the CHRONICLE
KFOR's Magazine
March 2022

KFOR's AIR POWER

CONTENT

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Printed by "Blendi"
Tel.: 044 149 115

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Is that not something to be proud of?

Sincerely,
The Chronicle Team.

***NATO* (20)** Nations within KFOR Albania, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.
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Dear reader,

Comdt Liam McDonnell, Chief Internal Information, PAO.

Welcome to March's edition of the Chronicle; this month we will explore KFOR's Air Power. The role of air power in stabilization operations is auxiliary and its use should ultimately improve the chances for success. Specifically, air power must support both the general peacekeeping principles and the specific objectives of an operation.

In addition to showing commitment, air power also can provide added credibility for stabilization operations in the eyes of the disputing parties. Improved effectiveness in observation and reporting can reduce mistrust among the disputing parties and foster the confidence building necessary for the long-term resolution of differences. An example of this potential, was observed in the Sinai where modern surveillance and communications equipment was operated by United Nations peacekeepers, thus enhancing the confidence of Egypt and Israel during the disengagement and cease-fire

Most people think of stabilization operations as ground operations performed by soldiers wearing helmets and operating heavy equipment. In fact, stabilization operation has evolved considerably beyond the two surface dimensions to cover the third dimension as well: airspace. Since the first major peacekeeping operation in the Congo in the 1960s, air power has played a critical role in mission accomplishment.

In stabilization operations, as in conventional military operations, air power offers four core capabilities: transportation, observation, communication and firepower (destruction). Simply put, aircraft provide means to carry, to see, to signal and to shoot. Aircraft are also a means to show presence, though the value of this presence lies in the ability to do the other four things.

This month edition brings you articles about KFORs air power. The story of the month explores the broad capabilities of helicopters and the type of operations conducted within KFORs area of responsibility. J3 Air provide an insight into their daily operations and tasks, from managing civilian air space to the coordination of military flights.

OF-2 Capt Monika Trzic (HRV) gives an insight into roles and responsibilities as a pilot, her crew, operation types and the unique capabilities of the Mil Mi-8 helicopter. OF-2 Capt Roland Sierra (USA) provides a detail account of some the many personnel with Task Force Pegasus, ranging from aircraft maintenance to pilot training on the UH-60 Blackhawk.

In the Command Sergeant Major Corner, Command Sergeant Major Zsiros shares his insights into operating within a multinational environment, the challenges encounter from mission-level to individual level, and shares his experiences and advice on this topic, in addition this month's Solider of the Month is also included.

Finally, we bring you an excellent Retrospect and Continuity piece this month, where we reflect on the contribution to KFOR by the Austrian Armed Forces since 1999. Their activities and actions to date have ensured a safe and secure environment for Kosovo and their continuation as a PfP nation is critical in the balance of impartiality and credibility of KFOR. Finally, PAO acknowledges a technical error within the Special Edition, which should have stated North Macedonia.

Sincerely
Your KFOR HQ PAO team.

ROTARY-WING AIRCRAFT CAPAB

Operation AGRICOLA The spearhead of the British deployment into Kosovo was a helicopter-borne force composed of elements of 5th Airborne Brigade, inserting approximately 1,400 personnel from two infantry battalions, and supporting artillery, logistic troops and engineers. Their main task in the initial phase was to secure a terrain feature designated the 'Kacanik defile' and the road leading from Pristina to Skopje, designated Route HAWK, to prepare the way for follow-on forces. Central to this task was facilitating forward passage of lines for the British 4th Armoured Brigade, as well as brigades from Italy, Germany and France. Subsequent phases continued this process for a United States brigade and other residual elements. The insertion of 1,400 troops from 5th Airborne Brigade was carried out in several waves in less than three hours by eight Chinook and six Puma helicopters flown by the RAF, with US Army Apache helicopters in support. Prior to the operation, a Phoenix unmanned aerial vehicle had flown over the area of the defile for three days. Both helicopter and electronic warfare assets had air defence as their priority tasks, and air defence was a second priority for artillery assets after close support. The operation commenced at 0500 on 12 June 1999, with the 1st Battalion The Parachute Regiment elements being lifted to the far end of the Kacanik defile from just south of the border between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo, a distance of approximately 15-20km. The brigade group successfully conducted passage of lines with 4th Armoured Brigade. On 13 June, 5th Airborne Brigade came under operational command of 4th Armoured Brigade and was engaged in peacekeeping operations in and around Pristina.

Air assets, are key enablers that give peace operations the mobility and agility they need to deter and prevail against hostile actors. They are also force multipliers that enhance the effectiveness of multidimensional operations, allowing them to implement their mandates.

BILITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Air assets have been used since the beginning of peacekeeping operations to supply troops, conduct surveillance and monitoring, provide logistics support, and move around assets and personnel, and they have continued to be used throughout the years. The capabilities offered by air manoeuvre forces have significant applicability to stability operations, tasks and activities, providing options for rapid intervention by land or amphibious units over battlefields, intra- and inter-theatre distances.

Currently KFORs air power employs only rotary-wing aircraft, integrated with ground forces to significantly increase the tempo and reach of KFORs land component. It is achieved through the independent tasks, conducted by helicopters independent of other arms. However, at times these tasks may be linked to a broader scheme of manoeuvre.

KFORs helicopter assets exploit the core attributes of air power – height, reach and speed. This provides many benefits to the land forces with an air manoeuvre capability. Height and reach enables access over difficult terrain and ground barriers. Combining speed with reach increases tempo and can give the advantage of surprise. The agility of helicopters allows an air manoeuvre force to move quickly between tactical actions. This enables them to exploit more opportunities than ground forces can alone.

Although offering significant advantages, helicopter assets can also be vulnerable both in flight and on the ground. They often lack persistence; as aircraft have limited loiter time, while troops are lightly armed and equipped with limited means of resupply. Therefore, logistic demands created by air manoeuvre forces are challenging. Agility and mobility characterise the main roles of KFORs helicopters. Agility allows helicopters to quickly move between tactical actions. Mobility allows helicopters to rapidly move tactically and operationally, regardless of conditions on the ground. Additionally, adaptability allows helicopters with their agility to quickly re-role for different tasks.

The daily operational employment of KFOR helicopters fulfil two main roles: lift and find. Both are applicable across the two types of tactical actions conducted by KFOR in its area of operations: stabilising and enabling. Helicopters suited to the role of lift are best used in all tactical actions that require moving cargo or personnel. This capability also covers air-enabled tactical casualty evacuation. These helicopters are normally termed support helicopters. Helicopters suited to the role of find are normally termed reconnaissance helicopters. They are best used to conduct: reconnaissance; framework security; and armed reconnaissance, in some circumstances. Additionally, these helicopters can also be used to provide command support functions. During high-tempo operations, commanders can use these helicopters as a platform to move. This allows the commander to exercise command and control from the air. In some circumstances, helicopters can also perform airborne radio rebroadcast.

OF-3 Liam McDONNELL
IRL-A
Chief Internal Information

KFOR H

J3 Air is part of the J3 Division, its activities are mainly focused on 3 macro-areas providing overall support, assessment and supervision for: air assets management, airspace management, meteorological information collection and dissemination; in order to deliver direct support to KFOR, for all operational aspects involving Airspace usage.

J3 Air has management responsibility to harmonize the use of the assigned air units (helicopters), done through the adoption and release of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to help priority based missions with planning, coordination and execution of given tasks, also meaning handling of Airport and helipad operations through its sub units.

A great part of these duties is carried out by the Heliops office, responsible for collecting and processing of requests from headquarters and subordinate units, while directly tasking Air detachments. Heliops Office is also responsible to revise\update Local Area Procedures, Kosovo Helicopter Landing Site Directory, maps and other SOPs connected with usage of helicopters and to record and process flown hours, tasks, administration boundary line reports, aircrew certification, dissemination of helicopters flight schedule.

Helicopters are often used for ISR, logistic transport of personnel\material, and can provide security quick response to support police activities, to maintain SASE and FOM. Some Air units are also available to provide Medical Emergency operations (MEDEVAC) for which JOC J3 AIR Desk assists JMED execution.

Airspace management encompasses a wide variety of activities, those may go from the allocation of airspace for specific activities (tactical activity) to the creation/implementation of new air structures, procedures, regulations (strategic activity), and is directly responsible for the deconfliction of allocated airspace among the users, should they be military or civilian providing safety oversight and information (KFSM messaging system) to all airspace users in order

Q J3 AIR

to minimize\avoid interferences among all air activities. Segregated areas will be assigned for specific helo operations, or given for aerial activities requested by civilians (mainly to be used with drones – geo mapping, agricultural or construction porpoise etc…). With respect to civilian aerial activity J3 Air has also responsibility for assessment, approval and monitoring of civilian General Air Traffic (GAT) and commercial Remotely Piloted Aerial Systems (RPAS), operating in Kosovo lower Airspace. Another important aspect of Airspace management (operational level) relates to KFOR objective, being the owner of the airspace, aiming to normalize Kosovo airspace through the harmonization of its structure with the surrounding airspace following ICAO and Eurocontrol standards\ regulations. The process is complex and in light of the objective, J3 AIR liaise on behalf of KFOR with relevant Civil Aviation Authorities, Air Navigation Service Providers and other Airspace Stakeholder to help improve Kosovo airspace structure towards normalization.

