

NCOs unite and receive more education

Written by AG

Friday, 27 March 2009 13:26



It was a very important week for all non-commissioned officers (NCOs) of the Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast. From 23 to 27 March a Classic NCO Course for junior NCOs was taking place, whereas on 26 and 27 March a NCO Seminar was organised.

Juniors "at school"

The education of non-commissioned officers of HQ MNC NE started in December 2008 and has been continued until this very Classic NCO Course. "*The aim of this training is to prepare NCOs in the best way possible for a mission as well as to broaden their knowledge about NATO as such and, simply, to make better leaders out of them*", said Sergeant Major Michael Frøslev, an organiser and mentor of the NCO education within HQ MNC NE.

As a matter of fact, previous steps in the NCO education encompassed senior NCOs ranking from Master Sergeant to Sergeant Major, who possessed some required knowledge and experience. They took part in a two-week Advanced Leadership Course divided into two one-week sessions, which took place in December 2008 and January 2009 respectively.

The Classic NCO Course was organised for junior NCOs ranking from Lance Corporal to Staff Sergeant – mostly all those who did not have a chance to participate in the Advanced Leadership Course. The course was conducted by an American-Croatian-Norwegian team from the Joint Mobile Training Team of the Joint Forces Command Brunssum. The topics covered in both trainings overlapped to some extent and covered areas, such as operations and administration, training management as well as leadership. Apart from HQ MNC NE members, admin clerks from the Headquarters Company and six servicemen from the Command Support Brigade also took part in the course.

"*Since my ordinary duties refer to purely administrative matters, this course was an excellent occasion to refresh my knowledge and prove that I am a soldier*", said Sergeant Tomasz Ciesielski who was very fond of the training. Master Sergeant Ralf Fricke emphasized another aspect of the training: "*It is absolutely necessary to get to know each other and to build up a network between NCOs from different nations*

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". As he said, a better understanding and cooperation is simply a prerequisite for better work.

To become one NCO Corps



Simultaneously to junior NCOs taking part in the course, their senior colleagues met to participate in the NCO Seminar, which was another step in uniting all NCOs serving at HQ MNC NE. As Sergeant Major Michael Frøslev said, "*When I came to this Headquarters, there was no organisation for NCOs*". They rather functioned within their national spheres where they received, for example, their education. However, training according to national lines is not enough in a truly multinational unit, which HQ MNC NE definitely is. Therefore, in June last year, an NCO initiative was approved and a Senior NCO Board was created in order to establish close cooperation between NCOs from different nations and create "a common corps". The Board takes care of all NCO interests, including education and incorporating newcomers into the MNC NE family.

During the meeting held at the beginning of March, three working groups were created, which focused on different areas of interests: newcomers, education and morale and welfare. Each 3-person working group was occupied with a given topic so that their founding could be presented to the rest of NCOs and discussed during the first day of the NCO Seminar.

In fact, participants of both NCO events met on 27 March when those two undertakings were coming to an end. Senior and junior NCOs listened to the address delivered by a special guest, Command Sergeant Major to the Supreme Allied Command Europe Michael Bartelle. Afterwards, the award ceremony was held in the presence of Command Sergeant Major Michael Bartelle and Command Sergeant Major Mario Ouellet from the Joint Forces Command Brunssum. All course participants received their certificates proving their knowledge and skills. Eventually, senior and junior NCOs could shake their hands as a sign of becoming "one common corps", members of which share experiences and help each other.

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One of challenges NCOs faced during the Classic Course, which aimed at team and trust building:

STATION 1 - Barbed Wire

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Situation

You have arrived at the location and you have encountered a barbed wire obstacle. You have to get through

Mission

You have to get on the other side of the obstacle. Each team member has to overcome the obstacle. Everyone

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You have 20 minutes to get across.

String or thin rope 20 m LIST:

Climbing rope 20 m

Climbing or any strong rope 2-5 m

Marking tape 20-30 m