

Speech Lieutenant-General Martin Wijnen

Veitshöchheim, 30 March 2023, Integration of 13 Light Brigade into 10 Panzerdivision

Remark: only the actual spoken words are valid

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Sehr geehrte Herr Bundesminister, Mevrouw de minister, Herr Erste Bürgermeister ... fellow soldiers

You are about to witness the ceremony that marks the integration of 13 Light Brigade into 10 Armoured Division. The unit flag of 13 Brigade will be passed through the chain of command, symbolizing the change in subordination. A simple gesture, but with significant impact.

Henry Ford, the founder of the Ford Motor Company once spoke wise words on the subject of working together. Ford said: **“Coming Together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.”**

Today we are bringing together 13 Brigade and 10 Division. And as Henry Ford said ... this is a beginning. But our armies have already made progress by ‘keeping together’ and achieved successes by ‘working together’.

13 Brigade and 10 division can stand firmly on the shoulders of units which already have started their journey of integration. Both our ministers and General Mais already highlighted the units we have already integrated and the successes they have achieved.

So, I dare to say we have a proven concept, but we need to further enhance our collective combat power. The Russian aggression in Ukraine has stipulated the need for this. We need to transform our armies from ‘peacekeeping operations’ to an army ‘ready to fight tonight’. We need to improve our armies’ ability to fight together and win.

So, how are we going to achieve this?

During the Griffin Seminar in Dresden, a few months ago, General Mais and I signed the Common Army Vision. Our vision of the way ahead for the integration of our armies. One vision for two armies.

We intend to establish more effective and cohesive formations at the tactical level, which will enhance our capabilities, structures and operational readiness and enable us to better face ongoing and future threats.

‘Organize as we fight’ is the guiding principle in our vision. Integrating Dutch brigades into German divisions does just that! Together we will be able to field three capable combat divisions. A capability that NATO asks ... a capability that Europe needs.

The vision describes 5 fields of action

First, we continue to adapt our force structure. Like we are doing here in Veitshöchheim today. In a synchronized effort, both armies will establish light, medium and heavy units, in order to provide our political leadership with the best variety of options to secure our (bi)national interests and to meet NATO commitments.

Second, we improve our Command and Control, through a consistent binational chain of command. This will create the required unity of command over all integrated formations.

Three. We strengthen our “unity of thinking” by synchronizing knowledge development capabilities of our armies. By exchanging knowledge and personnel, we will ensure that we develop the readiness of our forces in the same direction and based on common concepts.

Four. In order to achieve the best possible technical interoperability, we will align our operational requirements and aim to synchronize our national procurement processes for land-based systems.

The fifth field of action remains 1GNC – our starting point. In conjunction with NATO’s New Force Model, we will redefine the role and potential of 1GNC as our unique shared tactical command & control capability.

This is our vision. A vision points the way, but getting there will take daily effort on all levels.

Because integration is no easy task. ... We will encounter problems and make mistakes, but we will bring this integration further ... strengthened by our mutual belief: ‘together we are stronger’.

So a tough task lies ahead. I therefore call upon all soldiers present here to do your part, to successfully integrate 13 Light Brigade into 10 Armoured division and improve our ability to fight together. I ask you to show initiative and to share your knowledge and to be willing to learn from one another.

Let me conclude by conveying general Mais’ and my gratitude to our ministers. Your signatures on the Technical Agreement show your support and commitment for the integration of our armies. Your presence here at this ceremony is highly appreciated.

A big ‘thank you’ to our host, the First Mayor of Veitshöchheim, Herr Jürgen Götz as well. We could not have wished for a better venue for this ceremony than these beautiful castle grounds.

And last but not least ... my compliments to 10 Division - including 13 brigade – for an excellent preparation and execution of this ceremony. I say to you: Take a good look at your colleagues gathered here. Yes, we wear different uniforms, but what unites us far outweighs that what divides us. We have equal values and share a high degree of military professionalism. Let’s put it to good use and make this work!

Thank you

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