The Combined Meteorology and Oceanography (METOC) Unit (CMU) is tasked to provide METOC services for all forces deployed in KFOR and their supporting activities in order to ensure that the impact of weather is properly considered at all levels of operational decisions making, to strengthen safety of forces given that environmental information is a significant force multiplayer. The CMU primary task consist of anticipating the severe weather conditions that can affect operations within AOR, through the dissemination of information to the staff and units. Beside weather warnings, CMU produces and distributes updated weather forecast, covering from the next 24 hours to a 5 days extended outlook for planning porpoise and impact within the whole AOR.

Lt Col Gianluca ESPOSITO
(OF-4) Italian Air Force
J3 Air Chief | HQ KFOR

HRV Aviation

Aircraft capability and employment history within KFOR

First time Croatian helicopters landed in Kosovo as part of KFOR was in September 2009 at Camp Bondsteel. For the next 10 years Camp Bondsteel was home for more than 30 helicopter detachments that took part in the KFOR mission. Two wooden barracks were home for the members of the aviation detachments from 2 to 6 months, depending on the time they were deployed. Helipads 5 and 7 were places from which helicopters were departing on everyday missions.

Flight crew of two Mi171/Mi8 helicopters were taking off every day to do missions as reconnaissance, VIP, transport and training flights with ground troops, or taking part in multinational multiship flight with other helicopter detachments that are deployed to Kosovo.

The Mi171/Mi8 helicopter is medium size transport helicopter that can transport up to 24 fully equipped soldiers, transport 4 tons of cargo in the transport cabin or 3 tons as external load. Flight endurance is up to 3 hours and flight celling is 6000 meters (20 000 ft), with capability to operate in all types of weather, operate in temperatures from minus 40 to 60 degrees Celsius and can withhold strong winds. As part of quick response forces these capabilities and training of the flight crews are insurance for safe and quick response to every task that are put in front of HRV aviation detachment.

In 2019 HRV aviation detachment moved from Camp Bondsteel to Pristina Airport, to be more precise to MIL APOD Slatina. Move of the detachment did not decreased detachments capability or morale of members. New housing, having our own building and opportunity to put our stamp on it, to show our creativity in making this a home away from home made deployment and time being apart from ours

n Detachment

families easier.

HRV aviation detachment took part in many exercises and operations as part of training and improving inoperability with other nations to insure the flight safety and capability to work with different platforms in multinational environment. Over the last 13 years HRV aviation detachment was part of the operations and exercises such as Operation Gold Rush (2015), Exercise Icarus (2016) and Exercises Silver Sabre (2018) and many others.

To this day members of HRV aviation detachment are proud of the fact that they are part of the KFOR forces, with more than 3000 flights and over 5000 flight hours spend in air and not one single accident, and being part of forces that bring safety and security to the people of Kosovo and members of KFOR.

Pilot, loadmaster and flight engineer experience and training

For the flight crew, either if you are pilot or flight engineer, deployment to Kosovo is not just a part of the job, but also an opportunity to experience working in new environment, the climate that is so much different than the one you are used to work in and to have the ability to see how other nations handle day to day tasks and challenges working in foreign country.

The crews that are deployed to Kosovo are ones with years of flying experience and training done prior to their deployment to handle all sorts of critical and hostile situations. But there is always the challenge to adapt yourself to the current situation.

From the pilots perspective, the opportunity to fly in the conditions that are so much different than the ones you are used to is a challenge that we are happy

to experience, to learn new things, fly in formations with other types of helicopters, to be able to fly and land on higher altitude then you ever did before, to see the difference of flying in winter conditions with a lot of snow that change the landscape and making visual reference point hard to find is something new and sometimes very challenging. Speaking English most of the time and getting used to doing things differently than back home is part of the experience. Working with people from all over the world and learning new things every day can be stressful especially with language barrier, but after initial few days, new work place and speaking English every day is the new normal. Everything you do in preparation for flying is in English, even though as pilots we are used to speak and use English from the first day of training, this can be stressful, especially working with people for the first time. When both sides are speaking English as their second language, there is always probability for mistakes to happen, but then you always do your homework and double check everything.

For the flight engineer the experience of work and flying here is a big change and challenge. Back home you are used to have the support of your unit. Here things are a little different, there is no squadron or a wing supporting you, but only few more friends whose jobs are as challenging as yours. Preparing the helicopter for flight, post flight checks are up to you and your other flight crew members and just few of maintenance crew. Helping ground crew with their work, but also preparing for flights, working with people that sometimes barely speak English is challenging. Doing weight and balance, safety briefs and making sure everyone understands everything is very important and big part of missions we do while training with ground troops. But at the end when helicopter is safe on ground back in base, with no critical situation, you know you did your job the best you could in given situation.

