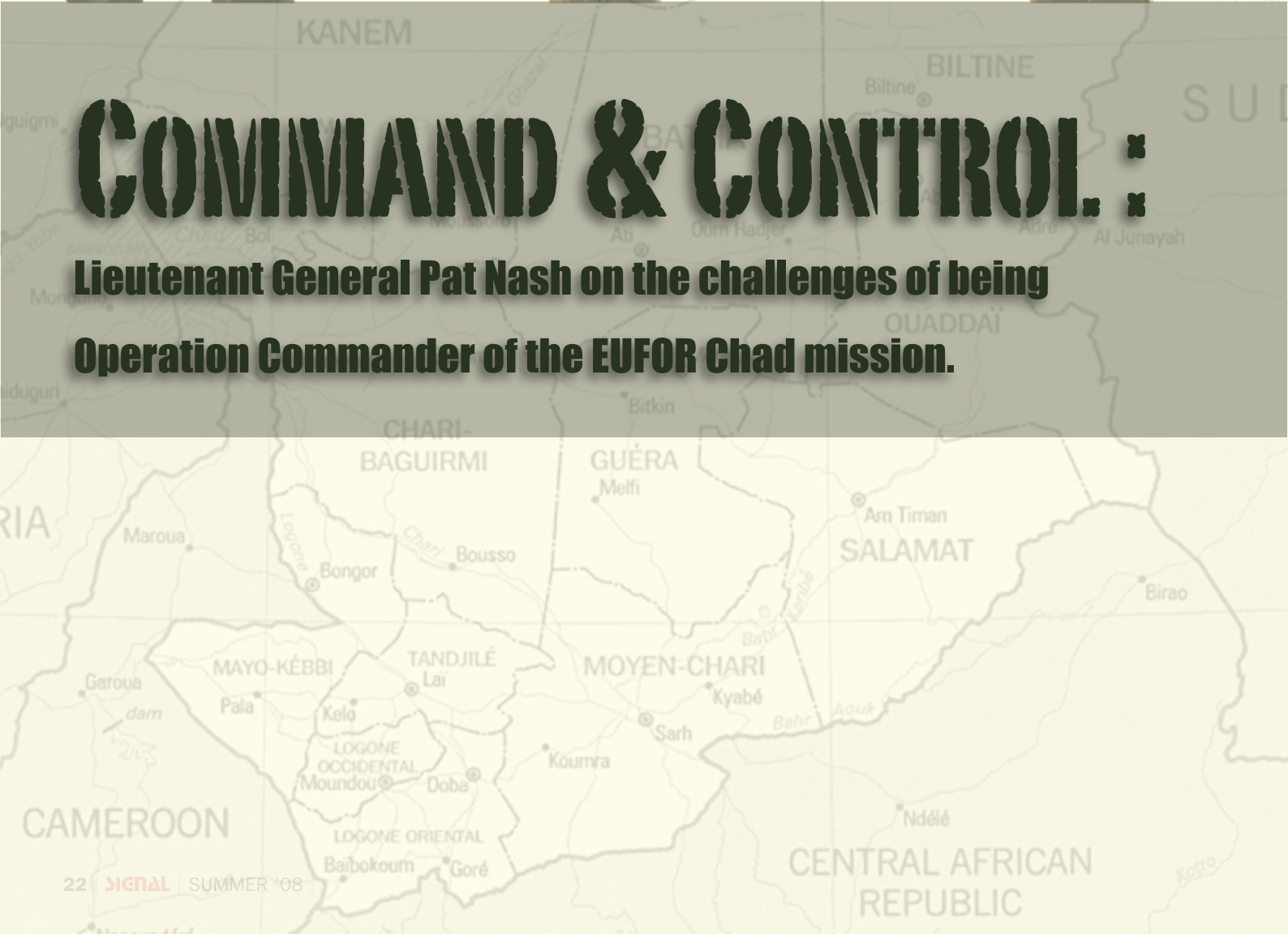




COMMAND & CONTROL :

**Lieutenant General Pat Nash on the challenges of being
Operation Commander of the EUFOR Chad mission.**



Last October, Lieutenant General Pat Nash was appointed the Operation Commander of the high profile EU military mission to Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR). Since then, he has translated a political direction by the Council of the European Union into an effective operation in an area of Africa that presents significant challenges.

Commandant Michael Geraghty discusses some of these challenges with General Nash.

