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DANCON MARCH – OCTOBER 18, 2014

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Dear readers of the KFOR Chronicle,

Thirteen years after my first tour serving in Prizren in the MNB S, I am back in KFOR. For eight months in 2001, I breathed the air of this remarkable country and developed a special relationship with it. Now, with my assignment as the DCOM of KFOR, it is an honour to write these lines to you. I come to you from the Austrian Joint Force Command, where I served as the Director of Inspection.

A lot has changed since 1999, and KFOR's involvement in Kosovo has led to further development and prosperity in this wonderful country. KFOR is still a mission of high responsibility and visibility. Although the security situation in Kosovo can be considered stable, there are always possible tense situations that could quickly deteriorate, as we have seen in the last days. We still must remain vigilant.

For the provision of a Safe and Secure Environment and Freedom of Movement, KFOR still needs capable forces. Professionalism, tactical and technical capability and above all, the WILL to give our best effort is required to serve in this theatre. KFOR is still a capable force.

The position of the DCOM and the representative tasks that come with it is a very good opportunity to get to know the country and its people. Since 1999, KFOR has evolved from a military mission to keeping the peace. It fills me with pride to be the deputy of this successful operation and this pride shall be yours since you are the men and women in the field that make it happen.

We work – in close cooperation with our other international partners and the Institutions in Kosovo - in order to make this country a better place to live.

One thing I am personally excited about is the upcoming 2nd semester exercise “SILVER SABRE”, which is a kind of benchmark for the troops involved in KFOR. It will take place from Nov 19 through Nov 21 2014, and spans from Crowd and Riot Control to transportation and signals. We intend to bring a more realistic attitude to this exercise series, in that commanders and troops on the ground will now have to react to unknown incidents. I am convinced that all of you will give your personal best in order to demonstrate our abilities and level of professionalism.

While speaking about professionalism, working with the headquarters staff has shown me the flawless integration of international workgroups and how KFOR is an example for multinational operations. I expect you to maintain that high quality of teamwork and continue to build friendships across all nations.

My fellow soldiers let me finish with our mission statement that sums up not only the military state of mind but the picture we communicate to the people of Kosovo:

"EXAMPLE, ENDEAVOUR, ENTRUST"

Brigadier General Anton Waldner
Deputy Commander Kosovo Force
The event was presided over by COM KFOR who spoke highly of BG Wessely’s ability, sound judgement and leadership which were greatly valued and added so much to KFOR HQ. COM KFOR also recognised the demanding role of DCOM KFOR, as his duties require him to represent COM KFOR when he is away, as well as directly lead his own varied and demanding tasks. BG Wessely’s commitment and professionalism were praised by COM KFOR, who singled him out as one of the best, if not the best officers to ever fill this role.

The importance of DCOM KFOR’s Transfer of Authority and the wide range of responsibilities of the position were evident by the many dignitaries and personnel in attendance. Attending the ceremony were Ambassadors, the UNMIK Head of Mission, all representatives of the various HQ Branches and KFOR contributing nations who also welcomed General Waldner in as the new DCOM KFOR.

In his farewell, BG Wessely thanked COM KFOR for his trust, support and clear guidance. BG Wessely expressed his enjoyment of working with the dedicated and talented personnel of KFOR and in particular he thanked everyone for their warm support, good humour and friendship. With his typical flourish, BG Wessely then went on to personally thank the 31 nations of KFOR, each in their native language, beginning with “Grazie” and running through every language of the KFOR nations ending with “Go raibh maith agat.” In his own special way he expressed how his time in the mission was remarkably enjoyable and he wished BG Waldner every success, noting that he was coming into KFOR at a most interesting and positive time.

BG Waldner a native of Lienz, Eastern Tyrol, Austria, was then given his authority as DCOM KFOR XIX in the dignified transfer ceremony with the parading of the one-star flag. He was welcomed officially by COM KFOR into his new role as Deputy Commander KFOR.

Commandant Condron
OF-3 IRL A
This was Admiral Ferguson’s first visit to KFOR since Maj. Gen. Figliuolo assumed command on 03 September 2014. Adm. Ferguson received a comprehensive brief by COM KFOR and the international HQ Staff on the latest developments of the current security and political situation in Kosovo, as well as an update on the wider Balkans region.