Aircraft maintenance

Aircraft maintenance is one of the most important parts in making sure that helicopter comes safe to the base every time it departs to mission.
Maintenance in area of operations is not much different than back in our home base, only with a lot less people to do it, but with good preparation and planning ahead of deployment, there isn't any problems.

Part of maintenance is preflight check, to make sure the helicopter is good to fly and that there are no problems or failures. Or if there are some small problems, to make sure that they are detected and fixed prior to flight.

Also very important part is after flight check, where maintenance crew has to check that there isn't any type of failures that had happened during flight, and making sure that every moving part is in perfect order, that all gauges are working properly.

Another important thing is to be able to repair any small failures or problems that are not critical which could occur during exploitation of the helicopter in area of operation.

Main task of aircraft maintenance is to make sure that helicopter is always good to go, and ready in any time of the day and night. To make sure of that, the type of helicopter that we use here has periodical checks that have to be done after certain amount of flight hours. During this checkups maintenance crew has to check every critical part and system on helicopter, making sure that those are working properly and that all parts are in perfect condition. They have to check every instrument and gauges, change oils and grease in the systems, making sure that the amount of oil in system is good and in the given parameters.

OF2 Monika Trzic
HRV AIR DET
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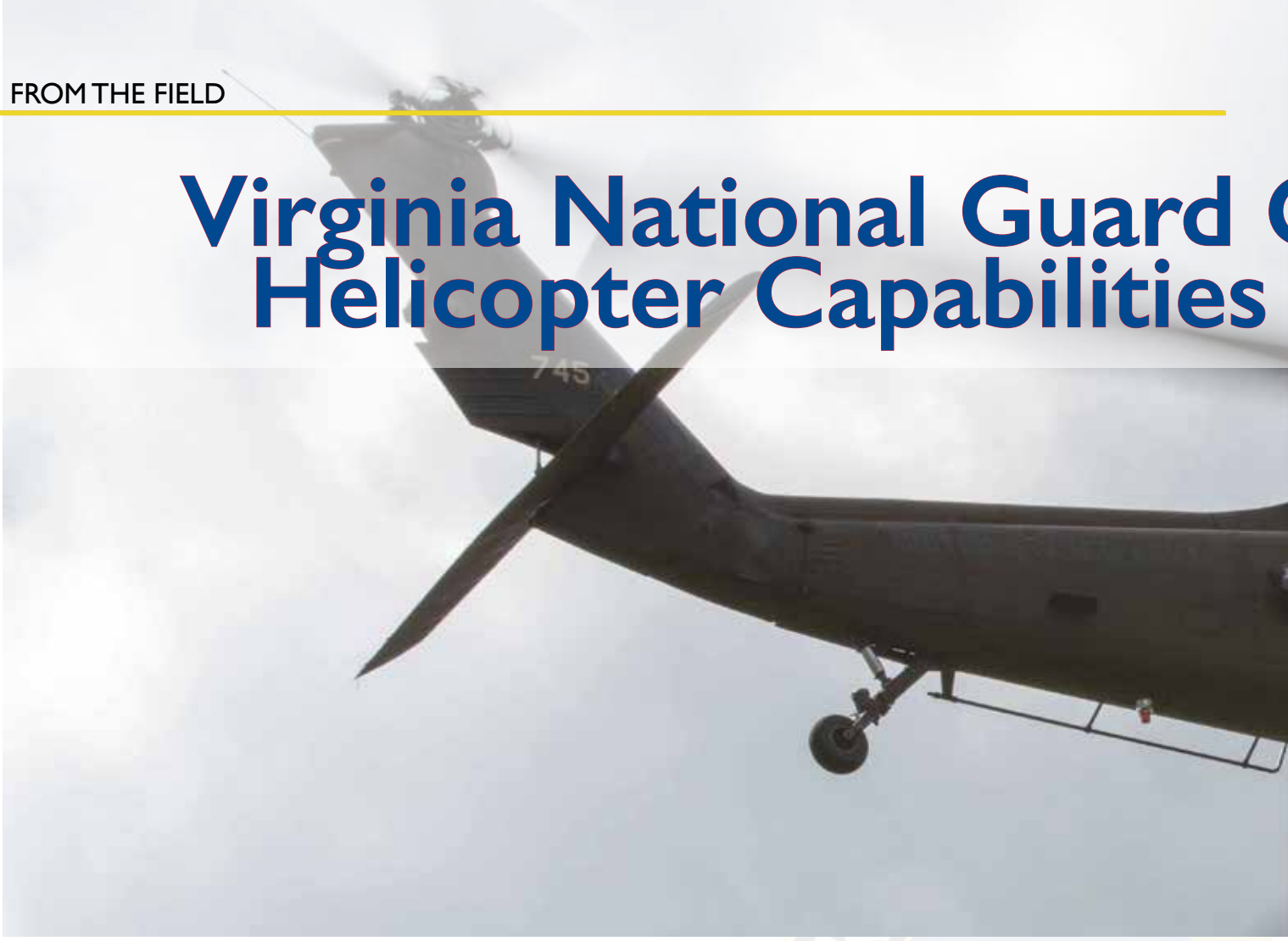
Virginia National Guard C Helicopter Capabilities



The Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter has been the U.S. Army's go-to aircraft since the beginning of NATO's mission in Kosovo in 1999. Over the years, the iconic Army utility helicopter has been used in numerous applications, including its use as a troop transport, assisting with extinguishing wildfires and rapidly transporting injured personnel via medical evacuation, or MEDEVAC.

Its use as a transportation platform has been the most commonly used capability of the Black Hawk in order to meet mission needs throughout the region. In addition to personnel, the helicopter also can move supplies throughout the area more rapidly than by ground transportation.

The Fast Rope Insertion/Extraction System, or FRIES, on the helicopter allows soldiers who have undergone air assault training to insert themselves into locations via fast rope when land or sea transportation is not feasible or timely enough for the mission.

"We provide aerial resupplies, conduct FRIES movement, move troops, conduct reconnaissance and anything (else) that allows the ground force commander to move troops in places that you can't get to on the ground, or maybe even get there in a timely manner that he couldn't otherwise get with a ground force," said Capt. Joseph Inglett, commander of Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment, 29th Combat Aviation Brigade, Virginia Army National Guard.

Another unique capability of the Black Hawk is its ability to combat wildfires. Wildfires have posed a significant threat in Kosovo, claiming dozens of lives over the past few decades. Kosovo Force aviation assets have used water buckets, also called "Bambi" buckets, to assist in extinguishing these fires.

"You have a bucket on the end of the aircraft that's hooked up by sling load, and you're able to put the bucket into water, and then the bucket submerges, filling it with water," Inglett said. "Then you lift off, you take it to where you need to, and there's an internal ejection button that you press (dropping) the water onto the fire to try to put it out or at least mitigate how big the fire can get and where it can spread to."

For medical uses, the U.S. Army has equipped a special version of the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter known as the Sikorsky HH-60M Black Hawk helicopter. The helicopter is fitted with bedpans for litters and includes special rigs for all the medical equipment needed. Additionally, the MEDEVAC version has a hoist for evacuating injured personnel in the event the helicopter is not able to land safely.

"This aircraft is capable of carrying four litter patients

Capitalise on Black Hawk During Kosovo Mission

as well as four ambulatory patients," said 1st Lt. Jonathan Murray, an operations officer with Detachment 2, Charlie Co., 1st Bn., 169th Aviation Regiment, VaARNG. "We have all kinds of equipment to provide in-route critical care, such as ventilators, drugs, fluids and we can carry blood as well."

"In addition to that, if we're unable to land somewhere because it's a tight landing zone, or if it's on the side of a mountain, we also have hoists capability to be able to pick up a patient, whether their litter or ambulatory, and get them to safety," he added.

Even though the initial version of the Black Hawk helicopter was first flown in 1974, continuous updates and revisions have made it the Army's go-to aircraft due to its versatility and capabilities. For nearly 40 years, the Black Hawk has proven itself to be an affordable and reliable helicopter and is expected to continue service for years to come.

Story by Sgt. Amouris Coss,
138th Public
Affairs Detachment

Maintenance Key to Black
to Accomplish M

U.S. Army helicopter repairers and maintainers play a critical role in keeping aviation assets flying through routine upkeep and conducting on-the-spot repairs, keeping helicopters safe and ready to fly in hundreds of Army missions.

At Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, home to Kosovo Force's Regional Command – East, the aircraft maintenance mission falls to the Soldiers of Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment, 29th Infantry Division, Virginia National Guard. The Delta Co. Soldiers maintain and repair the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters flown by their battalion in support of the NATO mission in Kosovo.

Black Hawk helicopter mechanics are specifically trained to remove, repair and install complex assemblies such as engines, rotors, gearboxes, transmissions, mechanical flight controls and other components, ensuring aircraft are always safe and operational.

"Aircraft maintenance is important because people's lives are in jeopardy and for the mission to be successful, the maintenance has to be on point, has to be done correctly, and has to be done to a certain standard," said Sgt. 1st Class Wayne J. Abrams, a maintenance platoon sergeant with Delta Co. To keep helicopters flying and flying safely, aircraft are put through regular maintenance based on the number of hours flown. Even if the helicopter is performing above standards, they still undergo routine checks and maintenance, the degree of which is determent by the cycle, or phase, they fall under based on the number of hours they have been operated.

