 2013 to Chief Warrant Officer Joe Ramsay from the Canadian Army.**

WOW, 3 years have gone by so fast. And so much water has gone under the bridge; we were on NRF Standby twice, changed the PE twice, changed the structure, moved offices, and conducted Lean Management. All while we trained, sustained, supported and conducted International operations, maintained old and started new relationships and educated others, just to name a few.

I had a privileged position, where I could step back and see the command as a whole, and one couldn't help to see how truly we are integrated with all the services and Nations, regardless of background, military or civilians, men or women all working with one goal – achieving mission success! It has been my distinct privilege to serve for, and with, all of you while we were accomplishing so much.

They say every day in uniform is a new chance to further develop as a person and leader. It is so very true for me as you should know that I have grown so much by having served beside all of you – who said old dogs can't learn new tricks! When I get a chance to reflect and look back, I know, I will cherish "the people" the most -- those I had an opportunity to

serve with, side by side. I've learned so much throughout my time here and tried to share my experiences. For that, I will be forever grateful.

I offer a few thoughts as I prepare for my departure. Remember to stay focused on the mission and the results. Whenever possible, leverage everyone's knowledge and experiences – especially as JFCBS continues to become deployable. Always push the envelope because you know what right looks like. You may have heard me say, you don't always need to think out of the box – just make your box larger.

I would like to highlight that it has been great to see our HQ look after its people so well from the family support group to the spouses' organizations and all those wonderful international events. What I learnt the most from my experience of a wide range of cultures is that we all may arrive at the finish line from a different direction, but we will still arrive together at the same spot and time.

Finally, simply said "thanks for what all of you do and will continue to do in the profession of arms while representing all of your nations". I would like to leave you with the three key words our Commander has said a few times; that this Headquarters must be Reliable, Responsive thus building a strong Reputation. Take Care!



Chief Warrant Officer Dave Preeper, Command Senior Enlisted Leader, JFC Brunssum

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Hamid Karzai, President of Afghanistan (left) with NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Photo courtesy of NATO HQ

Final Phase of Security Transition Announced in Afghanistan

NATO Commitment to Continue 'for years to come'

Courtesy story by NATO HQ

On June 18, Afghan President Hamid Karzai and NATO officials announced that Afghan security forces will enter the final phase of security transition and take the lead for the fifth and last remaining group of Afghan districts. Until the time of this announcement, these areas were under NATO-led responsibility.

The event was attended by the NATO Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen and the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), General Philip Breedlove. "This is a day for Afghans to be proud... and I am proud to stand with you," Mr Fogh Rasmussen said.

This event marks a significant milestone as Afghan security forces take the lead for security across the country, while the role of ISAF forces continues to shift away from combat to support, training, and assistance. This is in keeping with the goal set at the NATO Lisbon Summit in 2010 and reaffirmed at the NATO

Chicago Summit in 2012: Afghans taking full charge of their own security by the end of 2014.

"The transition to full Afghan security responsibility marks the start of a new phase in the evolution of our mission," said General Breedlove following the

ceremony. A decade ago, NATO led all combat operations while helping to build the foundations of new Afghan security forces. As these forces grew in capability and number, we evolved to partnered operations alongside our Afghan friends. Progressively, we transitioned away from leading combat operations and moved increasingly into a supporting role of training, advising and assisting Afghan forces. This transition milestone marks the point at which the Afghans move into the lead for security for their entire country. It is a significant step," he said.

ISAF forces will continue to be engaged in combat operations over the next 19 months, when necessary, and remain committed to supporting Afghan security forces in protecting all Afghans. After the end of 2014, the new Resolute Support mission will purely be focused on training, advising, and assisting Afghan forces. The move to this phase in the process was a joint decision made by the Afghan government and NATO. The transition process officially started on 22 March 2011, with the announcement of the first group of provinces, districts and cities to be handed over to Afghan security leadership. "With this announcement, we are entering the final phase of security transition," said General Joseph F. Dunford, Commander

of ISAF. "This is a cause for celebration, not apprehension. While the nature of our relationship is changing, the commitment of the international community to the people of Afghanistan remains resolute and enduring," he said.

Senior officials from the Afghan Government, the international community and ISAF troop contributing nations also attended the ceremony, which took place at the new Afghan National Defence university in Qargha, outside Kabul. Afghan soldiers and veterans, as well as young cadets from the Afghan security forces and ISAF also participated in the event.

"You today represent all the brave servicemen from this country and from our 50 nation coalition who have sacrificed so much for our joint effort. We honour you," Mr. Fogh Rasmussen said. He paid particular tribute to the wounded servicemen from the ANSF and ISAF, and to the memory of those who have given their life. Addressing the young cadets, he said, "Afghanistan's future is in your hands." NATO and Afghanistan, he said, will continue the journey to create a stable future "based on a new relationship that will remain strong for years to come."

NATO, as a part of the broader international community, is committed to supporting

Afghanistan through 2014 and beyond.

At the 2012 Chicago Summit, NATO and the Afghan Government agreed to establish a new mission called Resolute Support, to train, advise and assist the Afghan Security Forces after the ISAF mission concludes at the end of 2014.

"This new mission will be different from ISAF and will be significantly smaller in size," said General Breedlove. "It will not be a combat mission. It will focus on national and institutional-level training, and the higher levels of army and police command and it will be carried out in a number of locations across Afghanistan," he added.

At the Defence Ministers meeting on 5 June, a detailed concept of operations for the NATO-led post-2014 mission was endorsed. This document will guide military experts as they finalize the detailed operational planning in the course of the months to come.

The concept of operations blends political guidance with military considerations, and provides the basis for future planning. Now that the concept is approved, SHAPE will continue the operational planning process and will begin work on an operational plan. It is expected that a draft plan will be completed this summer.

Farewell after 46 Years of Active Duty

Story by HQ AIRCOM, Public Affairs Office

On Friday, 28 June, a quite extraordinary staff change took place at the helm of NATO's Air Command (AIRCOM).



All HQ staff lined up for a traditional Walk Out Ceremony.

After almost 46 years as an active member of the German Air Force, the outgoing Deputy Commander and Acting Commander, Lieutenant General Friedrich Ploeger, left the command at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

This departure not only marked the end of his three-year tenure at AIRCOM, but also

represented the final chord in the military life of Friedrich Ploeger. The General had an extremely busy schedule in his two last weeks in office. On 18 June he welcomed his successor, the incoming Deputy Commander, French Air Force Lieutenant General Dominique de Longvilliers. The following day, he travel to Berlin, where the German Armed Forces bode farewell to him with highest military honours and a

Großer Zapfenstreich tattoo at the Federal Ministry of Defence.

In his capacity as Acting Commander of NATO's single Air Command, he then conducted the second Air Commanders' Conference from 24 and 26 June at Poggio Renatico, Italy. This was also an opportunity for him to report off to his NATO air force commanders.

After returning to Ramstein Air Base on Thursday, he opened this year's Family Day at the NATO Air Command. The traditional event where nations present their culinary specialties was attended by some 450 HQ staff and their families.

On 28 June, the Chief of Staff of HQ AIRCOM, Major General Erich G. Siegmann, German Air Force, conducted the official farewell ceremony in front of the whole headquarters staff. He looked back on General Ploeger's military career and thanked his wife for all the years she was committed to support her husband. The ceremony was concluded when all HQ staff were lined up for a traditional Walk Out wishing their outgoing Commander well on his retirement.

NATO's Forward Air Controllers Trained Skills in Latvia

Story by HQ AIRCOM, Public Affairs Office

On 29 and 30 May, Forward Air Controllers (FACs) from Latvia, Lithuania and Poland cooperated with Allied fighters and helicopters from France, Estonia and Latvia and to train their skills in coordinating airborne missions in support of ground forces in fictitious scenarios at Ādaži Training Area in Latvia.



During the fifteenth Baltic Region Training Event (BRTE XV) the FACs conducted air-to-ground training to prepare for their pending deployment to NATO's ISAF operation in Afghanistan. FACs are usually employed on the ground to tell the pilots in their aircraft exactly where to go and employ their weapons or to guide them to their destination in support of friendly forces on the ground. They are indispensable especially in the ISAF scenario to ensure aircraft are employed to maximise precision and minimise undesired effects.