Following the briefing, Adm. Ferguson expressed his appreciation for the improved overall security situation in Kosovo and also greeted members of KFOR. He emphasized the importance of KFOR in the delicate and complex context of the Balkans and the need to continue to accomplish the mission promoting progress and dialogue in the region. Adm Ferguson remarked that “The Balkan area has long been recognized as both a delicate and complex region. However, I truly believe that KFOR is a crucial partner in the stabilization process”.

During the visit, Adm. Ferguson and Maj. Gen. Figliuolo visited the Multinational Battle Group West, followed by a tour of the Decane Monastery where they met Father Sava. Adm. Ferguson stated, “I have been once again reminded of the importance of the dialogue among all the stakeholders”. In particular, he highlighted the progress that had been achieved through the signing of an agreement between the Municipality of Deçan and the Visoki Dečani Monastery aided by KFOR’s mediation, which will now facilitate further dialogue as an effective tool to solve the problems related to land dispute issues. “The legal value of the Agreement’s signature reflects the symbolic importance of the act between the two counterparts - representing both Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serbian communities”, Adm. Ferguson concluded.
KFOR TACTICAL MANOEUVRE BATTALION – Change of Command Ceremony

On 04 October, Camp Slim Lines was the venue for the double ceremony of the Change of Head of the Portuguese contingent and the Change of Command of the Kosovo Tactical Manoeuvre Reserve Battalion (KTM).

The change of contingent ceremony from Lieutenant Colonel Pedro Brito Teixeira to Lieutenant Colonel Jose’ Tavares Das Neves was marked by great colour and foot drill and an impressive display by the Portuguese contingent concluding with the singing of the Portuguese national anthem. This strong display exemplified the pride and professionalism of the soldiers and was quite a spectacle for those who attended.

For the next phase of the ceremony, command of the KTM was transferred from Lieutenant Colonel Pedro Teixeira to Lieutenant Colonel Jose Neves. Major General Francesco Paolo Figliuolo COM KFOR presided over the ceremony. COM KFOR accepted command of the KTM back from Lieutenant Colonel Teixeira and then handed over command to Lieutenant Colonel Neves. This multinational battalion has soldiers from both the Portuguese and Hungarian armies who work together as a combined battalion.

COM KFOR congratulated the outgoing battalion on a successful and demanding tour of duty which paved the way for the new troops now welcomed as part of KFOR.

Major General Campos Serafino, representing the Portuguese Chief of Defence, attended the ceremony in addition to many military authorities representing the KFOR contributing nations.

In his farewell speech, Lieutenant Colonel Teixeira praised the Hungarian and Portuguese soldiers for working together in such a synchronised way. The synergies produced were evident in the high degree of readiness, tested and put to use, especially in June of this year. He wished his successor well, saying that with his experience he would excel over the next months as the new KTM commander. He finished by saying that it was his privilege to participate in this mission and that with the motto “Example, Endavour, Entrust” the well-developed KFOR values of sharing cultures, friendship, determination to succeed, all within the Transatlantic bridge would give KFOR the required competitive advantage to succeed in the challenges ahead.

Captain Ribeiro
OF-2 PRT-A

PICTURE: Afrim Hajrullahu(2)
After ten intensive days, both the old and the new Contingent assembled themselves to officially transfer responsibility. Numerous international guests and KFOR command personnel gathered to attend the symbolic ceremony and to show their respect for the Swiss peace support mission, which has been operating in Kosovo for over 15 years.

Following hours of preparations, both Contingents stood ready and the ceremony was officially opened by COL Laurent HUSSON, NCC / SNR of the outgoing Contingent 30. He addressed the 400 soldiers, NCO’s and officers by reflecting on the past six months of SWISSCOY’s successful work and cooperation with KFOR. The honour was continued by Brigadier General Laurent MICHAUD, Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of the Swiss Armed Forces Joint Staff, who emphasized the importance of peace support and encouraging stability in today’s world. He also addressed the new Contingent, which had been training as a fully integrated unit in Switzerland for over two months and was “now fit for the mission ahead”.

The Swiss national flag, carried by the departing Contingent 30 was then handed over to COL Reto Ulrich FLÜHMANN, NCC / SNR of the incoming Contingent 31. In an emotional ending, the national anthem of Switzerland was played while both Contingents stood at attention and the ceremony came to a close. The outgoing soldiers, NCO’s and officers were left with a couple of minutes to say goodbye to their comrades before they boarded the airplane waiting to bring them back to Switzerland.

