

Seminar of Berlin Garrison Command at HQ MNC NE

Written by Steffen Zander

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A group of visitors from a seminar organized by the Berlin Garrison Command paid a visit to Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast (HQ MNC NE) on 14 October 2011.

The group consisted of teachers and educationalists from the public sector and the regional economy; they travelled across Poland for a week and Szczecin was the last stop on their way back to Berlin. According to the officer accompanying the group, Lieutenant Colonel Hans-Christian Köhnke, the main objective of this seminar was to give an understanding of how the German Armed Forces work; especially their integration into multinational structures within NATO, but also with the new partner Poland. Of course, the history Polish-German relations up to nowadays were also depicted in the programme that lead the group from Słubice to the Joint Force Training Centre (JTFC) in Bydgoszcz, and Warsaw.

Prior to visiting Baltic Barracks, they took a guided tour of the bunker beneath Szczecin Central Station. During the visit to HQ MNC NE, all guests participated in a presentation delivered by Lieutenant Colonel Carsten Heß from the Logistic Operations Branch of the Headquarters' Logistic Staff Division. Not only did the presentation stress the history, tasks, and role of the Corps, but also presented how the cooperation among the three Framework Nations, i.e. Denmark, Germany and Poland and the eight other Participating States works. As many of the

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German soldiers live in Poland together with their families, some questions were asked about the education of their children who attend Szczecin International School and thus benefit from multilingual classes.

"To be frank I had no idea how the training of soldiers is organized nowadays, I had expected to meet soldiers in combat situations," said Peter Zahn the former Executive for Training and Education of Siemens in Berlin , who was among the group.

"I found highly trained and motivated officers instead who share the experiences made in missions to avoid military errors that in the end prevent the loss of life of every soldier on the ground,"

he added.