"This is the fourth time we've come to Ādaži

Training Area to train FACs and pilots for their real-world duties in Afghanistan. Even if NATO's combat mission there will end soon, it is important that we maintain the FAC capability for potential future operations. Here at Ādaži we have everything we need to provide FACs with challenging scenarios and we benefit from aerial support for the training from aircraft that are already stationed up here," said Lieutenant Colonel Oliver Habel, project officer for the FAC training from NATO's single Air Command at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

The synergy of efforts LtCol Habel referred to is due to the French Air Force detachment stationed at Šiauliai, Lithuania, until the end of

August. Their Mirage F1CR execute the NATO Air Policing mission for the Baltic countries; during BRTE XV the Mirage engaged a fictitious enemy force with their on-board cannon in support of friendly forces on the ground. In addition, an Estonian L-39 light fighter aircraft as well as a Latvian Mi-17 helicopter also simulated providing air support for the FACs.

"I am very pleased with the training event in Ādaži Training Area which once again assured the great importance of NATO's smart defence initiative. Not only the pilots of Allies who provide the air policing over the Baltic States but also the Latvian air controllers gained valuable skills during this training. Participation of the Air Defence Unit of the Latvian National Armed Forces also acknowledges our will to use every opportunity provided by our Allies to strengthen our defence capabilities," stressed Dr Artis Pabriks, the Minister of Defence of Latvia.

NATO's AIRCOM regularly conducts these BRTEs in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia reaffirming commitment and solidarity to the region. While some NATO countries deploy their fighter aircraft to ensure the territorial integrity of the three Baltic States, the latter make available air bases, air command and control entities and critically needed capabilities like the FAC personnel.

The next opportunity to train NATO FACs is scheduled in the Czech Republic and will occur in September during Exercise Ramstein Rover 2013.

In Iceland for Operation "Icy Skies"

Air Surveillance Interception Capabilities to meet Iceland's Peacetime Preparedness Needs

Story by the Italian Air Force Public Affairs Office

Keflavik (ICELAND) - On June 11, Italian Eurofighter aircraft, associated support staff and specialist crews of number 4^o, 36^o and 37^o Wings deployed to Keflavik Airbase, Iceland, for "Operation Icy Skies".

The operation is intended to provide a NATO air defence capability after the withdrawal of permanently stationed U.S. air assets from Iceland. The country does not operate autonomous airspace surveillance assets, which are provided temporarily instead by other NATO member nations. NATO conducts air-surveillance missions in Iceland as decided by the Alliance's North Atlantic Council in July 2007. Missions are carried out by NATO member states at an average of three times a year, for 2 to 3 weeks at a time.

Tactical control of Italian Eurofighters will be ensured by air defence controllers from GRCD (Air Surveillance Squadron), 21st and 22nd Radar Squadron, respectively, based in Poggio Renatico (Ferrara), Poggio Ballone (Grosseto) and Licola (Naples). They will ensure reporting and control services and airspace surveillance services within the Iceland AOR (area of responsibility).

Iceland operates an air defence and surveillance system (IADS) which is part of the NATO integrated Air Defence System, composed of four radar sites and centrally controlled Air Command and Control System. IADS supports



NATO allied air forces' air surveillance missions in Iceland in order to ensure that air sovereignty is maintained.

The operation kicked off last Friday, with the deployment of the Advanced Team, where the Italian TFA (Task Force Air) operates under the authority of the Italian Joint Operational Command (COI).

After an initial period for local orientation and dedicated training, leading to the NATO validation of the Italian Air Force assets, the Eurofighters are now providing Air Defence interceptor alert.

The Italian Air Force deployment is a clear example how NATO is sharing its resources among the partners. In these times of austerity, each euro, dollar or pound sterling counts. It is a new way of thinking about generating the modern defence capabilities the Alliance needs for the coming decade and beyond. It is a renewed culture of cooperation that encourages Allies to cooperate in developing, acquiring and maintaining military capabilities to undertake the Alliance's essential core tasks agreed in the new NATO strategic concept. That means pooling and sharing capabilities, setting priorities and coordinating efforts better.

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.

May 2013



31 May, Slovenian Permanent Representative to NATO visits Brunssum

His Excellency Dr Andrej Benedejcic met General Domröse (Commander Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum), Air Marshal Graham Stacey

(Deputy Commander) and other senior representatives of the Headquarters and used the opportunity to familiarise himself with the role and responsibilities of Joint Force Command Brunssum.

Beside other missions, the Slovenian Armed Forces have been present in Afghanistan since March 2004. The country assists in training the Afghan National Army, in Regional Command West, in Afghanistan's far-western Herat Province. Currently around 60 Slovenian troops are deployed to Afghanistan.



6 June, JFCB hosts Russian visit

Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum hosted a visit from Lt Gen Vladimir Zarudnitsky, Chief of the Main Operational Directorate, General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation; Maj Gen Alexander Burov, Acting Senior Military Representative of

the Russian Federation to NATO and their delegation. The visitors were received by the JFC Brunssum Deputy Commander, Air Marshal Graham Stacey. The visit took place as part of the ongoing program of activities of the NATO - Russia Council. The main areas of military cooperation between NATO and Russia are in the areas of counter piracy, counter terrorism, education, training, and search and rescue at sea. There is also a shared interest and solid cooperation in Afghanistan.

The NATO-Russia Council Helicopter Maintenance Trust Fund for Afghanistan has so far trained over 30 Afghan helicopter technicians, and provided spare parts for the Afghan Air Force's helicopter fleet. NATO and Russia have also trained over 2,600 counter-narcotics officers from Afghanistan, Central Asia and Pakistan. Russia also provides an important transit arrangement that helps sustain the NATO mission in Afghanistan.



10 - 11 June, US Airborne Corps visits Brunssum

XVIII US Airborne Corps senior leaders paid a two-day visit to Allied Joint Force Command (JFC) Brunssum at the beginning of a tour of several headquarters in preparation for their upcoming Afghanistan deployment in

2014. The Corps Commander, Lieutenant General Joseph Anderson, accompanied by the Deputy Commander, Brigadier General Wayne Eyre, met with General Domröse, Air Marshal Stacey and Lieutenant General Tieskens for office calls. The second day incorporated a series of briefings and follow-on discussions centred on current high-level ISAF issues including updates on transition, the status of ISAF redeployment planning, and the post 2014 mission. The XVIII Airborne Corps is the primary element of the United States Army designated for rapid deployment anywhere throughout the world. It is often referred to as "America's Contingency Corps". XVIII Airborne Corps have their headquarters at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

5 June, Baltic Defence College pays visit to Brunssum

A group of 59 officers from the Baltic Defence College visited NATO Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum. After welcome remarks by General Domröse, the students received a sequence of briefings to learn more about the role of JFC

Brunssum. The Baltic Defence College, located in Tartu / Estonia, is a multi-lateral co-operative military college which educates officers not only from the three Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), but also from NATO and EU States and other European States such as Ukraine, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Romania. The Baltic Defence College was established in 1999 and during the past years it has become an integral part of Baltic military cooperation.



10 June, Lieutenant General Messenger visits Brunssum

Deputy Commander Land Command (LANDCOM) Izmir was welcomed by the Commander Joint Force Command (JFC) Brunssum, General Domröse.

During an office call the Generals focused on the relationship and future cooperation of both headquarters within NATO's new command structure. Lieutenant General Messenger also used the opportunity to discuss current high-level ISAF topics e.g. the transition process, redeployment planning and the post-2014 mission with JFCB key leaders.

In addition, the status of preparations for NATO Response Force 2014 generated significant debate.

A lunch and final office call with the Deputy Commander, Air Marshal Graham Stacey, concluded Lieutenant Messengers' first visit to JFC Brunssum.



21 June, Commander's barbecue

General Domröse welcomed his guests to the annual Commander's barbecue at his residence. This traditional event is aimed to strengthen the ties with various civilian and military organisations and typically has guests from the political, religious, economic and local government arenas.



July 2013

Transformation Within Slovenian Armed Forces

Story by Colonel Zarko Henigman

'Alis grave nil' (lat.) - Nothing is heavy for those who have wings

In the turbulent environment that surrounds us organizations have to have courage in order to cope with challenges they are confronted by. When there is willingness, motivation and proactive action, there is always a solution to cope with the existing situation.