"This is not like working on a normal vehicle," Abrams said. Once the aircraft goes into its reset phase, "pretty much everything gets inspected, everything gets redone, rebuilt and then is pushed back out. And you pretty much do the same thing over again until that lifespan is up for that aircraft."

Abrams said that with good maintenance and a good crew, an aircraft could last anywhere between 10,000 and 12,000 flight hours and even further in some cases. However, a dedicated, knowledgeable, and responsible maintenance crew is needed to ensure aircrews get the most out of their helicopters.

Hawk Helicopters' Ability
lission in Kosovo

"It's takes initiative, it takes integrity, it takes honesty, it takes direction, and it takes good leadership, to (maintain these aircraft)," he said.

"You have to be able to trust in your leaders; you have to be able to trust yourself to actually do the job properly."

And while aircraft maintainers are exceptionally knowledgeable in their field, having undergone 15 weeks of advanced individual training followed by in-depth on-the-job instruction, even the most seasoned maintainers are still learning about their helicopters.

"With these aircraft, you're never going to know everything," Abrams said.

"So, if you have a good leader, a good platoon sergeant, or a good section leader that's been doing maintenance for a while, you can learn from them. And they don't have all the answers either. But they will direct you in the right way."

Even a seasoned mechanic like Abrams is still learning more about the helicopter he's spent the last 20 years working on and maintaining.

"Every day, I still learn from my lower enlisted," he said. "They can go to the book and find something that I didn't even know about. I mean, with this aircraft, you will never know everything. It will take years and years to know everything."

Even after 20 years, Abrams still enjoys working on the Black Hawk helicopter. But, even more, he enjoys teaching the next generation of Soldiers who will carry on as Black Hawk helicopter repairers.

"I love to see how they're into it and how they love to work on it," he said. "I love to see them take pride in their work, and that's what does it for me."

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Warren W. Wright Jr., 138th Public Affairs Detachment

Virginia National Guard
Training to Becom

Officer Talks Motivation, e an Army Aviator

In August of 2005, then eight-year-old Jonathan Murray was on the playground of his Baton Rouge, Louisiana, elementary school when he heard the distinctive hum of a fleet of UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters for the first time.

He watched in amazement as the aircraft flew overhead and knew they were tasked with a vital mission: rescue and assist the people of New Orleans affected by Hurricane Katrina.

At that moment, Murray knew he wanted to become a pilot.

Now, as a U.S. Army 1st Lt. in the Virginia National Guard deployed to Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, Murray is the medical evacuations, or MEDEVAC, operations officer for Kosovo Force Regional Command- East and is living his dream of flying UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters.

"They were helping people," Murray said of his childhood experience, "I always wanted to help people...and I'm very fortunate to be able to do that now."

Murray, assigned to Detachment 2, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment, recently completed the demanding flight school at Fort Rucker, Alabama, before deploying to Kosovo.

"The Army flight training program is pretty intense," said Murray. "It's anywhere between 18 to 24 months of training, which includes common core, or basic aircraft knowledge."

In addition to basic aircraft knowledge, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence attendees learn tactical knowledge and the specific capabilities of the aircraft they will be flying.

Murray said the most challenging aspect of flight school for him was finding a work-life balance.

"You spend a lot of time studying, a lot of time flying, and at the end of the day, you still have a family that you need to be there for," he said. "Learning that balance and also being able to succeed was the most difficult thing."

Everything came full circle when Murray found out that he was selected to be a MEDEVAC pilot.

"It was definitely my preference, but I didn't know if I was going to be a MEDEVAC pilot...I just wanted to fly really bad," he said. "But, when I found out that MEDEVAC was an opportunity, it was something that I went for."

Now in Kosovo as the MEDEVAC operations officer, Murray is responsible for not only flying, but coordinating missions and training operations with NATO partners.

"We provide training on how to load and unload patients onto a medical aircraft and how to be safe while doing so," said Murray. "We have a lot of training missions that we go out and train with our NATO partners."

In order to maintain their flight stats, pilots must fly a specific number of flight hours, something Murray said is easy to do while deployed to Kosovo in large part because of the training they routinely conduct. He added the best way to continue developing as an aviator is to keep flying.

"Even if you study a system and know it inside and out, those things perish," he said. "You have to keep studying (and) maintaining proficiency, as well as paying attention to new guidance and new lessons learned that come out in order to stay the best at your craft."

Murray shared that he's thankful to be deployed with the crew that he's working with in Kosovo.

"I'm very fortunate to be deployed with this group of individuals," he said. "They're very professional and have taken time out of their days to mentor and guide me, and I couldn't ask to be deployed with a better group of people."

While the process to become a pilot is extensive and demanding, Murray said those thinking about pursuing a career as an aviator should "go for it."

