

NORTHERN STAR

MAGAZINE FOR HQ JFC BRUNSSUM - SEPTEMBER 2019



RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION

TRAINING, ADVISING AND ASSISTING AFGHAN FORCES

THIS MONTH'S FOCUS: RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION

- PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING BY JFC BRUNSSUM
- ON THE SPOT: JFC BRUNSSUM'S MOBILE TRAINING TEAM IN AFGHANISTAN
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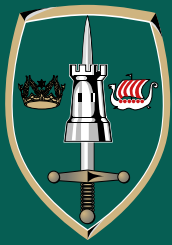
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ABOUT THE COVER

Afghan national army soldiers participate in the Afghan Emergency Tactical Air Coordinator Course, Balkh Airfield, Afghanistan. Photo by Resolute Support PAO

COLOPHON

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EDITORIAL

SEPTEMBER ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

The editorial staffs of the Northern Star are very pleased to present to you this special edition about NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. But first, our Commander, General Erhard Bühler, gives you the possibility to read his thoughts and insights after his first three months in command. With the upcoming Presidential election and the continuing talks between the Taliban and the U.S. government, this is a crucial time in Afghanistan. NATO remains committed to Afghanistan and its people and JFC Brunssum continues to have an important role within the Resolute Support Mission. JFC Brunssum is the out of theatre HQ enabling this mission. In order to highlight the role and responsibilities of JFC Brunssum, in this edition you will find an overview of the mission provided by the Afghan Focus Group. JFCBS J7 and J9 have contributed to this issue with articles about their engagement. You will find insights about the pre-deployment training conducted by J7, as well as an exciting first-hand account about JFCBS' Mobile Training

Team, which was recently on task in Kabul. JFCBS J6 hosted a conference to enable solutions for the future. In addition, JFCBS Political Advisor, Mrs Catherine Royle, is providing insight into the politics of Afghanistan with her contribution to this issue. Another highlight for JFC Brunssum regarding community life was the Small Pitch Soccer Tournament. This community event promoted friendship and multinationalism, and we are happy to present you the article and pictures. We hope you will be joining us next year for the 40th anniversary of this event. Many thanks to all who have supported us with articles for this issue! Last but not least, I would like to invite you to engage with us if you have a good story to tell. You are welcome to contact any member of the Northern Star editorial staff and send over your articles and stories. I hope you enjoy this issue of the Northern Star.

Tobias Luckau, Captain (DEU Air Force)
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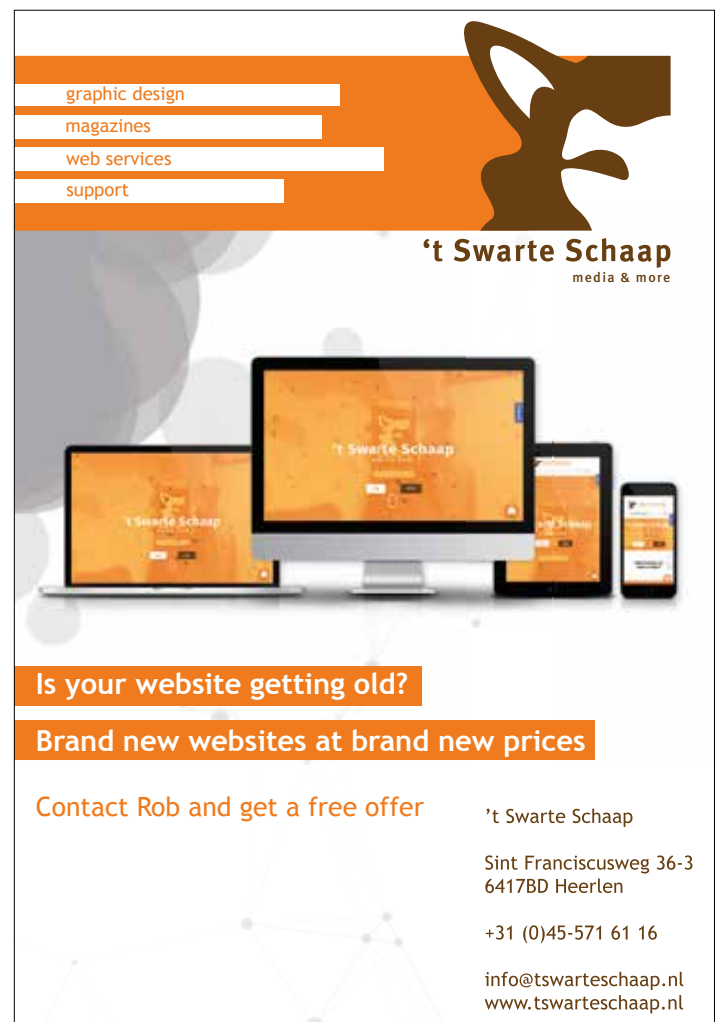
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COMMAND GROUP CORNER

"CAPABLE, COMPETENT, COMMITTED"

Team Brunssum, as you are all well aware, it has been a busy and productive summer season for the Allied Joint Force Headquarters and NATO as a whole. As we all return from much needed and well-earned leave period, I thought it appropriate to share my thoughts with you as we continue to improve our Headquarters, and our mission.

First, I am deeply honoured to have been selected as your Commander in NATO's Joint Force Command, here in Brunssum. "I'm proud to serve as your Commander!" Having used these first three months in the driving seat to get up to speed and enhance my awareness of all of our headquarters' focus areas, my thoughts are becoming clearer as I formulate a deeper understanding of the challenges we face and the means we have to accomplish them. I appreciate the hard work expended by the staff thus far to provide the necessary information to engage leaders throughout NATO to improve the capabilities of JFC Brunssum. I feel confident, through our continued hard work, that we will make significant gains in the coming months, becoming more efficient as a staff and as a headquarters.

In my initial staff address I emphasized that our **"team spirit" is the road to our success** within this headquarters; it is paramount in an international working environment like ours, and you have proven to me already, that you, as a functional staff, have the team spirit we need. This has been emboldened by the infusion of a large number of new team members in the wake of our summer rotation. Moving forward, it is up to you and me to maintain that spirit.

Welcome to each one of our new headquarters members, I look forward to the opportunity to work with you. You bring fresh perspectives with you that enable us to look at how best to execute our mission. I welcome your fresh viewpoints, knowledge, and experiences as we continue to work to improve our operational mind set. To those JFC Brunssum team members who have been here for some time, remember your challenges as you entered the headquarters for the first time. Help me by making the experience easier for our newest members. Start with small steps such as using the correct language in the correct manner, provide a helping hand and pass on the team spirit of the motivated and capable war-fighting headquarters we have established. Do not forget that you have the expertise and knowledge needed to help. Please continue to engage, educate, and enhance our capability as a headquarters.

I will continue to do my best to foster and facilitate a positive, forward thinking work environment, so I will be clear when issuing my direction and guidance. The information necessary to achieve this is ultimately provided by each of you. It is delivered to me by your ACOSs and DCOSs in regular meetings, working groups, boards, decision briefs and desk-sides. I ask that you continue to be pro-active; forward comprehensively reviewed briefings to me with your ideas and best recommendations via your chains of command. The process will afford the DCOM, COS, and I the ability to consider the quality work being presented, allowing for the best decisions possible. Your contributions to the team are integral and we are unable to perform our mission without your dedicated effort within your sections.

Our headquarters is a part of a larger organization; NATO has proven to be robust, relevant and of critical importance to the world we live in. In its 70th year NATO remains unique in its composition and is globally engaged more than ever before. Nevertheless significant challenges to our security develop at an ever-quicken pace and we must be able to adapt fast enough to successfully confront them.

We must continue to be fully engaged in our support for the Resolute Support (RS) Mission. That is why I directed a specific focus on Resolute Support with this issue of the Northern Star. I have recently met with COM RS and other key leadership of Resolute Support as part of my situational awareness programme and I am fully confident in the capability and team approach to the mission that continues to be the cornerstone underpinning the



work of our deployed colleagues. As Resolute Support approaches a critical period, Team Brunssum will face new challenges to our supporting headquarters mission. As the mission evolves, I ask that each one of you continue to stay mentally and professionally engaged in making sure we give our Resolute Support members in the field the very best we can, providing the resources they require to successfully continue their mission. To be very clear, we will continue to provide support to those conducting Train, Advise, and Assist duties for Resolute Support as long as the mission is ours.

In other areas our task to establish clear chains of command and transparent command and control structures within the operational area of JFC Brunssum continues. Strengthening Command and Control (C2) has been a focus item since I took command, and I view it to be at the very heart of effective operational command. My engagement with NATO members has emphasized the importance of ensuring a common understanding between nations, leaders, and commanders at each echelon, to further clarify roles and responsibilities in Basic Activities and Current Operations (BACO), training & exercises, and NATO alliance requirements. Strengthening C2 also translates to continued effort by this headquarters to improve our communication as a staff. I implore each one of you to improve your communication up and down the chain of command. In addition, creating relationships across the entirety of the headquarters is integral to improving our capability and understanding as a staff. Achieving Unity of Effort with clear C2 is essential to this headquarters and our mission.

Finally, as we work through the preparation and planning for a number of training and exercise opportunities, I am fully confident in the headquarters' capability to design and execute operations that will improve our efficiency, and capability as a Joint Force Command. Each opportunity to train as we would fight is extremely important to me. We must work hard to execute and develop the muscle memory necessary to increase our readiness, be it crisis response, deterrence or security efforts, your ability to think critically, react appropriately, and develop lessons learned will prove beneficial to our capability in the future. I look forward to the experience we will gain in our Trident Jupiter events and other exercises in the New Year. We have a busy schedule ahead, but I know you will put your best effort forward in the coming months to assure the very best outcomes possible. You, the staff of Allied Joint Force Brunssum, 'Team Brunssum', give this headquarters its capability! SHAPE will give us our tasks to fulfil, our job is to maintain our special team spirit and thus improve the overall information flow within our HQ. I look forward to working with you; thank you for the hard work to come. Together we will ensure JFC Brunssum's reputation for excellence is maintained.

