

Saying goodbye to Chief of German ODA

Written by AG

Monday, 06 April 2009 12:52



Visit of the President of the German Forces Administration Mr Matthias Lecker and his Deputy Mr Wolfgang Proband in Baltic Barracks on 2 and 3 April 2009 was related to the change of command in the German Office of Defence Administration (ODA).

"Był to cudowny okres w moim życiu" (It was a wonderful time in my life)

It is always the case that representatives of the German Forces Administration take part in handover of responsibilities in German Offices of Defence Administration (ODA). This time, it was a unique ceremony since Mr Alfons Heimer finished his tour of duty after six years – *"I was so lucky to have a chance to serve here for more than six years. I am starting my retirement tomorrow, so let me say it was a superb final tour of duty, which I have enjoyed very much"*, said Mr Heimer.

A lot of people gathered in the Allied Officers' Club to take part in the handover ceremony. There were President of the German Forces Administration Mr Lecker and his Deputy Mr Proband as representatives of the higher German authorities, MNC NE Commander Lieutenant General Zdzisław Goral, his Deputy Major General Ole Køppen, MNC NE Chief of Staff Brigadier General Josef Heinrichs as well as German soldiers, members of the Danish, German and Polish National Support Elements, Senior National Representatives or even a leader of one of border villages.

Mr Heimer handed his responsibilities over to Mr Andreas Walter. During the ceremony, Mr Lecker delivered a speech, in which he presented Mr Heimer's achievements. MNC NE Commander Lieutenant General Goral emphasized the importance of the German ODA because the more German soldiers are satisfied with the living conditions in Szczecin, the more effective servicemen they are. Mr Heimer addressed all the gathered in Polish proving the fact that he has integrated with the Polish community a lot. In fact, as he admitted, he is going to stay very close to Baltic Barracks, just across the border in one of the villages. This explains the presence of the leader of this village in the ceremony. Asked about the things he would remember most from his time in Szczecin, Mr Heimer answered: "International atmosphere – all members of this Headquarters were very kind to us, the internal atmosphere was very good and everyone was open to other nations – that were, I think, the most important points".

Last but not least, Mr. Walter, a new Chief of German ODA in Szczecin, took the floor and expressed his expectations concerning the new post. When the official part was finished, all guests were invited for snacks. The whole event was given musical setting thanks to a German

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military music band.

Supporting soldiers abroad

Mr Lecker as President of the German Forces Administration and Mr Proband as his Deputy represent an institution that supports German soldiers on abroad missions in terms of administrative matters. Obviously, offices in real mission areas, like Afghanistan, and those located in Germany's partners, like Belgium, France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and the USA, slightly differ. Mr Heimer explained the main tasks of the German ODA in Szczecin: "We are responsible for all administration affairs for all German soldiers in Poland – the most important challenge is to support our soldiers here in Szczecin, but also we support Joint Force Training Centre in Bydgoszcz, our personnel at the Military Academy in Warsaw and German units on exercises in Poland. A very important part of our job is housing – we are looking for houses and prepare all contracts". Mr Heimer also explained that the German ODA is responsible for paying salaries and dealing with other finance related tasks.

Mr Lecker and Mr Proband presented other tasks of the German Forces Administration. As they said, in Mazar-e-sharif in Afghanistan, where approximately 2,000 German soldiers are stationed, the administration is in charge of, for example, building facilities or bridges. One of the tasks is also visiting German soldiers in places where they are stationed simply to talk to them and identify areas that might be improved. Therefore, on the occasion of the visit to the Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast, German soldiers also had a chance to talk to Mr Lecker and Mr Proband about any topics they wanted.