



# FORTIS IN UNUM

Multinational Corps South-East Magazine, December 2021



#WEARENATO



"FORTIS IN UNUM" is the authorized magazine of Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East, produced by the Military Public Affairs Office. The publication is intended to provide members of Headquarters and the NATO community, as well as international visitors and other individuals, with relevant information on Corps-related topics.

Please, bear in mind that the articles and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the contributing writers and do not necessarily reflect official policy of NATO, or its member nations and cannot be quoted as an official statement of those entities.

The Editor reserves the right to edit or shorten submissions, with the agreement of the sender.

An electronic version is available on the HQ MNC-SE website:

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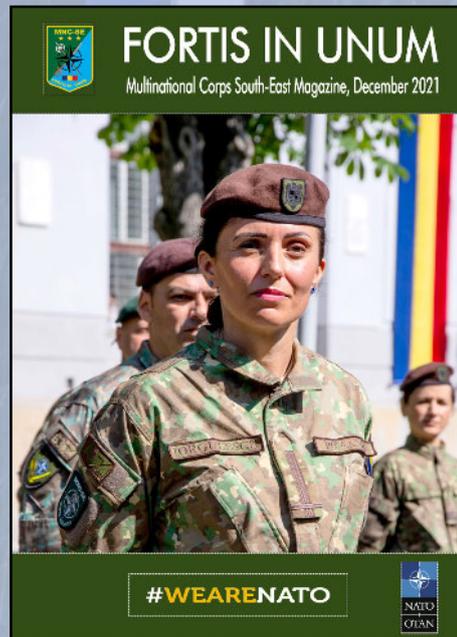
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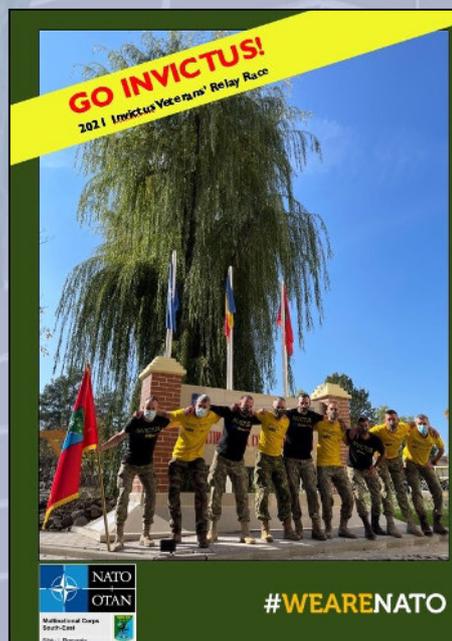
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### FRONT COVER

HQ MNC-SE personnel attending the headquarters' relocation ceremony to Sibiu Garrison, on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021.



### BACK COVER

HQ MNC-SE team getting ready to run the INVICTUS Veterans' Rally Race in honor of the heroes.

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**Nicolae-Ionel  
CIUCA**

**MINISTER  
OF DEFENCE**

*(Nov 2019 - Nov 2021)*

The establishment of the Multinational Corps South-East is unequivocally strengthening the Alliance's posture on the Eastern flank, demonstrating once again Romania's undeniable commitment to NATO and its values.

Building an Allied corps level command and control capability on Romanian territory is not only a proof of the cohesion among the Allied nations but also of the strategic importance of the Black Sea region.

As Multinational Corps South-East is a capability of vital importance in the region for the Alliance and Romania, as a Framework Nation, the Ministry of National Defence devotes the appropriate resources and expertise to create the conditions for HQ MNC-SE to reach the desired level of readiness as scheduled. Still, it is to appreciate the efforts of all the participating NATO nations contributing to this initiative.

Looking back in retrospect, it is quite obvious the marked progress HQ MNC-SE has made in the areas of readiness, interoperability, capability development, and infrastructure since its establishment in 2020, which gives me confidence that the Corps will achieve the Full Operational Capability in 2024.

