

Belgian KFOR: in the pa

*Story by OF-1 Wout Putseys, Belgian Army
Photos by Belgian KFOR*

Since 1999, the Belgian Army has been part of KFOR. Whereas BELKOS 1 still counted more than 1,000 men, the current contingent BELKOS 31 is composed of 179 soldiers. Nevertheless, due to the variety in specialized personnel and equipment, the Belgian contingent has been able to keep up the standard of flexibility, versatility and high performance. Currently, the company is located in BELVEDERE, MITROVICA and is under operational command of French Battalion. The BELKOS 30 and BELKOS 31 Transfer of Authority took place on 28 August.

Three platoons originate from the 2nd Field Artillery Regiment; first, Artillerymen with parachutist qualifications form the core of the company. Their main task is to

keep the area of MITROVICA safe and secure, among other things by patrolling inside the area of responsibility and by supporting EULEX if necessary. If Crowd and Riot Control (CRC) is the main emphasis, the Belgian company is fully equipped and trained to conduct such operations. Nevertheless, a quick transition back to conventional infantry tactics is not a problem, when needed. Both of these methods of operating are possible in almost every kind of terrain, due to the diversity of the available vehicles: light or armored jeeps, wheeled personnel carrier trucks or tracked Infantry Fighting Vehicles.

The sniper team plays a significant role in the execution of the main tasks. They provide tactical support that cannot be valued too high. Primarily, their job is passing intelligence reports continuously to the company. Secondly, in case of direct threat, they can take out appropriate targets with precision. Again, these tasks can be fulfilled both in CRC as in



ast and current activities

conventional operations.

Next to the tactical support, BELKOS 31 has its own means of technical, logistical and medical support present in the compound. The CIS Group keeps the communication and information networks up and running. The Logistics Group provides material support during operations, vehicle maintenance, and small infrastructural repairs; manage financial issues and local employees. The Medical Group is at any time able to respond in case of medical emergencies. Last but not least, there is a team of Military Policemen present, mainly to take care of road accidents and reports in case of damage to civilian property. In conclusion, BELKOS 31 has indeed the numerical size of a (large) company, but the structure of a battalion.

The pluralistic hallmark of the Belgian Contingent results

in a distinct build and versatility. This characteristic has already proven its worth in Operation NORTHERN HOLOGRAM, which took place from 21 - 25 September 2008. The general aim of this operation was not only to show the flag and to deploy a significant number of forces in difficult terrain, in addition, to observe passively and to gather intelligence about possible illegal activities alongside the Kosovo - Serbia border. BELKOS 31 operated between DOG 21 (Axis MOZART) and DOG 2 (Axis ZOLA). Three platoons, the sniper team and an extensive command post deployed in the process. The traffic of illegal woodcutting is one of several reported activities. EULEX transferred all valuable information at the end of the mission.

Meanwhile, the company has picked up the normal activities - the so-called framework tasks - in MITROVICA. They will continue to do so until the next rotation takes place, at the end of November, when BELKOS 32 will arrive in theatre.



HIGHLAND C

Story and photos by Lieutenant Colonel Vadym Tymoshenko, Ukrainian Army

On 18 October 2009, despite pouring rain and low temperature, a group of servicemen totaling up to 170 soldiers from the different KFOR contributing nations, gathered on the parade ground in the Camp Belvedere, Multinational Task Force North. Sixteen teams from six countries (Belgium, France, Denmark, Greece, Morocco and Ukraine) including one team from EULEX came to participate in the Highland Games 2009.

Belgian KFOR represented with 4 teams including 1 female team; French contingent represented with 5 teams including 1 female team; Danish contingent represented

with 2 men's and 1 female teams. One team was mixed Belgium-French. Lastly, Greek, Moroccan and Ukrainian contingents each sent one team.

The Belgian Contingent (BELKOS 31) hosted the Highland Games. The idea of organizing the games belongs to Corporal-Chief (OR-4) John Van Roy, Belgian Army. The organizers of the games were Sergeant-Major (OR-7) Michel Smet and his team, Platoon 2 of 3rd Company (in Belgium 2A - Batterij Paracommando) Joint BATFRA, with active assistance of Sniper Detachment, Communication Information Systems Detachment and Logistic Department of Belgian KFOR (Officer Commanding Captain Remes). Each of the 13 men's and 3 women's teams consisted of a minimal of 7, with a maximum of 8 players and a coach. It was allowed to have 2 substitutes. The team must not exceed the total weight of 680 kilos for the men's team and 640 kilos for the women's team.

The participants compete in 7 categories: Apnea, Relay race (Estafette run), Jerry can walk, Tire fun, Jeep push, Lumberjack and Truck pulling.



GAMES 2009

The competition was quite tough, and female teams only had handicaps for three events - Jerry can walk, Tire fun and Truck pulling. Two events were cancelled due to the bad weather, Jeep pushing and the Lumberjack. The risk for accidents or injuries became too high and organizers decided to cancel those events.

The final event of Tug of War decided the final ranking of the Highland Games 2009. Only the four best-ranked teams participated in the Tug of War. The third and fourth place teams competed in Tug Of War to capture third place. The first and second (men and women) pulled for the first place. In both cases, the Belgian teams won the event, the men by 2 against 1 pull, the women by 2 against 0. The winners of the Highland Games 2009 are Mac Battery (male, total score 94 points) and De Faestkes (female, total score 23 points and 13th place in general table). The second places received a Danish Dragoons team (male, total score 73 points) and French D&G Girls (female). The Belgian Team Charlie and the French team Spartiates pulled for third place. Spartiates won by two pulls against zero.

A small military touch went into arranging the Highland Games 2009. While participating in the Games, military athletes encountered quite a bit of the daily military life, aspects that are indispensable for a good soldier. It's about physical strength, the right mental state and focus. It's about resistance to cold, pain, enduringness, techniques and tactics. Most of all, it's about TEAM SPIRIT! In the Army, soldiers do not operate as individuals; they act as a team. Everyone does their own job, but all with the same goals. On Sunday, the participants tried to win the games, but the remaining time, KFOR soldiers are here to make Kosovo a better place for the people who live here.

