

MNC NE 10th Anniversary Celebrations – Part I (Videos Added!)

Written by AG

Monday, 21 September 2009 15:59



19 September 2009 was definitely the day of Multinational Corps Northeast (MNC NE) – after months of intensive preparations, hours spent on detailed planning, exhaustive rehearsals, long-awaited celebrations of MNC NE 10th Anniversary were finally launched!

It has been 10 years already since the memorable inauguration ceremony of Multinational Corps Northeast, which took place at Wały Chrobrego on 18 September 1999. These 10 years were filled with effort and hard work but the results have been outstanding. It can be clearly stated that these 10 years were years of success. The Corps managed to achieve Full Operational Capability in 2006 and as early as 2007 contribute to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. Apart from that, the Corps developed in terms of its multinational character. Out of three-national Corps in 1999 founded by Denmark, Germany and Poland, the number of member states grew to 11 – the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the United States. These celebrations were to thank all Corps' previous members, enthusiasts and inhabitants of Szczecin who have kindly welcomed the Corps' multinational family into their community. To prove those excellent relations, it has to be emphasized that the whole celebrations were organised in close cooperation between the Corps and the city.

Getting started

First military equipment started to be installed at Wały Chrobrego in Szczecin on Friday, 18 September. Passersby observed the soldiers working when, for example, tents of the command post and MNC NE Promotion Tent were being pitched. Danish patrol boat Hjortø (MHV903 type), Polish transport-mine layer “ORP Toruń” (767 type) and German first attack craft “Wiesel” (143A type) reached the shore of the Odra River in the evening becoming the first attraction of the celebrations.

Heavy military equipment entered Wały Chrobrego in the early morning on 19 September. Simultaneously, people started to gather. Some of them were simply going past and got interested in the preparations, others waited impatiently for the celebrations to start, but what is the most important – nobody remained indifferent. In the meantime, soldiers of Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast and Command Support Brigade were finalizing the preparations for the parade.

Official celebrations at Wały Chrobrego

Lots of people gathered at Wały Chrobrego waiting for the military parade to start. Among them there were inhabitants of Szczecin, tourists as well as families of Headquarters' personnel. Shortly before 14:00 military bands from Denmark, Germany and Poland and platoons formed up by HQ MNC NE and Command Support Brigade personnel together with Danish, German and Polish colour guards and guards of honour lined up along the Odra River.

Honourable guests took their seats in the stand. Among them there were Danish Minister of Defence His Excellency Mr Søren Gade, Polish Minister of Defence His Excellency Mr Bogdan Klich and Lithuanian Minister of Defence Her Excellency Ms Rasa Juknevičienė, German Secretary of State His Excellency Mr Thomas Kossendey, Estonian Secretary of State His Excellency Mr Lauri Tamm, Romanian Secretary of State His Excellency Mr Viorel Oancea, Mayor of Szczecin Mr Piotr Krzystek, Ambassadors, Defence Attachés, Honorary Consuls and many others. MNC NE 10

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Anniversary celebrations would not be complete with representatives of the world of the military including Commander Joint Force Command Brunnsom (and former MNC NE

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Commander) General Egon Ramms, Deputy Chief of the German Army Lieutenant General Günter Weiler, Polish Land Forces Commander Major General Tadeusz Buk, Commander Danish Operational Command Major General Henrik Bundsgaard, Deputy Commander German Army Forces Command Major General Bruno Kasdorf and many others.

Smallest Corps with high level of ambition

As soon as MNC NE Commander Lieutenant General Zdzisław Goral reported to the Ministers of Defence the readiness of formation, the inspection of troops took place. Afterwards, the NATO Hymn resounded played by the Szczecin Garrison Military Band. Then, the floor was taken by MNC NE Commander Lieutenant General Zdzisław Goral, the host of the 10th

Anniversary celebrations:

“On 18 September 1999 the inauguration ceremony of the Corps’ establishment took place in Szczecin. This is the reason that we are here today, at the same place, to celebrate the 10th

birthday of the Corps”.

General Goral mentioned most important achievements of the Corps, such as achieving Full Operational Capability, mission in Afghanistan as well as developing the Corps’ multinational character. He thanked those who supported the Corps throughout those past 10 years including National Support Elements and Headquarters Company.

“We feel at home here being grateful for this city’s friendship, openness and support”

, General Goral said emphasizing excellent relationship with Szczecin authorities and local residents.

