



**On behalf of the NATO Secretary General Mr. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Commander Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast Lieutenant General Zdzisław Goral awarded a German Lieutenant Colonel Lutz Rademacher the NATO Meritorious Service Medal for his exceptional service in Afghanistan.**

The NATO Meritorious Service Medal commends staff whose personal initiative and dedication went beyond their duty to make a difference both to their colleagues, and to NATO as an organisation. The following criteria decide on awarding the medal: the performance of acts of courage in difficult or dangerous circumstances; showing exceptional leadership or personal example; making an outstanding individual contribution to a NATO sponsored programme or activity; or enduring particular hardship or deprivation in the interest of NATO. The medal was first awarded in 2003.

**Anna Gałyga: Sir, you have been awarded the NATO Meritorious Service Medal for your exceptional service during the mission in Afghanistan, what is the importance of this award for you?**

LTC Lutz Rademacher: I am very proud and honoured to have this award. But we were deployed as a team and therefore this award is also for my team that served with me in the Combined Joint Operations Centre (CJOC) Floor.

It is also important for me that my General officers, Deputy Commander and Chief of Staff of the Headquarters with whom I served in Afghanistan, supported my awarding. They brought this idea forward to Commander ISAF General Dan McNeill, who is the official awarding authority. Then it was sent up the chain of command to SHAPE and finally to Brussels.

**Can you tell us more about your service in Afghanistan?**

I actually served under the command of Brigadier General Josef Heinrichs, Chief of Staff HQ MNC NE, in the CJOC. I was a leader of so-called CJOC Floor – an Operations Centre that was responsible for monitoring all current operations and reacting to any event or major incident. We had to take immediate actions and make responses from the HQ ISAF or ISAF itself.

Let me stress again that I was supported by very good guys from our Headquarters, who had been working as hell by day and night, 24/7. My folks were actually the backbone of the Operations Centre. Without them I would have never been awarded.

**What is the value of that mission for you?**

I was allowed to serve with dedicated personnel and of course this was a post for which I had been training for 25 years. I actually celebrated the 25th anniversary of my military service while being at HQ ISAF. So this was a post, which I was quite satisfied with.

**This medal is in fact one of the highest NATO decorations; do you think it will affect your future military career in any way?**

Not in terms of money, not in terms of being promoted earlier but of course in terms of reputation. It might be that my next post will be related to deployment to mission where simply my knowledge and expertise could be used.