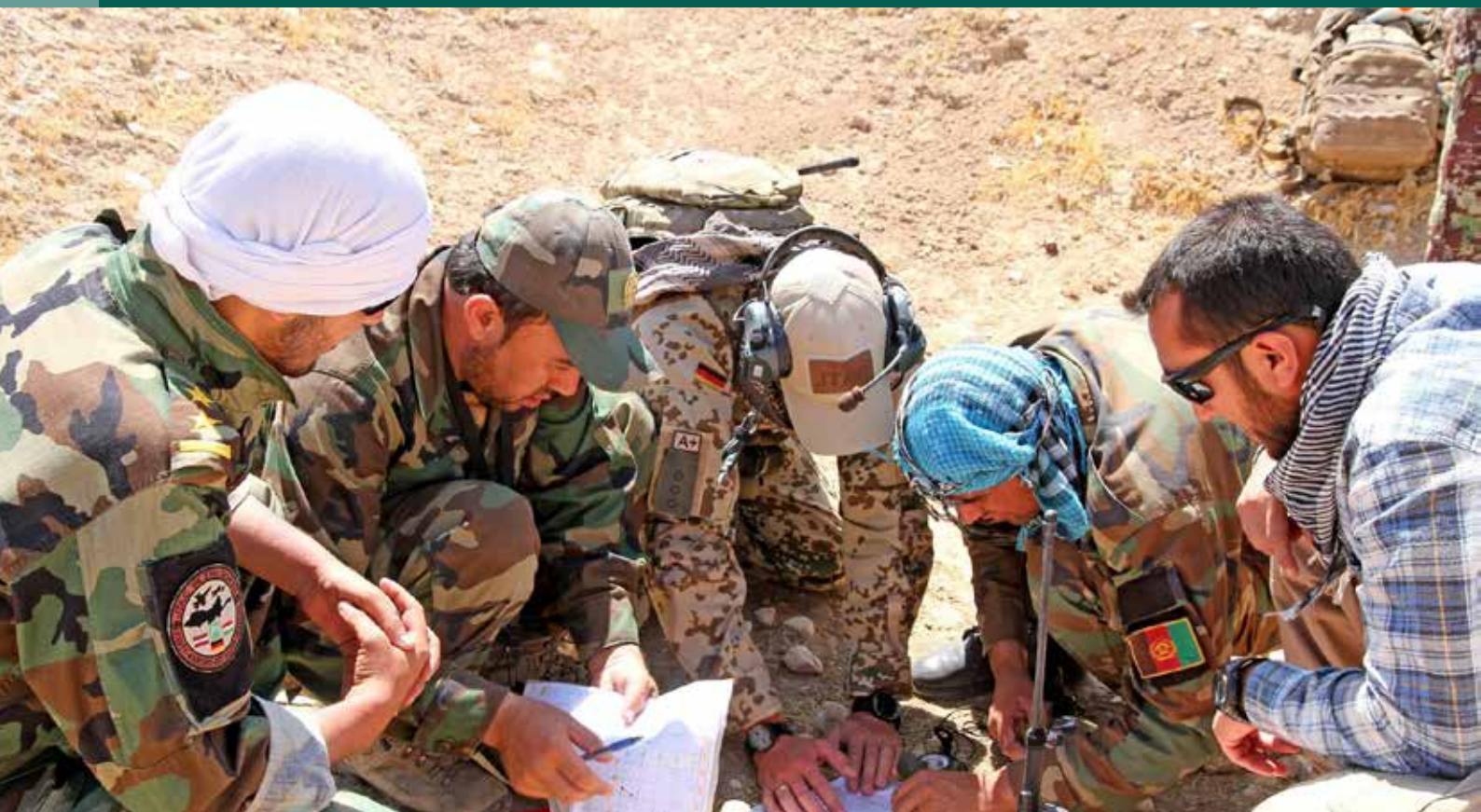
So let me end by saying to you once again: „I'm proud to serve as your Commander!“

*General Erhard Bühler
Commander JFC Brunssum*



RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION

TRAIN, ADVICE AND ASSIST



STORY BY JFCBS AFGHAN FOCUS GROUP

Resolute Support (RS) is a NATO-led, non-combat mission to Train Advice and Assist (TAA) the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) and the Afghan Security Institutions (ASI). This mission is vital to the Afghan security forces and institutions in order to develop the capacity required to defend Afghanistan and protect its citizens against Violent Extremist Organizations (VEO's). This TAA mission is by invitation of the Afghan government and supported by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2189, unanimously adopted on 12 December 2014. The mission assumed on 1 January 2015, seamlessly follows the conclusion of the previous NATO led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission and is working alongside the subsequent assumption of full security responsibility by the ANDSF. The RS mission is currently comprised of approximately 16,000 personnel from 39 NATO allies and partners.

The TAA activities focus primarily on the 2017 Afghan Government's four year security roadmap, aiming to increase security enabler effectiveness and accountability. The roadmap targets the areas of leadership development, fighting capabilities and unity of command,

as well as the fighting of corruption within the ASI. The mission also supports TAA activities to grow governance and administrative functions including budget creation, force generation programs, the development of personnel and logistical sustainment with civilian oversight. Civilian oversight is pertinent to ensure security forces and institutions act in accordance with the rule of law and good governance.

*SECRETARY GENERAL Jens Stoltenberg:
'Training local forces is one of the best tools
we have in the fight against terrorism.'*

Contributing nations to the RS mission continue to provide financial, personnel and material support relevant to accomplishing operational and strategic goals as addressed throughout various summits. In the Warsaw summit of 2016, heads of state agreed to the sustainment of the RS mission beyond 2016 utilizing a flexible regional model (e.g. TAA). Leaders further committed to maintaining financial support through 2020 as part of a greater International Community effort. In 2017 these decisions were reaffirmed by NATO leaders, with NATO defence ministers agreeing to increase the RS force posture to approximately 16,000 troops. At the NATO summit of 2018 in Brussels, the 39 RS contributing nations further committed to continued financial support through 2024. Here, NATO leaders reaffirmed their shared

commitment to Afghanistan's long-term security and stability goals and further welcomed the progress made by the ASI as an example of the effectiveness of extant TAA efforts.

TAA is delivered to our Afghan partners adhering to two sets of authorities. The first is governed by the NATO Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), which was signed in Kabul on 30 September 2014 by President Ashraf Ghani and ratified by the Afghan Parliament. It has a 'no combat mandate' focused on delivering TAA to the ASI across multiple levels. The second authority is governed by the US-Afghan Bilateral Security Agreement which authorises 'Combat Advising'. US forces carry out an extra two complementary Counter Terrorism (CT) missions under Operation Freedom Sentinel (OFS). One entails CT operations against Al Qaeda, its affiliates, and ISIS-K in Afghanistan. The second mission provides security force assistance within NATO RSM mandates.

Most recently, a number of meetings were held between the US and the Taliban. These structured talks, which are fully backed by NATO and the Afghan government, signal a first-step in achieving a measurable diplomatic breakthrough in the effort to end conflict with the Taliban.

Afghanistan: Resolute Support Mission



Resolute Support Mission

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	Albania	135		Germany	1.300		Poland	330
	Armenia	121		Greece	12		Portugal	214
	Australia	300		Hungary	93		Romania	763
	Austria	18		Iceland	3		Slovakia	33
	Azerbaijan	120		Italy	895		Slovenia	8
	Belgium	83		Latvia	40		Spain	67
	Bosnia-Herzegovina	63		Lithuania	50		Sweden	29
	Bulgaria	159		Luxembourg	2		Turkey	593
	Croatia	106		Mongolia	233		Ukraine	21
	Czech Republic	343		Montenegro	31		United Kingdom	1.100
	Denmark	155		Netherlands	160		United States	8.475
	Estonia	42		New Zealand	13			
	Finland	67		North Macedonia	47			
	Georgia	870		Norway	54			
							Total	17.148

DATE: JUNE 2019





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Factors	2001	2017
Gross Domestic Product ¹	\$2.46b	\$19.5b
GDP per capita ¹	\$118	\$596
Life expectancy ²	46.2y	60.72y
Literacy ³	31.5%	38.4%
Girls in primary school ³	0%	39%
Electricity ²	1%	43%
Clean water ²	32%	55.3%
Healthcare facilities ¹	496	2400
Internet users (PC) ⁴	0%	8.3%
Mobile phone users ⁴	0%	61.6%
Population ¹	20.1m	34.7m
Population in Kabul	500k	5m

1-World Bank

2-CIA Fact book 2001, 2015, 2017

3-Afghanistan Living Conditions Survey 2015-2017

4-Afghan Human Development Report 2016

DATE: JUNE 2019

RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION COMMAND AND CONTROL:

RS Commander: General Austin Scott Miller (USA)
 Dep. Commander: LTG Salvatore Camporeale (ITA)
 NATO Senior Military Rep: Amb. Sir Nicholas Kay (UK)

Train Advice and Assist Commands (TAACs)

Commanders:

TAAC-Capital (Kabul): Brigadier Gen. Yasar Dilber (TUR)
 TAAC-North (Mazar-e-Sharif): Brigadier Gen. Gerhard Klaffus (DEU)
 TAAC East (Laghman): Brigadier Gen. Donn Hill (USA)
 TAAC South (Kandahar): Brigadier Gen. Miles Brown (USA)
 TAAC West (Herat): Brigadier Gen. Giovanni Parmiggiani (ITA)



THE POLITICS OF AFGHANISTAN

STORY BY CATHERINE ROYLE, JFCBS POLITICAL ADVISER

The 19th of August 2019 is the 100th anniversary of Afghan independence. It was supposed to be marked by a ceremony at the Darul Aman Palace – the bombed out shell of a building that symbolised for many the destruction of Kabul in the last 40 years of conflict and violence. You may not know its name, but you will have seen it in media photos over the years. In the last 18 months the Palace has been transformed as its restoration has gathered pace. There is much more to be done, but the rebuilding of the Palace is a demonstration of hope, commitment and change on the part of many Afghans. This morning came the sad news that President Ghani has decided not to hold that part of the National Day ceremony. He has cancelled it as a mark of respect for the many killed in a suicide attack on a Kabul wedding hall.