Since this is the first edition of the HQ MNC-SE magazine and I feel proud of your achievements, I will take this opportunity to congratulate the Multinational Corps' South-East Command Group and staff, whose efforts and dedication make this ambitious defence project get closer to reality day by day.

I also have to acknowledge the outstanding outcome of the cooperation with our strategic partner, the United States of America, and within NATO, as well as the contribution of the national civilian and military institutions that worked together to establish the best environment for HQ MNC-SE development.

## **Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East - Increasing the Relevance of Romania across the Alliance**

In the process of NATO adaptation to strengthen the deterrence and defence posture on its eastern flank, at the NATO Summit in Brussels in July 2018, Romania offered to develop a land command and control capability at corps-level on its territory, integrated into the NATO Force Structure, capable of contributing to the defensive forces' operations planning in the Black Sea region.

The goal of establishing this capability is to reassure Romanian citizens that the forces' operationalization process is meant to provide an effective response to existing security risks and threats, as well as to future challenges. Two years later, in July 2020, President Klaus Johannis announced, during the military ceremony held at the "Getica" Joint National Training Center at Cincu, the establishment of Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East (HQ MNC-SE). The HQ MNC-SE went through a new stage of its functional development at the end of the exercise DEFENDER-Europe 21 in June 2021, when the

Initial Operational Capability was declared. A month later, HQ MNC-SE was relocated to the Sibiu garrison, in accordance with the approval of the Supreme Council of National Defence, benefiting from the strategic geographical position. HQ MNC-SE's development will continue progressively to achieve its Full Operational Capability in 2024.

HQ MNC-SE increases Romania's relevance in NATO through its consistent contribution to the allied defensive architecture, strengthening the regional system of command and control capabilities, and being the link between the national component and the allies in terms of defence and cooperation plans to ensure the security and defence of the Eastern flank.

With the whole spectrum of Allied structures established on its national territory, Romania is a relevant actor in the Black Sea region, which provides stability and contributes significantly to maintaining the strategic balance at regional, European, and Euro-Atlantic levels.



**General  
Daniel PETRESCU  
ROMANIAN CHIEF  
OF DEFENCE STAFF**

I am taking the opportunity of the first issue of the magazine to assure the outstanding staff of this headquarters of my highest consideration and esteem. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Romanian and Allied military and civilian personnel for their commitment to the success of Romania's endeavor in consolidating NATO collective defence.

# Commander's Foreword



I have the pleasure of welcoming you to the first edition of "FORTIS IN UNUM", the HQ MNC-SE magazine, issued on a special moment to honor Romania's National Day, 1<sup>st</sup> of December. As Commander, my intention is to establish an annual presence of this internal communication product, hoping that its quality will also draw the interest of the NATO community.

Since the headquarters' establishment in June 2020, it has been an incredibly thriving period for HQ MNC-SE, strained by the pandemic but abundant in activities and training events, culminating with our participation in Exercise DEFENDER Europe 21 CAX/CPX, highlights that we have tried to cover as much as possible in the present edition. Working in a COVID-19 environment posed an additional challenge that forced us to adapt, to be more innovative, and to identify alternate solutions and new ways to meet our demanding training and exercises programme.

We started to build this HQ at the end of 2019. The most relevant milestones achieved so far are reflected in the pages of this publication:

- A Core Team was established to build the foundation of the new HQ (October 2019);
- Post Allocation and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) conferences (March 2020, SHAPE) with 11 contributing Allies besides Romania as the Framework Nation;
- Official Establishment of the HQ, based on the Romanian Parliament Decision (June 2020, JNTC CINCUI)
- Signing of the first Mutual Training Support Agreement with ARRC (September 2020)
- Activation of the HQ as a NATO Military Body by the North Atlantic Council (February 2021)
- First and second HQ MNC-SE Plenary meetings (April and November 2021)
- Site Survey with COM ARRC and COM US V Corps in Bulgaria and Romania (May 2021)
- Exercise Defender Europe 21 and declaration of Initial Operational Capability (May - June 2021)
- Signing of the HQ MNC-SE MOU by the participating nations and SHAPE (June 2021)
- Relocation of the HQ to Sibiu (July 2021)
- Signing of the second Mutual Training Support Agreement with ARRC (November 2021)

