

NORTHERN STAR

MAGAZINE FOR HQ JFC BRUNSSUM - JUNE 2020

NATO RESPONSE FORCE 2020

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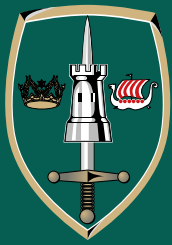
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NORTHERN STAR

MAGAZINE FOR HQ JFC BRUNSSUM

CONTENTS JUNE 2020

- 3 COMMAND GROUP CORNER
- 4 CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY
- 6 GENERAL VOLLMER, JFCBS COMMANDER
- 8 NATO RESPONSE FORCE PRESENTATION
- 12 TRIDENT JUPITER EXERCISE
- 14 EUROCORPS, LCC
- 15 JFAC, ACC
- 16 SPMARFOR, MCC
- 17 POLISH VJTF
- 18 POLISH SOCC
- 19 JLSG
- 20 DEFENDER EUROPE EXERCISE
- 21 ACCI
- 24 NATO PARTNERSHIP
- 26 BULGARIAN ARMED FORCES
- 28 WE ARE JFCBS



ABOUT THE COVER

A Royal Netherlands NH90 helicopter lands on Spanish frigate ESPS Cristobal Colon during NATO's exercise Trident Juncture 18 on November 2, 2018.
NATO MARCOM / WO C.Valverde

COLOPHON

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COMMAND GROUP CORNER

MAJOR GENERAL ANTONIO BETTELLI

DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF (SUPPORT)

When I was accorded the privilege to be assigned to JFC Brunssum, as Deputy Chief of Staff for Support about a year ago, I was fully aware of the importance of this NATO North-European Operational Command, located in the Southern Region of The Netherlands, together with its sister commands: JFC Naples (Italy) and the most recent addition, JFC Norfolk (Virginia - USA).

I very quickly realized how lucky I was having the good fortune to avail myself of an extremely professional team. Navigating through the sophisticated complexity of NATO procedures, acronyms and lexicon, I rapidly discovered the extraordinary capacities spread across the five Divisions forming the Support Directorate: J1 with Colonel Anne Marie FENTON; J4 with Brigadier General Serge SOENEN; J6 with Colonel Andrzej KAWASNIK; JENG with Brigadier General Ivan PACH; and JMED with Colonel David WILLEY; plus the recent addition of a Joint Logistic Support Group (JLSG) HQ rapidly establishing itself under the leadership of Brigadier General Jaroslav SCHON; and, last but by no means least, the liaison officer from the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA), Mr. Antoine WILDENBERG. Getting acquainted with the demands of my new job was relatively easy thanks to these, my direct collaborators, and the support team as a whole.

My self-confidence grew rapidly; knowing that everybody in the team was more than capable of carrying out his or her own role and responsibilities. In spite of this positive sentiment, I could never have imagined that a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic would have suddenly happened. I don't think anybody could have predicted this.

In January this year, when practically no-one could fully perceive the potential magnitude of the virus in Europe, Italy was one of the first countries to be impacted. It took a short while, only a few days, for my gut feeling to transform into the full awareness that a new evil had just appeared on the horizon, not only in Italy, but throughout Europe, across NATO member nations that, ultimately, encompassed the entire world.

This unpredictable phenomenon, developing at such a rapid speed, spreading throughout the entire planet, so heavily impacting on the most developed and richest countries in the world is having unprecedented effects, not only from a medical standpoint, but also economically and, above all, in my view, socially. The implications

are not yet fully imaginable, and all concerned nations are struggling to find a way to manage the time ahead, learning how to counter the virus and its consequences.

Multilateralism, which is the conceptual basis of any supranational organization such as NATO, has been recently criticized, even more so than in the past, being blamed, allegedly as not being responsive and effective enough in finding viable solutions to protect the members of the multilateral organizations, and amongst those, especially the weakest ones.

As a strong and capable military organization, born to be protective and defensive of the member states' integrity and sovereignty from any external threat, we, NATO soldiers and civilians, perfectly know that a new challenge might eventually be an opportunity to tighten up the bonds of loyalty, comradeship, and mutual trust amongst friends and allies.

Let me quote, very humbly, Pope Francis, who recently said, in one of his speeches on the pandemic: "Nobody can be saved by himself." He emphasized, in my understanding, the unnegotiable importance, nowadays more than ever before, to unite in front of a silent and powerful adversary such as this devious pandemic.

Being aware that the same sovereignty NATO is defending is the key aspect for which the Member Nations remain responsible for establishing their needs and how they intend to contribute to the Alliance, the coordinating role of NATO through its three organizational layers - political, strategic, and operational - becomes paramount, especially when a crisis of such a span and magnitude becomes a challenge for all.

JFC Brunssum plays a key role with respect to this fundamental coordinating role. As members of the out-of-theatre command in support of the Resolute Support Headquarters in Afghanistan, our obligations towards the mission leader, General Miller, and his team in Kabul are today, given the COVID-19 emergency, even more important. The reduction of personnel in theatre combined with the implementation of undelayable preventative measures to minimize the risk of the pandemic growth, presses us to be closer to our colleagues in Afghanistan, and more supportive and responsive towards their needs and requirements. This is particularly true for the Support Area for which I am responsible. There is an increased necessity to urgently augment our medical responsiveness. In particular, our capability to test NATO personnel for COVID-19 in Afghanistan must improve.



But a better tailored medical organization - facilities, materials, equipment, supplies and specialized personnel - must be established alongside an improved evacuation capability by means of a rapid access to strategic airlift. These are just some of the issues for which the JFCBS Support Directorate has been asked to be reactive and proactive in support of the NATO mission in Afghanistan. The major challenge is to rapidly understand the urgent requirements coming from Kabul, analyze, elaborate and forward them to SHAPE to find a viable and effective solution. Again, this is mainly a coordinating role, but it requires situational awareness, technical competence, open dialogue and confrontation, constant monitoring and adaptability, sometimes even the sparking light of personal and ethical judgment.

Nobody yet knows how the current pandemic will evolve in the future but, for sure, we are learning a great deal from it, particularly by increasing our capability to work together as a team. Never as before, in my experience in this extraordinary organization, have I sensed the meaningful significance of the slogan 'WE ARE NATO'.

My message to you is: 'take the challenge, work together, stay united, and we will eventually win this unexpected battle'.

MAJOR GENERAL ANTONIO BETTELLI
DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF (SUPPORT)



VIRTUAL CHANGE-OF-COMMAND CEREMONY AT JFC BRUNSSUM



STORY BY JFCBS MPA

In an unprecedented video-transmitted ceremony, NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), General Tod. D. Wolters (U.S. Air Force), transferred authority over Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum (JFCBS) from General Erhard Bühler to General Jörg Vollmer (both German Army) on April 22nd. As all NATO commands strictly obey COVID-19 related rules and restrictions imposed by their respective host nation, General Wolters supervised a virtual passing of the flag in the Dutch city of Brunssum from his office in Mons, Belgium. Twenty-seven Admirals, Generals and other senior military representatives from the NATO family and partner nations attended the virtual ceremony online.

SACEUR in his address highlighted the outgoing commander's extraordinary leadership skills by saying "General Bühler had a tremendous impact on all of us as we have all been strengthened by his will. He improved our operational activities and our ability to secure peace."

General Wolters then welcomed the new commander, General Jörg Vollmer, as "the perfect choice for this command." General Bühler in his response to SACEUR expressed deep gratitude for the honour of commanding JFCBS. He encouraged the headquarters to continue to focus on safeguarding Europe's north-eastern flank, support NATO's mission in Afghanistan and lead NATO's response force (NRF) by summarizing "our most important aim is to build a capable force for deterrence and defence."

The new JFCBS commander General Jörg Vollmer assured the audience that he will carry on his predecessor's legacy. "Work in this headquarters continues despite COVID-19 and the threats we face have not vanished. JFCBS will be ready for whatever it takes" he underlined. The Dutch Chief of Defence, Admiral Rob Bauer, emphasized the value of the Alliance in the fight against COVID-19. "This crisis has shown us just how strong our solidarity is. NATO allies are once again joining forces in a robust response" he said. Admiral Bauer welcomed the new commander on behalf of the Netherlands and thanked

General Erhard Bühler for his military achievements as well as for enhancing the good relations between JFCBS and the Dutch community in Limburg province. "As such a good neighbour, you will always be welcome here," the Admiral concluded. The German Chief of Defence, General Eberhard Zorn, expressed his high recognition for General Bühler and commended him by saying "you represent Germany in the best way in NATO". He also reiterated that Germany remains determined and will continue to support NATO and the Netherlands in the fight against COVID-19. General Zorn lauded the new commander as "well experienced and best prepared for his challenging duties."

Upon conclusion of the virtual ceremony, members of the headquarters, appropriately distanced to each other, lined up for General Bühler's walk-out and farewell.



READINESS COUNTS!

GENERAL VOLLMER, COMMANDER JFCBS



“Always expect the unexpected” is a proverb we all know.” As soldiers, sailors and airmen, we are well trained to keep calm, cool and collected when it gets tense. This spring, the proverb is challenging us again. It is with great regret that I had to take over command of JFC Brunssum on April 22nd without having a chance to meet you all in person. Even under these extraordinary circumstances you received me with a warm welcome and I would like to express my sincere gratitude for that. I hope this new edition of the NORTHERN STAR finds you, your families and loved ones in good health.

I am looking forward to getting to know you all – staff, families and hosts - both in the city of Brunssum and the broader Limburg Province as soon as possible but, realistically, this will take more time than normal because of the ongoing pandemic. So, for the time being, you might ask yourselves what kind of guy this new German General actually is. I try to be frank and very clear. For

members of a military headquarters it will not come as a surprise that I am expecting professionalism and mutual respect on all levels. As all decision making is teamwork, the starting point is a proper mission analysis. Thus, you will never find me making decisions somewhere on the hallway.

Proper mission analysis requires an enduring ability to adapt to change and a willingness to question ourselves, extant processes and current policies. The current crisis underscores that requirement more than ever. But, whatever happens, our noble task and top priority remains to provide readiness for deterrence and defence in northern Europe. JFCBS’ area of responsibility comprises a territory ranging from Greenland to Scandinavia, down into central Europe and Hungary, and all those countries rely on us. For them, we are NATO. If they have any request, we have to find a solution.

For those who know me, it is also not a surprise that I am a friend of exercises that really move troops and build confidence and this remains of the utmost importan-

ce, regardless of viruses, potential adversaries or other existential security threats.

Reference Afghanistan, we will continue to act as the out-of-theatre operational headquarters for NATO’s RESOLUTE SUPPORT mission, led by U.S. Army General Austin Scott Miller. His advice and his requests will guide us. We will seek to provide everything he needs to conduct his mission.