Today's adversary is a dynamic, adaptive foe who operates within a complex interconnected environment. A challenge confronting the Alliance is how to adapt from looking at two-dimensional time and space problems to the implications of a full PMESII¹ environment. This is not a small issue. It demands mindset and organisational change; and involves the generation of an improved understanding of the way in which the various systems that form the fabric of human society relate to one another and how some overlap such that they are nested in each other.

In concert with most other nations the Republic of Slovenia (RS) and Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF) are faced with these challenges. The issue is of course compounded because it comes at a time when further difficulties arise due to a complex economic environment that delivers problems limiting the availability of financial resources. If SAF wants to "survive" and continue to perform legal duties, it must respond on the appropriate way.

How to approach? Generally two ideas within NATO and the EU have appeared lately. The first is so-called concept of **Pooling & Sharing**. This has been developed within NATO and EU military structures and promotes the old idea of pooling and sharing some national military capabilities that fulfil the conditions of deployability and interoperability. The concept is based on a voluntary approach to find ways to reduce costs and to avoid duplication of facilities in order to fill critical deficits. The second is **Smart Defence** – a concept firstly publicly presented NATO Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, after the Chicago



Slovenian Armed Forces participate in multinational missions such as KFOR.

summit in 2012². As consequence of shrinking defense budgets the NATO leaders agreed to share the costs of weapons and equipment as part of a so-called "Smart Defence" initiative". Working together, the aim is to ensure NATO remains capable of responding to the security challenges

of today and tomorrow as no country, no continent, can deal with them alone. The nations hope to find common solutions to common problems. Secretary General Rasmussen explained the driver behind the "Smart Defence" initiative is primarily that the military must do more with less in a time of severe budgetary cuts as NATO members need to save

¹ Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure and Information

² Chicago Summit Declaration, May 2012

money in this time of the recession.

One particularly strong driver promoting Smart Defence is the imperative to make Europe more responsible for European security and the European zone of interest as the United States military withdraws from the continent.

In the Republic of Slovenia (RS) both initiatives are being implemented through established transformation

Transformation should not be seen as an external constraint, but as a conscious desire for something better, more efficient and last but not least as a basis for organisational "survival". In a rapidly changing and dynamic international environment transformation promotes the need for innovation and the development of modern technologies for the future.

This adaptation is nothing new. It is

the coordinated application of military capabilities to achieve desired strategic objectives. It is focused on actions and their influence on behaviour, rather than attrition and targets. EBO is the coherent and comprehensive application of the various instruments of the Alliance, combined with the practical cooperation of non-NATO actors, to create effects necessary to achieve planned objectives and ultimately the NATO end state.



processes in the SAF bearing in mind RS and the SAF must be capable to provide homeland defence and remain a credible partner in the Alliance.

Transformation

A major reorganization of the SAF is currently underway with the goal making them more effective at reduced cost. More than half of all commands have been disbanded which makes commanding the subordinated units easier and faster. Soldiers are to be located nearer to their homes in order to minimize travel costs. Since the SAF do not have enough modern armoured vehicles to maintain motorized battalions – meanwhile transformed into Regiments, two Combat Vehicles Centres (tracked and wheeled) have been organized within the Logistics Brigade, which now lends vehicles to any of four newly formed infantry regiments, as required. Reorganization also transformed 72nd Brigade from a support unit to a combat unit and thus put it on par with the 1st Brigade. Both brigades were added support elements, such as Air Defense, Artillery, Intelligence, etc. The operational units now consist of a Special Operations Unit, Naval Division, a Wing Command and three further brigades: the 1st (responsible for western Slovenia); 72nd (responsible for eastern Slovenia); and Logistics Brigade.

explained in Systems Theory as the essence of survival - existence of a system. Survival requires constant adaptation to the environment and the challenges it presents. Officials within the SAF are aware that we need to adapt and change, so that we can deliver on our commitments to the Alliance and are ready to defend our homeland.

The proposal for a new form of organizational structure is in keeping with the Theory of Systems and the concept of Effects Based Operations (EBO). It is also in keeping with the Comprehensive Approach (CA) philosophy that complements other conceptual thinking such as the indirect approach and mission command. It focuses on the end-state and on determining the effects that must be created in order to influence the behaviour and capabilities of key actors to achieve that.

According to its philosophy we have to consider the engagement space as a System in which all actors and entities interact to create effects and require an analysis of Systems of Systems to understand the relationship between actions and effects.

The CA Concept adopted by NATO is designed to influence the will of an adversary on our own forces through

We have realized that the armed forces and the entire defense system will be part of future political, technological and organizational solutions. The transformation is based on a non-violent, sophisticated and knowledge-based information society relying on changing defence and military structures, organization and functions, and the role of the military in society. In the Alliance and national environment, in security and also armed forces, the transformation process brings high expectations, as well as doubts. These can often be seen in the form of fear and uncertainty as conventional forces evolve and, in many cases, reduce in size. In a period of transformation, countries are setting the objective of forming an army, whose scope is smaller, but more efficient, more professional and modern, interoperable and capable of performing the mission of the various national and transnational tasks.

The dilemma provided by Smart Defence and Pooling & Sharing is well on its way to being solved within the SAF; as they strive to provide support to operations within the Alliance, they keep the mantra 'the optimal for us is also perfect for the Alliance' in mind.

General Domröse Visits Afghanistan

Story by Barry Mellor, Public Affairs Office, photos by Captain Kraus

The Commander Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum, General Hans-Lothar Domröse, visited the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission for his second situational awareness trip (SAT).



General Domröse during a press conference in Kabul.



Commander JFC Brunssum visits Regional Command North.

Note:- As Commander of the out-of-Theatre Operational Command (in Staff College terms "the supporting command") for the ISAF mission it is essential General Domröse conducts regular trips to Afghanistan for two reasons: a. To establish and maintain good personal relationships with ISAF, UN, Afghan and, on occasion, NGO, senior leadership, and; b. To establish and maintain his situational awareness of the latest campaign developments. Information the General gathers on such trips better enable him and JFC Brunssum to provide the support deployed colleagues require, enabling them to focus on the more immediate challenges they are confronted by on a day to day basis. At regular intervals between SATs (as they have become known) video teleconferences are conducted between the Commander and COM ISAF to discuss the most pressing issues however, experience demonstrates technology cannot completely replace a face to face discussion. Hence, the General makes three, sometimes four, trips to Afghanistan each year.

This SAT programme started in Kabul on 11 June and included meetings with Afghan military / civilian leaders and a visit to Regional Command North.

During this trip, General Domröse engaged, amongst others, with: Commander ISAF; the US Ambassador;

the German Ambassador; the Afghan Chief of Defence; and the Afghan Minister of Defence. The Commander also took the opportunity to take lunch with deployed JFC Brunssum personnel currently serving at Headquarters (HQ) ISAF. General Domröse enjoyed the company of his deployed staff, expressing his gratitude and pride as they support the headquarters' main mission.

Before leaving Afghanistan General Domröse answered questions posed by Journalists from Afghan and international media in Kabul, on 13 June. He stated NATO would not fully exit Afghanistan after 2014, although ISAF's combat role would evolve into one of training, assisting and advising by the end of 2014. The General went on to highlight the remarkable progress Afghan forces have made with regard to their combat ability over the past few years. He said that he was confident Afghan forces had the ability to maintain security on their own after 2014, saying NATO would gradually start pulling out its troops once the Afghan National Security Forces reached their agreed ceiling of 352,000 troops.

Invited to comment on the attack targeted on the Supreme Court building on 11 June, General Domröse said that, via the use of such attacks the enemy's of Afghanistan had demonstrated they wanted to promote anarchy in the country.

Postscript: The Taliban have since claimed responsibility for the 11 June

Supreme Court building attack that left 17 people, including women and children, dead, and 39 others wounded. Commander JFC Brunssum praised Afghan security forces for their quick response to the attack, saying they had been able to bring the situation under control in a short span of time.



General Domröse (middle) meets General Dunford, Commander ISAF.

FCE to ICE - Training the Transition

Story by LtCdr Grzegorz Łyko, photo by Jaroslava Augustinova, Public Affairs Office

Joint Force Command (JFC) Brunssum is preparing for NATO Response Force 2014 certification in November this year. In June a significant milestone, exercise Brilliant Bonus 2013 (BRBN13), was conducted at the Static War Headquarters Castlegate, Germany, and at Headquarters JFC Brunssum.