Since October 1999, the Swiss Armed Forces have been involved in Kosovo in the international KFOR peace support mission with SWISSCOY. The deployment of SWISSCOY dates back to the Swiss Federal Council’s decision in June 1999 to participate in KFOR on the basis of UN-Resolution 1244. A further extension of the mandate until the end of 2017 was approved by the parliament earlier this year. To meet the changing requirements of KFOR and to focus the current attention on monitoring the development of Kosovo, SWISSCOY has been assigned different tasks: Two liaison and monitoring teams (LMT) are stationed in field houses in Prizren and Mališevë / Mališevo, another one further north in Mitrovica / Mitrovice and a field office in the north, to operate in various assigned areas within AOR JRD-N and JRD-S.

SWISSCOY fulfils both multinational and national tasks in Kosovo. Its major part fulfils multinational services assigned by KFOR for operational cooperation with other KFOR organizations, for example the transport company linked with Austria in JLSG at the field camp in Prizren. At the same location, an engineer platoon is in charge of general construction projects for KFOR. Also, Switzerland provides professionals for the International Military Police (IMP), various medical centres, the Explosive Ordnance Disposal team (EOD) and for HQ KFOR Staff.

Sergeant Bishop (OR-6)
2nd PIO SWISSCOY 31
October 02: COM KFOR, Major General Francesco Paolo Figliuolo, met with Mr. Richard D.F. Froh, NATO's Deputy Assistant Secretary General. General Figliuolo spoke with Mr. Froh about the current political situation in Kosovo and the progress achieved in the dialogue on normalization of relations and cooperation between Belgrade and Pristina. Among other topics, discussions were held about the general situation in Kosovo, and included the role of KFOR in creating a Safe and Secure Environment and Freedom of Movement in Kosovo. Mr. Froh’s current appointment is NATO’s Deputy Assistant Secretary General for operations, with responsibility for the Alliance’s operations in Afghanistan, Libya, the Balkans, as well as counter-piracy and various training missions. General Figliuolo highlighted the fact that KFOR will continue to cooperate and assist the United Nations, the European Union, and other international actors and will act, as third responder, in assisting the activities of Kosovo Police, EULEX and all international and local organizations. In conclusion, Mr. Froh stressed the importance of the role of KFOR’s mission and its achievements within the Alliance strategy.

October 03: COM KFOR, Major General Francesco Paolo Figliuolo, met with the Head of Liaison Office of Greece, H.E. Ambassador Constantina Athanassiadou, at Camp “Film City” NATO KFOR HQ in Pristina. During this first official visit General Figliuolo and Ambassador Athanassiadou spoke about the overall situation between the communities of Kosovo and the progress achieved with regard to dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. Currently, Greece is an important Contributing Nation to KFOR with more than 200 soldiers deployed in Kosovo, operating in KFOR Headquarters. COM KFOR and the Greek Ambassador agreed on the importance of KFOR’s contribution, as the third responder, to support Kosovo Police, EULEX and all local and international organizations. They also spoke about maintaining a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement throughout Kosovo in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1244.

October 07: KFOR Commander, Major General Francesco Paolo Figliuolo, met with the Mayor of Mitrovica North, Mr. Goran Rakic, in City Hall. During this meeting they discussed the security and socio-economic situation in Northern Kosovo and the Mayor expressed to General Figliuolo his appreciation and gratitude for the impartial and effective work of the KFOR soldiers. He complimented the endeavours of KFOR and highlighted how they have benefited the people of Kosovo. He further emphasised the vital role KFOR plays in bringing stability to the area and creating conditions that ensure a safe and prosperous environment.
October 11: KFOR Commander, Major General Francesco Paolo Figliuolo, met with the Ambassador of Austria to Kosovo, HE Mr. Johann Brieger, at the Camp “Film City” NATO KFOR Headquarters in Pristina. The main topics of the meeting were the overall security situation in Kosovo and the Austrian contingent’s contribution to KFOR. General Figliuolo expressed his appreciation for the contribution of the Austrian contingent and highlighted the importance of their support. The Austrian contingent consisting of about 450 service members are mainly deployed in Pec, Prizren and Pristina as part of KFOR HQ staff. Ambassador Brieger reaffirmed Austria’s support of the KFOR mission and the political dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade.