At the Hindukush, NATO stands ready to help the Afghans pave their way towards a political settlement of the conflict. All NATO allies and partners remain firmly committed to support Afghanistan’s long-term security and stability. The future of our Alliance depends on its coherence which is of great emotional relevance. Coherence is nothing we can order, but comes from the heart. It is on us here in Brunssum to live up to it.

As readiness counts, it has to be properly communicated. I want all nations contributing troops to NATO missions to know that we share values as well as burden, be that in Europe or Afghanistan.

For the duration of 2020, JFCBS has command of the NRF, NATO's 40,000-strong response force which includes the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). It is Joint Force Command Brunssum's task to ensure this force remains credible and sustainable. We continue 24/7 to provide credible deterrence and defence also in the midst of coronavirus crisis.

Let us keep in mind that NATO heads of state and government agreed to create the VJTF at the Wales Summit in 2014 in response to a changed security environment, including Russia's illegal annexation of Ukraine's Crimea, and turmoil in the Middle East. This is the fast-changing world we live in.

For every individual staff member here in Brunssum, being ready to operate under this guidance means to literally think outside of the box and I appreciate your readiness to take up the challenge. I personally count myself lucky to lead a team of 26 NATO and four partner nations represented at the headquarters whose highly recognized expertise I can rely on.

In a multi-national environment we all have to respect different opinions. Thus

I encourage everyone in my headquarters to show respect for the beliefs of others and be open when facing me personally. Our work here in Brunssum is all about people and about team spirit. Without it, we are condemned to fail.

With all of this in mind, it is clear we are facing huge challenges for the next years. Everyone in Europe may rest assured that we will remain appropriately postured, capable and ready to continue our missions.

While I am writing you, I know that many are concerned about what consequences the current corona crisis will have for not only international security but for our families and loved ones in particular. I am sharing this concern. I am determined to personally keep an eye on that and care for our community to the best of my ability.

As we have successfully established a shift system that allows us to keep this headquarters operational, I am thinking of those working from home in order to keep the engine running. They are a great example of adapting to the unexpected. This readiness counts. My thoughts go out to the men and wo-

men on the front line, including health care providers and members of our armed forces, who are playing a key role in the joint fight against corona. Allied militaries are playing an important role in responding to COVID-19. They support civilian efforts: amongst other things providing logistics assistance and planning; field hospitals; patient transportation; disinfection of public areas; and security at border crossings.

However, in parallel, we have to develop plans to enable us to return to normal daily activities as pandemic restrictions relax. Our mindset has to be focused on a step-by-step approach, conditions based, carefully assessed and balanced against risks. Transition plans will physically reintegrate personnel back to their workspaces in a safe, healthy, and precautionary manner.

As transition occurs, JFCBS will continue to obey and act in accordance with Dutch National regulations, remaining good neighbors where we live and work. Brunssum being host to NATO is home to us.

With this, I salute you all and look forward to meet you all personally.

General Jörg Vollmer Biography

General Jörg Vollmer assumed command of Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum on 22 April 2020. He is one of three operational-level commanders in the NATO Command Structure, reports directly to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and is primarily responsible for the security of the Alliance in Northern Europe, NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan and NATO's Response Force NRF 2020.

After joining the German Armed Forces in 1978 and completing his basic officer training, General Vollmer graduated in Economics and Organizational Sciences at the University of the German Armed Forces, in Hamburg. In 1983 he attended Staff College at Hamburg. Later, following attendance at the School of Advanced Military Studies in Leavenworth (USA), from 2001 to 2002, he became a Fellow in Advanced Operational Art. General Vollmer has been privileged to hold a broad range of command posi-

tions. These include Commander Mechanized Infantry Brigade 37 in Frankenberg (2006-2010), Commander Specialized Operations Division in Stadthallendorf (2011-2014), and Commander Field Army / Vice Chief of the German Army (2014-2015) in Strausberg.

However, General Vollmer is no stranger to NATO. From October 2010 he served as Chief of Staff of the 1st German/Netherlands Corps, in Münster, for a year. His command portfolio is further enhanced by two deployments as Commander ISAF Regional Command North, in Afghanistan, between 2009 and 2013.

General Vollmer served as Chief of the German Army from 2015 to 2020. He assumed command of the German Army at a time of paradigm shift and laid the foundation for a modern army. A refocus on collective defence while simultaneously fulfilling missions abroad in a credible, reliable and professional manner, will remain associated with his name. He developed and executed critical new policies and plans in the areas of personnel, materiel, training and structure – these significant adjustments included the digitization of land forces.

His key staff assignments include Assistant Director (Operations and Intelligence) at the Armed Forces Office, Bonn, as well as Branch Chief "Army Concepts" (2004-2006) in the Army Staff at the Federal Ministry of Defence, also in Bonn (2002-2004). General Vollmer is married to Anette.



NATO RESPONSE FORCE (NRF) 2020



STORY BY LIEUTENANT COMMANDER JAMES CARRICK, JFCBS

It has been a busy start to the year for Joint Force Command Brunssum (JFCBS). One reason for this is that JFCBS took Operational Command of the NRF during the 2020 Stand-by Year. How has JFCBS managed this and what does it mean for the HQ? Firstly for those of you who are new to NATO let me give you a brief background into the NRF, what it is, how it is made up and what it is for.

At the Prague Summit, in November 2002, the NATO Heads of States and Governments decided to create the NATO Response Force. It consists of technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable forces, including land, sea and air elements, ready to move quickly to wherever needed, as decided by the North Atlantic Council (NAC), the principal political decision-making body within NATO. It was also designed to become a catalyst for military transformation, focusing and promoting improvements in the Alliance's military capabilities. The NRF provides NATO with the ability to deploy a capable force at short notice, trying to avoid using larger forces in the later stages of an unresolved situation and it could also act as a deterrent and aid in the early resolution of a developing crisis. Then at the Wales Summit, in September 2014, the Heads of States and Governments agreed upon a Readiness Action Plan which articulated how the Alliance should adapt "to improve its readiness and responsiveness", including the enhancement of the NRF to better meet the new security para-

digm, that was developing both within Europe and on the periphery of the Alliance.

The enhancement of the NRF was focused on making it more responsive, increasing its readiness, and capable, whilst leaving its purpose and mission unchanged. That is, to be capable of performing a wide variety of tasks, including the provision of an immediate collective defence response capability (prior to arrival of other forces), crisis management & peace support operations, disaster relief and the protection of critical infrastructure. So that is how and why the NRF was created but what elements does it consist of?

Well the NRF is made up of 3 distinct elements;

Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF):

Consisting of forces at the highest level of readiness. It is a joint force, consisting of a land component with appropriate air, maritime and special operations components, as needed, able to deploy within a few days in response to any threats or challenges that may arise on NATO's flanks;

Initial Follow On Forces Group (IFFG):

These are high-readiness forces that can deploy quickly, following the VJTF, in response to a crisis.

Follow-on Forces Group (FFG):

This consists of a broad spectrum of military capabilities - encompassing command and control, combat, combat support and combat services support units. FFG forces are nominated by Allied and/or Partner Nations and drawn from their deployable forces.

The details of the exact composition, locations and readiness of these forces are not publically releasable in order to protect operational security. Overall command of this force belongs to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), while Operational Command of the NRF falls to NATO's two Joint Force Commands (based in Brunssum, the Netherlands and Naples, Italy, on a rotational basis).

NRF Rotation and Contributions

The NRF is based on a rotational system where Allied nations commit land, air, maritime or Special Operations Forces units for a period of 12 months, starting on the 1st January. However each JFC concentrates on different geographical areas and therefore SACEUR will take this into account when choosing the JFC which leads any response required by the NRF.

NATO nations volunteer forces to the NRF, requiring the contributing Allies and partner nations to meet strict standards and adopt procedures required for defensive and expeditionary operations. As a result, participation in the NRF is preceded by a six-month NATO exercise programme in order to integrate and standardize the

various national contingents. Additional training serials are carried out by contributing nations during the 6-18 month period prior to assuming the role of NRF units. These multinational forces are highly interoperable and have proven capable of conducting complex military manoeuvres across the spectrum of operations.

JFC Brunssum took over standby responsibility from JFC Naples as the designated leading Headquarters for NRF rotation on 1st January 2020 with the following Component Commands and Task Forces in support:

Land: EUROCORPS, based in Strasbourg, France; Air: AIRCOM, based in Ramstein, Germany and UK Joint Force Air Command (JFAC), based in High Wycombe, England; Maritime: Spanish Maritime Force (ESPMARFOR), based in Cadiz, Spain; Special Operations: Polish Special Operations Command, based in Krakow, Poland; Joint Logistics Support Group: JFCBS JLSG, based within Brunssum, Netherlands. Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Task Force: Pol CBRN TF, based in Brodnica, Poland; Civil, Military Coordination Task Force: Multi National CIMIC Group, based in Motta di Livenza, Italy;

In order to participate within the NRF these Component Commands and Task Forces are required to be evaluated and certified, proving they are ready to take on the responsibilities, expected from the NRF. The certification exercise for train and evaluate the 2020 NATO NRF package, was TRIDENT JUPITER 19 (TRJU19). TRJU19 was a two part exercise consisting of a defensive multi-tiered command post exercise (CPX) of enormous complexity, set within an Article V scenario that embraces two strategic Joint Operational Areas, has eleven training audiences and impacts nine nations. As such it presented a real challenge that, by design, stretched all involved. Part I aimed to certify the NRF Components and Task Forces, while Part II was designed to certify JFC Brunssum.

Part I took place over two weeks, where the command and control elements of the NRF 20 force package was rigorously tested in a complex exercise scenario that deliberately incorporated the most demanding challenges the Alliance might face. As a fast changing operational tempo unfolded headquarters' staffs at all levels were deliberately stressed. After successful completion of part I the Components and Task Forces were certified. Unfortunately due to the current situation with the Corona Virus, part II of the exercise was cancelled. However JFC Brunssum's participation in TRJU19-I, combined with the planning and synchronisation that had been undertaken with the NRF Components as the prelude to TRJU19-II, allowed COM JFCBS to recommend to SACEUR that JFCBS be certified as the NRF Stand-by Headquarters for 2020.