Commander JFC Brunssum meets staff at the Static War Headquarters Castlegate.

BRBN13 was an internal JFC Brunssum exercise that was designed to train headquarters personnel for the transition from the Forward Coordination Element (FCE) structure to that of the Initial Command Element (ICE) – one of the most important moments in the build-up to a fully deployed JTF HQ.

The aim of BRBN13 was to prepare the staff for the upcoming finale of the NRF certification process, exercise Steadfast Jazz 2013 (SFJZ13); to establish and foster greater understanding of the SFJZ13 scenario; as well as to establish a profound understanding of the concept of operations (CONOPS) and operations plan (OPLAN) of the mission foreseen in the scenario. The exercise was supported, within means and capabilities, by NRF 2014 Component Commands, the Joint Warfare Centre, together with the Baltic Nations and Poland.

BRBN13 focused more on shaping a desired mindset than the actual processes and procedures that will be

used. Working groups and coordination boards convened had the opportunity to brainstorm provided vignettes to exercise and evaluate standing operational procedures/instructions. This case study, developed over these few days, will provide a basis for real exercise scenario play that has been prepared for September, October and November.

And what is actually prepared? In September, JFC Brunssum will conduct the Battle Staff Training 2013 (BST13). This will be the final test before NRF 2014 certification. BST13 will be almost a full-scale exercise with the main aim of preparing the headquarters for the certification event. After the summer break and annual summer staff rotation, BST13 will provide an opportunity to build a capable and experienced team to conduct, not only the certification exercise, but also to run a major joint operation should the need arise.

SFJZ13 will be the largest, arguably most important, exercise for almost a decade. JFC Brunssum hasn't had an opportunity

to conduct an event of this size since 2006, when exercise Steadfast Jaguar was played. A new scenario, new setting, new mindset for the NATO Response Force will be trained, evaluated and certified. JFC Brunssum, within SFJZ13, will train for a joint operation together with, not only component commands of NRF2014 package, but also with the strategic level, Allied Command Operations (ACO). ACO will test the recently introduced Crisis Operations and Management Centre (CCOMC). During SFJZ13 a Live Exercise (LIVEX) will also be held across all domains, on the land, in the air and at sea.

Since 2012, the NATO Response Force (NRF) rotational period lasts 12 months starting 1st January. The operational command of the NRF alternates between the two NATO Joint Force Commands - (JFC) Brunssum, the Netherlands and Naples, Italy. In 2013, JFC Brunssum is in charge for training, preparation and certification of the NRF package for 2014.

Leaders from JFC Brunssum Visited the Joint Warfare Center

Story by Major Vanessa Hillman, Public Affairs



The Brunssum Team.

Leaders from Joint Force Command Brunssum stopped at the Joint Warfare Center (JWC) in Stavanger, Norway 12 June to visit

Brunssum members participating in International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Training Event (TE) 13-01.

Major General Michel Yakovleff, Deputy Chief of Staff Plans and Brigadier General Indrek Sirel, Assistant Chief of Staff Training and Exercises were given a tour of the JWC facility, briefings about the ISAF preparation exercise and conducted meeting with JWC leadership in preparation for ISAF TE 13-2/Unified Endeavor 14-1 and NATO Response Force Exercise Steadfast Jazz 2013.

ISAF TE 13-01 is a training event designed to prepare NATO and Troop Contributing Nations for their ISAF deployment; Brunssum is the lead NATO headquarters for 2013. Additionally, members from Brunssum served as reach-back support during the exercise. The Brunssum contingent consisted of 18 in the training audience and 10 in support roles such as subject matter experts.

Partner Liaison Teams Visit

Story by LTC Straso Stojcevski, J9/Military Partnership Branch

On Monday, 03 June, twenty one Partner Liaison Teams (PLTs) residing in the Military Partnership Directorate (MPD) at SHAPE from 16 Partnership for Peace (PfP) and 5 Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) countries visited the Joint Forces Command Brunssum (JFCB) to receive first-hand information of topical issues for the JFCB.

The visit was planned for and run by J9/Military Partnership Branch with the support of other divisions and branches in close cooperation with the Military Partnership Directorate in SHAPE.

The event was opened by Brigade General Petar Petrov, Assistant Chief of Staff J9. During his welcome speech, BGen Petrov highlighted that this was the first visit to JFCB by Partner Liaison Teams. Also, he said that this visit provided a good foundation for enhancing the strategic objectives of NATO's partner relations as well as military partnership, engagement and outreach. The Brigadier added that interoperability within NATO, and between NATO and Partner Nations is vital – not only technical interoperability, but, especially human interoperability – the ability to work together, communicate and achieve a common understanding.

The Partner Liaison Teams were briefed about the new NATO Command Structure, Regional Focus, the Deployability Concept and Information Operations. All presentations were very well received. Our visitors asked many additional questions with regard to the topics and were intensively involved in discussion not only during the briefings, but also during breaks. At the end, on behalf of the PLTs, the Partner Liaison Teams representative, LTC Hannu Mattinen, said: "This visit is important not



only for familiarization with JFC B but also for cohesion of the PLTs and mutual interaction between partners and NATO to enrich the current good relationship". The high value of the visit has been recognised

by both the PLTs and the JFCB staff who are aware of the importance of this kind of activity which builds reliable working relationships with the PLTs and partner nations.

The 5th International NATO and Partnership for Peace NCO Camp - Croatia

Story by CMSgt (OR9) Pedro Donaire (ESP AF)

The 5th international NATO and Partnership for Peace (PfP) Non Commissioned Officer (NCO) Camp was held in Split-Croatia, from 11 to 20 June 2013, and was hosted by Croatian Armed Forces (CAF), Command Sergeant Major Petek.



The main objective of this camp was to strengthen the relationships and share experiences among NATO and PfP NCOs. We learnt many things about Croatia's Armed Forces and much about the beautiful country of Croatia. Many NCOs attended this excellent Camp; there were representatives from Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Montenegro and Slovenia. The the NATO Command Structure was represented with NCOs from Joint Force Command JFCs Naples and Brunssum. CMSgt (OR9) Pedro Donaire (ESP AF), from J4, attended from Brunssum.

The Lora Naval Base hosted participants and provided primary support to the organizers, with personnel, facilities and maritime activities. The Camp lasted ten days; during this time, we participated in

a series of lectures, training workshops, visits and outdoor activities. The lectures focused on Croatian Armed Forces capabilities and were presented by the most senior Croatian NCOs of the Navy, Army and Air Force. Participants also presented briefings on their NCO Corps from the different nations. The program included guest speakers from ACO, the NATO School and CSM of Kosovo; CSM Dave Preeper (CSEL JFCBS) was the ACO speaker; he gave an interesting presentation about the NATO Structure and NATO's role in the ISAF mission.

The Camp had plenty of challenging maritime outdoor activities including: basic seamanship skills, rowing training, swimming techniques, rafting and kayaking. There was also a live fire training serial, where we could shoot with the new VHS-K automatic rifle, the old AK47 and HS pistol. Official visits were

conducted to the Croatian Navy Flotilla (Split), the Guards Motorized Brigade (Knin) and Zadar Air Force Base (Zadar). During our free time, we were able to visit the tourist sites of Split, Zadar, Brac and Trogir, supported by Camp Staff.

To conclude, I would like to thank the Croatian Armed Forces for a very professional, well organized and worthwhile camp. "Mission achieved", this CAMP strengthen our relationship and generated substantial mutual respect, all at the same time, utilizing a great experience in a most enjoyable environment. All of this was achieved due to the professionalism, energy and camaraderie demonstrated by the staff of the 5th International NATO and PfP NCO Camp.

Film Premiere in Brunssum

Story and Photo by MSgt Jan Hecht, Public Affairs

The documentary 'Militairen in de mijnstreek' (Military in the mining area) has been shown at the Joint Force Command (JFC) Brunssum Alliance Theatre.



Documentary maker Frederieke Jochems gives her opening remarks.

This was the first time in the headquarters history that JFC Brunssum has hosted a film premiere.

JFC Brunssum staff and more than 100 external guests attended this unique event.

The Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Richard G. Tieskens, welcomed guests and opened the event.

"I am aware an enormous amount of hard work has gone into the making of this film and that many of you have each made a personal contribution. Thank-you for

that." - the General said.