In addition to the aforementioned events, while we were still operating from our temporary location in Bucharest, we had to cast the entire DOTMLPFI basement on which the HQ MNC-SE structure was to be built, well in advance of our relocation to Sibiu. The most important lines of effort were to staff the legal framework of our existence, initiate civil engineering works and CIS infrastructure investment, build the 46th

Support Regiment, prepare adequate working, living, and fighting conditions in both temporary and permanent locations, select experienced personnel, and plan the Corps' fundamental fighting concepts.

Herein, I have to emphasize the precious support of Romanian national structures as well as the cooperation with NATO HQ, SHAPE, JFC Naples, LANDCOM, HQ ARRC, USAREUR-AF, and US V Corps, whose expertise, mentoring, and support were invaluable for HQ MNC-SE to achieve the present level of capability development. Thereby, this edition is to recognize the national and allied efforts, the hard work and perseverance of the HQ's personnel, men and women, that have contributed to the evolution of this NATO regional Corps Headquarters - a record for future generations.

For this very first edition, the magazine encompasses addresses of the Romanian Minister of Defence (between Nov 2019 - Nov 2021) and of the Chief of Defence, perspectives of the HQ MNC-SE and of the partner Corps leadership, HQ ARRC and US V Corps while working together for more than one year, and of many others. The magazine is a forum that accommodates various topics, approaches, concepts, and opinions of numerous authors from across HQ Multinational Corps South-East, to include the security environment in the region, HQ development towards Full Operational Capability, the professional challenges, and experiences worth being shared within the NATO Corps community and NATO wide.

As the Headquarters continues to grow in all domains, I felt the necessity to inaugurate the magazine, at this stage, as a forum for professional discussions and the sharing of ideas.

I personally encourage each and every staff member to submit their contributions to the magazine's editorial staff.

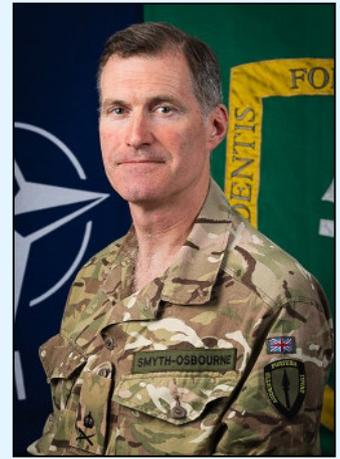
**"FORTIS IN UNUM"**

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tomița-Cătălin TOMESCU".

**Tomița-Cătălin TOMESCU**  
**LTG, ROU A**  
**COMMANDER MNC-SE**

# Baptism by Fire: A New Romanian Multinational Corps is Born

**LTG Sir Edward SMYTH-OSBOURNE, KCVO CBE, ARRC Commander**



In November of 2020 the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) was the first NATO corps to be validated as a corps warfighting headquarters held at high readiness since the end of the Cold War. With such a distinction comes great responsibility and rightfully so. Maintaining readiness and the ability to *fight tonight* is quite a challenge, but one that was overcome thanks to a key opportunity that emerged in Romania. After an agreement between LTG Tomița-Cătălin Tomescu and myself, we decided that a new partnership could be mutually beneficial to both corps and it would simultaneously increase NATO's land interoperability and defensive posture in the region.

