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Special Edition an Exclusive Interview with U.S. European Command-1

An exclusive Interview with the Spokesperson of U.S. European Command conducted by Editor in Chief

Sir, we are greatly honored to have the occasion of this interview with you. Thank you very much for your time.

Q 1: With your permission I would like to start with an overview of the U.S European Command, and the vital role it plays in European stability, security, and defense.

- **Can you please tell us about USEUCOM, its mission, the strategic interests it represents? And the most recent developments in the status of its force posture.**

U.S. European Command is one of 11 U.S. Department of Defense combatant commands, each with a geographic or functional mission that provides command and control of military forces in peace and war. Headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany, USEUCOM's mission is to execute a full range of multi-domain operations in coordination with Allies and partners to support NATO, deter Russia, assist in the defense of Israel, enable global operations and counter trans-national threats to defend the U.S. homeland and fortify Euro-Atlantic security.

USEUCOM plays an important role to meet the emergent challenges and opportunities in an era of great power competition as the U.S.' principal military instrument in Europe. Our presence in Europe provides the U.S. military with the strategic access vital to meet our NATO commitment to respond to threats against our Allies.

With both permanent and rotational forces in Europe, we are better positioned to deter current and potential threats, assure our Allies and respond in a timely way should deterrence fail.

Our rotational forces allows for more flexibility to deter threats when and where they arise, and are deliberate and defensive in nature. We have established a joint, persistent rotational presence of air, land and sea assets in the region to support our Allies and deter Russia from aggressive actions in the European theater.

An example of our rotational force posture is the Marine Corps Rotational Force – Europe, which focuses on regional engagements throughout Europe by conducting various exercises, arctic cold-weather and mountain warfare training and military-to-military engagements, which enhance overall interoperability of the U.S. Marine Corps with our Allies and partners.

Another example of our rotational forces is the Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine (JMTG-U), which is the name given to the mission of training, equipping, training center development and doctrinal assistance to the Ukrainian armed forces.

In regards to our force posture in Europe, the U.S. Secretary of Defense recently announced that the U.S. will base an additional 500 U.S. Soldiers in Wiesbaden, Germany as part of two new units, a Multi-Domain Task Force and a Theater Fires Command. The Multi-Domain Task Force-Europe, expected to activate Sept.16, 2021, will be comprised of field artillery; composite air and missile defense; intelligence, cyberspace, electronic warfare and space; aviation and a brigade support element. The Theater Fires Command, expected to active Oct. 16, 2021, will improve readiness and multi-national interoperability by integrating joint and multi-national fires in exercises and operations, in support of U.S. Army Europe and Africa.

Additionally, the U.S. Army announced in February 2020 the reactivation of an additional corps headquarters, the historic V Corps, to be located in the United States at Fort Knox, Kentucky, with a forward command post in Europe. The V Corps Headquarters (Forward) was officially established in Poznan, Poland, Nov. 20, 2020. The primary mission of the new forward headquarters is to conduct operational planning, mission command and oversight of the rotational forces in Europe. It will also provide additional capability to support Allies and partners in the region.

- **Q 2: With respect to building closer partnerships and strengthening NATO, what new complementary steps has USEUCOM envisioned to implement in the frame of its strategic planning for 2021 and beyond?**

USEUCOM is deeply rooted in the common values and strong relationships between our European partners and [NATO](#) Allies. Our commitment to the NATO alliance is ironclad. We are committed to standing side-by-side with our Allies to ensure the independence, sovereign territory and security of NATO members.

U.S. Air Force Gen. Tod D. Wolters, is dual-hatted as the USEUCOM commander and as the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), one of NATO's two strategic commanders. SACEUR is the head of Allied Command Operations and, as such, is responsible to the NATO Military Committee for the conduct of all NATO operations. Though these are two separate positions with distinct responsibilities, the fact that they are led by the same commander ensures that USEUCOM and NATO priorities are closely aligned.



