



"Cool Gasket was a great success" – with these words the exercise director Col K. Finck assessed the exercise that took place from 25th to 28th February 2008 at the Baltic Barracks.

The term "exercise" may be slightly misleading since during Cool Gasket there were no tanks, no dust, no soldiers carrying weapons. Cool Gasket was an Operational Study Period, where most of the work was done on the computer screens.

On the road to CRYSTAL EAGLE

Cool Gasket is in fact the next step towards the exercise Crystal Eagle, planned for September 2008. As the Commander HQ MNC NE LtGen Zdzisław Goral said, the command post exercise Crystal Eagle is the main training task of the Corps for this year.

To adequately prepare for the autumn exercise approximately 150 servicemen from 1st Estonian Brigade, 37th German Brigade, Latvian Brigade and 7th Polish Brigade as well as Staff members of Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast gathered at the Baltic Barracks. In this "narrow" circle, as in Crystal Eagle there will be about 1500 participants, four Brigades

being the training audience prepared for planning, organising and conducting Peace Support Operations. There was a real life scenario established with a fictional country Auriga based on Spain and reflecting what is actually going on in Afghanistan. All Brigades received the Land Component Command Order, which was prepared by the HQ MNC NE to start their operational planning process. Afterwards, they briefed the Commander of Land Component Command, in this case the HQ MNC NE Commander, on the initial results of their mission analysis.

Valuable experiences for Baltic Friends

For both Brigades from the Baltic States it is the first time when they train with our Headquarters. "This is a corps level exercise and we are a brigade so it is very important that we not only train our battalions but we also train ourselves" – emphasized LtCol Didzis Nestro, Latvian Brigade's Chief of Staff. Talking about the value of Cool Gasket, and later on also Crystal Eagle, Maj Tiit Paljak from the 1st Estonian Brigade noted that it is about "the cooperation, (...) how different nations plan, execute and what we can gain from that, so it is information and experience sharing". Moreover, LtCol Nestro mentioned the challenges related to "the lack of expertise in some particular areas because the Latvian Forces are still in the development phase (...) so for this exercise we adopted an exercise structure, which is not the real life structure of the Brigade but the reason behind is that you have to train people how to use the assets and the challenge is understanding how these capabilities should work".

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