National Day will still be celebrated – but in the shadow of yet more innocent bloodshed and in an atmosphere of deep uncertainty and anxiety about the future.

In Kabul last week many people – Afghan and members of the international community – said that this is a decisive moment for Afghanistan. They ruefully admitted that this claim has been made many times before. But, they added, this time is different. That feels right – although so much could have changed by the time it is published that you will think you have a POLAD who has no understanding of Afghanistan. (That might be a fair comment – after all I am the first to say that no-one should listen to any foreigner who says that they understand Afghan politics!)

So why does it look and feel different? There are talks underway between the US and the Taliban. They are NOT peace talks, but talks that are principally addressing the key demands of those two parties. On the US side it is about making sure that Afghanistan will never again be a place from which terrorists plan and/or launch attacks on the US and its NATO allies & partners. On the Taliban side it is about the withdrawal of foreign fighters from Afghan territory – a demand that the Taliban have made consistently through all the years of this conflict. Beyond that the talks are also about a commitment to Intra Afghan Negotiations – which are the talks that could lead to a peace settlement. And the final element under discussion is a ceasefire.



The international context of the talks is important. President Trump has long signalled his wish to end – or at least reduce – US military involvement in conflicts including Afghanistan. And his appointment of Ambassador Khalilzad as a special envoy coincided with a propitious moment in the wider regional politics. Newly elected Imran Khan surprised many by his willingness to put pressure on the Taliban to enter into talks. Other regional actors – including Russia, China, Saudi Arabia and Iran – were also relatively supportive. They have varying agendas, but all are concerned by the presence of ISIS-K and Al Qaeda (as well as a number of other extremist jihadi groups) in Afghanistan; and whilst many do not want a US dominated state, they do not want anarchy. That moment of agreement allowed talks to get underway, but it is already passing – with US-Iran relations at a low point, with US & China in dispute over trade, with India & Pakistan in renewed dispute over Kashmir – and the ever present Sunni-Shia rivalry still evident in Yemen and beyond.

But the moment was taken, and we know that talks have progressed. We hear that technical details are now being finalised for an announcement likely to be made in the near future. We know there will be a US-Taliban agreement, and a US-GIRoA declaration. We think there will be the announcement of a date for Intra-Afghan negotiations – possibly in Oslo and probably supported by Germany. We hope that there will be a reduction in violence as a result of the agreement – but almost certainly not a nationwide ceasefire. There will be a timetable for the US to reduce the number of troops in country. And that will be matched – and conditional on – the Taliban undertaking actions to demonstrate that it no longer supports groups which aim to export terrorism and sponsor attacks on our homelands. It will not be the end of the conflict – that must wait until the Afghans can negotiate a peace settlement. But it could be a step towards that peace.

The other long awaited event is the Presidential election – due to be held on 28 September – after being postponed from April. It is a truism to say that it is not ideal to hold a Presidential election at the same time as trying to start a peace process. Any

election is inevitably divisive – the aim after all is to make someone vote for you instead of someone else! And this competition makes it hard to present a united front to a common enemy in order to negotiate.

And is it right to elect a President with a 5 year mandate when any peace process is likely to result in some sort of power sharing or inclusion of the Taliban in governance in some way? Wouldn't it be better to have an interim government – perhaps the current one as a caretaker with limited powers, or another specially formed team – and hold the election once a deal has been reached?

I am on the side of those who argue for the elections. They may cause disruption, but so will the formation of an interim government. No-one knows how long it may take to negotiate a peace settlement. It is surely better to have a more legitimate government in place – especially if it can (as now seems possible) appoint a negotiating team inclusive of Afghan opinion. Afghanistan does not yet have a settled habit of elections. Cancel this one, and it is not guaranteed that there will be others.

With all this uncertainty, it is not surprising that everyone you talk to in Afghanistan mentions anxiety. Suspicions run deep – is this a Pashtun peace – a Pashtun President negotiating with the Pashtun Taliban facilitated by a Pashtun US envoy? Do the heirs of the former Northern Alliance leaders need to consider their ability to protect themselves and their people? Should those with the option to leave go? Should villages and towns put their faith in warlords who have only recently become a less important part of the political scene? Is the Taliban about to govern again? Have the Taliban changed?

That last question is key. The views of the Taliban are another complex factor in this mix of politics, power and violence. A majority of the Taliban seem to be supportive of the process now underway. But those who aren't may well join another jihadist group – perhaps ISIS-K. The Haqqani Network – long seen as the most effective facilitators of high profile attacks – is unlikely to reconcile, and will probably continue to supply its unsavoury expertise to those willing

to pay. Others may chose to focus on organised crime – staying outside the polity, but without the ideological cover of the Taliban.

So what about those who are willing to join peace talks? Are the current Taliban who use social media to such good effect really different from those who banned TV, radio and music in the 90's? They seem to be – and they talk about allowing women to be educated and to work. But that is then qualified by the phrase “in accordance with Islamic principles”. That raises suspicions, and those suspicions become sharpened when Taliban leaders talk about restoring the “Emirate” – as they called their 90's Government.

That call for the return of the Emirate may be exactly what the rest of Afghanistan's divided politicians needed. In the last few weeks people have begun to talk about supporters of the “Republic” – as in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and supporters of the “Emirate”. This distinction is the first I have heard in many years that so neatly defines the difference between the wide range of politicians who have participated in the electoral process, and the Taliban and other jihadists. It may provide a framework which could allow political leaders to put the interest of the Republic first at a key moment.

Our role in all this – the role of the internationals – is to try to take actions that keep the intertwined processes moving forwards, whilst helping all sides believe they can benefit. Thus the Taliban need to feel that, if they meet the conditions agreed, they will achieve their aim of seeing foreign forces depart – to whatever extent is negotiated. GIRoA needs to be convinced that it still has the support of the US, of NATO and of the development organisations. The Afghan people have to believe there is a prospect of a better, more peaceful life. The neighbours need to feel that terrorist groups will not operate from Afghan soil.

No-one thinks this will be easy, or that Afghanistan is about to be free from violence anytime soon. But we are at a crisis point – a point of inflexion. RS is unlikely to look the same this time next year. And maybe Afghanistan will look different too. I can only hope that it will be a change for the better.



Afterword

One sign that things are changing – at least in urban areas – is the attitude people have towards the police who have been working with RS and other internationals in an effort to “blue” the police. This has been about instructing police in basic law, in consent based policing, and in meeting the needs of the community. Police – Afghan and international – are being told by community leaders and ordinary people that they accept that their lives are blighted by the threat of

terrorist attacks. They are used to living with that, and have adapted. But they want the police to arrest burglars and thieves; to stop harassment in the street and prevent abuse in the home. In other words they want the rule of law, and the security of the knowledge that there is a police force that will defend them. This is a limited, but expanding programme. It provides a small step towards normality.



JFCBS PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING FOR RESOLUTE SUPPORT



STORY BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL GUIDO KORTE AND MAJOR JOHN LANDUYT, JFCBS J7

Effective Pre-Deployment Training is imperative for success within Resolute Support (RS). Pre-Deployment Training involves numerous stakeholders including Troop Contributing Nations (TCN), HQs in or outside of the NATO Command Structure and the NATO Force Structure, NATO Education and Training Facilities and other relevant NATO institutions. RS Pre-Deployment Training (PDT) has been developed to be as modular and flexible as possible in order to be continually updated to meet any new training requirements for personnel deploying to the Afghan theatre. The Commander of Joint Force Command Brunsum (COM JFCBS) has been delegated by Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) to coordinate roles and responsibilities by distributing Direction and Guidance to TCN, define the level of ambition of the Pre-Deployment Training and, in close coordination with Allied Command Transformation (ACT), Training Centres and Centres of Excellence, finalize the out of theatre Pre-Deployment Training construct. JFCBS will take the responsibility and authority of Officer Scheduling the Exercise and Officer Conducting the Exercise, for all

NATO-led RS Pre-Deployment Training which will be resourced as Priority 1 in the NATO Military Training and Exercise Programme.

The role of JFCBS is to provide operational guidance for the conduct of RS PDT and to organize NATO-led PDT for personnel deploying in support of RS. JFCBS is responsible for funding, manning, communication, coordination and creation of the Training Objectives. The operational guidance is disseminated and detailed through the Annex BB to JFCBS OPLAN 30312 in the following phases:

- a. Phase 0 - Selection of personnel (national responsibility).**
- b. Phase 1 - Acquisition of basic skills (national responsibility).**
- c. Phase 2 - Acquisition of mission specific skills; for the Crisis Establishment (CE) is achieved during the NATO led PDT phase (for Combined Joint Statement of Requirement (CJSOR) this is a national responsibility).**
- d. Phase 3 - In-Theatre training.**

HQ JFCBS conducts RS PDT consisting of:

- a. Joint Advanced Distributed Learning (JADL).** A series of online courses which provide a basic level of knowledge.
- b. Training Events (TEs).** HQ JFCBS acts as the Officer Scheduling the Exercise and as the Officer Conducting the Exercise (OSE/OCE). The training is conducted three times per year at NATO Joint Force Training Centre (JFTC), Bydgoszcz, Poland. The TE is divided into Mission Specific Training (MST) followed by Battle Staff Training.
- c. Key Leader Training (KLT).** HQ JFCBS is the OSE/OCE and the Officer Delivering the Exercise (ODE) for RS KLT. The training is conducted every 6 months at SHAPE, JFCBS and HQ RS.