EUFOR Chad/CAR achieved Initial Operating Capability [IOC] on 15th March 2008; what is the current operational situation?

Today EUFOR is approaching maximum operational effectiveness, with over 80% of its assigned manoeuvre elements and air assets fully operational. In Multinational Battalion Centre (MNB-C) and South (MNB-S) we have two main manoeuvre elements and, in addition, we have deployed significant rotary assets and fixed wing assets providing medevac, close air support and reconnaissance capabilities. This achievement has been completed within the last five months.

We have 3077 personnel deployed in theatre from 17 nations and in the next two months we will receive from Romania and third states, namely Russia, Albania, Croatia and possibly Ukraine, additional capabilities to deploy in theatre. These forces will join the Irish-Dutch forces in MNB-S, the French-Slovenian forces in MNB-C and the Polish forces in MNB-N who are currently deploying. In addition, Sweden and Finland provide a very valuable company that conducts force protection, convoy escorts and supply elements of the Quick Reaction Force (QRF). France and Italy provide three Role 2 medical facilities. France as 'lead logistic nation' has also deployed a Combat Service Support Battalion. France, Portugal, Greece, Spain and Holland have provided tactical air fixed wing transport. When we reach Full Operational Capability [FOC] with assigned assets we expect to have 3,800 personnel in theatre.

Here in Paris in my own HQ there are 22 nations represented in the staff where we have just over 140 people in all. Significantly we have had to build the entire infrastructure required to receive all elements of the Force and all the materials required had also to be brought into theatre. In the context of 'Host Nation' support, Chad provided us with two hard surfaced airports, in N'djamena and Abeche which had inadequate infrastructure to meet our requirements and so we have had to conduct extensive work at both locations to meet our needs, and which will have long-term beneficial impact for the country.

There were no 'Host Nation' facilities suitable for locating the Force Headquarters [FHQ] and, consequently, for the early days of the mission we were assisted by French Epervier¹ forces, who provided real life support to the Force. We have expended close to €50 million in this phase of infrastructure development.

You must remember that the theatre is 4300km from Europe and our OHQ in Paris. All materials and construction equipment has been brought into theatre to enable this work to be completed. Camps have been constructed by the multinational battalions at considerable cost, due mainly to freight charges, while we provided the horizontal works to facilitate their deployment.

“The process of translating political strategy through to military strategic/military operational concerns and through to the force on the ground involves identifying the military conditions or end state that constitutes the strategic objectives.”

Much of your initial work was at the political strategic level in Brussels. Reflecting over the last 9 months, how did you translate the political decision by the Council of the European Union [the Council Joint Action 2007/677/CFSP of 15 October 2007] into a realistic, appropriate, scheduled and costed plan?

This was quite an undertaking actually. My task is to translate diplomatic policy into military action; therefore the challenge I face is to give purpose, direction and motivation to a 3,800 strong multinational force that is employed in a challenging operational environment, in a region that is in the midst of a security and humanitarian crisis. In

the increased complexity of modern day peacekeeping this is a very challenging task for all concerned.

At the strategic level I take the overarching political objectives for the mission and translate them into military tasks that can be activated by the forces deployed into theatre. It is my job to raise the forces, through force generation conferences, necessary to achieve the job. It is also my task to agree the financing for the mission with the Member States of the EU through the mechanism of the special committee of ATHENA. To put all of the above in place is a multifaceted and ongoing challenge.

The process of translating political strategy through to military strategic/military operational concerns and through to the force on the ground involves identifying the military conditions or end state that constitutes the strategic objectives. The process involves deciding upon the operational objectives that must be achieved to reach the desired end state, while ordering a sequence of actions that leads to the fulfilment of the operational objectives and finally applying the necessary military resources to sustain the desired sequence of actions. In the Command and Staff School in the Curragh they are teaching this process which is "Operational Art". Operational Art is "The skilful employment of military forces to attain strategic goals through the design, organisation, sequencing and direction of campaigns and major operations." Here in this operation we are applying this art.

Left: Lt Gen Nash (left) arriving at a EU Defence meeting in Slovenia with Lt Col Mick Meehan (centre).

For a variety of complex reasons, including the geographical location of the mission area, a rudimentary infrastructure and an extreme climate, this mission has presented enormous logistical challenges, not only to the planners at the OHQ in Paris, but also to the participating Member States who have committed troops to EUFOR TCHAD/CAR; what has transpired specifically with regard to the logistics of the mission over the last 5 months has been an unprecedented success story. What was involved in this success?

