



"Welcome cordially" – said Commander of the Multinational Corps Northeast Lieutenant General Zdzisław Goral to all 21 representatives of the Corps of attachés from 20 countries and members of the Polish Ministry of Defence, who came to the Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast (HQ MNC NE) with a visit on 13 May 2009.

In the Jutland Garden

In the Jutland Garden within the Baltic Barracks a reception was specially prepared on that occasion. MNC NE Commander Lieutenant General Zdzisław Goral, MNC NE Chief of Staff Brigadier General Josef Heinrichs and Senior National Representatives greeted all guests. General Goral introduced the Headquarters personnel and presented some basic facts about the Corps and the Baltic Barracks. Afterwards, the guests were invited for a common lunch.

"We have an annual schedule to follow and there are several undertakings organised throughout the year. This visit is an example of our activities", explained Colonel Tomasz Podlasiński, Chief of the Liaison Office from the Department for Military Foreign Affairs of the Ministry of Defence. As a matter of fact, that office is responsible for developing contacts between the Corps of Attachés in Poland and the Polish Army. Apart from purely informational visits, the Office organises participation in various armaments fairs in Poland as well as supports the Attachés in answering their questions or solving problems. It seems important to notice that there are 34 Attachés in Warsaw altogether.

Attachés from 20 countries in the Headquarters

Written by AG

Thursday, 14 May 2009 14:24

Great education for everyone

"Attachés are officers, they know much about the army so it is all about showing aims, tasks, organisation of the Corps to them", Colonel Tomasz Podlasin developed the idea of the visit to the Headquarters. He admitted that it was very important to present them the Multinational Corps Northeast as one of multinational units in Poland. This is what actually the Attachés needed – "I have not been to Szczecin before so I expect some information about the Headquarters, its structure and about the city, too. And I am also here to meet some friends of mine", said a German Attaché Colonel Gerfried Elias, just a few minutes after the arrival in the Baltic Barracks.

Therefore, the guests took part in a briefing given by Lieutenant Colonel Lothar Hoffmann, in which the Corps' history, structure and mission were presented. Then, a more exercise and mission oriented presentation delivered by Major Ole Reith took place. The guests were very fond of the visit – "This is one of our bigger visits this year. The first expressions are wonderful, we have just had a good presentation and it is exactly the sort of thing that Defence Attachés need. General Goral is giving a good, open message about this Headquarters and, of course, this reaches out to all nations sitting in the conference room", said Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Nowak, Dean of the Corps of Attachés.



Enjoying every minute of being the dean

Attachés from 20 countries in the Headquarters

Written by AG

Thursday, 14 May 2009 14:24

Lieutenant Colonel Nowak explained that "to be the dean is an honour and it is also an honorary position, so there is no formal rank attached. It is a democratic process – all the Defence Attachés, if they wish to, they can elect a nominee to be a candidate and whoever gets the most votes, becomes the dean". The term of a dean usually lasts one year. "Some Defence Attachés say it may be an honour but it is hard work, but other say it is an enjoyable task", he added.

Even though there is no absolute necessity for the Corps of Attachés to have a dean, it does benefit their work. Talking about responsibilities, Lieutenant Colonel Nowak said: "I chair regular meetings for all the Defence Attachés in Warsaw and, in fact, we have what is called the Warsaw Attaché Association for all Defence Attachés in Warsaw. All of us get together and we arrange two things. One is to coordinate our professional work functions with the Polish Liaison Office". This is important since it gives an opportunity for Polish officers to meet, moreover, Attachés can present ideas to the Polish hosts in Warsaw. Another sphere of activities refers to the social part – "We like to create the atmosphere where all Defence Attachés and their families can socialize together. We organise events for that, such as an annual gala ball. I have formed relationships with officers whom I never thought I would have done before", Lieutenant Colonel Nowak added.

Asked about multinational character of the Warsaw Attaché Association, Lieutenant Colonel Nowak noticed that one of the biggest things he had learnt was how similar military people were – "We have many things in common. We find it very easy to converse with each other despite some language barriers so that is wonderful". Even Lieutenant Colonel Nowak's personal history has a little bit of multinational taste since as an Englishman, he has a father coming from Poland. "I have been in Poland 2.5 years and I have enjoyed every minute. It is an honour to represent Great Britain here but it is also an honour because my father is Polish and I think Poland is a lovely country", he said.

Other points in the itinerary

Since the intention of the Liaison Office/Division is to promote the Polish Army, apart from visiting Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast in Szczecin, on the following days the Attachés went also to purely Polish units – the 12th Mechanized Brigade, which as a part of the 12th Mechanized Division is a first-line formation with experiences from several missions and, therefore, a pride of the Polish Army, as well as to the 8th Flotilla in Świnoujście, where the Attachés could see, among other things, warships the Polish Navy is equipped with.