Personnel should complete the relevant training as dictated within the CE. On average, about 350 eligible personnel (plus 300 TAAC personnel) have been trained during RS TEs each year with approximately 70 pax trained under the KLT programme. In 2019, three Resolute Support Training Events (RS TE) and two Resolute Support Key Leader Trainings are scheduled:



The RS TE is a multi-modal training designed to educate and train personnel who are filling advisor and/or command and control positions within RS. It is held three times per year at the Joint Force Training Centre (Bydgoszcz, POL). Although the training event is focussing on RS HQ, personnel assigned to fill specific positions in NAC-A, NSOCCA,

and TAAC Advisors are also invited. The training consists of academic and practical lectures focusing on the Train, Advise and Assist methodology within the framework of the Functionally Based Security Force Assistance (FBSFA) Concept of Operations. Training will incorporate the expertise of Subject Matter Experts who have relevant theatre experience,

and will be augmented by the participation of members of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces to enhance realism. Focussing on preparing the training audience to “hit the ground running” when arriving in Theatre. Since 2015 more than 3100 (RSTE19-3 not included!) soldiers were prepared in these trainings for their upcoming mission and tasks in the HQ RS.



Resolute Support Training Events are being held three times per year at the Joint Force Training Centre in Bydgoszcz, Poland

The aim of the RS KLT, conducted bi-annually at JFCBS, is to prepare Key Leaders (OF-5 and above) for the RS Mission by providing high level Situational Awareness and, at the same time, improving their understanding of the role and responsibilities that are likely to be assigned to them whilst deployed. This does not mean that they are trained in their specific job duties, but that they should possess an in-depth knowledge of the overall mission. This aim will be reached by providing the Key Leaders with a number of briefings and presentations which will also give an overview of the role of the out

of theatre HQs, in addition to an understanding of their impending role and responsibilities. The training is divided into two Phases: Phase 1 (Academic Phase) will consist of three days conducted sequentially at SHAPE and then HQ JFCBS; Phase 2 (In-Theatre Orientation) is scheduled over 4 days at HQ RS. Key for success is not only the level of the briefings, but also the level of SHAPE, JFCBS and RS leadership involvement. Such level of involvement has shown in the past to positively influence future KLT attendance numbers. Key Leaders

particularly appreciate briefings at a strategic-political level such as lectures from POLAD JFCBS, LTG (Ret) Storrie former DCOM RS, an Afghan General of the MoD and from a diplomat of the Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan. Highly appreciated is also the counterpart time in JFCBS and HQ RS. KLT serves to effectively provide a high level of situational awareness to senior leaders regarding the roles and responsibilities of SHAPE, JFCBS, and RSHQ in support of the greater RS mission.



JFCBS MOBILE TRAINING TEAM IN AFGHANISTAN



AFG Instructors during their training for IOPC (“Train the Trainers”)



JFCBS MTT protected by the DEU FP ELM



OPC - group photo of students, instructors, MTT and DVs

STORY BY LIEUTENANT COMMANDER HARALD PLISKE, JFCBS J7

I am Lieutenant Colonel Harald Pliske, and I have been working as a Staff Officer of the J7 Doctrine Section of HQ JFCBS since July 2014. From 14 June to 29 July 2019, I served as the lead and an instructor on the JFCBS Mobile Training Team (MTT) responsible for teaching Afghan leaders the concepts and ideas of the operational planning process. Major Justin Koper, Major Michel Saeys, and Major Philippe Stuyts, well-educated and brave officers also from JFCBS, were key to the planning and execution of this initiative.

Since January 2018, the MTT conducted four iterations of the Introduction

to Operational Planning Course (IOPC). The results so far: over 160 Afghan students have been trained. They represent a diverse group of military and civilian leaders from five different ministries and agencies of the Afghan government. JFCBS and Resolute Support Mission (RSM) leaders decided on a shift of responsibility that had been planned since the third iteration of IOPC. Starting with the fifth iteration of IOPC (8 to 23 July 2019), the Afghan Command and Staff Academy (CSA) became responsible for teaching the course. The JFCBS team supported as mentors and advisors, ensuring that the training continues to deliver a similar quality as in the past.

To achieve this aim, the JFCBS MTT trained fifteen former graduates who are also instructors at CSA. An additional instructor, a graduate of the first iteration and a guest instructor during the fourth course, received his endorsement based on his outstanding past support to the program. The MTT ran this Train-the-Trainer seminar at the Afghan Ministry of Defense (MoD) from 22 June to 4 July 2019 and resulted in the endorsement of all fifteen participants. The team selected the four best qualified and committed instructors to run IOPC under Afghan leadership for the first time.

My past service has taken me to Afghanistan for a total of 12 months. I served as a Duty Officer in the RC North CJOC and as the Deputy Commander of the Mazar-e-Sharif Force Protection Battalion. Nothing I encountered in these positions could have prepared me for the challenges that came with volunteering to plan and execute IOPC.

First, any decision at the Afghan MoD requires a General Officer. Even the coordination of the class venue, information technology assets, and hospitality support had to be finalized by a General. Fortunately, Major General Jamaludin Saied, Director of Training and Education at the ministry, supported this endeavor and enabled its execution.

Second, to ensure a balanced mix of civilian and military students required the Afghan Administrative Office of the President (AOP) to coordinate attendance across the ministries. Further, AOP involvement was ultimately necessary to produce the orders to execute the course. The team received nothing but outstanding support from Lieutenant General Mirwais Farahi, AOP Director General International Relations. Even though this may seem like a cumbersome way to do business, building relationships with senior Afghan officials was a rewarding experience and vital to ensuring our success.

Lastly, we could not have organized and executed IOPC without RSM's Enduring Partnership Coordination Cell (EPCC). EPCC facilitated our preparations and served as our entry point to the Afghans and Resolute Support itself. Without their support, particularly that of Sergeant First Class Sebastian Binder, the IOPC initiative would have never happened.

On several occasions, we were reminded that Kabul remains a dangerous place. Not only did the team experience several alarm drills at headquarters and



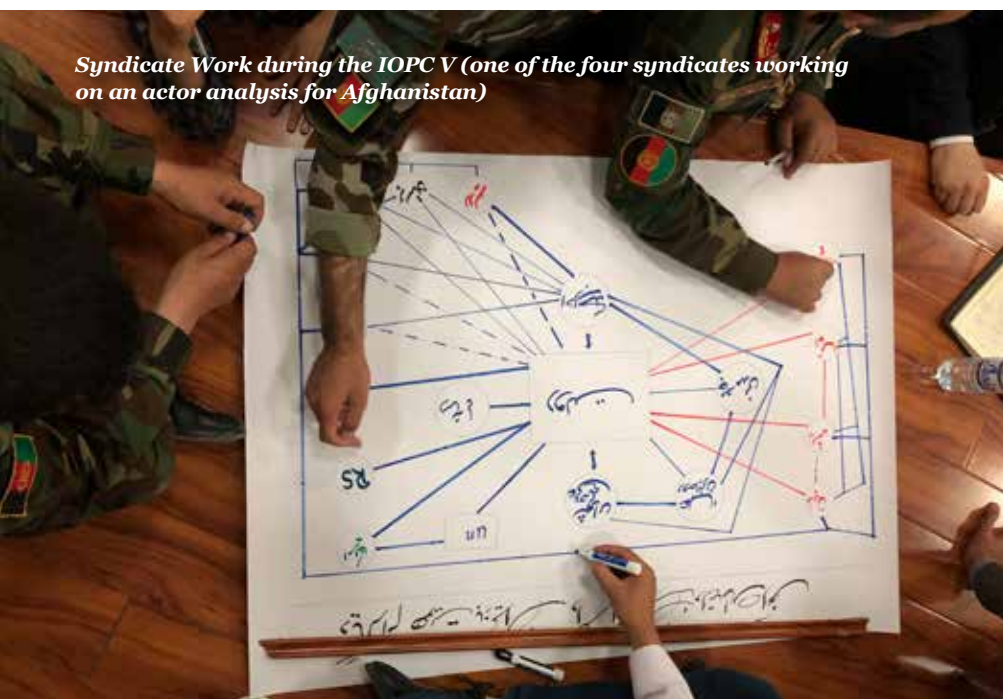
Handover of plague to the best AFG Instructor
(plague is hand over by the deputy Minister of Defense, Ms. Yousufzada, and the Leader MTT to Colonel Baba Gul Haqmal. From left to right: Colonel Haqmal, Colonel Niazi, Major General Jamaludin, Ms. Yousufzada, Lieutenant Colonel Pliske, Major Justin Koper, Lieutenant General Farahi, Brigadier General Safi)

IDF attacks, a bomb explosion and subsequent small arms attack in downtown Kabul shook the MoD on 1 July, minutes after the team had made it inside the building. To be very frank, each and every time the alarm went off the power of rushing adrenalin became recognizable. With the subsequent stress reaction you are subconsciously acting as trained and your body and mind are ready to fight; expecting the worst, hoping for the best. Nothing compares to the indescribable relief felt after the "all clear" sounds and accountability of the team is complete, confirming that every member of the MTT is okay.

We received outstanding support from the Kabul Security Forces, in particular the British Army Guardian Angels who ensured our force protection whenever we left the gates, the Estonian Scouts Battalion for their "taxi" services to and from our training location. The German National Support Element's Force Protection Squad enabled us to set up Train-the-Trainer and IOPC on several occasions. With me being a German officer, German national relationships were easy to leverage and greatly assisted in enabling support to the team after arriving in Afghanistan.

As if the course topic wasn't tough enough and the security environment not dangerous enough for the students, numerous officers faced personal challenges while working to complete the course. For example, a female 2nd Lieutenant, whose husband was killed in action, has been left to build a career while raising three children all the while facing a lawsuit from her in-laws regarding custody of the children. A second example is a female Captain who lost her brother in a raid. She was responsible for retrieving his body from Helmand and bringing it back to Kabul in her own vehicle just prior to the course start. Still another example is a Captain who lost his child during the first week of the course. Though challenged by such incredible circumstances, these students and others stayed committed and proved themselves willing to proceed with the course to increase their personal knowledge and to contribute to the development of the country. I felt deeply honored to work with those promising young officers and as such with the symbols of Afghanistan's bright future.