October 21: KFOR Commander, Major General Francesco Paolo Figliuolo, received the Head of Mission for the European Union Rule of Law mission in Kosovo (EULEX) H.E. Ambassador Gabriele Meucci, at Camp “Film City” NATO KFOR Headquarters in Pristina. General Figliuolo and Ambassador Meucci discussed the latest events and developments with regard to the current security situation in the region, in the light of the EULEX reorganization process that will take place based on the new mandate, assigned by the European Union, valid until 14 June 2016. During the meeting, General Figliuolo and Ambassador Meucci highlighted the effective collaboration between KFOR and EULEX. KFOR, in its capacity as the Third responder, ensures a safe and secure environment in Kosovo in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1244. It has had and continues to have a strong and successful working relationship with EULEX, which acts as Second responder. The joint effort of the two organizations, from the leadership down to the field, was instrumental in dealing effectively with critical events that occurred in Kosovo in recent times.

28 October 2014: KFOR Commander, Major General Francesco Paolo Figliuolo, had a meeting with the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden to Kosovo, H.E. Mats Arne Staffansson at Camp “Film City” NATO KFOR Headquarters in Pristina. General Figliuolo had the opportunity to discuss with H.E. Staffansson the overall situation and recent developments in the area and the KFOR comprehensive approach to the dynamics and current situation in Kosovo.

General Figliuolo and Ambassador Staffansson both highlighted the important role played by KFOR in the region and underlined the efficient cooperation existing among KFOR, Kosovo Police and EULEX to ensure freedom of movement and a secure environment in Kosovo. The Swedish Forces in Kosovo currently consists of some officers at the KFOR Headquarters in Pristina. Between 1999 and 2013 Sweden contributed up to 1000 men and women to KFOR.
JSLG CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY

On Friday, 10 October 2014, the Joint Logistic Support Group (JLSG) Change of Command ceremony took place on the frontcourt of the Multifunctional Tent in Camp Film City.

This transfer of authority from COL Olivier MEHU (FRA-A) to COL Franz Josef MADNER (AUT-A) was an opportunity for the outgoing JLSG Commander to express his sincere and deepest gratitude to his subordinates and fellow comrades for their support and the work which has been carried out during the last six months.

About 120 guests, including her Excellency the Ambassador of France, his Excellency the Ambassador of Austria and several delegations from JLSG subunits enjoyed this event presided over by Major General Francesco Paolo Figliuolo, COM KFOR. With a display of EOD, Engineers and Transportation representing the main JLSG assets, Col Mehu offered his deepest appreciation to the HQ KFOR staff, KFOR commanders and to the JLSG HQ and subunit personnel. He pointed out the dedication and professionalism of the JLSG officers, NCOs and soldiers, whose work during this busy 6 month tour has always been performed in an efficient and successful way and most of the time, on short notice. Such work included but was not limited to:
- GATE 1 dismantling
- EOD clearing of Mount Cviljen
- Contribution to the Bulk POL facility construction in CMLT in close coordination with NSPA
- Personnel transportation all around Kosovo
- Supply and Fuel delivery
- Gravel transportation and spraying in Camp Cabra and CMLT
- Polish containers transportation from Camp Bondsteel to CMLT
- Remove and transportation of generators in Zubin Potok
- APOD management
- FOM-D activations
- Decani Monastery road repair assessment.

As Col Mehu carried on with the work of his predecessor of the 8th Rotation, the JLSG 9th Rotation continued to demonstrate the relevance of JLSG in support of the KFOR mission. Executing heavy engineer and transportation tasks; continuing the development of the JLSG concept, coordinating national theatre level Logistic Support with the National Support Elements (NSEs) / Troop Contributing Nations (TCNs) under COM KFOR OP-CON became the main effort of the JLSG 9th Rotation. As KFOR moves to the future force posture, these tasks were essential to prove that the KFOR JLSG concept put into practice here in Kosovo.
should be developed to extend its responsibilities, its means and capabilities in order to set the proper conditions for TCNs/NSEs to facilitate the overall reductions of the KFOR logistic footprint.

In addition, COL MEHU reminded his distinguished guests that it has been a privilege to act as the JLSG commander, and that the JLSG HQ staff and sub-units members, those being Austrian, Swiss, Ukrainian, Italian or one of the sixteen different nationalities JLSG can rely on, could be proud of the tremendous job they did. As Col Mehu stated during his speech:

“A commander without good soldiers and outstanding HQ members is nothing and cannot achieve any mission.”