This is a demanding operation by any standard, where thousands of tonnes of military equipment, fuel and water are being shipped to the east of Chad, by ship from Europe, with heavy-lift aircraft and by convoy overland via the Cameroon port of Douala. Camps are being built from scratch in the middle of the desert to house 3,800 European troops from several Member States, and we are now planning for about 1,400 United Nations MINURCAT personnel as well. All this is happening in a landlocked country with a chronic water shortage, where temperatures often reach well over 40 degrees Celsius. The east of Chad is at the heart of an international humanitarian crisis zone, with nearly 500,000 displaced people trying to escape the fighting, killings and banditry in Darfur which spill over into eastern Chad. It is against this backdrop that our challenges emerge.

This area of operations in the heart of Africa is as remote, vast and inhospitable as you will encounter. It was obvious from our initial reconnaissance and subsequent visits that the nature of the theatre is unforgiving. You don't speak of journey times in terms of hours, but, rather, in terms of days, or in terms of flying hours. For example, our theatre of operations is based approximately 2,000 km from the nearest seaport of disembarkation in Douala in Cameroon, or 4,500 km from Brussels. The country experiences extreme climatic conditions and the inevitable arrival of the rainy season this month dictates that infrastructure developments and facilities had to be established within a critically short timeframe.

The putting in place of infrastructure is essential. EUFOR troops must be provided for with a minimum level of camp facilities, in order to carry out their mission. Getting a Force was a problem; putting it on the ground was the next. The build-up of our

Camp Ciara under construction.



“This area of operations in the heart of Africa is as remote, vast and inhospitable as you will encounter. It was obvious from our initial reconnaissance and subsequent visits that the nature of the theatre is unforgiving. You don't speak of journey times in terms of hours, but, rather, in terms of days, or in terms of flying hours.”

sustainment capability in advance of the rainy season is a major logistical challenge; and the long lines of communication from Europe with limited airport capacity in Chad means we need considerable sea lift and port capabilities. The environment is very challenging in that the heat, wet and rough terrain and very poor infrastructure place heavy demands on personnel, equipment and logistics. The security operational situation also poses difficulties. There is a blurring of the violence that is inspired by political motivation and bandit activities – it's a mosaic of associations that is constantly shifting.

The financial costs of launching such an operation are immense and troop-contributing nations have played a very significant role in the success of the mission to date. On the 28th of January this year, the date of the decision to launch the operation, Ireland and Austria had Initial Entry Forces (IEF) with equipment literally boarded on Antonov 124 aircraft when they received the message from us that the Chadian capital N'djamena was under attack from Chadian rebel groups, which caused the EUFOR deployment to be delayed for a two-week period, with subsequent knock-on to costs and schedules. We still declared Initial Operational Capability (IOC) on the 15th of March and had 450 special operations forces in theatre, which also included a Battalion sized unit with

a French company in Birao in the Central African Republic (CAR), a French company in Forchana and a Swedish-Finnish company in Abéché and N'djamena as Initial Entry Forces (IEFs) which was



General Nash in discussion with Austrian Defence Minister, Norbert Darabos at the EU Defence meeting in Slovenia.



effected using both military and civilian strategic air transport. We had three Role 2 hospitals fully operational, two French and one Italian, and we also deployed both fixed wing and rotary assets, including reconnaissance and close air support. After successfully reaching IOC on the 15th of March, the major task commenced with the deployment of the main manoeuvre elements and the building of infrastructure. The deployment of the main assets was enacted using a combination of strategic air and sea transport. Eight ships brought the main construction and operational assets through the port in Douala in the Cameroon, which is 2,000km from the FHQ, and a further 150 to 400km from the multinational battalion locations. To date, using rail, road and air, we have brought over 2000 containers into theatre and at the same time over 400 strategic flights have brought personnel and emergency equipment into the Chadian airports in N'djamena and Abéché. We have been fortunate with the support we received from the troop-contributing nations during this critical period for infrastructural development prior to the arrival of the wet season. In the near future, we will have deployed three multinational battalions in newly constructed camps, a rear and forward HQs in two new bases, housing in excess of 2300 personnel and significant infrastructure work on the airport parking facilities in N'djamena and Abéché. We will also have deployed rotary assets from France, Russia, and Poland, and fixed wing assets from France, Spain, Greece and, hopefully, Ukraine - I say hopefully because we have not yet finalised the details of the commitment from Ukraine.