Turning to the producer and the director of the movie he went on:

"Henk Jakobsen, the film's Producer, has been an unstoppable driving force behind the project. His determination, professionalism and perfectionism provide the bedrock upon which the film has come to fruition. Without his drive, quite simply, we would not be here today. Thank-you for your outstanding contribution, Henk."

"And then we have the documentary's primary creative influence - Frederieke Jochems.

Frederieke first approached our previous commander - General Langheld - over a year ago, to outline an idea she had about telling the story of South Limburg, drawing upon her personal insight as a child growing up in the area. Frederieke's enthusiasm was clear to all but, importantly, her idea resonated with us. We, at JFC Brunssum, go to great lengths to sustain the excellent relationship we enjoy with the people of this area."

About the movie:

Documentary maker Frederieke Jochems returns to the place she grew up to make this thought provoking film. After the closure of the Hendrik Mine in 1967, the NATO HQs AFCENT settled in the abandoned mine buildings following President De Gaulle's decision to take France out of the Alliance's military structure. For years, thousands of miners brought 'black gold' to the surface; now soldiers from NATO member nations work together to maintain international security.

Drawing upon her personal connection with Brunssum Frederieke explores the world of the military and fate of the former miners. She captures moments of both worlds as they come together but also shows their mutual isolation. This is a layered documentary in which the local mine history and the globally oriented military world is woven from a personal perspective.

A reception in JFC Brunssum Club 13 concluded the premiere.

International Club Charity Committee Presents 30,000 Euro to Charities

Story by Nathalie Lhermenier, photo by Jaroslava Augustinova

On behalf of the International Club Charity Committee the Chief of Staff Joint Force Command Brunssum, Lieutenant General Richard G. Tieskens, presented 20,000 Euros to "Boomer's Legacy", a charity which has a strong link with the ISAF mission in Afghanistan, 5,000 Euros to "Scale Dogs VZW" and another 5,000 Euros to "The Elisa Orphanage".

On behalf of the International Club Charity Committee the Chief of Staff Joint Force Command Brunssum, Lieutenant General Richard G. Tieskens, presented 20,000 Euros to "Boomer's Legacy", 5,000 Euros to "Scale Dogs VZW" and another 5,000 Euros to "The Elisa Orphanage", all of whom have strong links with the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.

The 2012-2013 season has been highly successful for the International Club. Funds were mainly raised through the November Craft Market (5500 Euros) and the Charity Night party (4,000 Euros). The Club has conducted a wide range of activities throughout this period e.g. the "Tour of Christmas Homes"; a large number of trips; many international "coffee mornings"; and courses such as jewellery making, tennis, cooking, walking, Dutch culture and French conversation. Many thanks to all who helped make this year a real success.

International Club registration is open to all NATO ID cardholders at a fee of 15 Euros.



Lieutenant General Richard G. Tieskens, Chief of Staff, presents 5,000 Euros to "Scale Dogs VZW".

Events and activities are held throughout the year. Members also have access to the Club Facebook group ("JFC Brunssum International Club") that informs of all club activities.

Find more details on JFC Brunssum website / community page.

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NATO Triathlon Team Brunssum Hosts Try-a-Triathlon for the 3rd Time

Story by Major Sascha Verheyen, NTTB Chairman, photos by Jaroslava Augustinova

On Sunday, 2nd June, the annual Try-a-Triathlon took place. Due to the much better facilities on GK Airbase, NATO Triathlon Team Brunssum decided to conduct this community event for the first time at the E-3A compound. Ninety-one triathletes, young and old, responded to the call from NTTB, to participate at this 3rd event, a serial that has now become firmly established in our yearly calendar.



NTTB presented 825 Euro to Amber and Michiel Vandeweert, who are suffering from a disease called Progeria.

With the weather-gods supporting us, underneath a bright and sunny sky, two waves of children started set off at 10 o'clock. But the work actually began much earlier for the young triathletes as race preparation is crucial and an essential element of any triathlon.

First, all participants had to check-in to the Transition Zone (TZ) where they also could address their first needs and questions way before the start: "What time do I start, do you have my race number, how do I use the ENDURANCE SHOP belt ..." Thereafter bikes and the helmets were checked. Those who passed successfully were welcomed in the TZ to organize their spot which needed to serve for two transitions. Others needed to do some maintenance to their bikes at the John

Willemsen support tent before being allowed to compete. Many parents were astonished at seeing their children taking orders so easily in the TZ.

As the first wave of children transferred the swimming pool into a huge washing machine, the adults were already mentally preparing for their events. According to their choice, they would have to do more or less rounds on the airstrip for the cycling part and on the running course next to the pool. The airstrip generated an increased interest since it was quite unique for a triathlon competition. Although cycling downhill on the runway the reasonably strong wind provided a challenge.

Whilst, in the children's event, the kids converted their TZ into an area of devastation by switching from the bike to the running part, the whistle

blew for the first adults to attack their sprint distance in the pool. For most triathletes swimming is the hardest because it is the most difficult to learn and to improve upon. Unsurprisingly, most adults were more than happy to swap the claustrophobic, noisy and sometimes painful pool serial for the wide open and silent area on the airfield. Intense breathing was the only sound to accompany them while being alone on the airstrip next to the huge airplanes.

In the meantime, the kids started proudly crossing the finish line. They immediately received their medals from Amber and Michiel Vandeweert. The Family Vandeweert were the special guests of the day. They have been chosen by the NTTB to be the focus of our charity project. By finishing the triathlon the kids achieved something

special: they proudly entered the family of real triathletes. And you could read it from their faces. This was neither a running contest nor an ordinary football game for them. This was the completion of a mythical sport called triathlon.

Some of the children nevertheless still had reserves of energy and parents were happy to see a bouncing castle set up for them. While the kids were jumping, parents enjoyed a typical German bratwurst, with drinks thrown in for nothing. However, the food was sold to support our charity project. This time NTTB decided to help Amber and Michiel Vandeweert, who's father is serving at JFCBS. Amber and Michiel are suffering from a disease called progeria and, with the money collected, we hope to enable them to enjoy some nice moments during their annual Progeria Meeting later this year, this time in England. We thank Amber and Michiel for being with us on this day. NTTB is happy to announce that 825 Euros were raised. Thanks to all of you who supported our project.

Erstwhile, under a warm and sunny sky, the first adults were starting to switch from the cycling to running stage.

The athletes will most probably not have recognized that they received their first supplies on the running track out of the hands of Major General Andrew M. Mueller, the current E-3A Component

Commander, who was helping his daughter to fulfill her community work. Observing the running part was the best proof that this event has really touched our community. Everybody enjoyed this event, no matter the quality of their performance. When the last competitor was announced to enter the stadium he was as warmly welcomed as the winner because, in triathlon, everyone is a winner, no matter the position in which you finish.

The Commander JFC Brunssum, General Domröse, together with Major General Mueller, presented medals, trophies and the gifts in a ceremony at the end. The gifts, mostly sponsored by some dedicated vendors, were of great interest. Even the legendary Mark Allen sponsored a training schedule. Can you imagine? Second and third places were able to receive some nice presents from the Canadian Corner, Snow World Landgraaf, Kinderstad Heerlen, Kasteel ter Worm and USA Triathlon. I personally thank all these sponsors for their contribution. The winners were overwhelmed by your support. Thanks!

As the last people left the competition area we, the triathlon team, were able to look back on a tremendously successfully day. Everybody seemed to have enjoyed themselves and no accidents were reported. It was worth



all the organization during the weeks beforehand. And maybe, some of you have found some interest in triathlon and might even to do it again. But, be careful, because maybe you end up some day with a dream of participating on Kona (large annual triathlon event in Hawaii), like I do. And maybe we meet again.....in Kona.....sometime.....maybe.

Have a nice day and never give up!

Belgian Community Invites for Lunch

Story by Guido Vandersteen, Commander Belgian Delegation

On Wednesday 05 June 2013 the Belgian community hosted their annual Belgian Flag Lunch at the International Conference Centre.

The intent of this event, which was open to Hendrik Camp's service and civilian personnel as well as their families, was to provide a venue in which the international Brunssum community had the opportunity to learn about the Belgian gastronomy and culture within a spirit of camaraderie.