Story by Sgt. Marla Ogden.,
138th Public Affairs Detachment

Four UH-60 Black Hawks fly overhead as Soldiers with the 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Vermont National Guard, salute during the Kosovo Force Regional Command- East transfer of authority ceremony at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, March 4, 2022.

Photo by Sgt. Marla Ogden

The Royal Lancers, GBR conducted a "Death and Glory" challenge held at Camp Novo Selo.
This challenge tested and demonstrate physical fitness and communication in teamwork. Each team was required to disassemble a cannon, move it over a set distance and reassemble it.

Photo by PAO

Regional Command-West Papa Company conduct Medevac exercise at Camp Villaggio Italia.

Photo by PAO

Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany, H.E. Ms. Annalena Baerbock visited KFOR Headquarters, discussing the overall security situation with COM KFOR.

Photo by: PAO

KFOR Headquarters celebrates International Women's Day. KFOR hosted the Centre for Promotion of Women's Rights.

Photo by PAO

Regional Command-West Quick Reation Force (QRF) STORM is a rapid reaction force, consisting of a platoon from Austria. The QRF platoon conducted CRC training, exercising a number of serials simulating various threats.

Photo by PAO

Austria Contrib

In order to give support for freedom for all people in Kosovo, the Austrian federal government decided in June 1999 to deploy an Austrian Armed Forces contingent (AUTCON/KFOR) to KOSO- VO within the NATO led force KFOR. Since autumn 1999, Austrian soldiers have been stationed in Camp Casablanca on the outskirts of Suva Reka as part of Task Force Dulje.
Austrian KFOR soldiers strike against arms smuggling July 27, 2001 - Austrian KFOR soldiers have twice struck against arms smuggling to Macedonia. In one of the two actions in the Dragas area in southern Kosovo, the smugglers even got into a firefight with the soldiers. The Austrians provided around 40 arms smugglers who had loaded nu- merous weapons and ammunition onto around 50 pack animals. Another 15 armed UCK fighters guarded the transport. They were also disarmed. Nobody got hurt.

Austrian army soldiers calm the situation

Kosovo, March 17, 2004 - On the evening of March 17, 2004, soldiers from the Austrian contingent of the international peacekeeping force moved out to protect the Serbian civilian population in the southern Kosovar town of Orahovac.
In the evening about 500 Kosovo Albanian demonstrators marched there and set a house on fire. In the small town of Novake, Austrian KFOR soldiers brought 17 Serbs to safety in a school buil- ding. In the late evening around 200 Austrian soldiers were still working in the field. As night fell, the situation in the area where the Austrian KFOR soldiers were deployed calmed down.
Lieutenant Colonel Anton Willmann, Task Force commander of the Austrian KFOR soldiers, an- nounced on March 17 that the curfew had been in place since 7:00 p.m. „The Austrians are excel- lently equipped and have been perfectly prepared for their mission in Kosovo," said Willmann. „KFOR has the situation under control again."

Declaration of Independence - law and order by Austrian soldiers

February 19, 2008 - The previously southern Serbian province of Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia shortly before 4 p.m. on 18th February. The Austrian Armed Forces contingent, under the overall responsibility of Colonel Jürgen Wörgötter, was mainly deployed in two areas as part of its KFOR peacekeeping mission: in the south of Kosovo and near Pristina, the capital of Kosovo.

outionto KFOR

To the relief of all those responsible, the intensive preparation and the very good cooperation with the Kosovo police and the political decision-makers made a calm and orderly celebration of independence possible.

Camp Casablanca: The end of an era

March 17, 2012 - An era came to an end in Camp Casablanca on Saturday: The last Austrian sol- diers stationed in the camp on the outskirts of Suva Reka in southern Kosovo marched out of the camp after the flag parade of the 25th Austrian KFOR contingent.

12 years home for soldiers

At the end of his speech, Lieutenant Colonel Dieter Schadenböck said goodbye specifically to the infantry company led by Major Jürgen Mitter: „The last Austrian task forces are leaving Camp Casablanca today after twelve years." Currently the Austrian soldiers are stationed in the camps Film City, Novo Selo and Villagio Italia.

Austria has provided the DCOM-KFOR six times so far

Austria has been a member of the NATO Partnership for Peace since 1995. The Partnership for Peace (PfP) is a program of practical bilateral cooperation between individual Euro-Atlantic part- ners and NATO. For the Austrian Armed Forces, this partnership for peace has enabled full partici- pation in the NATO-led peacekeeping mission KFOR in Kosovo since 1999.

From October 10, 2020 to November 17, 2021, Brigadier Günter Schöpf held the second highest leadership position in the KFOR mission. As part of an international ceremony in the „Film City" camp in Pristina, he said goodbye in the course of handing over command in the presence of high-ranking guests of honor.