A true highlight of the more than six weeks in theatre was the Closing Ceremony of IOPC V, which was attended by such dignitaries as Deputy Commander for RS Lieutenant General Salvatore Camporeale, Senior Civilian Representative Sir Nicholas Kay, and Afghan Deputy Minister of Defense, Lieutenant General Helaludin Helal. All the guest speakers spoke highly of this groundbreaking effort and the commitment by my team to achieve capacity building through Afghans teaching Afghans. They also highlighted the important partnership among the Afghan government, NATO and JFC Brunssum, in particular. Looking back on this experience, the ability to make a meaningful contribution to Afghanistan and the Resolute Support Mission, as well as working with an outstanding international team that facilitated IOPC, made the mission more than worthwhile. It is an experience I will cherish for a long time.



Syndicate Work during the IOPC V (one of the four syndicates working on an actor analysis for Afghanistan)



RESOLUTE SUPPORT COMPUTER INFORMATION SYSTEMS CONFERENCE



STORY BY SQUADRON LEADER VICTORIA DUTTON, JFCBS J6

HQ JFC Brunssum recently played host to the Resolute Support CIS (computer information systems) Conference. At a critical time for the Resolute Support Mission and the CIS Community supporting it, the Conference sought to establish a common understanding of the problems faced, present and future, and develop a strong working network in order to enable solutions in the face of a myriad of challenges.

The C5ISR Conference was initiated during the ISAF days of the mission in Afghanistan, where it was routinely held on a bi-annual basis in theatre. Since then due to the Operational tempo and other logistical issues a conference of this nature had not been held in two years. As most will be aware NATO CIS provision is a complex beast, involving a number of stakeholders and, recognizing the critical importance of bringing together the key players, J6 at HQ JFCBS took the initiative and proposed to reinstate the Conference

and to hold it here at Brunssum. Whilst historically including members of the J2 and J3 communities in addition to J6, given the challenges currently being faced, this year's two-day Conference focussed primarily on CIS. Playing host to forty-three attendees, including representatives from SHAPE Cyberspace, including Brigadier General De Pauw, theatre, CENTCOM, NCIA, the NATO CIS Group, and Thales, it promised to be a hugely beneficial event, notwithstanding the CJ6 having to attend via VTC from Theatre due to immigration issues (no passport!).

This year's Presidential elections in Afghanistan and the progress of the peace talks, which will undoubtedly see the Resolute Support Mission evolve over the coming year, provided the context for which to consider a number of issues, a key one being Cybersecurity: Understanding the perennial issues which affect the posture and how NATO provides mission assurance through audits

and inspections. Additionally the way in which the CIS change programmes and requirements could be delivered in a more efficient manner, particularly for requirements that are time sensitive, was a major point on the agenda, as well as looking at the Governance structure with a view to avoiding duplication and streamlining procedures in order to create the right environment to encourage innovation and efficiency

Facilitated by a number of briefings and the chance to discuss issues in detail in smaller syndicates, the Conference was acknowledged by all involved as highly successful and as a key enabler to addressing the challenges faced by the RS CIS community, particularly as we likely enter a transitional period in Afghanistan. J6 looks forward to hosting the Conference in future years with an aspiration to once again broaden the remit and welcome J2 and J3 stakeholders.

MODERN AIRCRAFT INTEGRATION INTO NATO AIR OPERATIONS



STORY BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL WERNER HARTWIG, ALLIED AIR COMMAND, SECTION A3 – OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The first Short Take-Off/Vertical Landing version of the F-35, or F-35B, assembled outside the United States rolled out of the Final Assembly and Check Out facility at Cameri, Italy, on May 5 2017. In the same year on November 3, Norway welcomed its first three F-35 Joint Strike Fighters to Ørland Air Base. These are highly newsworthy events in the world of combat aviation because 5th generation aircraft, herein called modern aircraft, take multirole aircraft versatility, performance and survivability to the next level. As the F35's unfold their mission roles they offer an unparalleled step change in NATO's ability to dominate the air domain in support of its collective defence mission and deterrence posture.

As NATO's only air-domain headquarters, Allied Air Command's primary operational role is the employment of NATO forces assigned to it in peacetime. With the introduction of modern aircraft into NATO nations and the pending offer of modern aircraft for force employment, it is incumbent upon Allied Air Command to assess the impact of the developing tactics, techniques and procedures as they relate to the integration of modern aircraft into, for example, European civil airspace. Allied Air Command must also assess the implication of modern aircraft on NATO training and exercises, as well as on the concepts of operations for peacetime, crisis and conflict. Except for NATO-specific tactics, techniques and training requirements, Allied Air Command has analysed the following

key areas of its responsibilities and tasks that will be impacted by modern aircraft integration.

Air Policing:

Super cruise capability and/or higher maximum speeds than currently observed will influence air policing procedures and techniques. Greater areas can be covered by fewer assets. Endurance and range are expected to increase, possibly reducing the number of assets required to cover a certain area of responsibility. The time from scramble to on-station will be reduced, which will likely impact the Readiness States or reaction times and could offer the ability to reduce the number of required Quick Reaction Alert locations which may result in reduced expenditure. The faster cruising and maximum speeds of modern aircraft, complementary to increased range, could lead to a reassessment of optimal Quick Reaction Alert locations based on tactical and economic considerations. Fewer locations, while maintaining equal strength and coverage, may result in reduced overall expenses for individual nations. With their enhanced identification capabilities, modern aircraft used in an air policing role might lead to a review of identification definitions and criteria, given that advanced sensors are able to identify objects with a higher accuracy and at much longer ranges than that of previous methods. The definition and implementation of visual identification might be adapted accordingly, so the entire identification process within the air-domain's Command and Control chain stands to benefit

from these enhanced capabilities. Scrambles are part of the training requirements of NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defence System with a focus on the air policing Command and Control system. Currently nations typically use the same assets for both Quick Reaction Alert duties and as target aircraft to train Quick Reaction Alert aircrews. The use of modern aircraft assets in anything but the most-advanced target-emulation role is an inefficient use of such high-capability resources and is of limited training value for experienced modern aircraft aircrews. As such, it is anticipated that those nations with modern aircraft on Quick Reaction Alert will turn to alternative, cheaper target-emulation solutions, such as legacy or contracted aircraft.

Command and Control Connectivity:

A challenging area for all military operations is to keep up with developments in the field of modern Command and Control connectivity and interoperability. Modern aircraft will be able to contribute to and provide unprecedented battlespace awareness. In order to take maximum advantage of their contribution to modern battlespace-management capabilities, Allied Air Command needs to ensure the technical capabilities exist to communicate and exchange information with all integrated platforms. These will include, but are not limited to, both technical and procedural developments within Tactical Data Link networks. Systems are being developed that allow modern aircraft to connect digitally to, and exchange data with, 4th gene-



ration aircraft and other platforms when operating in highly contested threat areas. These systems will operate through the existing Tactical Data Link platforms and will be able to connect with modern aircraft. This new "communications gateway" will have to be equipped with multi-level security features. Improved battlespace awareness through data sharing will provide a real-time Common Tactical Picture and Common Operational Picture. As the overall air-domain Command and Control entity, Allied Air Command will require the capability to initiate, manage, update, and have real-time access to modern Tactical Data Link networks. This will provide the ability to update Air Task Orders, communications frequencies, and airspace, as well as providing the capability for real-time prosecution of Time Sensitive Targets and conduct of the Dynamic Targeting process.

Airspace:

Increased modern aircraft sensor and weapon ranges will require larger training airspace. Given peacetime airspace assignment is a national responsibility and the already heavily congested European airspace (by both civil and military users), it will be a challenge to assign large dedicated military training areas that are required to adequately train the Beyond Visual Range-capable air assets. The Single European Sky concept and development provides an option to become part of the solution. Early Allied Air Command involvement to anticipate modern aircraft airspace requirements is important to provide a strong supporting function to national efforts in order to secure adequate airspace for NATO training. Within the context of assigning airspace as military training areas, special attention will be required with respect to restrictions, such as supersonic flight, chaff/flare expenditure and threat emitters. Furthermore, airspace management within a joint network environment will necessitate a dynamic approach involving all joint stakeholders.

Exercises:

Modern aircraft participation in NATO exercises is forthcoming. National participation with modern aircraft in NATO exercises offers excellent mutual training benefit with an

opportunity to gain experience and capture lessons identified on modern aircraft integration across the NATO air enterprise. Defining exercise scenarios to benefit modern aircraft aircrew training requirements will be based on offered capabilities and concept of operations. Allied Air Command is already exploring options to adapt its exercises to accommodate modern aircraft training requirements from an Air Command and Control perspective. In its primary force employment role as the NATO Command Structure's Joint Force Air Component, Allied Air Command will be responsible for training assigned personnel in efficiently planning and tasking modern aircraft assets to permit their effective Air Command and Control. It is expected that, at least initially, modern aircraft coordination will be enabled by experienced modern aircraft liaison personnel providing expert guidance to ensure smooth integration into NATO's training environment.

Force employment:

Improved and new capabilities will lead to a re-assessment of how NATO plans to employ its air assets. Depending on the threat and the environment, stealth characteristics and shared-sensor capabilities could mean that different numbers may be required to achieve the same effects, as 4th generation aircraft and modern aircraft working together will be regarded as force multipliers. One force employment consideration is that the high cost and limited numbers of modern aircraft may cause them to be considered by nations as high value assets. Therefore, the risk level determination process will likely be scrutinized by nations as closely as ever. The good news regarding risk is that fewer assets may be required to achieve the same effects and the improved capabilities of modern aircraft in a high-threat environment will increase asset and aircrew survivability.

Red Air Resources:

The replacement of older fighter aircraft by 4th/5th generation aircraft will create a challenge with regard to so called 'Red Air Resources'. The term refers to aircraft flown in simulated opponent roles for training under combat conditions. With less tactical training value for aircrew fly-

ing as Red Air, nations will be more reluctant to offer their Modern Aircraft for this kind of support during international exercises. A dedicated Red Air flying unit multi-national, NATO or commercial, could be the most efficient and affordable solution to close this gap of Red Air resources. Even though the decision on standing up such a unit is a national and/or commercial decision, Allied Air Command involvement in the concept of operations, contracting, planning, tasking and execution will likely be essential for NATO. Multinational concepts like the C-17s at Papa Airbase, a NATO unit like the Airborne Early Warning and Control Force in Geilenkirchen or the contracting of Electronic Warfare support services for NATO all provide existing, positive examples of similar arrangements.