With 215 attendees, it was a full house that day! Different Branches and Delegations participated in this cohesion building activity. People who came alone quickly found themselves part of one big happy family during the lunch.

After his welcome speech, the Belgian Senior National representative, Brig Gen Eddy Staes, invited the Commander JFCBS, General Hans-Lothar Domröse, to open the delicious food buffet with typical Belgian dishes prepared by the Military Mobile Cooking Team of the Belgian Armed Forces. The Dixieband of the Royal Band of the Belgian Air Force added lustre to the party with their sweet music. Everybody had the possibility to



taste Belgian sparkling water or even better, a Belgian beer or jenever offered by the Jenever Fraternity of Hasselt.

Before opening the dessert and cheese buffet, there was a raffle with typical Belgian prizes like chocolates, beer, Belgian sparkling wine, typical delicacies from Liege, an overnight in the Military Prince Albert Club in Brussels or a

weekend stay in the Ardennes, ...

Not only winners returned home with a prize; each participant received a goody bag with historical and touristic information, some chocolates and a bottle of the Blegny miner's beer. It was a great event in which our international friends were plunged into the Belgian culture for one afternoon.

3rd Other Ranks Association Sports-Challenge

Story by: AdjtChef (OR-9) Patrick Potloot – Chairman ORA; photos by MSgt Jan Hecht Public Affairs Office

For the first time in 3 years the weather was not the enemy for the teams participating at the 3rd annual WHO DARES WINS competition which took place in and around the base, 6 June.



A Belgian team starts to its first challenge.

Ten teams signed up for this competition and were willing to compete against each other. Amongst them, and for the last time in his military career, the Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL) planned to participate as his warrior spirit has become an integral part of his life. However, the main goal was to have fun and foster comradeship within the teams.

Each team consisted of three members. Participants were in high spirits and appeared to enjoy the physical challenge.

Some of the teams were mixed, men and women, and one all-female team participated.

After the briefing the Chairman, Patrick Potloot, opened officially the competition at 0815 A.M.

The first team to start, "The Glimburgers" (Belgian), jumped into the water as their first mission was to swim 50 meters dressed in uniform, carrying a rifle and a pair of combat boots.

Every 6th minute a team had to jump into the water. After leaving the swimming pool the teams had to go as fast as possible to the second activity located at the sports field where a pistol shooting range was organized.

Finding the shortest way to the "sandy beach" in the Brunsummerheide to compete in a sack race had to be done next.

After this all athletes had to search the next location and be ready to partake in the 'surprise activity'. Keeping in mind the activity from last year, the participants learned very well the names of their Commanders but surprise, surprise, a skiing serial was the plan this year.

Last but not least three grenades had to be thrown into a circle by each team member to gain as many points as possible.

To finish the competition, and determine the total time for the orientation element, all teams had to make their way to 'Josie's Restaurant', in the NCIA building.

After the sportive part of the event all Other Ranks were invited to join a pasta party inside the Alliance restaurant and enjoy an "after competition chat" with the other participants.

During the monthly gathering Command Warrant Officer (CWO) Dave Preeper gave us the honor to present the medals to the winning teams.

The "Who Dares Wins" cup was handed to the overall winner, a team from the Headquarters Joint Force Command Brunssum. Congratulations!

The Chairman, Sergeant Major Patrick

Potloot took the opportunity to say farewell to the Other Ranks Association (ORA) as the acting Chairman. His team, OR-8 Neil Fletcher, OR-6 Chris Beaudoin and last but not least OR-6 Sean Holmes received a gift from their Chairman as they will all step down as committee members, as 'End Of Tour' dates draw near. Thank you all for the work done.

Finally, a gift was handed over to the CSEL, CWO Dave Preeper, for his leadership, support and friendship, a great leader who will never be forgotten in the ORA family.

Everyone who took part had a memorable day.

But, of course, now those of us that remain look forward to the 2014 "Who Dares Wins" competition.

Never give up!!

Ranking:

1. JFCHQ – Estonian team - STONE

2. NCIA/SSG/Tech Support – B.I.T.E.

3. JFCHQ – Belgian team – The Glimburgers



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Children interested in this program should register at the library starting 25 June. Children will check out and read books from the JFC HQ Brunssum Library and receive a variety of prizes for the number of book they read. Pre-school children may earn prizes by having books read aloud to them. There will be a drawing for an tablet for children ages 12 to 18 years old who complete the program. For more information call 0031-45-526-2669 or 0031-45-526-2469.

The JFC HQ Brunssum Library is open to all U.S. and NATO ID card hold-ers in the Tri-Border Community.

Our location is next to B&S Central Store.
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JFC BRUNSSUM ALLIANCE THEATER Movie Schedule

Sat. 20 July / 16:00

**STAR TREK INTO
DARKNESS**

Chris Pine
Zachary Quinto

Sat. 27 July / 16:00

**STAR TREK INTO
DARKNESS**

Chris Pine
Zachary Quinto

Sat. 20 July / 19:00

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AFNORTH International School's 46th International Awards Ceremony

Story by Rose Wehrens, Directorate Secretary AIS and Dr Uwe Bettscheider, Director AIS

Student Masters of Ceremonies, Alexandria Bellas and Luka Hahn welcomed distinguished guests, parents and teachers to a ceremony and reception in honour of the AFNORTH International School's most outstanding secondary students.



This ceremony celebrates excellence by honouring those students who have made extraordinary contributions to the international life of our school. Students took the opportunity to learn, on a daily basis, tolerance and respect for those from other backgrounds, forged friendships that cross national and cultural borders, and learned that as different as we may be, there is much more substance that unites us than divides us.

The ceremony began with JROTC cadets' presentation of colours. During the ceremony, attendees enjoyed wonderful and high quality musical performances by Melody & Elizabeth Hubbs, Kristen Yasenchak, Sophia & Verena Essrich, Victoria Bone and Paul Mitchell.

Drama teacher, Kim Penzhorn, presented the award for excellence in acting to Koenraad Hogenbom. Jamie Moul and Hayle Stoner were awarded for their dedication and excellence in art by Ms Kimberly Wayland, Deputy Garrison Manager US Army Garrison Benelux-Schinnen. Victoria Bone and Claire Riebling were awarded for their dedication and excellence in music by Ms Verena Essrich, music teacher of AIS.

Dr Gloria Hajat, principle of U.S. middle and high school, Dr Constance McLeese, Canadian principal and Lt Colonel Michael Lamb, Branch Head, Family Support, Moral and Welfare Joint Force Command Brunssum presented the "Student Service Awards" to Nicole Jones, Maike Wagner and Sonja Narug. This group were recognized for their voluntary service outside school hours

to the student body, the school in general, and the community.

Natasha Snider, Sarah Seitz, Danielle Beland and Sophia Essrich were recognized for significant contributions to their national sections. Awards were presented by Dr Iris Gerloff, German Principal, Navy Captain William Silkman, Branch Head Policy Branch JFC HQ Brunssum, Navy Captain Paul Hendry, Branch Head Business Information Management JFC HQ Brunssum and Dr Uwe Bettscheider, Director of AIS.

Sophia Essrich was also presented the Jean Elder Award for outstanding participation and leadership demonstrated in the student government simulation program by the chairman of the simulation programme and Assistant Director of AFNORTH International School, Mr Robert Bindels.

The award presented to the top female and top male athlete in memory of David Newell, who died in an accident while his father was Head of the British Section of AIS, was handed to Hope Bonenclark and Nuri Karaca by Col Wildish, Engineer Operations Branch Head Joint Force Command Headquarters Brunssum.

Major General Andrew Mueller, Commander NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force E3A

Component, presented the European Council of International Schools Award to Philipp Karich. Philipp was honoured with this Award in public recognition as the student who best exemplified the principles of good international citizenship.

The most prestigious school award is as old as NATO's presence in Brunssum. It was initiated by General Johann Graf von Kielmansegg who was the first CINCENT in 1967. The Graf

von Kielmansegg award is presented for distinguished contributions to the international goals of AFNORTH International School. This year we recognized Grace Katzenson. The award was presented by General Hans-Lothar Domröse, Commander Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum.

Congratulations to the above students and special thanks to their teachers and parents for supporting them.



Graduation 2013 AFNORTH International School



The graduating class of AFNORTH International School. June 14, 2013 at the Parkstad Limburg Theater, Heerlen, The Netherlands. "We Came, We Conquered, We Survived", was the class motto.



