

Remus Cabins “anchored” in Baltic Barracks

Written by AG

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From 2 to 13 March 2009 Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast (HQ MNC NE), together with Command Support Brigade (CSB), conducted the Compact Yellow Exercise. For a few days several Remus Cabins and Transmission Shelters were placed on the Pomeranian Square, just in the heart of Baltic Barracks, location of HQ MNC NE. The main aim of the exercise was to test and implement new technologies, and in this way, also to prepare for the Little Eagle Exercise scheduled for May 2009.

Involved in actions

The command over the exercise was held by HQ MNC NE personnel from G-g Division, whereas complex equipment was operated by soldiers from the German 610th and Polish 100th Signal Battalions subordinate to the Command Support Brigade. They were assisted by advisers and experts from G-6 Division. Additionally, there were experts from civilian companies invited – Telecommunications Research Institute (PIT) and Transbit. One of them helped during the installation and maintenance phase of the Szafran software, HQ MNC NE Command, Control and Information System. The rest supported the 100th Signal Battalion in operating the communication system Storczyk. All in all, there were approximately 40 soldiers participating in this purely technical exercise.

Twofold exercise with multiple aims

Basically, the exercise was divided into two parts – the communication and IT parts, in which the participants had to perform certain tasks. However, in the end, they had to meet to work together to carry out a “combined” task and provide horizontal and vertical exchange of information.

Several aims of the exercise covered a wide range of activities providing an excellent opportunity to test new technologies. As Major Dariusz Stanek explained, “one of the aims of this exercise was to install Szafran system in our server Remus Cabins from the 610th Signal Battalion for the first time”. Afterwards, the system was used in different configurations for four command posts – Main Headquarters, Tactical Command Post HQ MNC NE, Command Post of CSB and command posts of the Battalions, all physically located in Szczecin, but portraying different locations for future use.

Apart from data exchange of different kind including reports, emails or orders via Szafran, the exercise participants used special hardware to test voice over IP exchange between different

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command posts. As a matter of fact, it was the second time when the 610th Signal Battalion dealt with voice over IP, making it quite a challenge. Additionally, the possibilities of conducting videoconferences were examined as well.

Finally, one of the aims of the exercise was a technical check of the Communications and Information Systems (CIS) concept for the Little Eagle Exercise.

On the way to Little Eagle

Compact Yellow enabled checking plans and concepts developed for the Little Eagle Exercise 2009 to ensure adequate support in terms of CIS. In fact, the overall architecture including routers, switches and other IT equipment except for workstations was prepared and thoroughly tested.

Little Eagle will mostly be conducted in two places – Szczecin in Baltic Barracks where HQ MNC NE is situated and barracks of the 12th Mechanized Division as well as in Stargard Szczeciński where the CSB Headquarters is placed. Communication between different locations will be established to exchange information. Although Compact Yellow took place in Baltic Barracks only, a solution was found to test this. “We portrayed Szczecin-Stargard Szczeciński connection using Remus Cabins which will be used during Little Eagle as servers for the Baltic Barracks. They are located one to each other. Then, we also have Storczyk system over here, which will be a medium for us”, explains Major Stanek. In fact, Storczyk as a communication system is able to provide communication up to 40 km over average terrain. For that reason, during Little Eagle at least two additional Transmission Shelters will be located in between Szczecin and Stargard Szczeciński.

Although it was a challenge to install the Szafran system in Remus Cabins as the Field Headquarters IT heart for the first time, use so complex services, like voice over IP, and to combine three services in one physical network, the Compact Yellow Exercise turned out to be a success – high capabilities of people and technical possibilities of the equipment were confirmed.