

## **RFID with a NATO Flair**

By Thomas Rigsbee

NATO Exercise Collective Effort 04 (CE04) was conducted in the Czech Republic to test the interoperability of NATO members' material handling equipment and logistical systems. CE04 took place at the Peace Forces Training Base in Ceske Krumlov and at the Airbase located in Ceske Budejovice.

A United Kingdom (UK) Ministry of Defense Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) team supported by an United States Army Europe RFID team deployed to the Czech Republic to support CE04 during the week of 14 June 2004. The UK team was lead by Major Marc Hayward and included Warrant Officer 1 Mark Lavers, Warrant Officer 2 Steve Green, and Flight Sergeant Stef Coltman. The US support team was comprised of EUCOM representatives LTC John Anderson and Staff Sergeant Josue Martinez of the EUCOM J4, as well as USAREUR G4 RFID Field Service Engineers Dan Goodspeed, Lefty Byrd, and Roger Hardy. Tom Rigsbee, from the Product Manager Automatic Identification Technology (PM AIT) office, also accompanied the team. The mission of the team was to demonstrate the capabilities of RFID to the NATO units and its ability to improve logistical shipments tracking.

Prior to commencement of the exercise, a Norwegian convoy was tagged with RF tags and tracked along its entire route of march from Norway to the Czech Republic using RFID and uploading the convoy position data to the In-Transit Visibility (ITV) server. Additionally, the combined RFID teams tracked shipments of ammunition, fuel, and air pallets at the Ceske Krumlov Training Area and the Ceske Budejovice Air Base by using RF tags, interrogators, and the Early Entry Deployment Support Kits (EEDSK). The first photo shows the Czech Republic cargo helicopter releasing RF-tagged cargo. The second photo shows a French personnel vehicle with an RF tag that was transported from the pick-up zone to the drop zone by a Czech Republic cargo helicopter. The French also participated in CE04 and demonstrated their SILCENT bar coding system.

The exercise ended with the placement of RF tags with the NATO VIP visitors and tracking their movements in and out of the Peace Forces Training Base in Ceske Krumlov and their movement to the Ceske Budejovice Air Base for the exhibition of Czech Republic military equipment. Major Hayward and LTC Anderson conducted a joint UK/US/out-brief to recap the mission and results of the RFID demonstration for the NATO VIPs prior to the culmination of the exercise.