



Interview with Colonel (GS) Peter M. Baierl, the Commander Permanent Headquarters.

Anna Galyga: Could you explain what is PHQ, the name that appears when talking about the structure of the Corps?

Col Baierl: PHQ is the abbreviation of the Permanent Headquarters. It includes our personnel remaining at the Baltic Barracks in Szczecin, while the soldiers are deployed to the mission. The Permanent Headquarters officially started to function just after the deployment to Afghanistan of the second party of the soldiers, namely on 25th January 2007.

- What are the main tasks and responsibilities of the Permanent Headquarters?

The Permanent Headquarters is to support the soldiers being deployed to ISAF in any possible way, but here in Szczecin our main task is to take care of the soldiers' families, to keep them informed and to help them if necessary. And if the soldiers deployed to Afghanistan can rely on us in this respect, it will definitely facilitate their lives out there. This I know from my own experience, as I was deployed three times, twice to Kosovo and once to Afghanistan. Apart from taking care of the families, the remaining staff also carries out all tasks of running the Baltic Barracks, preparing re-deployment and making the preparations for the time after the mission.

We have stayed in Szczecin to support them in Kabul.

Written by AG

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- Talking about the people, how many personnel, military and civilian, constitute the PHQ?

At the moment there are 74 personnel at the Headquarters, including 28 civilians, not taking into account the Polish HQ Company.

- It means that the manning is reduced decisively. Has it influenced the structure of the Headquarters in any way?

Yes, we have changed the structure slightly. In our peacetime structure the HQ is divided into the Command Group and seven Staff Divisions (from G-1 to G-6 and G-8). Due to the fact that a lot of personnel are deployed and some Staff Divisions consist only of 1 or 2 remaining persons, I decided to form up two divisions – an Operations Division (OPS Division) and a Support Division. The personnel from G-2, G-3, and G-5 form the Ops Division, while the personnel from G-1, G-4, G-6 and G-8 constitute the Support Division. As a result we have two acting ACOSs, the Ops Division being headed by a Pole and the Support one by a German.

- Are the duties of the remaining personnel changed as well?

Yes, of course, it particularly refers to our civilian workers. Some of them had to change not only the working place but also their duties, for example the secretary of the Commander is now working in the Multinational Family Care Centre.

- What is the link between the PHQ and the staff deployed to Afghanistan?

Apart from personal relations, we have established close contacts related to the functional areas, for example G-4 PHQ to G-4 ISAF, G-5 PHQ to G-5 ISAF and so on, and on the command level as well. For that reason we start to send weekly reports to the HQ ISAF reporting what we are doing here. But normally most of information is exchanged on case-by-case basis.

- And, to conclude, how do you perceive your role as the Commander Permanent Headquarters?

To be honest it is rather difficult for me because in an ordinary life I am the ACOS G-6 and I still feel like ACOS G-6 simply tasked to run the Permanent Headquarters as the Commander.

Thank you