NRF Management

So how does JFCBS manage the elements of NRF20? Well there is a core team within JFCBS whose job it is to coordinate the NRF 20 Components and monitor their readiness and capability throughout the year. The overall job of coordinating the NRF for JFCBS falls to the NRF Coordinator, ACOS J3, Brigadier General Jerome Goisque (FRA A), assisted by deputy NRF coordinator and a small team of staff officers from J35. This NRF team holds the NRF20 Working Group, which coordinates activities and hold monthly Video Tele Conferences (VTCs) with Component Commands and Task Forces in order to maintain situational awareness of components issues and activities. There is divisional representation from all areas within JFCBS, to ensure that there is a pan headquarters understanding of NRF issues and that we always have the relevant SME available to offer advice should problems occur. These monthly VTC, along with quarterly Readiness Reports, provide the information for updates to the Command Group and is the basis for the 6 monthly Readiness Reports JFCBS sends to SACEUR. This ensures that the readiness state of the NRF and its as-

sociated forces are understood at all levels. During the Standby Year it is important that the NRF HQs and forces maintain the level of training that allowed them to certify. Therefore there are numerous exercises, planned throughout 2020, to ensure that the NRF maintain their ability to conduct complex military tasks, across a broad spectrum of operations. The Brilliant Jump exercise series ensure NATO troops are ready to deploy, in times of crisis and consists of two parts. The first, Brilliant Jump I, tested the activation (un-alerted) of the VJTF and was conducted by a wide range of NATO HQs and contributing nations at the end of January, while Brilliant Jump II will test the ability of the VJTF to deploy and will take place in the final quarter of the year. Execution of Brilliant Jump II will see number of units deployed to the exercise area and then adopt a protective stance in accordance with standardized NATO procedures; just as they would in a real military operation in a crisis area.

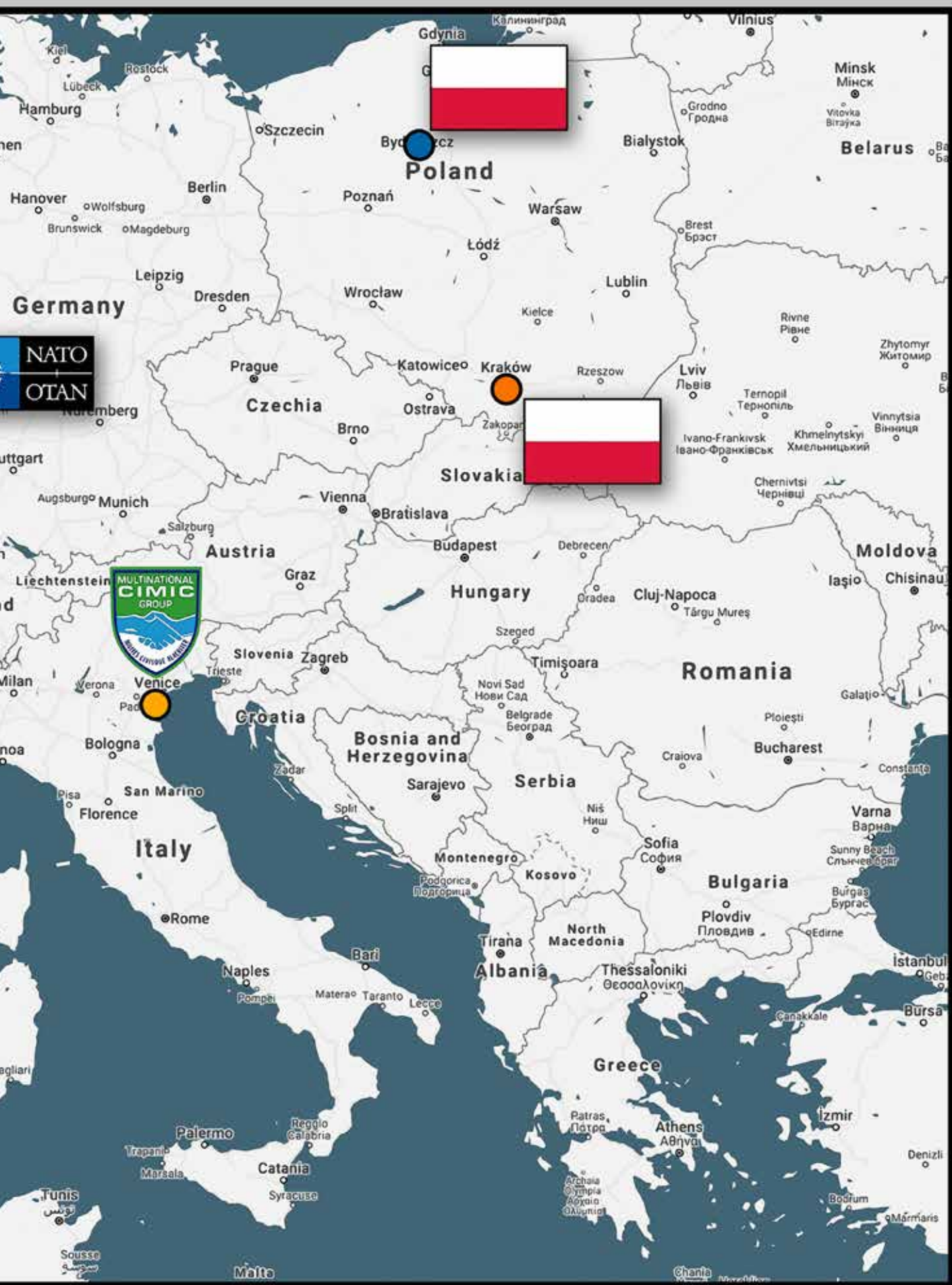
Joint Force Command Brunssum will lead the exercise, in close coordination with NRF components. It will demonstrate how NATO forces, command structures and associated military activities provide the best visible example of NATO readiness, the Alliance's ability to swiftly deploy to counter threats to our collective security and, assure member nations and their populations of NATO's ability and commitment to protect them.

JFCBS is currently undergoing unprecedented times, and despite the HQ and associated NRF Components and Task Forces all experiencing some form of National Lock-down we continue to maintain NRF Readiness and we are able to react, as required to any situation NATO demands of us. JFCBS staff remain focused on maintaining the high state of readiness and professionalism in order to swiftly respond to the next upcoming crisis or contingency, wherever it may be.





- Designated leading NRF2020 HQ - Joint Force Command Brunssum (JFCBS), Brunssum, the Netherlands
- Land Component Command - EUROCORPS, Strasbourg, France
- Air Component Command - AIRCOM / UK Joint Force Air Command (JFAC), Rammstein, Germany / High Wycombe, England
- Maritime Component Command - Spanish Maritime Force (ESPMARFOR), Cadiz, Spain
- Special Operations Forces Component Command - Polish Special Ops Command, Krakow, Poland
- Joint Logistic Support Group - JFCBS JLSG, Brunssum, the Netherlands



- Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Task Force, Polish CBRN Task Force, Brodnica, Poland
- Civil, Military Coordination Task Force : Multi National CIMIC Group, Motta di Livenza, Italy



EXERCISE TRIDENT JUPITER 1



STORY BY MAJOR BORDAIS AND CAPTAIN RECEP AKINC, JFCBS/J7

The NATO Response Force (NRF) is a highly ready and technologically advanced, multinational force made up of land, air, maritime and special operations components that the alliance can deploy quickly, wherever needed. NRF is designed to provide a rapid demonstration of force and early establishment of NATO presence in support of collective defence, crisis management or cooperative security operations. NRF is prepared to conduct the full range of alliance operations and missions with an emphasis on collective defence and is capable of performing independent missions. In addition to its operational role, the NRF can be used for greater cooperation in education and training, increased exercises and better use of technology. It gives the Alliance the means to respond swiftly to various types of crises anywhere in the world. The decision to deploy the NRF is taken by the North Atlantic Council, NATO's highest political decision-making body. NRF is also considered as a driving engine for NATO's military transformation.

NATO Allies decided at the 2014 Wales Summit to enhance the NRF by creating a "spearhead force" within it, known as the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). This enhanced NRF is one of the measures of the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) agreed by Allies to respond to the

changes in the security environment. The enhanced NATO Response Force includes:

- A command and control element: operational command and control of the NRF alternates between Allied Joint Force Commands in Brunssum and Naples. Tactical C2 for each component is provided by nations' Graduated Readiness Forces HQs or NATO Command Structure Single Service Commands if required.
- The VJTF element is a standing joint force about 20,000 strong, including a multinational land brigade of around 5,000 troops and air, maritime and SOF components. Spearhead force is ready to deploy at very short notice. Allies assume the leading role for the VJTF on a rotational basis.
- The Initial Follow-On Forces Group (IFFG): The IFFG is a structured set of forces providing necessary augmentation of VJTF. These are high-readiness forces that can deploy quickly following the VJTF in response to a crisis. They are made up of two multinational brigades.
- The Follow-On Forces (FOF): The FFG build mass and provide access to High Demand/ Low Density capabilities.

The deployment of a credible and capable NRF at short notice upon NAC approval acts as a substantial deterrent and aid in the early resolution of an emerging crisis, thus precluding the need to use larger forces in the later stages of an unresolved situation.

Joint Force Command Brunssum is the leading headquarter for the NRF 2020 stand up and standby phases, and is supported by the following command and control elements:

- Land: EUROCORPS (EURCORPS framework countries: France, Germany, Spain, Luxembourg, Belgium)
- Air: UK Joint Force Air Component (JFAC) HQ
- Maritime: Spanish Maritime Force (SPMARFOR)
- Special Operations: Polish Special Operations Component Command (POL SOCC)
- Joint Logistic Support Group (JLSG): JFC Brunssum JLSG
- Also contributing to the NRF 2020 package are the Polish CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence) Task Force and the Multi National CIMIC Group that is based in Italy

The NRF is being trained and certified to the standards set by SACEUR. All component commands including Joint Force Commands undergo a very challenging and demanding training period in order to improve their capability and capacity. After National training and evaluation phase ends with success, NATO preparation phase commences 6 months before standby year (2020). The main purpose of the NATO preparation phase is to test combat readiness of component commands by examining vertical and horizontal interaction between Joint Force Command and component commands. The primary

focus of training and exercises is the collective defence. JFCBS HQ was in charge of the preparation, training and certification of NRF20 and the Trident Jupiter 19 exercise was used as the main venue to train, evaluate and certify NRF20 Force package before standby period.

The TRJU 19 series was also to Strike Force NATO (SFN) and to JFC Brunssum a challenge for certification and real benefit to improve the operational level decision making process and decision themselves.

Based on the exercise specifications (EXSPEC) and the exercise plan (EXPLAN), we can summarize quickly TRJU 19 as 2 years of preparation, handrailed by the exercise planning process (EPP), comprising a huge numbers of coordination meetings, among 17 main actors, participating to the 2 events as TRJU 19-1 and TRJU 19-2 (2 Joint CRPs (Crisis Response Planning), 2 MEL MIL sequences (Main Events List/ Main Incidents List), 2 Battle Staff training (BST) and the process of mandatory reports following the exercise). All these events were supported by invitation letters, taskers and trackers, real life support, transport, coordination, decisions, and reports. All in all, an exhausting, interesting, rewarding and wonderful experience.

