

## “We will prepare them for the job” – mission preparations proceed

Written by AG

Friday, 04 September 2009 12:57

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**All necessary decisions, timelines and plans prior to the training at Joint Warfare Centre in Stavanger in December this year were arranged during the Main Planning Conference, which took place at Baltic Barracks in Szczecin from 31 August to 4 September 2009.**

### **Planning to avoid duplications**

During the conference all efforts made by Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast and Joint Forces Command (JFC) Brunssum, responsible for the Headquarters' training for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan were successfully coordinated. Colonel Oole Eilertsen, Branch Head Exercise and Training & Knowledge Management Directorate at the Joint Force Command JFC Brunssum said *“the aim is to deconflict the training that you do here in Szczecin before you come to Stavanger so that the training in Stavanger starts at the level you are”*

As Colonel Eilertsen explained, his branch is responsible for planning all exercises and training in the Headquarters in Brunssum. Apart from that, in the sphere of their responsibilities lies preparing all headquarters deploying to Headquarters ISAF, Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams as well as those headquarters that take over Regional Commands. A typical procedure is that JFC Brunssum issues guidance for the training which, after the coordination done with

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the formation to be trained, is executed by either Joint Warfare Centre in Stavanger, Norway, or Joint Force Training Centre in Bydgoszcz, Poland. To be more specific, Joint Warfare Centre prepares for serving at Headquarters ISAF whereas Joint Force Training Centre in Bydgoszcz – for Regional Commands.

In case of Multinational Corps Northeast, the ongoing preparations will result in deploying to the ISAF Headquarters in 2010. Therefore, the actual training will conduct Joint Warfare Centre in Stavanger. *“The conference here is first to develop what we call the training specification – that is the guidance with all the training objectives”* . The purpose of this is to develop the training plan allowing for achieving this guidance.

After this Main Planning Conference everybody should know how to prepare himself or herself before going to Stavanger. It includes getting familiarized with Standing Operating Procedures and Instructions as well as job descriptions. Apart from that, each soldier is obliged to do the so-called Advanced Distributed Learning via the Internet, which ends with a special certificate. An element of the preparations is also the Functional System Training planned for November, during which the officers and non-commissioned officers will learn to work with some of the software used in Afghanistan.

In the meantime, JFC Brunssum will support Joint Warfare Centre in preparing the training for MNC NE, e.g. in finding the right *“Subject Matter Experts”*, who will train the Headquarters officers.

### **In Stavanger almost like in Kabul**

The exercise in December will actually be the last big training event for the Headquarters before going to Afghanistan. That is why it is extremely important to benefit from the training as much as possible. First, there will be Mission Specific Training to provide the same operational picture to everybody. Then, the Functional Area Training will take place – every individual will work in a respective cell to learn about his or her specific tasks. There will also be some additional training on computer software and so-called Battle Staff Training for whole cells or branches, also across branches.

Finally, the Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRE) will take place for the Headquarters. *“It will be very realistic, we do not take a fake scenario”*

, emphasized Colonel Eilertsen,

*“what they will see on the screen of their computer in Stavanger is the same what they will see when they come to ISAF”*

. It is because the whole ISAF database will be copied for the MNC NE soldiers – they will have to cope with the actual situations taking place in Afghanistan. It is about building confidence, said Colonel Eilertsen. Besides, with such realistic training the soldiers will need only a few days to handover in the mission area. The greatest challenge for the soldiers will be keeping up with a high tempo of operation which is the same like in Afghanistan but

*“the more prepared you are for the MRE, the easier you can cope with the tempo”*

, complements Colonel Eilertsen.

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It is interesting to notice that Colonel Eilertsen trains the Headquarters personnel for the mission for the second time. As he admitted, the Corps' exercise in Stavanger in 2006 was the first one he organised. In the context of experiences gathered from other training and based on the current process of preparations, Colonel Eilertsen, a person responsible for the overall training of Multinational Corps Northeast for the mission in Afghanistan, is convinced about the effectiveness of the training in Stavanger. *“I am not worried, I will not lose a night's sleep on it”*, he said with a smile.