This success was based on effective planning, close coordination between the OHQ, the FHQ and the troop-contributing nations, and their willingness to provide the critical enablers required to allow the necessary capabilities be deployed. Our challenge now is to

sustain the logistical flow through our line of communication until the end of our mandate.

The early deployment of special elite forces, including the Army Ranger Wing, into the mission area in advance of the IOC was immensely important. What was the purpose of this tactic?

The early insertion of initial entry forces into theatre had a number of objectives at a number of levels. Firstly, their independent specialisation allowed them to operate without large logistical back-up and infrastructural support. They were an early footprint on the ground and significantly represented the multinational make-up of the Force, with elements drawn from five Member States, namely Ireland, France, Belgium, Austria and Sweden. Their capacity to effect special reconnaissance, overt observation and patrolling, route recce and establish contact with other elements in theatre were impressively executed and hugely benefited the main Force's later deployment. The operation was sorry to see the bulk of them depart, but they did so having made an immense contribution to the success of this operation to date.

That they themselves benefited from their experiences I have no doubt. Unfortunately,

it was not without cost. Sergeant Gilles Polin of the French Parachute Regiment lost his life in early March – a tragic loss of a fine soldier. Their success can be measured through the establishment of the EUFOR presence in Chad, the provision of visibility and the projection of the multinational nature of the force, and they were the medium through which I was able to get the Information Operation launched.

Would you agree that the work of the various advance parties in the EUFOR mission, particularly from the Irish Defence Forces, who built the camps and improved the infrastructure in preparation of the arrival of the main troops, was instrumental in the initial success of the mission?

The deployment of the advance parties was critical in creating the environment that enabled the deployment of the main manoeuvre units at a later date. Their ability to deploy with the key equipment to build up the necessary infrastructure to receive the main element enabled full operational effectiveness of the main body to be achieved within a shorter timeframe, as their focus is not on building the camp but, rather, on gaining full operational capability.

The initial entry Special Operation Forces [IE SOF] also played a very significant part in this phase of the operation. In all areas of the Area of Operation they sustained themselves for long durations and, if required, were capable of responding with effective capabilities to any threat encountered. They also effectively demonstrated the multinational aspect of the force in our area, which was very important. You may be aware that since 1969 France has a bi-lateral arrangement with Chad, whereby they have deployed French forces on a permanent basis in that country, known as Operation Epervier. The Special Operation Force, while including French, also included Irish, Swedish, Belgian and Austrian soldiers, so the Chadian population could clearly see that this force was very different, with new faces from new countries, new emblems and with a new mandate. These initial forces met with the local leaders in towns and villages and liaised with the international organisations and NGO's already working in the theatre. They also conducted significant reconnaissance in the areas where we were deploying the initial contractors for the development of the infrastructure. In

the case of the Irish Special Operation Forces, they facilitated the deployment of the Irish Advance Party and the main body of the Irish Battalion by providing key situational awareness of the theatre where they were to deploy and, in addition, they provided valuable force protection for the sensitive convoys during the deployment phase of the Battalion. They introduced the new military commanders to the key players in their areas, whether Chadian, international organisations, or NGOs. As a result, leaders of the local population had already been used to the Irish forces in their area.

The Advance Party and the Special Operation Forces can rightly be proud of the role they played. The overall presence of the initial entry force was critical in enabling me to declare Initial Operational Capability in March.

Prior to the deployment in Chad, there was coverage in the media of rebel factions, intent on overthrowing President Deby, who announced that if EUFOR is not impartial they would regard them as belligerent. In Jan 08 there was the attack on the capital N'Djamena by these same rebels factions. However, the rebel factions appear to have been relatively inactive since then?

Well, the events of the weekend of the 13th of June would not uphold this premise, as the rebels again advanced from Sudan into Chad and carried out limited attacks on Chadian Forces in the Goz Beida, Bilitine and Am Zoer districts before being comprehensively defeated by Chadian forces.

The first thing to say is that there was an expectation on our part that this would happen. The history of rebel activity, both inside Chad and inside Sudan, has been relatively continuous since 2003 and the main objective of the opposing rebel groupings is to bring about a transition of power in both Chad and Sudan.