Great graduation ceremony in the German department. Congratulations to the graduates!



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Experience the Country Life

Castle Aerwinkel in Posterholt, close to the German town of Heinsberg, is going to host the event 'Experience the Country Life 2013' on 31st August / 1st September.



More than 60 different stalls will offer various home-made products like fudge, chutneys, marmalades, oil & vinegar, wines but also pumpkins, outdoor

clothing, antiques, flower decorations, jewellery, garden ornaments, Irish products and much much more.

During both days a varied program,

including demonstrations with different animals such as sheep, puppies, shire horses and hunting dogs, as well as a fashion show will ensure fun for the whole family.

As in the previous years the contest 'Strongest-Men of Limburg' is going to be one of the highlights. The complete program for both days can be found on the following website: www.proefhetlandleven.nl

Castle Aerwinkel was built by the famous architect Cuijpers. The beautiful garden is an attraction in itself and worth a visit. The owner of the castle will give a guided tour through the castle on both days.

Castle Aerwinkel is located at: Aerwinkelallee 2-6, Posterholt. Opening hours are from 11a.m to 6 p.m and the entrance fee is 4 Euros. Children below 12 years of age are allowed free entry.

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One of us

Lieutenant Colonel Janez Pungarsek

Country: Slovenia

Population: Just over 2 million

Capital: Ljubljana

Head of State: Borut Pahor

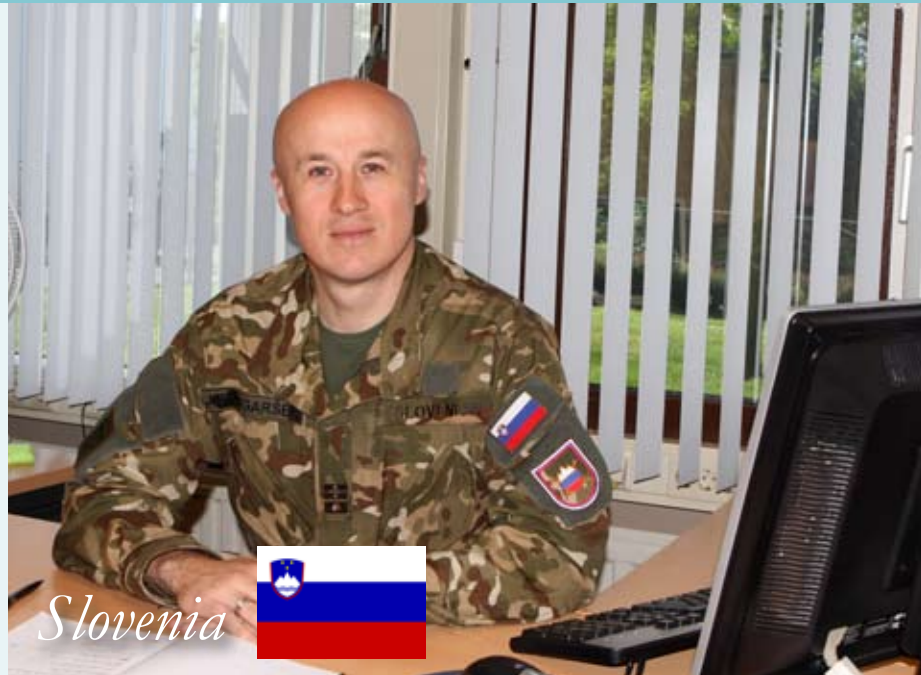
Area: 20.000 square kilometers

Climate: From alpine in the North to mediteranian in the South and panonian in the East

Currency: Euro (from 2007)

Military: The Slovenian Armed Forces provide military defence independently or within an alliance in accordance with international agreements. Since conscription was abolished in 2003, it is organized as a fully professional standing army. The Commander-in-Chief is the President of the Republic of Slovenia, while operational command is in the domain of the Chief of the General Staff of the Slovenian Armed Forces. In 2008, military spending was an estimated 1.5% of the country's GDP. Since joining NATO, the Slovenian Armed Forces have taken a more active part in supporting international peace. They have participated in peace support operations and humanitarian activities. Among others, Slovenian soldiers are a part of international forces serving in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Afghanistan.

According to the 2012 Global Peace Index, Slovenia is one of the world's most peaceful countries.



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

I've arrived in Brunssum in July 2012. First I was appointed to the Joint Assessment Branch and now I have settled in J3, Effects and Influence Branch (PSYOPS).

Tell us about your military career.

I've been in the Slovenian Armed Forces since June 1991 and participated in the Slovenian Independence War. Until 1999, I worked in Communications and INTEL. Between January and July 2000 I was deployed to Kosovo as the chief media analysis section. After that I held a number of different posts in the General Staff. I was actively involved in Slovenia's accession to NATO with responsibility for the 'Partnership Goals' aspect. I studied at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, specialising in European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) from 2002 to 2003. Between 2004 and 2008 I was assigned to Brussels as Slovenia's national delegate to the EU Military Staff Working Group (HTF). In 2008, during the time of Slovenia's Presidency of the Council of the EU, I was co-chairman of the European Union Military Committee Working Group. Following this I held a command appointment in my country's 132 mountain infantry battalion. Between 2011 and 2012 I was deployed for my second mission, this time to UNIFIL in the Lebanon, where I was a contingent commander. Since July 2012 I've been at JFC Brunssum.

Do you have any experience with other international missions?

As alluded to, I was deployed to KFOR, UNIFIL (Lebanon) and to the EU (Brussels)

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

I am in J3, Effects and Influence, where I work in PSYOPS. It is a challenge since I am new in this functional area. In my country we don't have this kind of capability, hence it is an opportunity for me and my armed forces to get more acquainted. I have completed the necessary functional training and now it is time to put theory into practice. I am very lucky since I work with really experienced PSYOP-ers who are always ready to share their knowledge and experience. Who knows, maybe my country will decide to develop this capability. If so, they would be able to obtain practical guidance from my colleagues and me. I always say: "not having it does not allow you to ignore it".

Is your family here with you?

Yes, I am a father of three outstanding boys (8, 7 and 2 years old) and, together with my wife, they are my huge supporters. It is not always easy, as you can imagine, but without them it would be much more difficult. We only function as a team.

What are your hobbies?

There are many. My favorite are: mountain climbing, free diving, amateur radio, electronic kit building and, more recently, running.

What do you like in your job?

I always enjoyed working in multinational environments. JFCBS is a perfect environment for me. It is so much fun to share experience with different nations and listen to their views. It makes our professional lives much more enriching and rewarding.

Can you shortly describe your country?

Rather small, but you don't have to say it, since Slovenians don't like that. Every point in Slovenia can be reached within a maximum 3 to 4 hour drive. Slovenia has high mountains in the North, the Adriatic Sea in the South West and, to the East, mainly flat land. Culturally, Slovenia is a mixture of many backgrounds; the predominant one deriving from Austrian and Bavarian influences and much of the architectural heritage reflects that. Food is outstanding; wines are exquisite. Industry embraces a variety of products from household electronic appliances, software, high tech solutions, nano technologies, all the way to food production and the exportation of raw materials such as wood. Slovenia also produces the world's widely acknowledged best electric and light airplanes (Pipi Strel). The vast majority of the country is covered by forests. In Slovenia you will still find large brown bears, wolves and bob cats. The population of brown bear is so huge, that we are often forced to limit their numbers. Luckily for them, instead of being shot, they are often exported to countries where their numbers are already critically low (mostly to France and Italy). Wine has a special place in Slovenian culture. It is highly prized, a theme of many friendly discussions, and considered a food product (thus attracting lower taxes) and is even mentioned in our national anthem.

Your future plans?

Who knows. With my armed forces I am used to expect the unexpected. And this is why I really like my job. Every few years you are given a completely new experience. Isn't that great?

Did you know? The New Dutch Herring Has Arrived

Story prepared by Ed Frieser, photo by Evert-Jan Daniëls, Source: Fish Promotion Holland

A closer look at this typical Dutch traditional sea food

In the beginning of June the new fresh herring, also referred to as “Hollandse Nieuwe” (Dutch New) or “Maatjes Haring” arrived in the Dutch sea food shops. Many consider it a delicacy but there are still many others who don't like eating a “raw” herring. To help understand what fishermen do to assure the great taste and that you can tastefully eat “raw” herring, this article will explain how this is achieved. Add a little bit of history to the story and hopefully you will understand and appreciate this typical Dutch tradition.