Conclusion

With modern aircraft transitioning from concept to reality, these highly capable air-combat platforms are on the verge of being operationally capable within a NATO context. It is doubtful that the next NATO operation involving air-combat assets will not include modern aircraft. As the most-likely entity for NATO to be tasked to provide the Air Command and Control of these assets, Allied Air Command is moving forward and dealing with the modern aircraft integration challenge in a highly proactive manner. Within the constraints of the complexities and challenges normally associated with the introduction of new technologies and capabilities, Allied Air Command's lead role is being supported greatly by a host of other outstanding interested agencies such as the European Air Group or the Joint Air Power Competence Centre. As these new, highly capable air assets become operational within NATO nations, Allied Air Command is committed to leading the integration of modern aircraft into the NATO air domain in preparation for the force employment in whatever role or mission they may be assigned.



REMEMBERING THE HUMAN COST OF WAR: THE CREW OF JB907

STORY BY WING COMMANDER MICHAEL DUTTON, JFCBS J2

Three Englishmen, an Australian, a Canadian, an Irishman and a Welshman walk into a pub in the quiet village of Brighton in Yorkshire, England. Whilst it may sound like the beginning of a joke, it is in fact where the story of the crew of Royal Air Force No. 78 Squadron, Handley Page Halifax Mk II, tail number JB907 begins on 20 June 1943. Sadly, their story ended just 9 days later when their aircraft was shot down by a Luftwaffe night fighter and crashed into a field near to the Kasteel Schaloen on the south bank of the picturesque river Kleine Geul near Valkenburg, The Netherlands. In a beautiful shady spot on the north bank of the river there now stands a simple granite monument bearing the names of the 7 airmen who died there on that night 76 years ago:

Flight Sergeant Patrick William James Rendle, Royal Australian Air Force,

Flight Sergeant William Russell Townsend, Royal Canadian Air Force,

Sergeant Leslie Howarth, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve,

Sergeant Gwilym John Samuel, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Sergeant Cecil Andrew Morris, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve,

Sergeant Theodore Ivan Lishman Daggs, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve,

Sergeant Frank Hill, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, Air Gunner.

Standing on that spot, your eyes are drawn across a bend in the river to the field opposite, where a large cross stands, displaying one of the crashed aircraft's original propellers, marking the exact spot of the crash. But why does this matter? Why is it important for us to remember these 7 individuals who were but a fraction of the 60 million people who lost their lives as a direct or indirect result of the Second World War? It matters because remembering the human cost of war matters. We cannot readily contemplate the deaths of 60 million people; it becomes a mere statistic and we lose sight of the personal tragedy and true horror. As the number of Second World War veterans diminishes, there is a danger that successive generations will lose touch with the realities of such conflicts and their real human cost. Our generation must bear the responsibility of keeping the memory of individuals like these 7 airmen alive, not just because they selflessly gave their lives, but because we cannot allow future generations to forget the true cost of a conflict on this scale.

Bomber Command was to have one of the highest sustained casualty rates of the Second World War. Ultimately 55,573 of the 125,000 aircrew who served in Bomber Command were killed in action, more than 44 percent. A further 8,403 were wounded in action and 9,838 captured. Less than 40 percent returned home unscathed. The loss rate on any given mission averaged around 3 to 4 percent, hence the probability of surviving a standard 30 mission rotation was less than 50 percent. The physical and mental strain

was immense. By 1943 more than 5 percent of Bomber Command aircrew were diagnosed as having some form of psychological neuroses, often unsympathetically labelled as 'LMF', or 'Lack of Moral Fibre'. Today the diagnosis would most likely be Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD. All of the members of the crew of JB907 would have understood the risks when they volunteered to join Bomber Command, yet they volunteered anyway. To say that they were extraordinarily brave would be a gross understatement.

Their last mission was Cologne. At 2326 hours on 28 June our crew rolled down the runway at Royal Air Force Brighton in their aircraft for the last time. Although our crew may have considered the possibility of never coming back, it is unlikely that any of them would have expected it. Piecing together reports from multiple sources, it appears as though JB907 never reached the target area over Cologne that night. All we know for certain is that all 7 of the crew of JB907 died on 29 June 1943 and were finally laid to rest in Maastricht General Cemetery. They had successfully completed 2 missions, aborted one and died whilst conducting their fourth. Just 8 days after arriving at their front line Squadron, 8 days after that first drink in that quiet pub in Brighton, all were lost.

The loss of all 7 of these airmen was undoubtedly keenly felt by those who knew and loved them at the time. We should be forever grateful for their courage, bravery and, ultimately, for the sacrifice that they made on our behalf 76 years ago.

We owe it to them to remember them as more than just a statistic, more than just 7 of 55,573 Royal Air Force Bomber Command aircrew that were killed in action during the Second World War. We owe it to them to think of them from time to time, try to imagine what they were like and remember that they were just 7 ordinary, young individuals who volunteered to do something extraordinary despite the apparent risk to themselves, despite the odds. We should reflect upon their lives and their loss and remember that this is the human cost of war, a cost that we should never forget.



REMEMBRANCE OF LIEUTENANT COMMANDER DAVID POIRRIER



On Thursday, 1st of August 2019, a formal Military Memorial Service was held at the Monuta Uitvaartcentrum in Kerkrade, Netherlands, to honor the life of Royal Canadian Navy Lieutenant-Commander (LCdr)

David Poirrier.

He was the loving husband of LCdr *Kim Poirrier* (J4). Deeply mourned by daughters *Kassandra* and *Jamie Poirrier*. LCdr David Poirrier joined JFC Brunssum in February 2019. Sadly, he passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on July 25, 2019 at the age of 57. A talented musician committed to community service, he enjoyed sailing, jogging, spending time with his family and the continuous pursuit of professional development. Family, friends and JFC Brunssum colleagues came together and assisted in a beautiful ceremony filled with emotions where personal messages and memories of LCdr Poirrier were shared. General Erhard Bühler, Commander JFC Brunssum, addressed the audience and underlined that LCdr Poirrier was a valuable member of the headquarters. Our heartfelt condolences and thoughts are extended to his family and friends during this difficult time.



CEREMONIES



BRUNSSUM DEPUTY COMMANDER LAYS WREATH AT MARGRATEN.

Sunday 26th May Lieutenant General Stuart Skeates CBE, Deputy Commander Joint Force Command Brunssum, laid a wreath on behalf of the HQs at the annual US Memorial Day Ceremony, at the Netherlands American Cemetery, Margraten. A poignant, reflective and beautifully constructed ceremony was attended by several thousand people. Amongst others, wreaths were laid by: Rear Admiral L. Brummelaar (Adjutant General to His Majesty the King & Chief of the Military Household); The Honourable Peter Hoekstra (United States Ambassador to the Netherlands); The Honourable Stef Blok (Netherlands

Minister of Foreign Affairs); Th.J.F.M. Bovens (King's Commissioner, Province of Limburg); and Rear Admiral Thomas E. Ishee (Director of Operations, Commander, US Naval Forces Europe-Africa). Congratulations to the Cemetery Superintendent, Mr Shane J. Williams, and his team for their superb planning and execution.



JFC BRUNSSUM PARTICIPATION IN LIMBURG VETERANS DAY AT ROERMOND

The 15th Limburg Veterans Day was hosted by the town of Roermond. The province of Limburg is home to approximately 5500 veterans and this was a special event to honor them. The program was focused on the brave men and women who enjoy the status of 'veteran' out of respect for the risks they took so that we can enjoy

peace today. In the morning, a remembrance ceremony took place at the National Remembrance Park in Roermond. The Governor of Limburg, Mr. drs. Th.J.F.M Bovens, as well as the Mayor of Roermond, Mrs Donders-de Leest, addressed the veterans. Lieutenant General Skeates, Deputy Commander JFC Brunssum, laid a wreath at the monument at the National Remembrance Park. In the afternoon veterans of all ages paraded through

the center of Roermond supported by military music. The parade was followed by a social event where veterans and their families were reunited with each other. JFC Brunssum was represented in the remembrance ceremony, parade and social event by an international platoon of soldiers stationed in Brunssum. The Brunssum platoon marched through the center of Roermond and represented the Brunssum military base in a magnificent way.



VISITS AND ACTIVITIES

June - September 2019



JUNE 08, 2019

NORWEGIAN NATO MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE VISITS JFC BRUNSSUM

Brigadier General Anne Rydning, Norway's Military Representative to NATO, visited JFC Brunssum today to better familiarise herself with the HQs, its mission and responsibilities, and meet with Norwegian personnel serving here. Her programme included an office call with the Commander, General Erhard Bühler, and other members of the Command Group. JFC Brunssum, with a focus on the sustained security of Northern Europe, is viewed as an important Joint NATO HQs. Further, Norway remains committed to the Resolute Support mission, in Afghanistan, where it contributes a military advisory team.



JUNE 19, 2019

GERMAN NATIONAL COMMAND & GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE VISITS JFC BRUNSSUM

The German National Command and General Staff College visited JFC Brunssum to familiarise its students with the role, responsibilities, planning processes and current challenges that confront this operational-level NATO military headquarters.

The Staff College delegation, with students from Belgium, Canada, Estonia, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States, was welcomed by the headquarters' new Commander, General Erhard Bühler.

Following insightful opening remarks the General participated in an hour-long Question & Answer session that afforded students the opportunity to delve deeper into issues raised.



JULY 2, 2019

GENERAL ERHARD BÜHLER MET THE FRENCH CHIEF OF DEFENCE (CHOD)

The Commander Joint Force Command Brunssum, General Erhard Bühler met the French Chief of Defence (CHOD), General Francois Lecointre, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces (CEMA).

The two Generals met on the 2nd of July and exchanged their thoughts about mutual interests in the NATO's Command Structure adaptation process, underlining the JFCBS main operational role.

One of the main topics of discussion has been NATO's presence in the Baltic Sea Region. France is one of the contributing nations since 2017.



