

Mobile system helps keep Tour de France in Corsica on track



With the huge Tour de France starting in Corsica for the first time, special measures in the form of a mobile tactical system were deployed to supplement local communications.

While the eyes of the world are transfixed by the drama being played out in the peloton (or pack), it's the security and organisation of the Tour de France that commands the attention of 13,000 military police, 6,000 police officers and 7,000 civil security officers every summer. And that's where the Tetrapol French National radio network comes in, helping all these public safety professionals smooth the way for riders and spectators alike. But with the race starting out in Corsica for the first time in 2013, the local communications infrastructure needed reinforcement in the shape of the Gendarmerie's PTN mobile tactical system.

Big start on Corsica

The French security forces typically count on the availability of

the national Tetrapol network to ensure radio communications and easy interoperability between all the different public safety organisations, but the preparations for this year's Tour were slightly more complex than usual, with the race gearing up for a big start on the island of Corsica, which had never hosted a sporting event on this scale before.

The organisers anticipated a record-breaking 100th year for the Tour, especially during the three first stages in Corsica. The race started on 29 June in Porto-Vecchio, crossing Bonifacio in the very south of Corsica and passing through Bastia and Ajaccio before crossing the famous Calanques de Piana during the third stage and ending up in Calvi.

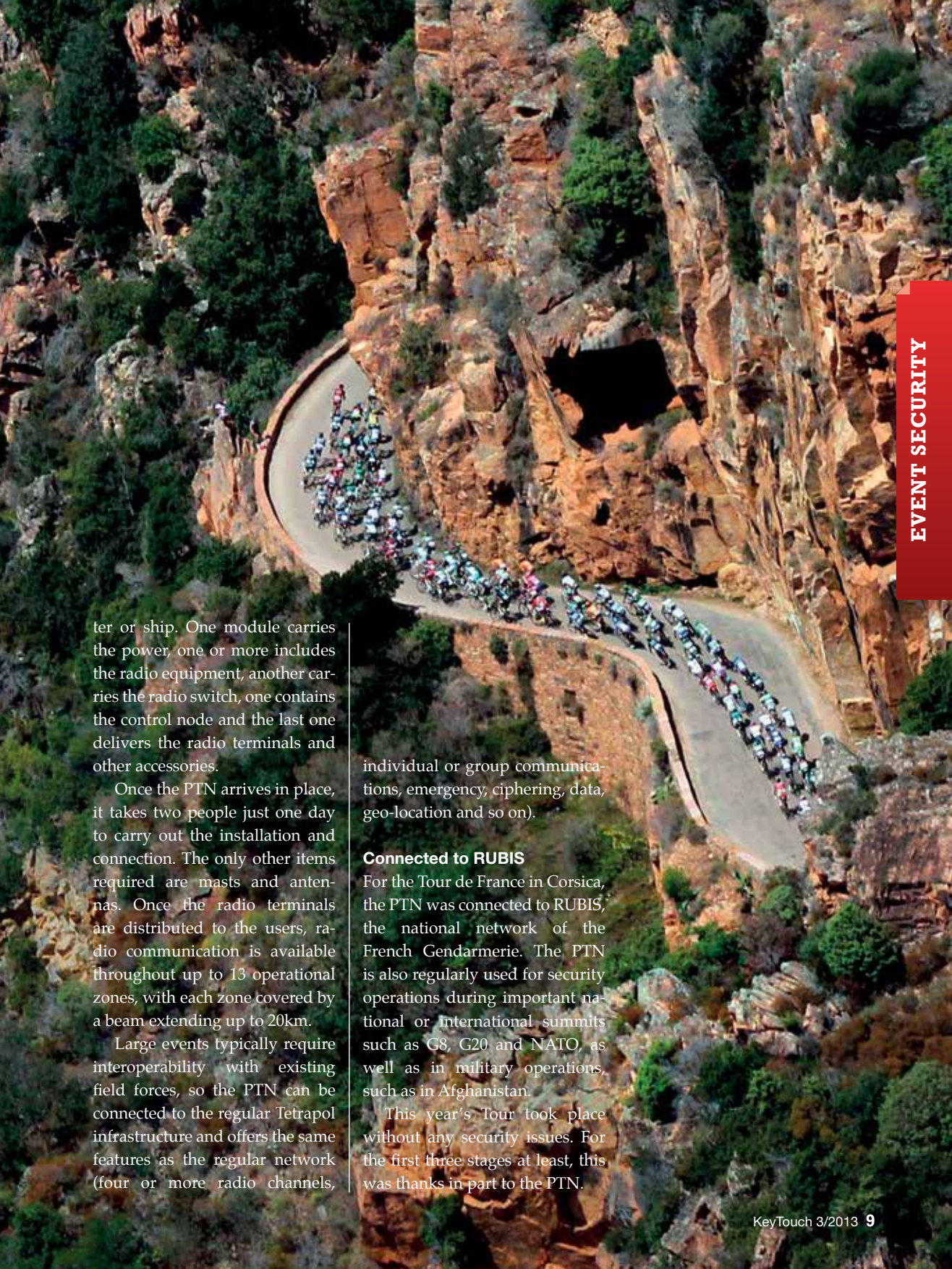
This was the first excursion of the Tour de France to Corsica and the sheer scale of the event

threatened to strain the existing communications infrastructure. The Gendarmerie therefore implemented its mobile tactical solution, which was based on technology from Cassidian.

Communication network on the move

The PTN (Projectable Telecommunications Network) was rolled out temporarily for the Corsican stages of the race. It is designed to meet the needs of military and civil security forces during large tactical operations.

As with the IDR tactical cell used for smaller tactical deployments, PTN enables users to transmit voice and data information via radio and telephone terminals. This system comprises several portable modules that can be transported in secure cases by van, truck, aircraft, train, helicop-

An aerial photograph showing a large group of cyclists and support vehicles on a narrow, winding asphalt road that curves through a rugged, rocky mountain landscape. The terrain is covered with sparse green vegetation and large, reddish-brown rock formations. The cyclists are clustered together, following the curve of the road. The overall scene is dynamic and scenic, capturing a moment during a major cycling event.

ter or ship. One module carries the power, one or more includes the radio equipment, another carries the radio switch, one contains the control node and the last one delivers the radio terminals and other accessories.

Once the PTN arrives in place, it takes two people just one day to carry out the installation and connection. The only other items required are masts and antennas. Once the radio terminals are distributed to the users, radio communication is available throughout up to 13 operational zones, with each zone covered by a beam extending up to 20km.

Large events typically require interoperability with existing field forces, so the PTN can be connected to the regular Tetrapol infrastructure and offers the same features as the regular network (four or more radio channels,

individual or group communications, emergency, ciphering, data, geo-location and so on).

Connected to RUBIS

For the Tour de France in Corsica, the PTN was connected to RUBIS, the national network of the French Gendarmerie. The PTN is also regularly used for security operations during important national or international summits such as G8, G20 and NATO, as well as in military operations, such as in Afghanistan.

This year's Tour took place without any security issues. For the first three stages at least, this was thanks in part to the PTN.