Multinational Corps South-East (MNC-SE) was identified as a participating corps with US Army Europe and Africa's (USAREUR-AF) large DEFENDER EUROPE 21 Command Post exercise. MNC-SE was going to jump right into the fire and test itself in a demanding simulation exercise against a free-thinking opposing force. A bold and daring commitment indeed, this new corps was going into a difficult joint fight. Given ARRC's recent accreditation it seemed appropriate to help and by doing so, MNC-SE could enhance, and to a degree, accelerate its attainment of initial operating capability a bespoke and robust training opportunity. Likewise, the ARRC would profit from joining forces to further maintain readiness at corps warfighting with a Combined Joint Land Force Component Command (CJFLCC) headquarters and equally, if not more important, gain an insight and understanding into the Black Sea Region in line with Alliance policy. This partnership and the experience of EUROPE DEFENDER 21 proved hugely rewarding for all those involved. I am particularly grateful

for the teamwork which was evident at all levels. If I was to boil down the key insights gathered from the ARRC perspective it would be distilled down to three points: first, the speed and tempo of tactical corps warfighting; secondly, the integrating effects across domains; and thirdly, the need for Host Nation expertise and, by that token, the absolute requirement for coherent combined planning and execution to achieve unity of command and effort, thus harnessing the power of an alliance.

Successful tactical manoeuvre relies on a speed and tempo which enables one to concentrate strength against enemy weakness to create multiple dilemmas and advantage over adversaries. This is challenging at the corps level given the large volume of information to process and synthesize springing at multiple levels. We must strive to improve systems, processes methods to increase the tempo of decision making, conscious that the timing of execution remains a command decision. Flexible and fast planning wins the day and thus requires Land headquarters to continue improving in this regard. Fighting with MNC-SE in DEFENDER EUROPE 21 provided another step in this direction and we are conducting further experimentation on Exercise STEADFAST LEDA 21.

Operating under the US CJFLCC illuminated the growing effects that can be coordinated across domains. Both MNC-SE and the ARRC were exposed to new capabilities that can create windows of advantage for a convergence of effects. More repeated practice and learning will shore up new ways of fighting. Wargaming and simulations to test integrations should

be ruthlessly pursued and shared across all Land headquarters. It follows that learning from failure is best applied outside the final audit of physical battle, where the crucible of ground combat is unforgiving and unrelenting. We need to sweat and suffer in peace to avoid bleeding and dying in war.

Finally, the last point and probably the most important coming out of this experience with MNC-SE is the absolute value provided by local expertise. Not only does MNC-SE know their back yard, they have historical experience that provides invaluable insight to the region and its competitors. This should not be overlooked and cannot be understated; the Alliance benefits tremendously from regional expertise and knowledge. Understanding should precede action and without a doubt, the ARRC learned much from its Romanian brothers and sisters in this regard. There is no way to supplant or gain this lifelong knowledge resident within our partners. It must remain valued and harnessed in ways that confers advantage.

We are hugely grateful for the robust and resilient relationship that has been created between ARRC and MNC-SE. It is a relationship that is designed to survive the test of time throughout the spectrum of conflict. As I write a cohort of Staff from Sibiu are fully integrated into our MAIN and FWD Headquarters, training together and sharing lessons ~ as steadfast allies. It is an example of one of the many things we must embrace to build for our collective defence. In a defensive alliance if we want peace, we must prepare for war.



Commanders' Terrain Walk for Exercise DEFENDER Europe 21 CAX/CPX

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# DE21 Corps' Commanders Terrain Walk in Romania & Bulgaria



**LTG John KOLASHESKI, V Corps Commander**



*V Corps Commander meets with Romanian leaders during the Defender 21 Terrain Walk*

training facility capabilities and areas that could be used for future exercises. At the completion of the Terrain Walk, I came away with a better understanding of the terrain, an appreciation of training areas and facilities in the region, and closer ties with leaders from the

ARRC, HQ MNC-SE, Romanian Land Forces, and the Bulgarian military. insight into the Black Sea region which I and my headquarters have benefited. Our continued collaboration with HQ MNC-SE enhances regional security and improves NATO's security posture. Having V Corps and HQ MNC-SE troops working side-by-side helps to strengthen interoperability, trust, and overall readiness.

On behalf of V (U.S.) Corps, I would like to thank LTG Tomescu, his team at Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East, and the Romanian and Bulgarian militaries for their support over the past year, and again congratulate HQ MNC-SE on achieving Initial Operational Capability (IOC). Continued cooperation between our military forces is critical for cooperative security and credible deterrence, and if necessary, crisis management and collective defense.

