

Team from Oberammergau prepares for ISAF mission

Written by AG

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For five days, 4-person Mobile Education Training Team from NATO School in Oberammergau and about 10 outside instructors were training 32 personnel of Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast (HQ MNC NE) for the upcoming mission in Afghanistan in 2010.

Main preparations for organising the ISAF Intelligence Course in Baltic Barracks were already made during last visit to Baltic Barracks of members of the Mobile Education Training Team from the NATO School in July 2009. Since all technical arrangements were made and a formal agreement was signed by HQ MNC NE and NATO School, the course could finally be conducted from 5 to 9 October 2009 as part of mission preparation process for HQ MNC NE personnel.

“To prepare them for their job”

“Our aim is to prepare the people going to intelligence positions in ISAF in the best way possible so we are getting in experts with recent experience from ISAF to tell people what is going on in Afghanistan, what they should foresee and how they should prepare themselves”, said Course Director Lieutenant Colonel Ronny Sorby, Norwegian Army. During the course all participants learned about current situation in Afghanistan and received instructions and pieces of advice on how to do their future jobs and what they should expect. For that reason, the presence of

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trainers from different Headquarters with experience from ISAF on similar positions to future HQ MNC NE posts was of such significance. Additionally, several videoconferences were conducted during the course, also with ISAF personnel in Afghanistan. This allowed for more in-depth analysis of topics and, most of all, firsthand information.

The whole course was a mixture of theoretical lectures and practical work in syndicates. Most of course participants would occupy positions within Joint Intelligence Centre of the ISAF Joint Command, therefore, there was lots of training prepared for example for analysts. Lieutenant Colonel Sorby noticed that in comparison to training organised by the NATO School in Oberammergau, courses conducted by Mobile Education Training Team outside the school are slightly different, depending on e.g. availability of instructors and the students' needs. *"This course has been a little bit easier because everyone is going to the same Headquarters. Normally, when we do such courses in Oberammergau, people go everywhere all around Afghanistan. But, of course, running a course outside the school is administratively more complicated but that has worked in an excellent way"*, he said.

Lieutenant Colonel Guido Altendorf from HQ MNC NE G2 Division noticed that some course participants had already had experiences gained in ISAF. Such differences have not been an obstacle, though. To the contrary, he treated them as an advantage: *"We do not learn only from lectures and external briefers but also from each other and this is maybe one of the most important things about the course conducted here in our barracks in Szczecin and not in Oberammergau"*. As a matter of fact, exchange of experiences also resulted in team building process and establishing personal relations, which were among important priorities for this course. Therefore, apart from G2 staff also personnel from other Headquarters Divisions took part in the course, especially those who would cooperate with Intelligence cells during the mission in Afghanistan.

Training to be continued

"It has been according to the plan" – Course Director Lieutenant Colonel Ronny Sorby assessed the training positively hoping that all students would have a better view on the situation in Afghanistan and their preparedness for the mission. From the Headquarters' side the comments were favourable as well.

This ISAF Intelligence Course does not complete mission preparation process within

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Intelligence area though. The next step is going to be Functional Area Training on different stages. The final test before the mission in Afghanistan will be taken at Joint Warfare Centre in Stavanger, Norway.