Our mandate precludes us from getting involved in the internal affairs of Chad. The short presence of EUFOR does not deter the current rebel activity which has been ongoing since 2003. In January and February, and again in June, the rebels clearly indicated to EUFOR that they will not interfere with EUFOR, as their conflict is with President Deby and the Chadian Forces. The main threats that we will be exposed to in the short term are bandits, smugglers, and the Janjaweed and Toro Boros militias. These, basically, belong to no formal faction and carry out attacks for their own personal gain and this is a serious problem for us.

“You may be aware that since 1969 France has a bi-lateral arrangement with Chad, whereby they have deployed French forces on a permanent basis in that country, known as Operation Epervier. The Special Operation Force, while including French, also included Irish, Swedish, Belgian and Austrian soldiers, so the Chadian population could clearly see that this force was very different, with new faces from new countries, new emblems and with a new mandate.”

I would say that there is no doubt that the presence of EUFOR has already created a significant deterrence. We have had 211 encounters to date with armed bandits and smugglers and in all cases they have moved away from the area. Mid-June's incident in Goz Beida saw the Irish and Dutch troops react calmly and in control of a complex situation, because they had clarity concerning their mandate. EUFOR's role in Chad is challenging and this early Irish led action has seen it carried out in an impartial way.

I am satisfied that the Force has the necessary capabilities to provide security for the refugees and IDP camps and I believe that this situation will improve with the deployment of MINURCAT, because we are the main Force for the safe and secure environment, but the specifics of bandits and smugglers and such like is a gendarme situation and very much within the United Nations ambit.

There are some worrying factors that are out of your control which may affect the operation, such as: the deteriorating political relations between Sudan and Chad, the ongoing delays with the deployment of the UN force in the Darfur region of Sudan, UNAMID, and the continuing internal power struggle in Chad between various anti-Deby rebels and the Chadian government. How do you envisage these issues evolving over the next nine months?

In any Operation there are invariably external factors that need to be taken into account and, in this context, EUFOR Chad/CAR is no exception. Relations between Sudan and Chad is one such factor and it is explicitly recognised in UN Security Council resolution 1778 that an improvement of relations between Sudan and Chad, together with a proper settlement of the Darfur issue, will contribute to long-term peace and stability in the region. Work is ongoing at a political level in this regard; for example, further follow-up meetings are taking place on the implementation of the Dakar Agreement of 13 March last, whose objective is to put a definitive end to disputes between Chad and Sudan and restore peace and security in the

region. Indeed, I have an observer at the latest meeting that is ongoing in Dakrar at the moment.

EUFOR's task is to complement such efforts at the political level by being part of the multidimensional presence, mandated by the UN, to help create the safe and secure environment necessary to facilitate the work of international organisations and NGOs with refugees and internally displaced persons and to facilitate the work of MINURCAT, the UN policing mission. The challenge for EUFOR is to ensure we fulfil our mandate despite the difficulties that may arise from external factors such as rebel activity. I am confident that we have the necessary forces and equipment in place to do so. You must remember we are just one aspect of a multifaceted approach to the problem.

The EU mission in Chad/CAR was specified in the Council Joint Action decision to last for 12 months from the date of the IOC [to 15 March 2009 (14Mar 09). Bearing in mind that the number of soldiers serving on UN peace missions globally has grown from 16,000 in 1999 to over 60,000 today, it would appear that the UN will have great difficulty in raising and deploying an appropriate peacekeeping force to take over from EUFOR, while the EU will be reluctant to stay. What exit strategy is envisaged?



Austrian troops in Chad with EUFOR mission.

Our Operation is indeed authorised for a 12-month period from IOC and this is set out clearly in UN Security Council Resolution 1778, which also sets out the terms for the mid-mandate review which will culminate in a report of the UN Secretary General to the Security Council in September 2008 on the arrangements for following up on EUFOR. We at the OHQ are currently preparing our input to the review process, together with our colleagues on the ground. The final decision on follow-on arrangements will, of course, be taken at political level, and my priority is to maximise EUFOR's contribution until the end of our mandate to ensure that, for whatever follow-on arrangements are agreed, the necessary conditions, including a safe and secure environment, are in place.

Your selection as the EUFOR Operation Commander has been deemed as a great accolade and honour for both the Defence Forces and Ireland. Are you enjoying this onerous appointment?

