

# *Operational Effectiveness*

Commandant Michael Geraghty talks to Colonel Con McNamara, Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff Operations [DACOS, CJ3], and Lieutenant Colonel Mick Meehan, the Military Assistant to the Operation Commander, Lt Gen Nash, about their roles at Operational Headquarters (OHQ) for the Chad mission in Paris.

The structure used by the EU for crisis management operations, such as the Chad/CAR mission, requires an Operation Headquarters (OHQs). There are five EU OHQs offered to the EU for the command and control of EU Crisis Management Operations; situated at Mont Valerien in Paris, Rome, Potsdam in Germany, Larissa in Greece and Northwood in the UK, to provide the EU with the premises and infrastructure to be able to conduct an operation at the strategic level in all fields of command and control with a multinational staff.

## **Can you explain the concept of the OHQ?**

The OHQ is a static, out of theatre military strategic headquarters for the Operation Commander, for the purpose of building up, launching, sustaining and recovering an EU led force. At present, the EU has three options to plan and conduct crisis management operations: firstly, it can use one of the five HQs of the EU framework operations, namely, Paris, Rome, Potsdam, Larissa in Greece, or Northwood in the UK; secondly, it can use the new Operations Centre in Brussels, or thirdly, it can use the EU-NATO command and control structures at Allied Command Operations(ACO) at Mons in Belgium.

The EU has no permanent headquarters structure at the operational/military strategic level, so when the EU Council decided to take part in multidimensional operations in Eastern Chad and the

north east of the Central African Republic by providing the military force component, it had to agree to a 'framework nation' for the Operational HQ – The French offer was chosen so Paris became the OHQ for the EU military operation EUFOR Chad/CAR.

The OHQ is home to the Operation Commander, in our case Lt Gen Pat Nash, who is the strategic military commander nominated by the EU Council to conduct this operation, and he is authorised to exercise operational command over all air, sea and land forces allocated by EU Member States. He has an EU multinational military and civilian staff of in excess of 140 to assist him in this task. EUFOR Chad/CAR is an EU autonomous operation without recourse to NATO assets.

## **The Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) consists of a multinational combined and multi-service (joint) task force. What does this concept entail?**

A CJTF is a multinational (combined) and multi-service (joint) task force, task-organised and formed for the full range of military missions requiring multinational and multi-service command and control by a CJTF Headquarters. The EU OHQ and FHQ reflect the CJTF concept.

The need which the concept was created to meet arose from the changing security situation in Europe and the emergence of smaller, but diverse and unpredictable, risks to peace and stability. In particular, it was agreed that future security arrangements would call for easily deployable, multinational, multi-service military formations tailored to specific kinds of military tasks. These included, among others, humanitarian relief, peacekeeping and peace enforcement. The forces required would vary according to the circumstances and would need to be generated rapidly and at short notice.

In addition, the development of the CJTF concept was also linked to practical political-military cooperation in the context of the Partnership for Peace (PfP). At the core of the CJTF concept that evolved was the need to meet the command and control arrangements essential to allow combined joint forces to operate effectively. The wide variety of circumstances under which CJTF's

might operate places considerable demands on the command and control arrangements for such operations. The role of CJTF HQ is, therefore, crucial.

The Command and Staff School, in the Curragh, which conducts the Defence Forces' strategic leadership and senior management education, including the MA in Leadership Management and Defence Studies with NUI Maynooth, introduced a new operational semester in 2005 to take into account the changing trends within the command, control and management arrangements for EU and NATO led operations. In essence this encompassed teaching an operational planning process, CJTF HQ training and the functioning (battle rhythm) of an OHQ within the context of the EU Crisis Management Operations (CMOs). This operational planning process is being implemented here at the EU OHQ in Mont Valerien Paris for operation EUFOR Chad/CAR.

This was a critical advancement in our education, as it brought us from our historical tactical level of operations and knowledge practiced for many years, to the Operational/Military Strategic level of command, which dovetails into the political level. Hence, at the Operational HQ we are translating political objectives into meaningful military strategies.

This advancement in our education enables us to play a significant role at the Military Strategic and Operational level of UN, EU and NATO led operations and it is a major development in our capabilities as a Defence Force.



#### **Lieutenant Colonel Michael Meehan**

Lieutenant Colonel Michael Meehan joined the Irish Defence Forces in 1974 and was commissioned into 2 Infantry Battalion of the Eastern Command. He has served in a variety of command and staff appointments at home and abroad. His last home posting was as Chief Instructor of the Command and Staff School, in the Military College.

Lt Col Meehan has extensive overseas service, having served in Lebanon, Iraq and Kosovo. His last mission was with EUFOR RD Congo as JOC Director in the EU Operation Headquarters [OHQ] located in Potsdam, Germany. He is currently serving as Military Advisor to the Operation Commander [OpCdr] for EUFOR Chad/CAR, Lieutenant General Pat Nash in Mont Valerien, France.

He is a graduate of the Irish Senior Command and Staff School and also has a primary degree (Hons) in Information Technology from Dublin City University and a Masters Degree (Hons) in Education from Trinity College Dublin.

Lt Col Meehan is married to Sheila and they have two children.



#### **Colonel Con McNamara**

Col McNamara was commissioned in 1979 with the 43rd Cadet Class. During his early career he served in the then Eastern Command and Air Corps, but mainly in the Curragh Command. He was an original founder of An Para Cumman Mileata and trained in France, where he received his International Parachute Instructors license. He introduced parachuting into the Defence Forces with Comdt John Walsh in the 70s. An active sportsman, he holds All Army Rugby medals with the East, Air Corps and the Curragh.

His most recent appointments include Commandant of the Command and Staff School 2005-2007. Plans and Policy, Operations Section, DFHQ OPS 2004/2005. During his tenure in the C&S School the new Operational Semester was introduced. The C&S course was also more internationalised, with students from China, Pakistan, Germany, Algeria, Cyprus and US attending. In addition Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) training was introduced.

His recent overseas appointments include Assistant Military Representative Irish Liaison Office to NATO 2001/2003, Irish Liaison Officer to the Italian Permanent Representation to the EU – 2003, Deputy Chairman of the Helsinki Task Force – 2004, during the Irish Presidency, and Assistant Military Representative to the Irish Permanent Representation to the ESDP - 2004. He is currently Deputy Chief of Staff Operations in the EU OHQ, at Mont Valerien in France, for the EUFOR Chad/CAR Operation.

Col McNamara is a former president of RACO.

He lives in Newbridge with his wife, Meg. They have three daughters Elaine, Ruth and Susan. Con is an active member of his local community, having held the office of President of Newbridge Chamber of Commerce.