

Danes bring Christmas to Baltic Barracks

Written by AG

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On 5 December 2011, Danish community of the Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast and Danish National Support Element invited honourable guests, members of the Headquarters, National Support Elements, Headquarters Company for a traditional Danish 'Jule-Gløgg' which brought the spirit of upcoming Christmas into Baltic Barracks.

Jule-Gløgg is a wine based drink with aromatic spices, almonds and raisins. It is popular in Denmark especially around Christmas time; it also lent its name to the Danish Christmas event organised in Baltic Barracks. Even though it is a truly Danish event with Danish traditions, delicacies and drinks, its extraordinary and multinational character was clearly depicted during a Holy Mass which initiated the celebration. Prayers in Danish, German, English and Polish and the Holy Mass celebrated together by the Danish, German and Polish military chaplains at Szczecin's Garrison Church proved the fact that nations contributing to Multinational Corps Northeast cherish national customs and traditions. A highlight of the Holy Mass was a traditional procession of light. St. Lucy's Bride, wearing a wreath of fir and candles on her head, was leading the procession of children holding candles in their hands and singing St. Lucy's song.

The second part of the celebration took part in Baltic Barracks. Each guest crossing the

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threshold of the gym, entered a different world. Beautiful Christmas decorations, thousands of lights and candles made everybody think of upcoming Christmas. Colonel Søren B. Bojesen, the Danish Senior National Officer, welcomed everybody and invited them for tasting traditional Danish delicacies and beverages: *‘Velbekomme! Smacznego! Guten Appetit! Enjoy!’*.

‘Jule-Gløgg’ is probably the best moment for the Danish community in the whole year when they can express their content of living in Poland, together with ten other nations of the Multinational Corps Northeast. *‘This event serves not only the purpose of setting our minds for the upcoming season. It also gives the Danish community an opportunity to thank all our “external beneficiaries” – all you who make our life here in the wonderful city of Szczecin so much easier,’* Colonel Bojesen emphasized.

Christmas time is also a good time to give a hand to the needy. Therefore, an integral part of Jule-Gløgg was a traditional Christmas Charity Bazaar prepared by Danish ladies. The proceeds from selling the homemade gifts, crafts and goodies will be handed over to Szkoła Podstawowa Specjalna i Gimnazjum Specjalne in Nowe Czarnowo.

There were friendly talks, children cheerfully playing around a huge Christmas tree, there was music played by Szczecin Military Band and various Danish Christmas delicacies. But most of all there was great, family atmosphere joining people from eleven nations.

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Photos by Marian Cihon, SVK CIV