Recognition of the achievements of Austrian soldiers

Since the start of the KFOR mission, the Austrian Armed Forces have met for the first time in 2011 with Lieutenant General Johann Luif, and subsequently with Major General Anton Wessely (2013), Brigadiers Anton Waldner (2014), Christian Riener (2016), Reinhard Ruckenstuhl (2018) and Gün- ter Schöpf has held the position of Deputy KFOR Commander (DCOM KFOR) for the sixth time. This underscores the international recognition of Austria's contribution as a non-NATO member country to peacekeeping in this newest Western Balkan country. The army contingent in Kosovo is numerically the highest of all Austrian foreign missions. Currently the 45th Austrian Contingent is engaged in the service of Peace within NATO-led peacekeeping mission KFOR.

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Challenges in an international mi

KFOR has undergone a continuous transformation over the past 20 years. Both in terms of numbers and structue and organizational composition, it has changed significantly due to the participating nations' contribution and partly due to KFOR's changing responsibilities and priorities. Furthermore, the role of the current lead nation has significant responsibility and impact, as it defines the main tasks of the given mandate and sets the goals to be achieved based on the guidelines of the superiors.

The successful realization of the goals and the achievement of the results is not a simple and easy-to-implement process. Still, internal and external battles and struggles often achieve the performance.

In this paper, I want to share the difficulties of the organization and the ways and opportunities to overcome the constraints with the staff, which will help overcome the obstacles and accomplish the task.

I want to highlight the national and cultural composition of KFOR. Commanders need to be aware of the cultural affiliation, history, and design of the 28 participating countries and their military multitudes to find common ground in their work. You also need to know the capabilities of the forces and assets offered by that country, as this will allow you to assess the actual ability and power of the organization. At the same time, we must not forget the participating countries' economic, political, and socio-cultural relations and interests.

Based on this knowledge, you can form your idea of the goals to be achieved, which is also influenced by many other external factors.

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Given that an international organization such as KFOR is essentially an alliance of states, a careless conclusion could fall victim to the elevation of

ilitary organization such as KFOR

international organizations to the level of a super-entity.

KFOR has a role in shaping the international agenda, mediating political bargaining, locating political initiatives, and catalyzing coalition formation.

Characteristics of KFOR as an international organization: they are in constant cooperation with the participating states. Their association is based on international law and international treaties for the successful implementation of teamwork.

Its effectiveness is based on the international relationship cooperation of the participating countries, regardless of their national or political interests.

To achieve efficiency and effectiveness, we must work together to focus on the tasks and add the maximum to achieve the goals. KFOR XXVI.'s motto is DUTY, RELIABILITY, COMMITMENT, which symbolizes this harmony and unity.

We can and must solve tasks; this is not one: "one-man show," 'WE ARE THE TEAM!'

One of the best examples of this was the unprecedented collaboration and contribution when we had to say goodbye to a deceased colleague. There was no need for an order, as many volunteers took on the task. There was no need for practice, as everyone knew their job after a short guideline. There was no question of the identity of the correspondent of the incident or the commander. Everyone worked together as a team despite the mental tension and sadness for our lost comrade. This event shows the strength of a team, an organization, regardless of the nature of the task. I am sure this bond would carry out the mission of collecting humanitarian donations, helping the local population, training together, or carrying out an active military task with the same dedication, determination, and cooperation.

At the same time, there are plenty of other responsibilities for soldiers serving in KFOR.

As an external challenge, I would like to highlight the following:

Defending against evolving security threats
Complex environments and operations
Demanding compliance mandates

It is perhaps no coincidence that KFOR has been active in this field for more than 20 years. Thanks to the successful cooperation of nations, it can be present in this country as an organization valued by locals and other international organizations.

Challenges within the organization:

Alcohol Use and Abuse
Diversity and Inclusiveness
Cultural differences
Historical background, traditions
Environmental Responsibilities vs. Military Ops
Fit to Fight Program and Wellness

The individual's problems compound these difficulties:

The top issues related to this are time away from family, relocation stress, new mission environment, language skills, etc.

Fortunately, the MWA organization, which works very well in KFOR, helps relieve any accumulated stress by organizing various excursion programs and events (sports, cultural), well-equipped sports complexes, and other available equipment.

There are also camp priests and bishops serving in KFOR who provide spiritual help to those in need.

The bars and restaurants are a place to relax and get to know each other.

Nevertheless, the organization's strength lies in individuals' confidence (mental, physical, professional) in contributing to and committing to work and in performing the task at a high level. I respectfully ask the entire staff to continue to do their job with this dedicated attitude, dedication to selfless service, and support the commander. This partnership shows how strong KFOR is, where it is good to serve, and good to work in a real TEAM!

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Photo of the Month

Plaons of Kosovo