Facing the real threats in the real world, even simulating situations by computers (CAX/CPX), the execution phase was very

stressful. As a mirror, JWC made its side of the exercise, the enemy, incidents and subordinates to the micro level, all being played by a phenomenal team of staff officers supported and their teams, about 900 people, representing all domains of expertise. This fabulous mechanism was the counter part of our real life, reacting to our deployment, actions, decisions and obliging us to give more and more.

The TRJU 19 series was more an exercise, it was an experimental venue to test, improve, facilitate and revise, not only the players, but the system itself. We experienced things we have never had the opportunity to experience before. The scale of intensity, from deterrence to major joint operation, through the scale of capacities and decision from tactical to strategic level, involving NATO countries as well as NATO partners. The TRJU series was a very demanding effort for the professional staff, however a real and beneficial source of improvement, ideas and experiences that will provide a framework of guidance into the coming years.

At the end of the NRF20 Force package preparation process, the BRILLIANT VISION 20 (BRVI20) conference was co-hosted between JFC Brunssum and JFC Naples. The audience included NRF19 and NRF20 component commands, three Joint Force Commands and single service commands at Commanders level. The aim of the conference was to finalize the handover-takeover

of NRF responsibility between supporting and supported JFCs. The BRVI20 conference provided a perfect venue to improve the network between NRF Commands while exploiting the opportunity to share the lesson learned during stand up and standby phase.

During the standby period, BRILLIANT JUMP 20 ALERT Exercise was conducted with a NO-NOTICE concept in order to test readiness and responsiveness of VJTF20 and to exercise the deployment of selected VJTF20 Force elements to planned Port of Embarkations. NATO Crisis Response Measures (NCRMs) were released by SHAPE and implemented by NRF20 Component Commands and VJTF20. MNC-NE, NFIUs and eFP Battle Groups were also alerted. In the After Action Review, all participants expressed their compliments, particularly regarding NO-NOTICE concept. The concept gave the opportunity to test the messaging systems, alerting mechanisms and the reactions from the participants in real life conditions. NCRMs were successfully transmitted from SHAPE to the lowest unit level in theatre. The Second part of BRILLIANT JUMP20 Exercise which is DEPLOYEX will be conducted in Q4 of 2020. Selected VJTF20 Force elements will be deployed to UK and Lithuania.



EUROCORPS HEADQUARTERS LAND COMPONENT COMMAND



Since 1 January, 2020, after a thorough certification process conducted by LAND-COM and after having participated in exercise TRIDENT JUPITER 19-1, Eurocorps Headquarters (EC) has taken over the responsibility of Land Component Command (LCC) Headquarters, NATO Reaction Force (NRF), for one year, under the leadership of Joint Force Command Brunssum.

What is NRF, and what makes Eurocorps so special?

NRF is NATO's high readiness force that is prepared, capable and ready to provide an immediate response capability to support every mission from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to peace-support operations up to war-fighting. EC under the lead of Joint Force Commander Brunssum is providing the headquarters command and control element for the land component, which is rotating every year between several Army corps level headquarters throughout NATO. EC took over this responsibility from the 1st German-Netherlands Corps and will hand it over to NRDC Turkey on 1 January, 2021.

As NRF LCC, EC is able to command and control a land force component up to 65000 men and women, anywhere, at any time and within a short notice to move. This NRF capability also contributes to NATO global deterrence, as the very existence of a credible and well trained response force sends a significant message to any potential aggressor.

Eurocorps headquarters is a multinational military command and control structure located in Strasbourg, France. What is very unique, compared to other Graduated Readiness Forces Land (GRFL) HQs, is the balanced apportionment of positions. Five Framework Nations (France, Germany, Spain, Belgium and Luxembourg) and five Associated Nations (Poland, Italy, Greece, Roma-

nia and Turkey) provide EC's staff and personnel. In addition, the command structure is rotating every second year among the framework nations. Considering that its sister HQs under NATO command are either national units or Bi-or tri-national at best, the backbone of this HQ is therefore very multinational by construction. Eurocorps Headquarters is quite young but despite its youth, it has developed a consequent experience.

Eurocorps creation is the result of European nations understanding that cooperation, including in the defense domain, is key to protect peace. Thus, French and German government decided in May 1992 to set up in Strasbourg a French-German Corps Headquarters, where both nations would share equally the command but also the burden. Eurocorps was born. Shortly afterwards, they decided to open this headquarters to members of the Western European Union and Belgium, Luxembourg and Spain joined the framework nations. Later several other nations, Greece, Turkey, Italy, Poland and Romania joined the framework nations as associated nations. Regarding Eurocorps not only as a new European unit but as complementary to the defense efforts of the Alliance, both governments decided in 1993 to put it at the disposal of NATO. For this very reason, the "SACEUR Agreement" was signed in January 1993. From the beginning, the EC was integrated into the alliance, not as a "force belonging to NATO" but as a "force dedicated to NATO". This agreement established the framework conditions for the EC's deployment in the NATO Command Structure, in collective defense and in crisis areas.

EC has a strong military experience as a headquarters working both for the benefit of NATO and of the European Union, either in Africa or in Europe or Central Asia.

The first real commitment of Eurocorps occurred in 1998, when the HQ participated in the NATO-led operation SFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Then in 2000, Eurocorps formed the core HQ of

the NATO headquarters deployed in Kosovo and took over the leadership of the operation. The next challenge and highlight for Eurocorps was the commitment in Afghanistan from August 2004 to February 2005, taking over the command of ISAF. During this tour, EC supported also the United Nations in the organization and execution of the first democratic presidential elections in Afghan history. EC returned there in 2012. The year 2015 saw EC first commitment under the European Union flag: the European Union Training mission (EUTM) Mali mission during the second semester of 2015. During the second semester of 2016 and the entire year 2017, EC staff member were deployed to the Central African Republic (Bangui) as core nucleus of the mission headquarters of the EUTM CAR.

It is the third time that EC endorses NRF standby roles (2006, 2010 and 2020), and especially the role of land component command HQ. Eurocorps was also on standby as EUBG (F) HQ during the 2nd semester 2016 and during the first semester 2017. All together alert periods and operational deployments are representing more or less 7 years in EC headquarters 26 years' life!

EC is a multinational HQ with approximately 1000 men and women dedicated to their mission, with a strong multinational and European identity and still open to new nations; a versatile HQ able to rapidly autonomously deploy and conduct major joint operations under NATO leadership but also humanitarian and peace-enforcing missions under the EU banner. Despite COVID19, EC remains ready to be sent wherever NATO will see fit during its standby phase. We are committed in our mutual collective defense while we are already preparing our next commitments. After the hand-over of the NRF LCC pennant to our sister command in Istanbul early in January 2021, EC will take part in EUTM campaign in Mali and Central African Republic in 2021 and 2022, and already prepares the long term future and train for the next NATO standby phase in a Joint headquarters role in 2024!



UK JOINT FORCE AIR COMPONENT

AIR COMPONENT COMMAND



The UK JFAC provides a scalable, Air Command and Control (C2) capability at very high readiness in order to meet the United Kingdom's requirements for national, bilateral, alliance and coalition operations. It delivers Air C2 from the planning of the Air Scheme of Manoeuvre (SoM) through to the execution and dynamic control of a complex Air Tasking Order and Airspace Control Order. This can be achieved from the Royal Air Force's Air Operations Centre at High Wycombe or from a deployed facility on land or at sea using the UK JFAC's Deployable Rapid Assembly Shelter (DRASH), providing maximum flexibility.

Air C2 provides the Joint Force with the right effect at the right time, in the right location, supporting the Joint Commander's intent and meeting Joint priorities. It provides freedom of manoeuvre for the Joint Force with control of the air; decision making superiority with an Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance capability; swift decisive effects and flexibility in manoeuvre. The UK JFAC comprises a cadre staff of 70 (including Royal Navy and British Army liaison officers) held at 5-days' notice to move. The UK JFAC has an assigned 1* commander which can be raised to a 2* or 3* commander should it be required. In addition, the UK JFAC is routinely supported by 136 augmentees from across the Royal Air Force representing the wide array of UK Air Power capabilities.

NRF Role/Function

The UK JFAC provides the NATO Force Structure (NFS) JFAC for the NRF standby period in 2020. It is held at readiness to provide Air C2 for Non-Article 5 Crises Response Operations (NA5CRO) and to augment the NATO Command Structure (NCS) JFAC at Ramstein Airbase for collective self-defence.

2019 Preparations

To achieve the standards and readiness for NRF20 the UK JFAC participated in four exercises during the 2019 training year. Deploying to Ramstein in Apr 19 for Ex RAMSTEIN AMBITION, the staff augmented the NCS JFAC HQ to train in a complex, full-spectrum joint war-fighting environment, using the SKOLKAN scenario to simulate high-intensity operations. In May 19, the combat support element deployed to Bucharest for Ex STEADFAST COBALT; a SHAPE sponsored, Command, Control, Communications, Computer, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Interoperability exercise. Over a six-week period, STEADFAST COBALT verified and validated the interoperability of the NRF components. In Oct 19, Ex TITANIUM FALCON 19 (Ex TF19) was planned and executed by the UK JFAC to demonstrate, to the NATO AIRCOM evaluation team, the HQ's ability to meet NRF standards for Air C2. Finally, in Nov 19 the UK JFAC again augmented AIRCOM at Ramstein for Ex TRIDENT JUPITER 19-1, the largest NATO CAX / CPX since the Cold War, involving all NRF20 Component Commands, Naval and Striking Force NATO and JFC Brunssum.

2020 In-year Activities

During the NRF20 standby year, the UK JFAC will participate in NATO Air Component and Joint level exercises to demonstrate capability and maintain the high level of integration it achieved with NATO Air Command (AIRCOM) and JFC Brunssum in 2019. Core personnel and augmentees regularly attend courses at the many NATO training schools and work alongside other European JFAC HQs to fulfil the United Kingdom's commitment to national, bilateral, alliance and coalition operations. The UK JFAC will continue to demonstrate interoperability with the French JFAC (Lyon) and United States 603rd

Air Operations Centre (Ramstein) in particular, conducting joint exercises. The HQ also engages with the other NATO Component Commands, maintaining land and maritime liaison elements, as part of its core staff, who are capable of representing the Air Component Commander to COMSPMARFOR (Maritime Component Command) and COM Eurocorps (Land Component Command) during the NRF20 standby period.