At the end of the ceremony, Col Mehu gave his JLSG patch to his successor, COL Franz Josef Madner, and wished him a good luck and during his tour as the JLSG 9th Rotation Commander. To conclude, all the guests and JLSG subunits fellow soldiers were invited to attend a “Maximum Support” reception in the Multifunctional Tent. The atmosphere was relaxed and was a testament to the comradeship of the JSLG family. While changing its members every six months, JLSG continues to develop positive and strong relationships that support and enhance its ability to fulfil the KFOR mission to provide Freedom of Movement and Safe and Secure Environment.

OF-1 CHATELET (FRA-A)
DECANI MONASTERY AND DECAN MUNICIPALITY INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT AGREEMENT SIGNED- FURTHER PROGRESS IN INTER-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Camp “Villaggio Italia”, Headquarters of Multinational Battle Group West (MNBG-W), was the location for the signing of an agreement between the Municipality of Deçan and the Visoki Dečani Monastery.

During the event, KFOR Commander Major General Francesco Paolo Figliuolo, the MNBG-W Commander, Colonel Angelo Minelli, Deçan Mayor, Rasim Selmanaj, and the Monastery Abbot Father Sava Janjić, signed an agreement regarding the commencement of works for refurbishing a pre-existing minor road within the Special Protected Zone behind the Monastery.

This agreement will see an improvement to the road surface and the underlying structure and will ensure safer and easier travel to the natural spring. This site is frequently visited by pilgrims and tourists and the spring is believed to have curative properties.

The works will be funded by Italy and the construction work will be carried out by the KFOR Joint Logistics Support Group. This multinational unit is KFOR’s arm in relation to civil engineering works, as well as heavy transport logistics, fuelling, Freedom of Movement and EOD.

The project will be completed without negatively impacting the monastery or the monastic routine of the monks. All works will be completed in agreement with the local municipality, in a positive multi-cultural atmosphere. This agreement between the Serb and Albanian communities is in accordance with the Kosovo Law on Special protected Zones dated 20th October 2008.

Commandant Condron
OF-3 IRL A
It was the 3rd of October, 2014. In the central square of Prizren’s old town, the Shadervan, the Military District Band III, led by Lieutenant Colonel Roland Kahle, had already taken their position. The soldiers of the 38th and 39th German KFOR Contingent gathered there this evening to celebrate the Day of German Unity and were joined by the people of Kosovo.

In a ceremonial atmosphere, the German soldiers marked this special day. Numerous guests had accepted the invitation by the Commander of the 38th German KFOR Contingent, Colonel Hans-Jürgen Freiherr von Keyserlingk. Among them was the German Ambassador to Kosovo, Angelika Viets, as well as the German Brigadier Peter Braunstein, in his function as Director of the NATO Liaison and Advisory Team (NLAT). The Austrian Deputy Commander of KFOR Brigadier Anton Waldner, and Colonel Trinkle Deputy Commander of the Multinational Battle Group East were also present. The citizens of PRIZREN gathered in the town centre to spend the evening together with the German soldiers. Joined by torch bearers the band started to play at half past six, their audience filling the market square.

“We are stronger together than each on their own because we all contribute our knowledge, our tradition and our skills to the collective well-being,” These were the words of the Commander addressing soldiers from Germany, Austria and Switzerland who were present that day. These words fit the mood and the tone of the evening event in PRIZREN. The town’s citizens were there on Shadervan square, to express their thankfulness for the continuing and wide-ranged support given by the German people to the people of Kosovo. They celebrated Germany’s unity together with the German KFOR troops and representatives from the German embassy in Pristina. “We do not take for granted the warmth and friendliness you extend to us. For this, I would like to express a sincere ‘Thank you’, not only from myself, but also on behalf of all those who have been Commanders here before me,” emphasized Colonel Freiherr von Keyserlingk, speaking in the heart of Prizren. The atmosphere was warm and welcoming on this evening among friends.

“Twenty-five years of German unity enriches the whole of Europe,” explained German Ambassador Angelika Viets in her speech. “KFOR troops have been the backbone of Kosovo’s security,” she added in her remarks. Mr. Vesel Krasniqi, Director of the Prizren-based Lorenc Antoni School for Music, and main speaker on this evening, expressed his thanks for the generous support the school has received from KFOR troops and others in the last 14 years. As a sign of recognition and appreciation for Germany’s supportiveness, the school’s mixed choir, made up of 60 singers, proceeded to give an impressive demonstration of their vocal skills. The evening was rounded off by a large display of fireworks above the old Kalaja fortification situated on a hill east of the town.

