

COMMANDO OVERDRACHT CIS battalion

Luitenant-kolonel Kees Verdonk - 5 juni 2013



Dear guests, former members of the CISBn, and above all, men and women of the CISBn,

I welcome you all to this Change of Command ceremony during which I will hand over the command of the CISBn to my successor, LTC Erik Buskens.

A special welcome to MajGen van der Laan, Deputy Commander of 1 (GE/NL) Corps and the superior commander of the CISBn.

Finally, I am very glad that my family and close relatives are present to attend this ceremony.

In March 2010 I accepted the command of the CISBn. And in that period the prospects for the CISBn looked quite gloomy. The Dutch Ministry of Defense was confronted with the most drastic budget cuts ever. And therefore the future of 1 (GE/NL) Corps and CISBn was uncertain. In some Dutch studies it was proposed to disband the Corps and the CISBn completely.

But we did not accept the outcome of these studies. After all, the mission of the CISBn, to provide all necessary CIS-support to commanders and their staff, is a vital one. During exercises, demonstrations and workshops we continuously showed that we master all skills to connect military units and civilian organizations to each other, everywhere in the world, so the users of our CIS-systems can share their information.

With professionalism, a high level CIS-expertise and creativity we were able to support the new demands and concepts of our Corps. For example, we made sure that military units can share their information with civilian and governmental organizations, like the United Nations and Red Cross but also international police organizations and ministries of foreign affairs.

An important milestone was the Corps-exercise PEREGRINE SWORD September last year. During this 4 weeks exercise the CISBn deployed a full CIS-network connecting more than 1200 users who worked for 20 different military units and 25 civilian organizations. On this CIS-network more than 35 CIS-services and applications were available for the users like, telephony, mail, internet and Video teleconferencing. Leading principle with these exercises always were the wishes of the commanders and their staff.

These excellent performances of CISBn were noticed by our military leaders and led to the final decision not to disband the CISBn. Of course, the number of Dutch jobs in the CISBn will be reduced by 9%. But also the CISBn has to take its share in the massive reductions within the Dutch Army.

However, the main conclusion is that the joint efforts of every single soldier of the CISBn had a decisive impact on the final decision. The fact that the CISBn remains 'alive and kicking' is therefore the achievement of you all. You made the difference.

Besides the professional performance, I would like to say some words about the atmosphere in which we worked together, where comradeship; mutual respect and loyalty are key virtues. These virtues create a pleasant and friendly environment in which people like to work with each other. The comradeship became especially visible after the sudden death of WOI Dick Jager in April 2011. His death is the black page in my period as BnCdr. As mark of honor to his death we jointly prepared and executed a respectful and dignified farewell and paid special attention to his family.

I personally enjoyed working in such a strong social unit.

On the other hand there was always my family, who greatly supported me in my job. Esther, Lena en Lois: ik dank jullie voor alle steun die mij het mogelijk maakte om deze functie te kunnen vervullen. Voor mij was de rust en de ondersteuning thuis een be-

langrijke steun in de rug. Ik ben jullie daar enorm dankbaar voor.

So, what about the prospects of the CISBn? The future of the CISBn looks a challenging one. Being part of the NATO Response Force in 2015 is an important milestone, which is an excellent opportunity to further improve the performance of the Bn the coming years.

However, NRF is not the only important milestone. Already next month 42 men and women of the CISBn will be deployed to the ISAF-mission in Afghanistan.

"Soldiers of the ISAF-platoon, I am glad that most of you are able to attend this ceremony. The ISAF-mission is important and exiting but also a potentially dangerous one. Therefore you went through an intensive mission preparation training. Even at this moment some of your colleagues have their last exercise in Norway. I wish you all the best during your deployment. I hope it will be interesting and challenging mission but above all a safe one."

Finally I wish my successor, LTC Buskens, good luck in commanding this Bn for the coming years. With your knowledge and spirit I am convinced that you are the right man for the job.

After all, from my own experience I know that it is an honor to command such a unique Bn which daily demonstrates the motto of the 1 (GE/NL) Corps: 'Communicate Valemus' or 'Together we are strong.'



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Luitenant-kolonel Erik Buskens - 5 juni 2013



Lkol Verdonk salueert tijdens de commando-overdracht op 5 juni 2013

Distinguished guests, dear family, colleagues and last but not least soldiers and civilians of the CISBn. First of all, I would like to thank you for your presence at this ceremony. Some of you have travelled a long way to be present. Thank you for that.

A few moments ago I accepted the command over the CISBn 1(GE/NL) Corps. It is tradition that a new commander does not elaborate too much in his speech. Nevertheless I would like to share some thoughts.

In Januari 2002, I was posted in Garderen as the first commander of 2Ciscy. Standing there with 126 soldiers, no equipment and no training, we were tasked to become operational within a year. And we did. The same year the Full Operational Capability criteria were met and parts were deployed to Afghanistan. Today, 11 years later, I can really see the huge improvements that have been made since. In equipment, in skills and in knowledge.

Also, I can see the same spirit to support the Corps HQ in a changing world. And this world has changed; it has become more com-

plex and technologies are changing rapidly. The presence of these modern complex technologies and of bandwidth is often taken for granted. It is you, soldiers of the Cisbn, who have shown the skills and ability to adapt to these requirements.

Although I left this Battalion 9 years ago, I didn't lose sight of it. In my last position, as the Commander of the C2 Support Centre, I had a good view at the professional way this Battalion was performing. For those who are not familiar with the C2 Support Centre. It is the supplier of the Titaan System and Software, but also for the concept for interoperability. Further developments of the system are currently being made, also with input of this Battalion.

The way this Battalion is performing could not have been possible without the leadership of my predecessor. I would like to thank Lkol Verdonk for what he has done for this Battalion. I would also like to thank him for the very powerful way he has introduced me into the Battalion last week. The best thing I can do for this Battalion is to continue the course he has set. And I will.

I also feel privileged. As both our countries are restructuring their forces, this Bn as part of the 1(GE/NL) Corps is at the forefront of the future. The widespread call for more international cooperation is increasing. As the new Dutch King stated in his speech last month: We are confronted with countless challenges that can only be met by working

together at international level. That is daily business in this unit. Last week, both our Ministers signed a declaration on the further enhancement of the bilateral relations in the field of Defence, including CIS interoperability. We can expect a lot of attention of others who want to understand our lessons learned.

Soldiers of the CIS Battalion. This Change of Command ceremony is not a ceremony about the Commander, but about you. You form this Battalion. I know that I cannot fully understand this Battalion in a week. The upcoming period I need to improve this understanding and you have the right to get acquainted with me. Anyway, it will be an intense period. Some of you will be deployed to Afghanistan next month. Furthermore, we have to prepare for the Nato Response Force Standby period. That will be the focus for the upcoming years. Therefor we have to keep the level high and keep on adapting. That is what we are obliged to our profession.

It's good to be back!