Way Ahead

During the COVID19 global pandemic, members of the UK JFAC have assisted with the UK's national response but have been safeguarded to maintain their availability for NATO operations. The UK JFAC remains committed and stood-by to provide the NRF20 NFS JFAC, held at readiness to execute NA5CRO or augment the AIRCOM NCS JFAC where required.



SPANISH MARITIME FORCES HEADQUARTERS

MARTIME COMPONENT COMMAND



SPMARFOR Staff



Spanish Maritime Forces Headquarter (SPMARFOR-HQ) is one of the four High Readiness Forces (Maritime) Headquarters (HRF (M) HQ) which can command and control assigned forces up to the level of a NATO naval task force. This headquarter provides a Maritime Component Command for the NATO Response Force. It is comprised of Spanish Navy personnel and NATO allied officers who currently come from France, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Turkey and the United States. SPMARFOR operates from its shore-based headquarters in Rota, Spain, as well as at sea on board its Afloat Command Platform, the Spanish Flagship ESPS Castilla (L52).

SPMARFOR currently serves as the Maritime Component Command (MCC) for the NATO Response Force (NRF), a role that it assumed on January 1st, and that it will maintain throughout calendar year 2020.

The past year has been extremely busy and productive for SPMARFOR. The primary focus during 2019 was to plan, prepare, and successfully execute two large joint NATO certification exercises in October and November, while deployed at sea on board ESPS "Castilla" (L52). "Dynamic Mariner" was planned for October as a live exercise with a distinctly maritime focus and the participation of twenty-five surface combatants, two submarines, fourteen helicopters, four maritime patrol aircraft and a Landing Force onboard Spanish LPDs. November's

follow-on "Trident Jupiter" was to be a Computer-Assisted Command Post Exercise (CAX/CPX), placing greater emphasis on the Joint element of multinational military operations. Both exercises would test SPMARFOR's ability to act as NATO's Response Force Maritime Component Command (NRF/M) as well as its interoperability with supporting air, land, and seaborne NATO forces. Successful completion of both would be necessary to attain the fully mission-capable status required for the official assumption of NRF/M duties during 2020.

Last fall's high OPTEMPO period culminated with the successful execution of both "Dynamic Mariner" and "Trident Jupiter", ultimately resulting in certification of SPMARFOR as fully "Mission Capable". Subsequently, this January, SPMARFOR assumed duties as Maritime Component Command of the NRF 2020. Since then, SPMARFOR has continued unit level training, maintaining readiness to execute NRF/M duties on short notice.

This December, SPMARFOR bid a fond farewell to RADM Alfonso Pérez de Nanclares, who completed his tour of duty as SPMARFOR Deputy Commander. Since then his replacement, RADM Ignacio Villanueva, has quickly adapted to his new leadership role on our multinational staff.

In recent months the story dominating the headlines has been the global COVID-19 pandemic. Like everybody else, SPMARFOR has had to cope real-time with the

evolving situation. In this regard, SPMARFOR has been proactive in dealing with the threat of contagion safely and responsibly, while still maintaining the necessary level of readiness for NATO operations.

The COVID-19 crisis has been unique, but it has also been a reminder of a constant in military operations: the most effective force is one that can quickly adapt to ever-changing conditions. Accordingly, SPMARFOR, working closely with the rest of the NATO Response Force, will continue to rise to any challenge. First and foremost, SPMARFOR remains dedicated to its mission as NRF2020 Maritime Component Command, and remains ready to respond to crisis on short notice.



THE POLISH 21ST PODHALE RIFLEMEN'S BRIGADE THE VERY HIGH READINESS JOINT TASK FORCE 2020

NRF 20



As a part of restructuring the NRF, NATO has also established a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) which can deploy within days. It comprises of a multinational brigade (approximately 5,000 troops), with up to five battalions, supported by air, maritime and special forces.

The force is available to move at the first warnings and indicators of potential threats, before a crisis begins, to act as a potential deterrent to further escalation.

In the case of an activation, VJTF Brigade elements have a maximum of 5 days to move to the operation area, which can be up to 8000 km from Brussels. The use of the VJTF Brigade is decided by the Eurocorps command in Strasbourg.

"Brilliant Jump 2020" is the first exercise of the Polish NATO Response Force brigade during the stand by phase has started this year. The aim of the exercise was to check the readiness of the 21st Podhale Riflemen's Brigade and other NRF units to deploy its forces in case of activation.

One of key aspects of the exercise was to achieve readiness to deploy forces at the certain time. 1st Podhale Riflemen's battalion acting as "Spearhead" had to appear at the port of embarkation no later than 48 hours after the activation. Other VJTF brigade forces had five days to do so.

"We knew that 'Brilliant Jump' would be carried out, but we did not know the date or scope of the exercise (...) When the activation was announced, many soldiers were on courses or on holiday. Thanks to this, the command could test the real ability to mobilize the VJTF brigade. Immediately, almost a one hundred percent of soldiers appeared in the unit. Only a small group stayed on military business trips abroad. Their absence would not affect the course of the exercises, so we did not call them". - said Brigadier General Dariusz Lewandowski, commander of the land component of the NATO Response Force brigade.

The quickest to respond to activation order should be forces of the "Spearhead" battalion. Battalion must be able to move to any place in the world within 48 hours. Soldiers from 1st Podhale Riflemen's battalion did not disappoint their hopes and completed the task in even less time - they needed 42 hours.

As Lt. Col. Rafał Iwanek, commander of the 1st Battalion of the Podhale Rifles, said: "Two days is the maximum specified time, but the sooner we are able to achieve readiness, the more time we have to remove any shortcomings in the preparation of people or equipment".

In accordance with NATO guidelines, the "Spearhead" battalion was checked at every stage of preparation: from the appearance of soldiers, through the preparation of equipment, picking up supplies, forming

marching columns, up to the march to the port of loading. "We are ready to reach any area of activity through any possible path. It does not matter to us whether it will be rail, road, air or sea transport". - emphasizes Lt. Col. Iwanek.

After deploying on the theatre of operation, "Spearhead" battalion main task is to secure the indicated place for the remaining forces of the VJTF Brigade. After that, battalion can continue fighting as the mechanized battalion. "On stand by phase, we conduct all tasks related to the operation of our battalion, from administrative matters to training. If the activation will found us during the exercises, we would be deploy to the area of operations straight from the training ground. (...) Even while at home, soldiers are ready for the signal all the time and can immediately hit the road" - said Lt. Col. Iwanek.

The exercise "Brilliant Jump 2020 (1)" was attended by over 2,500 soldiers and 1060 vehicles, 1100 tonnes of supply transferred and overcome by land transport in total 20 thousand kilometres. It can be said that the basis for success was efficient logistics. The more that as emphasized by Major Radosław Kozieliwicz, acting commander of the logistic battalion of the VJTF brigade, the unit itself performs all deliveries, ranging from food, through fuel to ammunition's. The more that the fact of participation in military exercises does not release you from compliance with transport regulations.



POLISH SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

SPECIAL FORCES COMPONENT COMMAND



Special Operations Forces (SOF) are military units trained to conduct operations defined as "military activities conducted by specially designated, organized, trained, and equipped forces, manned with selected personnel, using unconventional tactics, techniques, and modes of employment."

Special Operation Forces emerged in the early 20th Century, becoming more and more relevant to the battlefield commanders especially during the Second World War, when almost all participating nations created formations to conduct special operations behind enemy lines or on key terrain.

Special Forces are able to perform a variety of functions including airborne operations, counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism, covert operations, hostage rescue, intelligence & reconnaissance operations, unconventional warfare and, of course, prosecute high-value targets.

Therefore, Special Forces units have played an important role throughout the history of warfare such that, today, their value is undisputed when it comes to gathering essential intelligence vis-à-vis an adversary and, increasingly, in combating irregular forces. Special Forces can be traced back to the Chinese and Roman Empires. They were also part of the Muslim forces in the Ottoman

Empire, as well as in the imperial forces of Japan.

In Poland the Special Troops Command is the fourth military branch of the Armed Forces of the Republic and was formed in early 2007. It is composed of special forces units and a commanding headquarters with a variety of tasks such as: the implementation and coordination of projects related to the use of special units at home and abroad; the preparation of Polish Special Forces to cooperate within the Multinational Joint Special Operations Forces of NATO and the European Union; the planning and programming of the development of Special Forces; the coordination and supervision of training processes amongst commands and staffs of Special Forces units; the setting of objectives for training and vocational training of soldiers in military specialties of the Special Forces corps; and the performance of all tasks related to the exercise of the function of armour and armament equipment for Special Forces.

Polish Special Forces are designed to conduct special operations both in-country and abroad, during peace, crisis and war. Being an integral part of the Polish Armed Forces, they are part of all their missions. The most important task is to prepare and participate in national defence operations if needed. Actions carried out by commandos together with conventional forces or alone can have

both operational and strategic significance. An important task of the Special Forces is to maintain the readiness of their ability to support other services in combating terrorism within the territory of the state.

The Polish Special Forces are ready to conduct the full spectrum of special operations tasks articulated in the catalogue of special capabilities. By engaging in NATO operations and NATO Response Forces, these troops also make a significant contribution to broader security stabilization.

The structure of Special Forces is based on independent units clustered under one command, consisting of specially selected, trained and equipped soldiers prepared to operate in the highest risk environment.

The Special Forces Command is currently assigned the role as NATO Response Force 2020 Component Command. Therefore, the command participated in several national evaluation exercises and in the NATO Trident Jupiter 19 series so that it could be certified fit to undertake its assigned task.

THE JOINT LOGISTICS SUPPORT GROUP – NATO NRF

2020 SUPPORT



1 January 2020 once again saw the Commander Joint Force Command Brunssum assume responsibility for NATO's Rapid Reaction Force (NRF) and its many supporting entities. To achieve this, the Commander has several enablers at his disposal, not least of which is the Joint Logistics Support Group (JLSG).

At the Wales Summit of 2014, the complex nature of supporting multinational forces of all domains operating in a Joint Operations Area (JOA) was explored and the JLSG concept offered as a solution to coordinate logistic operations, enabling effectiveness and efficiency to be utilised to ensure optimal support to the troops in theatre. The roles associated with the JLSG means that they are one of the first elements to enter a crisis and one of the last elements to leave.