JULY 5, 2019

GENERAL ERHARD BÜHLER ATTENDED THE BALTIC PROTECTOR EXERCISE

The Commander JFC Brunssum, General Erhard Bühler, attended the Distinguished Visitors' Day at the UK-led Exercise, Baltic Protector, where he witnessed a demonstration of the military capabilities trained throughout the exercise.

General Bühler also took the opportunity to discuss collective defence, deterrence and interoperability with senior military leaders and civil dignitaries present at the event.



JULY 11, 2019
YORK COLLEGE OF PENNSYLVANIA VISITS JFC BRUNSSUM

JFC Brunssum was pleased to host a visit of undergraduate students from the York College of Pennsylvania, USA. The students, studying a curriculum comprising political science, national security and intelligence studies, enjoyed a day at Brunssum as part of a broader field trip to Europe embracing briefings at NATO HQs, SHAPE and other locations.



JULY 15, 2019
COMMANDER JFC BRUNSSUM VISITS NORWAY AND POLAND

Commander JFC Brunssum, General Erhard Bühler, conducted a short round-trip through the north-eastern part of his area of responsibility 10-12 July to build relationships, enhance understanding of extant issues, and increase situational awareness. General Bühler started (10 July) in Stavanger, Norway, where he attended the Change of Command Ceremony of the Joint Warfare Centre. 11 July the General attended the Change of Command Ceremony at Bydgoszcz, Poland, NATO's prestigious Joint Force Training Centre. General Bühler completed his trip with a call on the Multinational Corps North-East (MNCNE), in Szczecin (Poland) - a key element of the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) command and control structure on NATO's north-eastern flank.



AUGUST 12, 2019
JFC BRUNSSUM COMMANDER VISITS THE US

General Erhard Bühler, Commander JFC Brunssum, visited the USA 5-8 August. Amongst other issues, a priority for the General was to continue to build and strengthen the relationship between JFC Brunssum and the recently instigated JFC Norfolk in order to facilitate greater teamwork and coordination between the two commands. Moving to Allied Command Transformation General Bühler enjoyed a highly productive visit where, in particular, his engagement with the new Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, General Paolo Ruggiero, proved a highlight. Topics discussed included: Lessons Learned; Centre of Excellence utility; Exercise evaluation; and future capabilities.



AUGUST 21, 2019
NATO MILITARY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN VISITS JFC BRUNSSUM

On Wednesday 21st of August, the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach, visited JFC Brunssum to engage with the Headquarters' Command Team. Topics discussed during the visit were, among others, the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan and the further development of the capabilities of enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) on NATO's north-eastern flank. Also high on the agenda of the day were upcoming exercises, especially the so-called Trident Jupiter exercise.



FRENCH BASTILLE DAY CELEBRATION FOR BUILDING BROTHERHOOD IN JFC BRUNSSUM

STORY BY PAO JFCBS

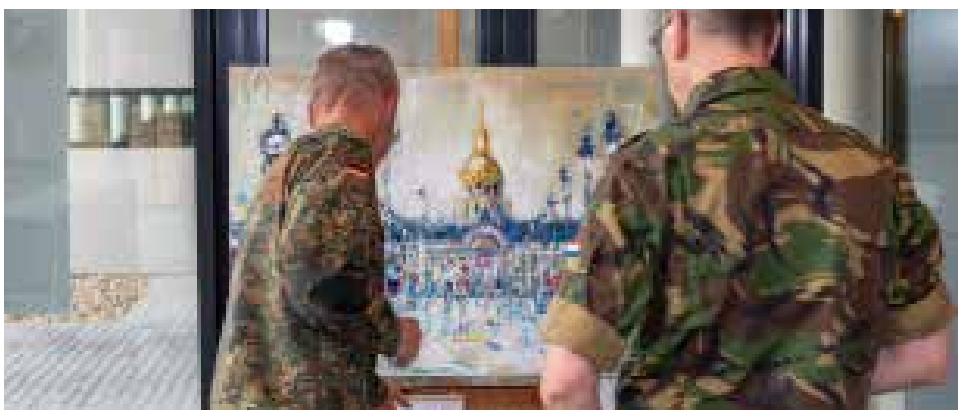
On the occasion of the French national day, known as “Bastille Day” and for the first time, the French community of the JFC Brunssum had the great honour to welcome the artists of the Army Heritage Delegation during an exhibition hosted in the HQ. The values expressed in the presented works were universal, the artists described with depth and sensitivity all the humanity of the soldiers and the brotherhood which unites each and everyone, especially when the time to fight has arrived.

Then, in the evening of Thursday 11 July the French delegation of JFC Brunssum, led by Brigadier General Jérôme Goisque, hosted a celebration in honour of Bastille Day in the wonderful setting of the Schinvelder Hoeve (Schinvelder Hoeve is a beautiful old building close to Brunssum that has been converted into a hotel).

In his remarks General Goisque highlighted the importance of social events as a means to build strong relationships in the Alliance. He stated: “All these social and festive events are a contribution to what we should build together; a cohesive and solid group of servicemen/women and civilians who know each other and do their utmost best to reinforce their mutual understanding to build a credible work-oriented tool.”

General Goisque also reminded of France’s permanent commitment since NATO’s founding in 1949: “What we celebrate here today with you is the brotherhood that we have built together for 70 years now in this Alliance (...) As you now, France holds a prominent position in the NATO Command Structure (NCS) with the most important ones being the positions of Supreme Allied Commander Transformation in Norfolk (USA) and the Vice Chief of Staff (COS) in Shape(BEL), but we also have flag officers like our COS here at JFCBS and a total of some 650 positions in the NCS.”

In response, and on behalf of General Erhard Bühler (Commander JFCBS), Lieutenant General Stuart Skeates (Deputy Commander JFCBS) emphasized the outstanding dedication of the JFCBS French delegation and the importance of the nation’s role in NATO.



COMMUNITY EVENTS



COMMAND SENIOR ENLISTED LEADER CHANGE OF RESPONSIBILITY CEREMONY

Chief Warrant Officer Paul Francis, Canadian Army, outgoing command senior enlisted leader (CSEL) of Headquarters Joint Force Command Brunssum (JFCBS) turned over his position to his country fellow Chief Warrant Officer Lance Dunn during a change of responsibility ceremony at JFCBS on Friday the 5th of July presided by the Commander General Erhard Bühler. “It has been an honour and privilege to have been the Command Senior Enlisted Leader here at Joint Force Command Brunssum and a steward of the NATO NCO Corps” Chief Warrant Officer Francis stated in his speech. “What I will remember most from my time here are the people, our conversations, meetings, exercises and just getting the business done.”



ITALIAN REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATION 2019

The Italian Delegation at JFC Brunssum celebrated the 73rd anniversary of Italy's Republic Day together with many guests drawn from the nations represented at the Headquarters.

The ‘Festa della Repubblica’ is traditionally celebrated in Rome on 2 June with a parade across the city performed by Armed Forces and State bodies who pay tribute to the President of the Republic and celebrate the day, in 1946, when a referendum chose the new institutional form of the State.

During the evening event, hosted at the International Conference Centre, guests were shown a presentation about Italy's tradition, history, culture and an explanation of the Italian national anthem, followed by a speech by the Italian Senior Officer, Major General Antonio Bettelli, before enjoying Italian food specialties.



COMMUNITY RELATIONS AT JFC BRUNSSUM

JFC Brunssum hosted a highly successful networking day with visitors from local municipalities, companies, organisations and universities from the South of Limburg. The over-arching objective was to improve awareness of NATO and, in particular, the responsibilities of JFC Brunssum and the NATO Air Base at Geilenkirchen. Fostering and developing good relationships with local communities is something that NATO is extremely keen to sustain. Lieutenant Colonel Marco Schmidl, Mr Barry Mellor (Deputy Chief Public Affairs) and Twan Thimister (Intern) briefed visitors on the Alliance and JFC Brunssum. In addition, Captain Albert van Dam (Deputy Chief Public Affairs NATO Airbase Geilenkirchen) briefed the visitors on the AWACS programme and the role of NATO's Geilenkirchen Air Base. A very attentive audience then raised a number of thoughtful questions.



JFCBS INTERNATIONAL SMALL PITCH SOCCER TOURNAMENT



STORY BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL MARKUS HOMBERG, JFCBS J3

„It is just a soccer ball...“

With those words, the German Senior Representative and Head of the German Delegation Netherlands, Colonel Günter Thiermann, on behalf of the Commander JFC Brunssum, General Erhard Bühler, precluded the 39th International Joint Force Command Small Pitch Soccer Tournament in Brunssum. Thiermann emphasized the fascination emanating from the most popular gaming machine in the world. He should be right: 53 participating teams and over 500 players from more than 20 nations played in four competitions for the coveted trophies. In exciting games, both well-known and first-time participants took the trophies back home. A colorful entertainment program completed the event.

One of various highlights was a match between a celebrity team of former Dutch Eredivisie and German Bundesliga players against a selection of tournament participants. Henri Heeren, Mister Roda Geradus "Ger" Senden, Sascha Dum, Marco van Hoogdalem and Mister Bicycle kick Klaus Fischer wore the NATO colors and won 4:2. Legendary FIFA referee Walter Eschweiler had everything under control. In the traditional match between the JFCBS Headquarters and the Municipality (Gemeente) Brunssum the lady and men from the HQ managed to make forget last years' 2:8 disgrace and won 1:0. Thus, the overall score is 2:2. With tension both teams are looking forward to the next years' match.

In 2020 the event will be executed for the 40th time. With the 20 and 21 August the dates are already fixed: Participation in the tournament is open to all interested teams.