Captain Schönberger
OF-2 DEU A
The DANCON MARCH is a Danish tradition that dates back to 1972, when Denmark had UN peacekeepers in Cyprus. The tradition sees Danish military units organize these marches when they are deployed in international operations. All troop contributing nations of the mission are invited to participate.

It is not a competition but an opportunity to demonstrate the physical preparedness of the individual soldier. It is regarded to be a social event where you get to know each other better across nationalities and units. Participation and completion of the march is honoured with a medal and a certificate. Danish units have over the years organized the Dancon March in such distant places as Cyprus, Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Lebanon, Eritrea, Iraq and Afghanistan.

This year, the Danish Force Protection Unit at Camp Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny in Novo Selo arranged a Dancon March to take place in the hills surrounding the Camp Maréchal de Lattre de Tassigny south of the town of Vucitrn. Participants could choose from either the 25km. route which is the normal range for the march or the Extreme Dancon March of 50km. On the day, 548 participants registered for the 25km. and 125 choose the 50km. option.

There were soldiers, civilians and police officers from Germany, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine, Switzerland, Canada, Portugal, Slovenia, Austria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Moldova, USA, Ireland, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Turkey and Denmark. Furthermore, there were 40 soldiers from Kosovo Security Force. Kosovo Police helped to manage traffic on the route and the Danish Force Protection Unit would like to thank them for their cooperation in this regard.
The day started at 5:30 with weigh-in and registration. Then there was a welcome speech from Lieutenant Colonel Henry J. Krogh (Highest ranking Danish Officer at Dancon). He talked about the tradition behind the march, offered some practical information and wished all participants well. The march commenced at 07:35 on a sunny morning with a little wind, the perfect cruising weather for a march! The route alternated between asphalt and gravel roads. It was a challenging route with 600 vertical meters with some “nice” increases and descents, rocks and mud. But the view along the way was appealing as it was thought some of Kosovo’s most beautiful countryside. Along the route there were refreshment stations where it was possible to get fruit, water and medical assistance if required.

Throughout the day, participants arrived safely at the finish line. When finished, participations remained at the finish line to encourage and commend their comrades as they neared completion. The last participants from the extreme 50km. finished after dark, around 1900. Everyone was tired but happy with their accomplishment and happy that that it was over! It was a great day and while there was a lot of “blood, sweat and tears”, there were also a lot of smiles and joviality. The Dancon March wants to thank everyone who participated and helped us carrying on the tradition of the Danish Army. We would also like to thank all those who had helped Dancon in a support capacity.

Profits from Dancon March goes to veterans in Denmark!

The first three across the line in the 25 km category:

1. Avar András (Hungary) 2.44 hours.
2. Aleksander Sobieraj (Poland) 2.57 hours.
3. Piotr Sobczyk (Poland) 3.08 hours.

The first three across the line in the 50km category:

1. Lukasz Ciszek (Poland) 6.16 hours.
2. Kamil Gesich (Poland) 7.46 hours.
3. Thomas Scheiniller (Switzerland) 7.52 hours & Remo Nater (Switzerland) 7.52 hours.

Corporal Grøngård OR- 3 Danish Force Protection Unit
UKRAINIAN EOD TEAM IN KOSOVO

KFOR personnel go about their duties whether in barracks or out in Kosovo, be it patrolling, training, administrative or logistic duties in relative security. This did not come about by itself and is the result of years of cooperation with the international and regional organisations in Kosovo, to develop a safe secure environment and freedom of movement (SASE and FOM) for all people. This is the foundation of democracy, commerce and progress, and the benefits to the Kosovar people and the international community are felt daily.

One of the frontline units involved in ensuring this and addressing any issues that threaten SASE and FOM are the EOD detachments. How many of us have walked into a building or past a road block not knowing that we only do so in safety thanks to the EOD teams that have swept and secured the area?

EOD in KFOR is a multinational effort with EOD teams deployed by the Austrian, Moldovan, Swiss and US forces here, and Ukraine. During a recent event in the run up to the Change of Command of COM KFOR, the Chronicle met with the Ukrainian EOD team under the command of OF-2 Viktor Rybalka (UKR-A) EOD team leader.