“I am deeply convinced that the Corps has written a fine story of success throughout these past 10 years. Multinational cooperation, professional development and effective integration – these have been the guideposts along our way. These ideas will continue to guide us in the future, too”,

summarized the Commander.

“The decision made 10 years ago to establish the Corps opened a wide window of possibilities for Poland to develop cooperation with Germany and Denmark”, said Polish Minister of Defence His Excellency Mr Bogdan Klich in his speech.

“The role of the Corps has become nowadays even more eminent bringing visible advantages to its Framework Nations, other contributing participants as well as the whole Alliance whole Force Structure MNC NE remains an integral element of”

, Mr Klich continued.

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Danish Minister of Defence His Excellency Mr Søren Gade noticed among other things a multinational character of the Corps: *"It has been ten good years for multinational cooperation"*, he said.

"The Corps is therefore an outstanding example of regional cooperation and integration within NATO, and a valuable asset for continued work with partner nations"

, he added. He summarized his speech with a statement that

"today, we can be really proud of the results that Multinational Corps Northeast has achieved".

A very important moment in the official part of celebrations was awarding medals and certificates for military and civilian personnel of the Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast, Headquarters Company and National Support Elements. These were medals "Stars of Afghanistan" and "Stars of Iraq", "Polish Armed Forces Medals", medals of "Merits for Country Defence" and "The Armed Forces Serving for the Homeland".

Since ties between Multinational Corps Northeast and the city of Szczecin has always been close, also Mayor of Szczecin Mr Piotr Krzystek addressed all the gathered guests and inhabitants of Szczecin: *"I wish to emphasize that Baltic Barracks is our city's mark and pride. I express joy that perfect cooperation and friendly relations between the authorities of the city and the Corps are our common success. The close ties foster our partnership and allow us to carry out common events"*, he said. *"I wish you a never-ending streak of successes. Let your service give you much joy and satisfaction"*
, Mr Krzystek wished the Corps for the future.

Military parade

After the speeches, a long-awaited moment took place. Thousands of people gathered at Waly Chrobrego watched how troops first formed formations and then marched past along the Odra River. All military bands played music at that time what made it very unique. People started to clap their hands, wave MNC NE flags and balloons. And, for sure, it was an unforgettable experience for many of them to see marching soldiers from 11 nations of the Corps along with colour guards and guards of honour.

Serenade at the Castle

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As soon as the official part of the celebrations ended, the invited guests moved to the Castle of Pomeranian Dukes, where two more speakers addressed the audience. The first of them was German Secretary of State His Excellency Mr Thomas Kossendey. *“This Headquarters has made a quite amazing development within just 10 years. Quicker than any child ever could”,* he emphasized. *“I am certain that the family of our 10-year old child here in Szczecin will continue to grow in the years ahead”*, he summarized.

Joint Force Command Brunssum General Egon Ramms, who was the MNC NE Commander from 2004 to 2006, started his speech in Polish saying that *“the first years of a new organisation are always the hardest, and to see many successes of this organisation during this 10th Anniversary celebration makes a former Commander proud”*.

General Ramms also talked about NATO and the mission in Afghanistan, which is currently the greatest challenge for the Alliance. In his final word, he referred to MNC NE home garrison: *“I want to thank the people of Szczecin and Poland hosting this Headquarters here in this beautiful town. You are doing well. Please continue. Include members of MNC NE and their families into your society”*.

The ceremony at the Castle ended up with so-called serenade, musical performance played as a final highlight of the reception. This German tradition is to honour guests who line up for the serenade.

Attractions for people

Although the military parade was a huge attraction itself, HQ MNC NE and Szczecin authorities prepared much more entertainment for the people. There were concerts of shanty and folk music, karate competition, inflatable toys for children as well as Danish, German and Polish warships open to public. Hungry participants could have a free meal at the field kitchen and bakery. A huge attraction was a display of heavy equipment from Denmark, Germany and Poland like tanks, artillery, armoured vehicles. Also a display of equipment prepared by Polish mechanized infantry section drew a lot of attention. A very popular place was the MNC NE Promotion Tent where lots of gadgets were waiting for people, like balloons, flags, leaflets, guides to MNC NE, calendars, lanyards and others. Everybody had a chance to see multinational presentations about MNC NE or take a photo in a uniform. And there were also many other attractions...

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Inhabitants of Szczecin enjoyed their time at Waly Chrobrego till late evening when at 22:00 fireworks flared up and for a few minutes the sky was lit up with thousands of colours.

More coverage on attractions during MNC NE 10th Anniversary will be published soon.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Px_PijgpB4

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTo-MMkVx3A>

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