Since 2015, JFC Brunssum has had a JLSG under its command, with 4 posts initially created to provide a permanent staff presence and with a further 21 posts dual hatted from JFC Brunssum to create the 25 JLSG Core Staff Element posts and in addition 86 posts would be force generated during the NRF Force Generation Conference. When activated, however, the Full Operating Capability (FOC) of the JLSG, within the JOA, is 113 personnel in total. This, therefore, relies on rapid force generation from national augmentation to achieve the desired number of personnel for the Headquarters. In addition, and to allow the JLSG to achieve its purpose when deployed, it will require

enabling logistic units inserted into theatre from Troop Contributing Nations. Therefore, it is highly likely that when required, the JLSG will discharge operational and logistic control over a significantly large number of personnel.

Once the decision is taken to deploy the JLSG into the JOA, the JLSG will need to plan, coordinate and execute three key processes. Firstly, the management of the Reception, Staging and Onward Movement (RSOM) of NATO forces – a process which uses Land, Maritime and Air assets to move personnel, vehicles and equipment from arrival at a Sea or Air Port of Debarkation to a location as determined by the mission plan. Secondly, the JLSG will have to facilitate the provision of a consistent flow of sustainment to ensure that the deployed forces receive sufficient quantities of provisions, fuel and ammunition; the JLSG's maintenance of a continuous sustainment flow is integral to meeting the mission objectives. Finally, the Rearward Movement, Staging and Dispatch (RMSD) will typically signify the conclusion of the JLSG responsibilities in theatre as the Joint Task Force withdraws forces elements from the Theatre of Operations, but must also be carefully coordinated to ensure a smooth return.

When activated, the JLSG will synchronise and coordinate the logistics flow into and within the theatre, tailored to the requirements of the mission while simultaneously coordinating cross-functional solutions provided by all governmental, civilian and

military stakeholders to benefit deployed forces.

To ensure preparedness of the JLSG, the Command regularly facilitates training using a bi-annual academics programme, as well as deploying staff in support of joint operational exercises (TRIDENT JUNCTURE, BRILLIANT JOUST and, most recently, TRIDENT JUPITER) in order to train and integrate both the Core Staff Elements and augmentees.

2020 - A pivotal year for the JLSG

With formal recognition of the JLSG as an independent Command expected to be achieved early in 2020 and a new, post NATO Command Structure Adaptation (NCS-A) manning structure will be adopted. This will see the JLSG grow from the current 25 Core Staff Element to a staff of 77 as a permanent Headquarters. When deployed in crisis, however, the requirement for 113 personnel will still exist; force generation post NCS-A will be achieved by a mutual support agreement that will be formalised with our sister JLSG HQ in Naples, Italy, who will provide the other manpower to achieve the mission. This formal recognition of the JLSG Command is an important milestone on the way to Initial Operating Capability (IOC) being declared in April 2021 and Full Operating Capability (FOC) in January 2023.



EXERCISE DEFENDER-EUROPE 20

"A PLATFORM TO STRENGTHEN THE READINESS AND INTEROPERABILITY OF ALLIED FORCES"



Introduction: Exercise DEFENDER-Europe 20 (USDE20) is a US-led multinational exercise, that includes NATO's participation. It is the largest deployment of US-based forces to Europe in more than 25 years with 20,000 soldiers planned to deploy directly from the US to Europe. As such, it demonstrates US commitment to NATO and American resolve to stand by European Allies and Partners.

General Tod D. Wolters, Supreme Allied Commander Europe and Commander US European Command, describes the exercise as: "A platform to strengthen the readiness and interoperability of Allied Forces."

Alliance Perspective: Throughout the period of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), 11 August 2003 to 31 December 2014, in Afghanistan, interoperability was not an issue for NATO as participation in the ISAF mission delivered synchronised tactics, planning and procedures amongst the nations as a consequence of that participation. And this interoperability extended to partners as well. At the height of the ISAF mission 52 nations had troops on the ground and numbers exceeded 160,000. When the mission came to end NATO was keen to explore ways via which high levels of interoperability might be maintained and the so-called 'high visibility' exercise series was implemented. The concept was relatively simple. Every three years the Alliance would conduct an exercise culminating in a LIVEX with 30-40,000 allied, and partner, troops. Exercise locations would rotate between north and south Europe so that operational-level leadership would alternate between the two large Joint Force Commands – Brunssum in the north and Naples in the south – and take place every three years from instigation. The first of these exercises was conducted in 2015 and the second in 2018. However, although successful, the 'high visibility' exercises proved extremely expensive and the Alliance began to look for a way to deliver much needed interoperability at reduced cost. Towards the end of 2019, with the USDE20

initiative transparent Alliance leaders agreed that non-NATO flagged exercises conducted by troops from member nations, with partners in support, could be better utilised to achieve Alliance strategic communications objectives and tactical/operational military synchronisation. Thus the decision was taken to support USDE20 with NATO assets although it was not, officially, an Alliance-flagged exercise. This is very much a new approach for NATO and many lessons have already been learned but it is likely this concept will remain in place for some years to come as it delivers strategic objectives and, concurrently, a noticeable economy of scale.

USDE20 Evolution: On 7 October 2019, US European Command (USEUCOM) officially announced what was intended to be the largest deployment of US-based land forces to Europe for an exercise in more than 25 years. It was planned the exercise, Defender-Europe 20, would be Europe's third largest since the end of the Cold War, with over 37,000 (20,000 US plus 17,000 US, allied and partner troops already in Europe) service members and eighteen countries participating. The US contingent would operate in conjunction with its European and NATO allies in activities focused on strengthening readiness and interoperability, demonstrating recognition amongst the countries that capability in partnership is essential. Lieutenant General Christopher Cavoli, US Army Europe Commanding General said: "Conducting tough, realistic training alongside our allies and partners in Europe enhances those professional relationships that build trust and confidence in each other and increases our overall interoperability, readiness and the ability to collectively deter potential threats."

USDE20 Key Points: The exercise provides a multifaceted opportunity. Firstly, it provides a platform for the evaluation of the readiness of Europe's armies to respond to a threat. This readiness encompasses a range of

elements, principally the level of interoperability between the countries. As forces operate together mutual understanding will develop and areas that require improvement will be exposed. The exercise also provides a testing ground for new ideas from which new working doctrine can be developed that better reflects new and emerging security threats. Finally, Defender is an exhibition of US commitment to its European allies and many hold the view that the demonstration of collective defence is the Alliance's best deterrent.

Impact of COVID-19: Following the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) and the ensuing worldwide pandemic that it ushered in, prudent steps were taken to scale back Defender; in order to ensure both the safety of the personnel involved and the citizens in the counties where the linked exercises were scheduled to take place.

In response to the outbreak and subsequent guidance by the United States' Secretary of Defense, Defender was modified in size and scope.

As of March 13, all movement of personnel and equipment from the United States to Europe formally ceased.

According to the United States European Command, "The health, safety and readiness of our military, civilians, and family members is our primary concern. With this decision, we continue to preserve the readiness of our force while maximizing our efforts to advance our alliances and partnerships."

As a result of the decision, the linked exercises to Exercise Defender-Europe 20 - Dynamic Front, Joint Warfighting Assessment, Saber Strike and Swift Response - will not be conducted. Forces already deployed to Europe for other linked exercises will return to the United States.

In response to COVID-19, NATO has taken precautionary measures based on the guidance of the World Health Organization to safeguard the health of its personnel, family members and home nations. Daily operations continue, with measures implemented to reduce the exposure and potential transmission of the virus and NATO is conducting continuous assessments, as the situation is dynamic.

Transition to DEFENDER-Europe 20 Plus: To maintain operational readiness and protect the health of the force in response to COVID-19, U.S. Army Europe in coordination with allies and partners will execute a modified Allied Spirit/DEFENDER-Europe 20 Plus, tentatively scheduled June 5-19 at Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area (DPTA), Poland.

The U.S. and Polish bilateral exercise will feature a Polish airborne operation and a U.S.-Polish division-size river crossing. The decision to modify rather than cancel the exercise was made with careful consideration of public health while building military readiness.

The exercise will involve a Combined Arms Rehearsal (CAR) conducted by elements of the U.S. and Polish units. Following the CAR, battalion and company size elements will conduct river crossing rehearsals (both period of daylight and darkness). Additionally, elements of the 6th Polish ABN will execute an airborne operation. Following the completion of all rehearsals, participating units will reset and plan the execution of the final river crossing.

Approximately 6,000 U.S. and Polish Soldiers will take part in the exercise. Of those, approximately 4,000 U.S. Soldiers will come from the 1st Cavalry Division Headquarters (Forward); 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team and 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division; and approximately 2,000 Polish Sol-

diers will come from the 6th Airborne Brigade; 9th Armored Cavalry Brigade; 12th Mechanized Brigade, 2nd Engineer Regiment, and the 5th Engineer Regiment. Additional support personnel will come from U.S. Army Europe and subordinate units: 21st Theater Sustainment Command and 7th Army Training Command.

All personnel arriving at DPTA will go to an identified Life Support Area (LSA) and undergo a 14-day quarantine (personnel can undergo a 14-day quarantine at their home stations prior to movement). Personnel will be tested for COVID-19. Upon completing quarantine, testing and receiving a negative test results, they will be sent to their designated LSA. Personnel that test positive for COVID-19 will be placed in isolation for further testing and trace teams will be activated to identify potential others that may have been infected.

Additionally, U.S. Army Europe planners are in the process of developing a training plan to link modified DEFENDER-Europe 20 activities to an Army Preposition Stock draw and live fire exercise at Bergen Hohne Training Area, Germany.

While the initial scope of the exercise was scaled back, the functions required to deploy brigade and division sized elements from the United States to Europe and the ability to coordinate large scale movements with Allies and partners were exercised and tested. Supply and reinforcement lines were tested across Europe. Troops disembarked via aircraft while equipment arrived by sea. They were both successfully linked together and then caravanned via convoy from ports and supply depots in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany to exercise areas throughout Europe. Road, air, rail, and sea transport lines facilitated the expedient deployment of troops. Many traversed thousands of kilometres to si-

tes in the Baltic nations, demonstrating that distance wouldn't prevent NATO forces from coming to the aid of an Ally.

Since January, the U.S. Army deployed approximately 6,000 Soldiers from the United States to Europe including a division headquarters and an armoured brigade combat team. Approximately 9,000 vehicles and pieces of equipment were moved from U.S. Army Prepositioned Stocks in Europe and approximately 3,000 pieces of equipment arrived via sea from the United States. Likewise, in coordination with Allies and partners, Soldiers and equipment arrived at multiple ports where they then undertook onward movement to training areas in Germany and Poland.

Many details regarding what the remainder of Defender will look like are still being worked and discussed between the participating NATO Allies and partners. Changes are anticipated to the deployment timelines of Soldiers currently in Europe, redeployment of U.S.-based equipment, and the next Atlantic Resolve rotation. Details about these adjustments have not yet been finalized due to the ongoing nature of the COVID pandemic.