We were able to see the team sweep a building and carry out safety checks to ensure no risk to our visitors or VIPs existed. The team used a variety of electronic devices and the final exhaustive check was carried out by “Lord”, the Labrador retriever search dog, who at 3 years old is in his prime and proving to be an excellent asset. This search was slow and deliberate and on being finally cleared by the search dog, the building was declared safe for the visit. The EOD team were long gone by the time the visitors arrived and no one knew the extensive work that had been carried out. Such is the work of EOD – often out of sight and away from the public.

The Ukrainian EOD detachment is part of JLSG’s FOMD 1. For this reason their primary role is checking road blocks for IEDs or UXO and rendering them safe if found. This requires constant training and staying up to date with the latest devices and methods used.

The Ukrainian contingent does a one year tour in KFOR and is due to rotate in December. Over this time they have deployed operationally constantly for major events (most recently with the Swiss EOD team for the Change of Command Ceremony of COM KFOR) and they are currently working in the mountains to search for UXO and are always on hand to come to the aid of anyone who encounters suspected ordnance or UXO.

Although the team are well able to deal with all environments and situations, working in the
mountains for prolonged periods is a difficult task, dealing with heavy terrain to move equipment, exposed to extreme heat, rain, cold. Contending with mosquitos and snakes also increases the hardship for the team in addition to sweeping and searching the area.

The search dog “Lord” performs well in this terrain, able to cover area not easily accessible by machinery or equipment and was able to recently locate ordnance in Cviljen. This was rendered safe by the team and the “safe” areas of Kosovo increases all the time with their work.

The team trained in Ukraine in their national Demining Centre where they concentrate on counter-IED, explosive ordnance reconnaissance, and the destruction of ammunition. At home they form part of a heavy engineering unit and in KFOR as mentioned they are part of the FOMD. The team trained together prior to deployment and continue to train in theatre when not on operations. They took part in the large “Silver Sabre” exercise in Camp Vrelo in May this year.

The team are looking forward to going home, although they say that their families have been very supportive and with the help of Skype they were able to keep in touch regularly. They have had a busy time to date and have done much work to maintain a safer and more secure Kosovo both for KFOR and the citizens of Kosovo.

Lt Col Yevhen LOBATIUK and OF-2 Viktor RYBALKA
FOX III allowed KTM to validate Command and Control and interoperability between KTM HQ (MN), SupDet (PRT), A Coy (MN), B Coy (PRT) and C Coy (HUN). The Exercise included an academics share, a crosstraining and Situational Training Exercise (STX), designed to train KTM Units as the Primary Training Audience (PTA) at the tactical level. Additionally it provided the KTM the opportunity to train in a Crowd and Riot Control (CRC) environment. The scenario used was a simulated situation of violent public disorder in a Hot Spot (in Camp Vrelo).

Besides the PRT and HUN Contingents, six others nations supported the Exercise: AIR Assets, from Croatian, Slovenian, Switzerland and USA contingents, deployed KTM to the Hot Spot; A Freedom of Movement Detachment (FOMD) from the Switzerland contingent removed obstacles and cleared all IED Threat; International Military Police (IMP), from the Austrian contingent, escorted the several KTM convoys and detained/processed rioter; The Tactical Psychological Operations Team (TPT), from the Danish contingent, executed PSYOPS series; ICoy/MNBG W from Slovenian contingent, reinforced KTM. On the last Day, to validate the Exercise, observers and visitors went to Camp Vrelo, one in particular was COM KFOR, Major General Francesco Paolo Figliuolo.

At the end of exercise, the KTM commander Lt Col José NEVES, thanked all participants of the exercise for their commitment and proficiency. He also referred to the pertinence of this kind of training to exercise the integration and employment of affiliated units within the KTM concept of Level I and II. This Exercise attests that KTM, which motto is “two nations, one force” could be Stronger and Flexible.

Captain Ribeiro
OF-2 PRT-A
PRISTINA APOD SUPPORTS MNBG-E HELICOPTER ROTATION

On the 21st of September, two C-17 Globemaster aircraft arrived at Pristina Military APOD carrying three UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters bound for Camp Bondsteel.

The C-17 aircraft, weighing an impressive 265,000Kgs, also transported spare parts and sustainment equipment for the helicopters, which will replace the older models currently operating out of Camp Bondsteel.