In truth it's been at times both fascinating and frustrating, overall though a huge challenge and an immense honour. Overcoming difficulties in becoming operational while trying to deploy has meant no two days have been the same. CHAD/CAR is a unique place where the confluences of different influences converge; by this I mean Arab and African, Muslim and Christian, nomadic and settled. Translating previous overseas experiences to the strategic level, particularly my experience as Battalion Commander in South Lebanon and EU Mission in the Balkans, has been of significant assistance, and I am fortunate to have an experienced, educated and hard-working staff.

The challenge I face is to give purpose, direction and motivation to a multinational force seeking to be deployed into a remote inhospitable environment, in very poor countries with both humanitarian crisis and a security dimension. It is a broad, deep and multifaceted challenge.

Getting a force was a problem, putting it on the ground was the next. For now the ongoing development of that deployment, including the creation and improvement of infrastructure, is concentrating our minds, as is the build-up of our sustainment capability in advance of the rainy season. Having served overseas I've learned that multinational forces have the ability to combine humanitarian and military roles



An Irish soldier with a local child in Chad. General Nash has described the challenge there as 'broad, deep and multifaceted.'

without losing focus, while still operating with compassion and competence. Undoubtedly, however, the big difference for me is to apply all this at the strategic military level while remaining conscious of parallel demands at the strategic political level.

I am optimistic and I believe I have good reason to be. The planning has gone well and, with resolve and leadership the Force has made a significant impact on the ground in Chad/CAR. It will continue to increase gradually and incrementally, providing the necessary safe and secure environment whereby the humanitarian improvements can begin to take effect for the people who need it most. We are three months into operational capability and I am hopeful and optimistic on the future.

This mission is being hailed at the political level in Brussels as a great success story for the EU and it the outward manifestation of the EU's ESDP. As a military commander has it been very important to have this political support?



Of course – for example, I report to the ambassadors representing the 27 Member States of the European Union. My point of contact is the chairman of the European Union Military Committee [EUMC], but I have, in effect, a board of 27 and their continued support is very important. I had a very fruitful meeting recently at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and I was able to go there as the Operational Commander of the EU Force and brief them on our progress and discussions on the MINURCAT deployment. I will visit the Area of Operations (AOO) later this week and meet with the Chadian Prime Minister, Mr Abass, the UN SGSR Mr Angelo and the head of the Chadian Liaison Office to EUFOR (CONIFIT) Ambassador Mochtor Moussa. On the 8th July I will report to the EU Military Committee on the developments in theatre. The support and guidance which I receive from the EUMC and PSC is critical in ensuring the broader EU political objectives are being achieved.

Footnote:

1. Operation Epervier is the title for the French military presence in Chad.

**Lieutenant General Patrick (Pat) Nash
Operation Commander EUFOR CHAD/CAR**

A graduate of the Cadet School, Lieutenant General Pat Nash was commissioned into the Cavalry Corps in Sept 1966. From commissioning up until 1994 he spent most of his service in the Southern Command, holding both command and staff appointments in a number of Cavalry and Infantry Units. On promotion to Colonel in June 2000 he was appointed Director of Defence Forces Administration, responsible for the planning and implantation of Defence Forces Personnel Administration programmes, Defence Forces Financial planning and Defence Forces Logistics planning.

He was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General in Jan 2002 and appointed to the position of General Officer Commanding, 1st Southern Brigade. On 03 December 2005 he was promoted to Major General and took up the appointment as Deputy Chief of Staff Operations. In October 2007 he was appointed Operational Commander EUFOR Chad & CAR and promoted to Lieutenant General.

Lieutenant General Nash has a wide range of overseas experiences, primarily with United Nations Forces, but also with the European Union Monitoring Mission in the Western Balkans. He has served as a Troop Commander in United Nations Force in Cyprus in 1967. He was a Company Commander with the 54 Irish Infantry Battalion, United Nations Interim Force (UNIFIL) in Lebanon in 1983 and Operations Officer with the 71 Irish Infantry Battalion UNIFIL in 1992. In 1996 he served as a Staff Officer at the Headquarters of the European Union Monitoring Mission in the Western Balkans. In 1999 he commanded the 85 Irish Infantry Battalion in UNIFIL (Lebanon).

Born in Ahane, Co. Limerick, Lieutenant General Nash received his secondary education at CBS Limerick. He is a graduate of the Irish Defence Forces Command and Staff School and has completed a United Nations Senior Management Course in Stockholm and New York. He lives in Cork City with his wife Deirdre. They have three sons, Alan and Gary (twins) and Kieran.