Apart from military training objectives, the health of participating soldiers remains a priority. The scaled-back version of Defender is expected to potentially mitigate the spread of the virus within NATO forces and also to support local containment efforts and objectives. The modification of the exercise will not harm NATO's ability to protect all Allies and to protect our shared values. Our nations, Allies, partners, and potential adversaries should know that our forces remain ready.

ALLIED COMMAND COUNTERINTELLIGENCE: HERE TO PROTECT YOU!



Allied Command Counterintelligence (ACCI) was established to conduct a wide-range of activities in order to detect, identify, assess, deter, exploit or neutralize Terrorism, Espionage, Sabotage and Subversion (TESS) threats to the Alliance. These threats are often posed by hostile intelligence services and international terrorist organizations, existing all over Europe, including here in the Benelux.

The greatest Terrorism threats present in the Benelux (aka Tri-Border Region) are often posed by persons and/or organizations associated with Violent Radical Extremism, which can be representative of any ideology, from the religious to the political. In the past three years, terrorism suspects have been arrested in

the Netherlands (Utrecht, Eindhoven, Maas-tricht, Heerlen and Brunssum), in Germany (Aachen, Dusseldorf and Cologne), and Belgium (Liege, Verviers and Brussels). Further, in this same time frame, ACCI has fielded many reports concerning video/photographic surveillance of USAG Schinnen, JFC Brunssum, AFNORTH and other NATO affiliated facilities in the surrounding region.

The greatest Espionage threats present in the Benelux are generated by known and suspected agents of adversarial intelligence services.

These intelligence services are truly modern and employ a full range of capabilities, from the traditional human intelligence collection (e.g., elicitation) to the non-traditional realms of cyber and cellular telecommunications. Some of these threats are represented in the receipt of unsolicited correspondence (e.g., emails or social media messaging), and can span the gamut from consultation or contract offers to requests interviews and academic papers.

In the last two years, a common form of unsolicited communication has been employed to great effect at JFCB: via our office telecommunications. This scheme, possibly meant to Sabotage our communications capability(s), often involved a caller portraying themselves as a legitimate authority and urging NATO

personnel to download and/or run a given program on their unclassified workstation.

Additionally, these intelligence services are heavily invested in acts of Subversion, creating influence through the employment of creative narratives via social and traditional media mediums. These narratives and the resulting influence can erode support for NATO and/or allied nations, as well as undermine the many missions and objectives pursued by the Alliance.

Our ability to protect the Alliance is largely reliant upon the willingness of NATO personnel and dependants to inform ACCI when they believe they may have been personally targeted, or otherwise observed a suspicious act targeting a fellow NATO member, entity or organization. It is for this reason we ask that, "If you see something, say something".

The local ACCI office charged with protecting you from these threats is the Brunssum Detachment, located in building H201, across from the BSG offices.

They be reached, via walk-in during working hours, or alternately, by phone (+31 (0)45 526-3396) or email (accibrdet@jfcbs.nato.int).



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JFCBS EXPERT TEAM VISIT



Short articles about JFC Brunssum (JFCBS) staff conducting Expert Team Visits (ETVs) to NATO's partner nations regularly feature in Northern Star. However, readers may not be aware of the finer details and the strategic importance of these activities. This article aims therefore to introduce the topic of Military Partnerships and to provide a better understanding of ETVs.

Why are Military Partnerships important?

Security in NATO countries is not just linked to events within NATO borders but also to actions farther away, such as in Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. The reverse is also true. NATO has therefore made Cooperative Security one of its 3 core tasks and has reached out to develop its cooperation with partners around the world.

Who are NATO's Partners?

NATO has formal partnerships with 41 non-member nations. These relationships fall under 3 regional frameworks and one other grouping: 'Partnership for Peace' includes neighbours in Europe and the former Soviet Union, 'The Mediterranean Dialogue' involves 7 nations of the Mediterranean region, and 'The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative' comprises 4 partners of the Middle East region. Nine 'Partners across the Globe' are not assigned to a particular framework but are countries that cooperate with NATO in areas of mutual interest, such as emerging security challenges.

NATO's Partners

Partnership for Peace	Mediterranean Dialogue	Istanbul Cooperation Initiative	Partners across the Globe
Armenia Austria Azerbaijan Belarus Bosnia and Herzegovina Finland Georgia Kazakhstan Kyrgyz Republic Ireland Malta Moldova North Macedonia Russia Serbia Sweden Switzerland Tajikistan Turkmenistan Ukraine Uzbekistan	Algeria Egypt Israel Jordan Mauritania Morocco Tunisia	Bahrain Kuwait Qatar United Arab Emirates	Afghanistan Australia Colombia Iraq Japan The Republic of Korea Mongolia New Zealand Pakistan

Table listing NATO's partners under the regional frameworks that they belong to.



How does the Military Partnership process work?

Every partnership is unique with nations having different levels of ambition for their cooperation with NATO. International Staff at NATO Headquarters therefore establish goals for each individual partnership. These goals are translated by the International Military Staff into military objectives, from which SACEUR's Strategic Partnership Directive is produced.

Guided by this directive, Joint Force Commands (JFCs) liaise bilaterally with each partner nation to produce an annual plan of activity. The finalised plan, known as the 'Final List of Events', may include ETVs to be executed by the JFCs and Single Service Commands. Because of the process described above, each ETV should create an effect. That effect will support a military objective, and that objective will lead to the achievement of a partnership goal.

Where does JFCBS conduct ETVs to?

Of NATO's 41 partners, JFCBS is responsible for managing activity with 13 Partner-

ship for Peace countries (Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Finland, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and one Partner across the Globe (Afghanistan). Additionally, JFCBS supports SHAPE with mobile training for 2 special-relations partners (Ukraine and Georgia).

When do these visits happen?

JFCBS typically conducts between 25 and 30 ETVs throughout the year. Visits usually last for one week and are scheduled outside of major JFCBS HQ events, such as exercises, so that Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) are available to support them.

What does an ETV involve?

Each ETV will tend to focus on a specific topic. Last year's visits covered the following subjects: Operational Planning, Logistics, Civil Military Cooperation, Law of Armed Conflict and Legal Aspects, Medical, Training and Exercise, NATO Overview, Joint Assessment, Non Commissioned Officer Leadership, Communication and Information

Systems, Information and Psychological Operations, and Military Combat Engineering.

The Officer with Primary Responsibility for an ETV, who will be a member of the Implementation, Coordination and Execution Section of J9's Military Partnership Branch, will manage the event's planning and execution. Two or 3 SMEs from the relevant Section at JFCBS will lead the delivery of lessons, which might be in the form of classroom briefs or more practical syndicate exercises. To enable greater communication and dialogue outside of the formal training programme, evolutions such as ice-breakers, hosted dinners, and cultural tours are often included in the programme.

In summary, JFCBS personnel routinely undertake ETVs to partner nations where they help to develop a partner's understanding of a particular topic. This effort aims to strengthen NATO's military partnerships in order to enhance regional and global security. Such is the value of this work that the Brussels Summit declaration in July 2018 stated "NATO partnerships are, and will continue to be, essential to the way NATO works".



BULGARIAN ARMED FORCES

The defence of Bulgaria is planned and implemented within the framework of NATO's collective defence and the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy through the effective employment of national military and non-military defence capabilities.

The strategic goal of the Bulgarian Defence Policy is the protection and promotion of national interests through the development, improvement and use of adequate defence capabilities, and building up NATO-interoperable Armed Forces with a single set of command and control system in peacetime and in crisis. The achievement of this objective is based on the active participation in the process of planning, development and use of defence capabilities of NATO and the EU. Besides the military instrument, it requires the implementation of a comprehensive approach to the usage also of diplomatic, political, informational, economic, financial, intelligence and legal tools. This is particularly important today, given the increasing penetration and use of hybrid methods and means of influence against the country and its allies.

The Bulgarian Defence Policy is aimed at building-up and development of defence capabilities for the execution of the Armed Forces' tasks on the three assigned missions: (1) Defence; (2) Support to the International Peace and Security; (3) Contribution to the National Security in Peacetime.

The Bulgarian defence system functions in a dynamic, complex and increasingly unpredictable security environment, with a sustainable deepening of destabilizing processes globally and regionally. The dynamics in the development of "hybrid warfare", the potential risks of mass migration and terrorism, as well as organized crime and cybercrime, pose new challenges to the national security system and to the defence system in particular.

A key priority of the Bulgarian defence policy is to achieve a gradual increase of the defence budget to 2% of the GDP by 2024 according to the "National Plan for Increasing the Defence Spending to 2% of the Gross Domestic Product until 2024". Bulgaria is resolved to implement the NATO Wales Summit commitments regarding the increase in defence spending to 2 % of GDP as well as to have at least 20% of total annual defence spending on acquisition of new NATO-interoperable defence capabilities. The aim is by 2024 to reach a ratio for personnel costs, operating costs and capital spending of 60:20:20.

The Bulgarian Armed Forces remain one of the main instruments for implementation of the country's defence policy. Their role is to



guarantee the sovereignty and independence of the country and to protect its territorial integrity under Art. 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, as shared responsibilities with allies from NATO and the EU, through effective contribution to collective defence, by participation in missions and operations for prevention and management of crises, as well as in the implementation of the Common EU Policy for Security and Defence.

Bulgaria builds operationally compatible and modern armed forces, adequate to the contemporary risks and threats, whose capabilities are developed in accordance with the ever-changing security environment and the resources of the country. Military operations are the most common form for employment of the Armed Forces for execution of tasks set by the government.

Bulgaria has been a NATO member state since 2004. The Alliance is the cornerstone of Bulgaria's security and the membership enables the country to effectively address the security challenges of a fundamentally changed security environment in Europe since 2014. Therefore, the implementation of the national commitments and especially the NATO Wales, Warsaw and Brussels Summits' decisions related to the build-up of the Alliance's deterrent and defence posture is the top priority of the Bulgarian defence policy.

In this regard, NATO's tailored Forward Presence (tFP) in the Black Sea region continues to be of exceptional importance for the security of Bulgaria. Therefore, the country is working closely and is contributing to the full implementation of all agreed tFP measu-

res, including inter alia the establishment of a Coordination Centre in Varna. The Centre, as a high priority issue for Bulgaria, will collect and analyse information and coordinate all NATO maritime activities in Black Sea and report to NATO's Allied Maritime Command in Northwood (UK).