“Hollandse Nieuwe”

The herring feeds itself with fish larvae, copepods, clear krill and other minuscule sea creatures. On their turn these creatures eat vegetal plankton, which are the first food organisms in the food chain. Plankton needs sun light and warmth to develop. Spring and summer with more sunlight are an important period for the herring. Lots of sun means lots of food for the herring. The food is transferred into fat and is stored in the intestines and the muscle structure. The “Hollandse Nieuwe” herring, is therefore raw herring from the catches around the end of spring and the beginning of summer. The past months though were registered as too cold for the time of the year. Hence, this year the new herring arrived a few weeks later due to lacking sunshine and warmth. This new herring must meet certain fat standards of 16 to 25 percent to be tender and well fed and get its predicate “Hollandse Nieuwe” or “Maatjes”. After some time the fat changes in a sort of oily layer, which is already visible immediately after its catch, making the skin thinner. After maturing, the skin can easily be peeled off to ease cleaning and preparation. Because of the excellent conservation methods and knowledge of the maturation, the consumer can



actually eat “Hollandse Nieuwe” all year around.

Gibbing

The maturing process of the herring starts on board the Dutch freeze trawlers by removing the intestines and gills from the herring. This is called gibbing. The process of gibbing was invented in 1380 by a Dutch Zealand fisherman, Willem Beuckelszoon van Biervliet. Gibbing is the process of preparing salt herring (or soused herring), in which the gills and part of the gullet are removed from the fish, eliminating any bitter taste. The liver and pancreas are left in the fish during the salt-curing process because they release enzymes essential for flavour. Because the gills are removed the fish can lose its blood optimally and is not entering the fish meat. Therefore the end product will be more pink-white. Around the bone there should

be no blood. The fish is then cured in barrels or “kantjes” as the Dutch say with one part salt to 20 herring. This ensures that the herring flesh matures. The herring will lose some of its cell fluids which will be absorbed by the salt through the process of osmosis. The salt will become brine and the herring gets its slight salty taste. After one day the herring is put into plastic buckets of some 6 kilos and mixed with the brine. The buckets are then placed in freezers. By freezing, the herring can be kept for months. As a consequence later in the year one can still eat relatively good quality herring. But the Dutch prefer the herring when it enters the harbour and the first new herring is sold in the shops. It is typically eaten with raw onion. Well I hope you learned something of this typical Dutch traditional food item. Try it and hopefully you will enjoy it.



Place to visit: Fun Valley Maastricht
Distance: 37 kilometers
Further Information: www.funvalleymaastricht.nl

Have Fun in Fun Valley

Story by MSgt Jan Hecht and Fun Valley Maastricht, photos by Fun Valley

Listening to the weather forecast and looking out of the window makes us carefully optimistic that the real summer is here. Let's hope that the "never ending rain season" is finally gone (at least for a couple of weeks). Truly spoken it would be the right moment as the summer holiday season starts, pupils and students are released from schools and parents have to think how to entertain their children and make their summer beautiful and unforgettable.

Looking to the options available in the vicinity of Brunssum, we discovered Fun Valley (near Maastricht) as a perfect place for summer fun in South Limburg.

Adventures for you and your family!

The famous Fun Valley lies just four kilometres south of Maastricht and offers a wide range of interesting and exciting indoor and outdoor activities. You and your family but also your friends or colleagues can enjoy an entertaining day on the river bank of the Maas.

There you will find a huge indoor playground with a giant family slide and freefall, play area, hobby corner, toddler corner, children's disco, football pitch, trampolines, cushions and much more. Adventurers can conquer the more than 100-metre long flying fox or the climbing wall.

As mentioned earlier we hope for good summer weather now, so let's have a look outside. Here you can enjoy the beautiful

beaches along the Maas river with large, clean sunbathing areas and terraces. Playgrounds, a climb-slide-mountain, miniature golf, pedaloes, canoes, bungee trampoline and pirate ship are all available to ensure varied outdoor fun.

Fun with friends or colleagues!

Fun Valley also offers tailored activity packages for groups of 10 to 800 people. Challenge your colleagues and friends with fun and sporting challenges such as paintball, quad biking, archery, rafting, a rope obstacle course, bicycle train, Vespa scooter tours or hexathlon.

A climbing wall of just over 100 metres, survival nights, playful or sporting teambuilding activities, are all waiting for those who want to enjoy active and sporty fun.

Your group can taste delicious food and drinks in beautiful pavement cafes with a view over the water. A brand new indoor catering facility and multi-purpose hall for groups will prevent your event from being cancelled because of the weather.

The park's entrance fee includes free access to all activities i.e. miniature golf, pedaloes, canoes, etc.

For further information visit the Fun Valley Maastricht website. You will find important information there such prices, opening hours and the current fun program in English, French, German and Dutch.





Win Tickets for Fun Valley

- We have 5x2 tickets
- In order to win the tickets, please answer the following question:
- **What is the size of the climbing wall at Fun Valley Maastricht?**
- Fill in this coupon and send it to PAO, or send an e-mail to pao@jfcbs.nato.int, before 28 August 2013
- For NATO ID card holders only
- The winners will be announced in the next edition of the Northern Star

Answer:

Division:

Full name:

Extension:



Winners Blegny-Mine

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

Tickets won by:

Marleen Stevens, French NSU

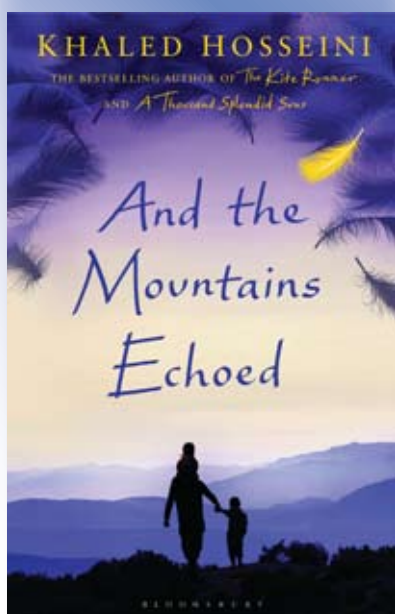
Johny Stegen, J7

Albert van Dam, COS office

Vasileios Tsarouchas, J4

Harry Grissen, HQ SO

Book Review



And the Mountains Echoed

*Prepared by Jaroslava Augustinova,
Public Affairs Office*

Hosseini's much-awaited third novel was published on May 21, 2013. The author of international bestsellers *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* tells us a moving story of Abdullah and his sister Pari from the small Afghan village of Shadbagh. Hosseini moves the story between Afghanistan and Paris, with side trips to the United States and Greece. This beautiful three generation saga about loss and love, sacrifice and betrayal, loneliness and poverty, spells out what happens when a brother and sister are torn apart as children. The novel is a portrait of the Afghan diaspora as it is folded into the West and includes tales of expatriates and aid workers, doctors and nurses, drug lords, war victims, parents and children.

"Wrought with mastery, *And the Mountains Echoed* is not just a well spun tale, but an accomplishment of the most elusive of literary challenges—the humanization of a war ravaged population in the eyes of the very people complicit in their ruin."—Daily Beast

Khaled Hosseini was born in Afghanistan. His father was a diplomat and his mother taught Farsi and history at a high school in Kabul. In 1976, the Foreign Ministry relocated the Hosseini family to Paris. They were ready to return to Kabul in 1980, but by then their homeland had witnessed a bloody communist coup and the invasion of the Soviet Army. The Hosseinis sought and were granted political asylum in the United States. Hosseini graduated from high school and earned a bachelor's degree in biology in 1988. The following year he entered the University of California where he earned a medical degree. He completed his residency at Cedars-Sinai medical center in Los Angeles and was a practicing internist between 1996 and 2004. In 2006, Hosseini was named a Goodwill Envoy to the United Nations Refugee Agency. He established The Khaled Hosseini Foundation which provides humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan.

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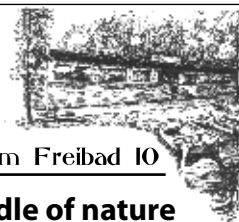
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