The Blackhawks themselves are specially equipped for the MEDEVAC role and contains a micro hospital capable of sustaining a patient whilst in flight.

Offloading the helicopters, which weigh 5,000Kgs apiece, from the rear of the C-17 is an exceptionally tricky procedure, with the helicopter being rolled off the rear ramp using the C-17 onboard winch and the helicopters own brakes.

With expert care and skill, the $21 million dollar helicopters were then parked at the APOD service area where they were assembled by US Personnel before departing to Camp Bondsteel to begin their vital and lifesaving duties.

After the departure of the C-17’s, a Boeing 767 arrived carrying 150 US Army personnel who will form KFOR 19 Task Force Aviation, operating the Blackhawks from Camp Bondsteel.

For Pristina APOD, it was another major achievement in building an enabling capability for KFOR nations, with this being the first operation of its type at the APOD. The success follows on from the commencement of Super Heavy operations at the APOD, from last year with the first Boeing 747-400 ‘Jumbo Jet’ to the giant Antonov-124 operating into Pristina APOD for the first time.

Another example of JLSG and Pristina APOD moving onwards providing Maximum Support to KFOR.

Mr. Lewis Smith
JLSG Air Operations Manager
The meeting took place on 11 October 2014. The meeting was called by the KFOR CSM and organized by KTM CSM Hermes Mateus, Portugal (PRT), in cooperation with OR-8 László Vígh, Hungary (HUN).

The meeting was an excellent opportunity to familiarize and meet with the PRT and HUN NCOs assigned to Camp Slim Lines. During his briefing KFOR CSM Maurizio D’Alessandro focused on the importance of the “NATO Non-Commissioned Officer Bilateral Strategic Strategy and Recommended NCO Guidelines”, signed on 13 October 2010 by Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) and on the significance of the NATO NCO Development Programme that allows NCOs from all Nations to participate in International courses. To learn more about the Professional Development for the NATO NCO please visit http://www.aco.nato.int/command-senior/blog/professional-development-for-the-nato-nco.aspx.

A sincere word of appreciation is due to KTM Commander José NEVES for hosting the meeting, for his warm words of welcome and to KTM CSM Mateus for the outstanding organization.

D’ALESSANDRO M.
CSM KFOR OR-9 ITA-A
BROTHERS IN ARMS

Name: Citti Giuliano
Rank: OR-4
D.O.B: 31-03-1983
Nationality: Italian
KFOR Unit: Close Protection Team (CPT) COM KFOR


About the mission: Close Protection Team (CPT) COM KFOR.

Family reaction: Both my parents are proud of the fact that I work in the Italian Army, for the Alpine troops. Like every mother, mine worries when we are deployed, however she knows and respects the fact that it is the life I have chosen and that I am happy. I am happily engaged to a girl, Julia, who is part of another regiment of an Alpine Brigade. As she is also a military person she fully understands the demands of the job and supports me and my contribution to the mission.

Hobbies: Mountain running, martial arts, playing guitar, singing alpine songs, yoga, reiki and mountain skiing.

Name: Citti Riccardo
Rank: OR-4
D.O.B: 31-03-1983 (I was born first!!!!)
Nationality: Italian
KFOR Unit: Close Protection Team (CPT) COM KFOR


About the mission: Close Protection Team (CPT) COM KFOR.

Family reaction: For me the job of a soldier has always been a vocation. Not a sacrifice but a direct way to achieve and demonstrate results. It is one way to be proud and to make my family proud. Four missions abroad have led me to grow and change in a positive way. Unfortunately my family also has to make the sacrifices that the life of a soldier requires, the goodbyes, the distances between us but we always share in the joy of my return.

Hobbies: Mountain trekking, mountain skiing, motorbike riding, photography, playing bass guitar and the ukulele. Also I am an artist and I like to draw.
Rules:
The standard consists of a grid Sudoku field with $3 \times 3$ blocks, which are each divided into $3 \times 3$ fields, a total of 81 fields in 9 rows and 9 columns. In some of these fields at the beginning digits 1 to 9 are registered ("targets").

The task is to fill in the blanks of the puzzle so that in each of nine rows, columns and blocks of each digit from 1 to 9 appears only once.

The three areas (row, column, block) are equally units or groups.
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Sincerely
The Chronicle Team