USEUCOM contributes to NATO's success in a number of ways, and exercises are one of our more visible activities. Exercising with NATO and non-NATO partners demonstrates readiness, interoperability and capability. These exercises ultimately contribute to deterring our adversaries from threatening European security and the homeland. Additionally, NATO elements often participate in U.S.-led multinational exercises, such as Defender Europe and leaders from the two organizations regularly meet to ensure efforts are synchronized. One example of regular coordination is the yearly USEUCOM and NATO staff talks, which began in 2018 and strengthens transparency and understanding between the two organizations. Throughout 2021, we will continue to work alongside NATO and our Allies and partners to ensure the safety and security of the Euro-Atlantic.

Q 3: “DEFENDER-Europe 21” is considered as one of the most robust military exercises in the history of the U.S. Armed Forces in Europe and its NATO allies.

- **Could you please elaborate on the significance of this exercise and its key central aspects?**

DEFENDER-Europe 21 is a U.S. Army Europe and Africa-planned and executed multinational exercise. It demonstrates USAREUR's ability to command and control large-scale ground operations across more than a dozen nations simultaneously.

Although DEFENDER-Europe 21 is a **U.S. Army** exercise, it will include significant involvement of the **U.S. Air Force** and **U.S. Navy**. Key ground and maritime routes bridging Europe, Asia and Africa will be utilized. Other high-end capabilities will be exercised, such as the new U.S. Army Security Force Assistance Brigades, air and missile defense assets and the recently reactivated V Corps.

In March, equipment and personnel began moving from the United States. In April, participating units will draw Army Prepositioned Stock from sites in Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. The bulk of training activities will occur in May and the exercise will conclude in June with the redeployment of U.S.-based forces and equipment. The exercise will build readiness and interoperability by exercising the command's ability to integrate approximately 28,000 U.S., Allied and partner forces from 26 nations conducting concurrent exercises across more than 30 training areas.

DEFENDER-Europe 21 will demonstrate our ability to serve as a strategic security partner in the western Balkans and Black Sea regions, while sustaining our abilities in northern Europe, the Caucasus, Ukraine and Africa.

Q 4: Earlier in March in support of NATO Exercise “Dynamic Manta” and other operations, guided-missile destroyer *USS Donald Cook (DDG 75)* provided overall defense for the “*Charles de Gaulle Carrier Strike Group*” (CDG CSG) in the Mediterranean.

- **Could you comment on the importance of this exercise in the pivotal context of the U.S- French military partnership?**

In the beginning of March, the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer *USS Donald Cook (DDG 75)* provided multi-warfare defense to France's *Charles de Gaulle Carrier Strike Group (CDG CSG)* in the Mediterranean to support NATO Exercise Dynamic Manta and other operations. High-end integration is only facilitated through trust, sharing and cooperation. This level of operational interchangeability is unique to the NATO Alliance, and we maintain our asymmetric advantage through participation in exercises like Dynamic Manta, which takes place off the coast of Sicily.

This was not the first time the two vessels trained together. In 2019, *USS Donald Cook* joined *CDG in exercise FANAL 19*, which involved operations across all maritime warfare disciplines. In recent history, the U.S. Navy has worked side-by-side with the French Navy throughout the European and African theater of operation. In 2016, *USS Ross (DDG 71)* operated with CDG as part of Combined Task Force 473 in the Mediterranean. In April 2018, France, the UK and the U.S. conducted strikes into Syria in response to the Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons against its own people.

In 2020, the Ross operated with CDG in eastern Mediterranean as part of Operations Chammal and Inherent Resolve, the overarching missions against the expansion of ISIS in Iraq and Syria. France is one of America's oldest allies dating back to 1781 with their support in the U.S. Revolutionary War. This strong bond between our two nations reinforced our relationship and tested our joint combat skills during both World Wars. Today, this relationship continues in that great tradition of exceptional partnership between the U.S. and French militaries.

Q 5: USEUCOM maintains a crucial role in assisting allies and partner nations in the fight against Covid-19.