Further information can be found at www.gnt-brunssum.de

In case of any questions please contact OF4 Markus Homberg, +31 (0) 45 526 4205 or markus.homberg@jfcbs.nato.int



JFC BRUNSSUM INTERNATIONAL CLUB (JFCBIC)



STORY BY SONJA TAYLOR

'One of the best things about being at NATO'

Almost 50 years ago, some enthusiastic ladies founded the JFC Brunssum International Club. Their idea was to socialize and to undertake common activities. Truth be told, not much has changed in the almost 50 years of its existence when it comes to what the JFC Brunssum International Club intends to achieve: the members still seek to support each other, learn from each other, exchange and enjoy good times in an international environment whilst also raising funds for international charities. Strong bonds and lifelong friendships have been forged in this club and minds were inspired by learning about each other's cultural traditions or tasting a different country's homemade dis-

hes at a Coffee and Culture morning. Common activities like foreign language conversation groups or walking dogs together, playing tennis, sewing or simply having fun at a karaoke night all belong to the wide array of activities that the club's members organize. All with one thing in mind, not to leave people in the Tri-border region in isolation and frustration but to enable them to find new friends and common ground and to grow into this community that is as diverse as the different NATO nations and the backgrounds of its people. The Brunssum IC celebrates diversity and although English is mostly the common language, there is no need for proficiency in English in order to belong and participate. The club raises funds with the monthly Coffee and Culture Mornings

hosted by different nations or by running fun events like the annual Christmas Fayre, Casino Night or Charity Night. This year however the club is striving to organize an array of new events especially with the 50th anniversary coming up in 2020, so stay tuned. The Brunssum IC is open to all NATO ID holders, from spouses, teachers, military and civilians. The club holds its first Coffee and Culture Morning of the 2019/2020 season on September 10th from 10am to 12pm at the International Conference Centre (ICC). You can purchase memberships on that date and sign up for activity clubs. To learn more about this club, please go their website at www.jfcbic.com.



Brunssum Military Wives Choir

The Joy of Singing Together

In 2011 when the first Military Wives Choir was initiated in England by TV host Gareth Malone and his show The Choir, no one would have thought that this would evoke a wave of military wives' choirs being founded all over the UK. Certainly no one would expect one of by now more than 70 choirs to have its home here in Brunssum. The local choir is part of the British Military Wives Choir foundation. Since it was founded four years ago by Claire Wilkinson in Brunssum as a mostly British choir, it has al-

ways been welcoming singers and choir music fans from all NATO nations. "Our choir is unique in many ways but holds its firm place within the choir foundation", says Kirsty Briggs, the Brunssum choir leader. "We welcome members from all NATO nations, no matter if they are 18 or 81 years of age. No auditions necessary!" Over those last four years the choir has performed during several Remembrance Day Ceremonies, the RAF 100 festivities and participated in the recording of a MWC CD called Remember. In February 2019 the Brunssum Military Wives Choir (MWC) had the unique opportunity to welcome famous British choir leader, arranger

and vocal coach Mark De-Lisser for a one-day workshop in Brunssum. Mark, who is widely known in the UK and beyond for his special arrangement of Stand by Me that was performed during the 2018 Royal Wedding, especially came to train with the ecstatic choir members. In September 2019 you can witness a performance by the choir at the 75th Anniversary of the Liberation of Brunssum Celebration. To learn more about the Brunssum MWC, their rehearsal times and how to join, please contact brunssum@militarywiveschoirs.org or find them on Facebook at *military wives choir brunssum*.





ALBANIAN ARMED FORCES



STORY BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL AVNI BILBILAJ

The Vision is enabling a defense capability – responding to any threat, facing any challenge. We strongly believe that co-operation and collaboration with others – not only nationally and within the NATO Alliance, but with all constructive nations in the region and internationally – reinforces our overall ability to deter any threat of any kind.

The Mission of Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) is safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country and, in cooperation with NATO, contributing to collective defense under article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Another domestic dimension of the primary responsibilities of AAF is assisting our population in case of natural and industrial disasters, whilst conducting Disaster Relief and Search and Rescue Operations.

The guiding principles in developing AAF are:

- A key condition for the AAF to be readily available is our capacity to attract, recruit, develop and retain people with relevant skill sets.

- Through frequent and extensive training we strengthen our defense capabilities.
- Our military units should be well manned, well equipped and well trained, to enable an effective and rapid response to any threat.
- Transparency, performance and accountability are our watchwords.

The AAF consists of MoD/GS collocated in Tirana, Land Forces, Air Force, Naval Force, Support Command and a TRADOC.

There are as well some military units and agencies, which are directly subordinated to MoD and/or General Staff, but providing service and support not only to them, such as:

- The Joint Operations Centre, provides the GS with current information, and monitors the military operations and personnel deployed in and out of country.
- Interagency Maritime Operational Centre;
- Defense Intelligence and Security Agency;
- Military Geographic and Infrastructure Institute;

- The Authority of the State Export Control;
- Personnel Recruitment Center;
- Material Management Center;
- Communications and Information Systems Agency;
- Military Police battalion;
- Support Battalion of GS;
- Military Representative to NATO and NMR to SHAPE;

The National Level of Ambition for participation in international, mainly NATO – led operations and missions are:

- One Light Infantry Battalion Group without rotation for Article 5 Operations;
- One Light Infantry Companies for non-Article 5 operations, with rotations;
- One SOF Land Task Unit;
- One Navy Patrol Boat (for low-intensity operations);
- Two medium transport helicopters.

Currently Albanian Military units and personnel are contributing in Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, NATO enhanced Forward Presence Canadian





Battle Group in Latvia, KFOR in Kosovo, “AEGEAN SEA”, EUFOR “ALTHEA” in Bosnia – Herzegovina, as well as in European Union Training Mission in Mali. As of today there are 211 military personnel serving in those missions. Since 2009 when we joined NATO, almost 5.000 Albanian military personnel in 85 Contingents (rotation) has served during 10 years in NATO/EU missions

and operations. Albanian Armed Forces after a thorough discussion with NATO Defense Planning Team, accepted 46 Capability Targets in 2017, which is a robust package for the AAF in terms of financial support that they require within the real defense budget we are having. However a lot of progress is done recently. Since 2008 four Damen Stan 4207 patrol boats have been commissioned in Albanian

Naval Force, three of them have been constructed in Albania. Those boats are serving in Aegean Sea on rotational basis.

The Air Force has acquired 4 EUROCOPTER/AIRBUS AS 532 Cougar and 2 EC-145. The Air Surveillance system is being modernized as the new Fixed Air Defense Radar is procured and planned to be operational by late 2019. Both Air and Maritime Surveillance system are Lockheed Martin technology. Our region has already entered into an irreversible Euro-Atlantic integration process and building this base is the right action at the right moment. Security is one of the key conditions of the integration process. This step confirms the NATO's increased attention to our region and it helps the integration processes. As it is announced recently, Kucova Air Base will be a NATO tactical Air Base. NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) is currently working to modernize this base in order to be operational and up to NATO standards. Land Forces are being equipped with the latest NATO models light infantry weapons as MK 4 Carbine, Italian made AR 70/90, US made HMMWV M1114 and MRAP armored vehicles.

Regardless equipping the combat, combat support and combat services support forces, AAF have paid attention to modernize the enabling units such are Military Police, EOD, and logistics, which needs substantial upgrade.

A crucial part of Albanian Armed Forces' Mission is the participation in Disaster Relief Operations. The Armed Forces have been successfully engaged in these kinds of operations all over Albania.

Working closely with local authorities, institutions and agencies, the Police, providing all necessary assets to distribute food supplies, shelters, medicines, clothing, and most importantly conducting SAR, MEDEVAC operations in all weather conditions, all those have increased the credibility of Albanian Armed Forces among the population.



#WEAREJFCBS

GREECE

#WEARENATO



NAME: Panagiota Plati
 SERVICE: Civilian
 NATION: Greece
 OFFICE: Office of the DCOM



During this time, I was also an instructor to the Non Commissioned Officers' courses several times, which I enjoyed very much.

I finished my career in the Hellenic Army in June 2015 having reached the rank of Master Sergeant. I succeeded in being selected for a NATO International Civilian position in JFC BS. I look back at my military career with great memories; I met so many inspiring people and I learned so much.

Please tell us about your job.

I work in the Outer Office of the Deputy Commander, where all matters which affect the Command Group and the DCOM are managed. The role of the Outer Office is to ensure the DCOM has the right information at the right time to enhance his situational awareness and support timely decision making. The office responsibilities are broadly divided into two areas: first is the 'current operations', which involves the management of day-to-day visits, office calls and reading. I am a part of this team. The second is 'future plans', which involves the coordination of longer term projects and commitments.

The main challenge of my role is keeping on top of all the work being undertaken across a really varied range of topics in a fast paced environment. I feel privileged to be a part of the DCOM's team and the exposure it provides to some very interesting people.

When did you arrive & what is your job?

I arrived at HQ JFC BS in July 2015. I am the personal assistant and event coordinator of the Deputy Commander.

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

I was born and brought up on the beautiful island of Lemnos in Greece. I graduated from the Non Commissioned Officers Academy of the Hellenic Army in 2007 as a Sergeant in Logistics and Management in the Signal Corps. On completion of my basic training, I spent much of the early part of my military career on the Greek Main-land and on the Greek islands as Chief Logistics and squad leader in a Signal Battalion.

In 2012, I was promoted to Sergeant First Class and was successful in being appointed to the Protocol and Conference Service Cell in SHAPE. This was when my international career started properly. I worked as an event manager in the Protocol office and performed senior personal assistant and secretarial duties. I also supported the organisation of conferences, high-level visits, ceremonies and other formal events for SACEUR and the SHAPE Command Group. During this time I was selected to be the personal assistant to the SACEUR, General Breedlove, and provided direct executive secretarial support to him, which involved managing his schedule and liaising with the Belgian authorities.

Do you have family here?

Yes, my husband is assigned in JFCBS since summer 2017.

What are your hobbies?

I love cooking for my family and friends and I also enjoy a range of fitness activities, and I like to learn foreign languages.

What do you like in your job?

Every day is different! There is always something new and this requires a flexible, positive approach to my work. Every day is an opportunity to improve my skills and become more effective as a member of the team. My work in DCOM's Office provides a unique perspective on international affairs and the importance of NATO to a secure world order.

I like working as a part of a highly committed, flexible and passionate team of professionals doing their best to support the cause of the NATO Alliance. Most of all, I enjoy the challenge and responsibility of working in a team with both purpose and ambition.



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