Bulgaria continues to contribute actively to the development of the Alliance's Command Structure (NCS) and Force Structure (NFS). By the end of 2021 100% of NCS national quota posts will be filled. The Bulgarian Armed Forces continue to actively participate in various elements of NFS at the Eastern flank of NATO. The Republic of Bulgaria has affiliated one battalion to the Multinational Brigade South East (MN BDE SE) in Craiova, Romania, and has appointed 2 servicemen to its HQ. 10 other staff officers are appointed to the HQ of the Multinational Division Southeast (MND-SE) in Bucharest, among them the rotational post of deputy commander of the division (Brigadier General) since July 2019. One mechanised brigade is affiliated to the division HQ mentioned above. One mechanised Brigade is affiliated to the NRDC-GR, where Bulgaria has on a permanent bases position of Deputy Commander of NATO rapid deployable corps. Currently there are negotiations for the appointment of 8 more staff officers in the newly established Multinational Corps Southeast (MNC-SE) in Sibiu, Romania.

We have already declared our contribution and we will participate in the ongoing work on the NRI with formations from our Armed Forces, within the assigned timeframe.

The role of the Bulgarian Armed Forces



is to guarantee the sovereignty, security and independence of the country and defend its territorial integrity. In order to fulfil this role, three main missions are assigned to the Bulgarian Armed Forces as follows:

Mission DEFENCE covers the tasks related to guaranteeing the State's sovereignty and independence, defense of the territorial integrity of the country and of the other NATO member-states pursuant to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. In this context, if necessary, the Bulgarian Armed Forces are prepared to fight together with Allied forces deployed on the territory of Bulgaria and to provide the required Host Nation Support.

Mission SUPPORT OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY involves contribution to NATO and EU crisis response operations; conflicts prevention; countering terrorism; participation in UN, OSCE missions and other coalition formats; arms control; non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; their means of delivery and materials for their production; international military cooperation; humanitarian relief; consolidation of confidence and security.

The Bulgarian Armed Forces maintain a state of readiness for participation in multinational allied and coalition crisis response operations. In terms of size they contribute to prolonged operations with concurrent rotation of one reinforced battalion (Battle Group) or greater number smaller units and assets from the military services exclusively within the resource equivalent to the level of ambition (on average about 1000 troops). The Navy participates with declared forces within the resource equivalent to one frigate for a period up to 6 months per year. The Air Force participates with transport aviation without rotation for a period up to 6 months per year with the necessary personnel. The necessary logistics and other elements for participation in operations are also ensured.

The Bulgarian contribution to NATO's activities is multi-component. Bulgaria is actively working to strengthen political dialogue, consultation and coordination within the Alliance, contributes to NATO's crisis response operations and missions and to the buildup of the collective deterrent and defense posture. Bulgaria actively supports the Alliance's open-door policy, sharing the position that the European and Euro-Atlantic perspective is the most stable guarantee for the establishment of lasting peace, security and prosperity. NATO membership is precondition for achieving EU accession, especially regarding the Western Balkans.

Bulgarian military units and personnel are contributing to the NATO Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in Afghanistan, the NATO Mission in Iraq and to KFOR in Kosovo. As of today, there are 185 Bulgarian military personnel serving in those missions.

Since 2002, when the Bulgarian Armed Forces joined the Memorandum of Understanding to form the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, 9,184 Bulgarian military personnel have participated in the NATO-led ISAF-mission. Since January 1st, 2015, 1300 military personnel from

Bulgaria have contributed to RSM, including 160 servicemen as of today. (source - Internet)

The Bulgarian Army contribution to the NATO Response Force (NRF) in 2020 included maintaining of a permanent operational readiness movement control team, a unit dedicated for special operations, a military police company, CIMIC unit, CBRN unit and a medical surgical team. The Bulgarian Navy also contributes with forces and resources equivalent to one frigate and one minehunter three to six months per year. In 2020, Bulgaria will participate with one frigate and with one minehunter in the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2) and in the Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 2 (SNMCMG 2) respectively.

The Bulgarian Air Force participates with helicopters and personnel for this capability, without rotation, for a period of six months per year.

Mission CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL SECURITY IN PEACETIME encompasses maintenance of early warning capabilities for potential risks and threats; control of the air and maritime spaces; participation in operations for countering terrorist activities; protection of strategic facilities; protection and assistance to the population in the event of natural disasters, industrial emergencies and ecological catastrophes; unexploded ordnance disposal; humanitarian relief; support to migration control; search, rescue and evacuation activities; support, when necessary, to other government bodies, organizations and local authorities to prevent and overcome the aftermath of terrorist attacks, natural disasters, ecological and industrial catastrophes and severe infectious disease outbreaks.

At present, in the context of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, and in accordance with the constitution, national laws and the declared state of emergency, the Bulgarian Armed Forces are assisting other state institutions in the implementation of the measures taken in relation to the emergency.

Together with other NATO members, Bulgaria continues to contribute to NATO's partnership policy. Bulgaria is ready to provide support and assistance in the defence and security reforms to NATO partner countries. As an example, practical support for partner countries and candidates for membership could point out long-term assistance to Georgia and Ukraine. In 2017-2018, Bulgaria was the NATO Contact Point Embassy in Tbilisi and worked actively to provide support and assistance to Georgia on the path of Euro-Atlantic integration. The Republic of Bulgaria continues to provide support for the reforms and implementation of the Significant NATO-Georgia package. Bulgaria also supports Ukraine by continuing to fulfil our responsibilities as a leading member of the NATO Trust Fund for Medical Rehabilitation of Wounded Ukrainian Servicemen. This contribution equals a value of 250,000 Euro.

Bulgaria's involvement in NATO capability-building policy is also materializing through

its commitment to build up the NATO Crisis Management and Disaster Response Centre of Excellence (CMDR COE) The Centre has been formally accredited by the North Atlantic Council and provides specialized expertise in capacity building support, improvement of interoperability and training for member states and NATO partners. CMDR COE currently has two Sponsoring Nations - Greece and Poland, and one Framework Nation - the Republic of Bulgaria. Hungary and Romania have recently indicated interest to join the COE too.

The process of rearmament and modernization of the Bulgarian Armed Forces is underway to make them more effective and interoperable with NATO. The introduction of new weapon systems will go in parallel with the decommissioning of remaining legacy from the old Soviet type armament.

The current major investment projects are:

- Acquisition of a new type of combat aircraft.
- Acquisition and maintenance of new armoured combat and combat service support vehicles for establishing battalion battle groups within a mechanized brigade.
- Acquisition of multifunctional modular patrol vessels for the naval forces.

Their implementation will overcome a deficit of critically needed defensive capabilities. Simultaneously, overcoming the capability shortfalls depends also on the acquisition of new 3D radars, air and missile defence systems, systems for command and control, development of capabilities for cyber defence, artillery, attack helicopters, UAVs, on the modernization of the Wielingen-class frigates, modernization of T-72 tanks and other projects.

The acquisition of the first lot of eight F-16 Block 70 fighters will provide the country with the most modern in the region and combat-tested fourth generation multirole fighter. This purchase marked the beginning of the technological re-equipment of the Air Force and opened new horizons for strategic defence partnership with the United States as well as the development of the Bulgarian defence industry.

The participation of the Republic of Bulgaria in multinational projects and in various NATO and EU initiatives contributes to overcome shortage of critical national capabilities and benefits the preparation of the declared units.

By Council of Minister' decision from January 2019, a national Strategic Defence and Security System Review was initiated. As part of this process, an organization was created within the Ministry of Defence to conduct a Defence Review. Taking into account the results of the Strategic Defence Review, a new Program for the Development of the Armed Forces will be under elaboration. The document's time horizon will be 2032 for better synchronization with NATO and EU defence planning processes. Based on this program a new Armed Forces Development Plan 2026 will be elaborated as well.



#WEAREJFCBS

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NAME : Gregory K. Denton
 SERVICE : JFCBS Combined
 Joint Operations Centre
 NATION : CANADA



However, as a member of the CJOC team, encompassing a daily staff of about 25 personnel, we must work together to collate and analyse new information from the operational environment multinational specialists from the intelligence, logistics, and planning divisions are just a few of the multitude of experts with which we must share information. It is essential that information from each of their respective domains is shared with us so that the CJOC can provide accurate reporting to the Command Staff and enable the decision-making process.

We work directly with all ACO entities in the achievement of this process. Working with our 'sister' command in Naples, Italy, we have very close partnerships formed with all single service HQs. In this sense, we truly are a 'combined' division that incorporates very specific skill-sets from a myriad of experts across all 30 nations in the Alliance. Our current geographical focus spans from Implementation Area North, which includes Iceland to the Baltics and from Norway to Belgium. On top of that, reporting and analysis is needed on Resolute Support, our current mission in Afghanistan, and situational awareness of the overall European area, where we provide the requested information to the Command Group and SHAPE.

Do you have family here?

Yes, my wife Michelle and my son Logan have moved here with me. Michelle is a teacher's assistant at AFNorth International School where my son is a student. Logan is an enthusiastic hockey player and he plays for the Geleen 'Smoke eaters'.

What are your hobbies?

In addition to studying French, I am one of the goaltenders for the Geilenkirchen Flyers during the fall and winter. During the spring and summer I am an avid gardener where I devote a lot of my spare time to planting and cultivating a wide variety of plants and vegetables. Going for bike rides and playing baseball and soccer with my son are probably my favourite activities.

What do you like in your job?

Working in the CJOC has afforded me the rare opportunity to provide direct input into the operational framework. This first-hand experience within a large, multi-national joint headquarters has provided me with a greater appreciation for the operational level and the importance of developing and maintaining strong team relationships. My experiences from JFCBS HQ will continue to strengthen my personal and professional development. Overall, working in NATO has been a rewarding and culturally enriching experience for me and my family.

When did you arrive & what is your job?

I arrived here at JFCBS HQ in July 2017. My primary role is to be the Subject Matter Expert on the Land Command and Information Service (LC2IS) within the Combined Joint Operations Centre (CJOC).

Please tell us about your career prior to arriving at Brunssum.

Upon completion of a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Psychology at the University of New Brunswick Canada, I immediately transferred from the reserve forces to the regular forces, and I was posted to Kingston Ontario, Canada. I deployed on multiple tours of duty including Afghanistan, Haiti, and the Middle-East. Moreover, I was further deployed as part of Canada's Disaster Assistance Relief Team (DART) in direct support to the global tsunami relief efforts in Sri Lanka in 2004. One of my notable duty stations includes Yellowknife, which is just south of the Arctic Circle in Canada's high North. Here, I worked for Joint Task Force North, a national HQ where I was directly involved in the planning and conduct of domestic sovereignty operations within the Arctic environment.

Please tell us about your job.

I synthesize real time operational information from numerous sources to enable the HQ to maintain situational awareness and support the decision making process. Specifically, my duties entail the management of operational information from a multitude of functional area systems.

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