- **Can you describe the measures USEUCOM has executed in this regard in the military and civilian arenas?**

USEUCOM support to our Allies and partners during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has been unwavering and resolute. A mere nine days after the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on March 11, 2020, USEUCOM's crisis and humanitarian response professionals identified and facilitated the swift transfer of \$150,000 worth of medical equipment and related supplies from a military warehouse in Livorno to hospitals and clinics throughout Italy. The first Italian assistance mission on March 20, 2021 was USEUCOM's first formal support to NATO Allies during the pandemic.

Since then, the command has programmed more than \$21 million in assistance across 24 European nations, spanning the continent from Latvia to Greece and the Czech Republic to Azerbaijan. From delivering personal protective equipment and sanitizing solutions for schools and assisted-living facilities to donating medical equipment for first responders, hospitals and clinics, USEUCOM personnel supported these life-saving efforts.

In addition, USEUCOM turned to its existing relationships established through the U.S. Department of Defense's State Partnership Program (SPP.) The SPP pairs a U.S. state's National Guard with a partner nation in a cooperative, mutually beneficial relationship.

In November 2020, a six-member National Guard medical team from U.S. states Texas and Nebraska deployed to their SPP partner nation, the Czech Republic, to provide medical support as that nation faced threatening levels of nationwide infection.

Two SPP nations also provided COVID-19 support to the United States, as two separate teams – one from Poland, the other Romania – deployed to the U.S. to provide support in their partner states.

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Spiritual Fitness



By Major General John L. Gronski, Deputy Commanding General, United States Army Europe (U.S Army Ret.)

Our four up-armored wheeled combat vehicles launched themselves out of the gate of Forward Operating Base Ramadi on a sun-drenched morning in September 2005. The heat was stifling. The Euphrates River that ran to our north added a high degree of humidity that made the Oakley eyewear I used as eye protection to mist up with sweat. We were traveling along Route Michigan toward OP Hotel, an observation post that overlooked east Ramadi. A suicide bomber attacked the observation post a few weeks earlier but failed to dislodge the tenacious Soldiers who operated out of there. I wanted to check in on the Soldiers and gauge their morale. Our vehicles made their way through a city that was struggling due to the violent insurgency there. Still, as we made our way toward east Ramadi the streets were busy with both vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

I was happy to have my brigade chaplain riding along with me in the back seat of our vehicle. In the Army I have always been a big fan of our Chaplains. These “Warriors of a Higher Power” could bolster the spirit of Soldiers anytime they visited a unit. The Chaplain was also part of my personal staff and I valued their insight prior to making a decision that affected the welfare of Soldiers. After our visit to OP Hotel we made our way back through the center of the city. The chaplain noticed the same thing that I and every Soldier in our mounted patrol noticed. The vehicles and pedestrians that had covered the streets about two hours earlier had disappeared. There was a strange quietness that clothed the neighborhood we were passing through. We had seen this before. We braced ourselves for an insurgent attack. We all became a bit tense as our senses were alerted. The banter we would usually engage in as we moved about the city was quieted as we gave the alleys and buildings around us our full attention. In order to calm down our crew the Chaplain announced in a loud a voice, “Fear not boys, God is with us.”

The young specialist operating out of the gunners compartment of our vehicle heard the Chaplain's announcement, and from his more exposed area atop the vehicle he playfully called down to the Chaplain, "God may be with you all down there, but he certainly is not up here with me."

About 20 seconds later we heard the boom of a rocket propelled grenade. The round of the grenade squarely hit the armor shield surrounding our young gunner and then harmlessly ricocheted into the air before exploding and causing no harm to personnel and no damage to equipment. Our stunned gunner did not miss a beat. He quickly and loudly proclaimed, "I stand corrected Chaplain. God just arrived." Of course, we all broke up with laughter. It was good having the Chaplain with us that day. Over my years leading Soldiers as well as leading people in civilian organizations, I have come to appreciate what I call spiritual fitness. I realize that civilian organizations do not normally have a Chaplain assigned. Spirituality is not something normally discussed at business school and does not usually find itself into a boardroom. Yet, I believe leaders must encourage spiritual fitness when they could to create a more resilient workforce.

In the civilian workforce this is more prone to take the form of initiatives such as integrated health or whole health initiatives. Positive psychology is also a form of spiritual fitness that can strengthen organizational resiliency. It is important for leaders to realize that their people have lives outside of the work environment and many struggle with personal issues.

These issues may include aging parents, an ill spouse, or a child or grandchild struggling with addiction. Many leaders may themselves be struggling with issues like that. That is why practicing mindfulness and developing spiritual fitness is important for running an effective organization, showing people you care about them, and because it is the right thing to do.

There are several things leaders can do to encourage spiritual well being within the organization they lead. They include encouraging workers to practice yoga and instructing associates on breathing techniques; bringing in guest speakers to instruct employees on ways they could reduce stress; providing nutritional training; and bringing on a corporate life coach. These are all reasonable things that a leader can do to encourage spiritual fitness.

Leaders must also get to know their employees. It is a good practice to get to know a little about your employee's families and learn if there are any unusual situations at home such as a child with special needs or gaining parents. Once gaining a little understanding about the home front it is easier to sense signs of distress and to be more empathetic.

Although most corporations will not have the benefit of having an assigned Chaplain like I did when I commanded large military units, by using creativity and imagination, leaders can enhance spiritual fitness and well-being within the workforce.

The U.S Air Force with France and UK in Atlantic Trident 2021

From May 17-28 next month, the multinational joint training exercise ‘Atlantic Trident 2021’ will be held in France, marking the third military event of the Atlantic Trident. The participants are the U.S Air Force, French Air and Space Force, the Royal Air Force of the United Kingdom—presenting with them, to challenge and test, the most advanced proven fighter aircrafts in a range of air combat scenarios.

The two previous Atlantic Trident 2015 and 2017 were hosted by the U.S Air Force, and in a trilateral joint exercises with the same two major NATO airpower, France and UK.



This year the objective of Atlantic Trident will place the focus on re-enhancing the interoperability, to level up the coalition’s operational capabilities, and to transform the readiness in all areas of airpower by applying and improving the fourth and fifth generation of the aircrafts.

Announced by the U.S Air Force (USAFE-AFAFRICA) :

“Aircraft planned to participate in the exercise include U.S. Air Force F-35A Lightning II and KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft, and U.S. Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II aircraft; French Air and Space Force Rafale, KC-135 Stratotanker, A330 Phenix and E3-F Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft; and Royal Air Force F-35B Lightning, Eurofighter Typhoon, E-3D Sentry and A330 Voyager aircraft.”

Acknowledgments: Image of the fourth and fifth-generation aircraft from the U.S. Air Force, French Air Force and Royal Air Force fly during ATLANTIC TRIDENT 17 near Joint Base Langley-Eustis, VA, April 26, 2017. By U.S. Air Force/Staff Sgt. Natasha Stannard. Sources: U.S Air Force (USAFE-AFAFRICA)

By Editor in chief

28,000 Participants from 26 European Nations in the U.S Army-led exercise, Defender Europe 2021.

The exercise combines and empowers the **NATO** allies and partner nation's Armed-Forces with the inspiration of **We are NATO.....Stronger Together**

Acknowledgments:

Image 1: U.S flag ©U.S Air Forces Europe-Africa 2016. Image 2: We are NATO ©U.S Army Europe and Africa April 4, 2021. Image 3: Major General John L. Gronski (U.S Army Ret.) Deputy Commanding General for the Army National Guard, speaks with Romanian Maj. Gen. Nicolae Ciuca, the Chief of the Romanian Land Forces Staff, April 20, 2017 © U.S-EUCOM/Army Pvt. Nicholas Vidro, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment. Image 4: The fourth and fifth-generation aircraft from the U.S. Air Force, French Air Force and Royal Air Force fly during ATLANTIC TRIDENT 17 near Joint Base Langley-Eustis, VA, April 26, 2017. ©U.S. Air Force/Staff Sgt. Natasha Stannard.

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