The Defender Europe 21 (DEF 21) exercise was V Corps' first opportunity to integrate with allies in a training exercise. This helped strengthen our interoperability and built our operational capability.

In preparation for DEF 21, I was fortunate to travel to Romania and Bulgaria for a HQ MNC-SE hosted Terrain Walk. It proved very beneficial in providing perspective of the exercise location as well as a familiarization of the terrain that V Corps trained on during the exercise. I visited the region previously and I always come away with a deeper appreciation for the contributions of the Romanian and Bulgarian leaders and Soldiers serving in the Romanian and Bulgarian Armed Forces.

The DEF 21 Terrain Walk showcased how Allied forces can move and maneuver in Europe. It highlighted

ARRC, HQ MNC-SE, Romanian Land Forces, and the Bulgarian military.

I appreciated my time spent with HQ MNC-SE and I am always grateful for the continued hospitality I experience every time I visit Mihail Kogalniceau Airbase and other parts of the region. Opportunities like the Terrain Walk allow us to not only learn more about how to improve our interoperability, but to strengthen our relationships with the leaders and Soldiers serving in NATO and the Romanian and Bulgarian Armed Forces.

Romania and Bulgaria are key strategic Allies. I consider HQ MNC-SE a significant source of experience and

Looking ahead, our participation in future exercises will be important in building our collective capability and capacity to operate with a common purpose. If ever called upon to carry out a real-world contingency, I am confident we will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with commands like HQ MNC-SE and be successful. I appreciate our close partnership with HQ MNC-SE, the Romanian and Bulgarian Armed Forces, and I am eager to continue to work together in solidarity. Again, congratulations on achieving IOC and we look forward to a brighter future alongside you.

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*V Corps Commander with NATO Corps Commanders during the Defender 21 Terrain Walk*

# Seizing the Intellectual High Ground: An Academics Experience to Remember in Romania



 **MG Matthew VAN WAGENEN, DCG-M, V Corps**

In my last job as deputy chief of staff for operations (DCOS OPS), I had the privilege and distinct honor to help bring two corps together: the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) and the Multinational Corps South-East (MNC-SE). Both corps commanders agreed that it would be mutually beneficial to collaborate and prepare for last year's Europe Defender 21 exercise. The MNC-SE would benefit from the help a recently validated corps warfighting headquarters and the ARRC would benefit from learning from a regional partner, further enhancing its readiness and warfighting capability.

To help this Romanian corps establish a firm foundation, LTG Tomescu, the corps commander, asked that a joint planning team plan and execute their first academic seminar. This initial event, described as a senior leader academics forum, served as a platform for in-depth intellectual conversations. Everyone present invested time to think about how to build a new corps and where it fits

into the broader alliance network. The team worked safely around a continued pandemic and various national restrictions to bring together top scholars and military leaders, which drove interactive discussions about strategy, planning, warfighting, and operational culture.

The level of introspection was enlightening. The approach was partner-centric with everyone challenged to open up their minds and exercise imaginations. Our team worked quickly and booked a venue that would provide an atmosphere that enabled not just learning, but true collaboration at all ranks and levels. There was no holding back on delivering the latest ideas and cutting-edge scholarship to this group. The most challenging concepts were presented, unpacked, and fully debated, allowing the competition of ideas to flow.

I remember a colleague present, a Romanian general, highlight the significance of this approach by saying "it is a new way to collaborate and think amidst a military culture that is normally very hierarchical." The

group was taught by warrior scholars who have mastered the methodology for design thinking, and in turn, developed a framework to describe how the Romanian corps intends to operate and fight. An introduction to NATO planning from the ARRC provided necessary linkages for NATO procedural interoperability and examples of assessments, red teaming, and wargaming were shared. Overall, there are three big ideas to take away from this event that illustrate the exceptional thinking from such a diverse group:

**1. Mission Command.** Dr. Robert Johnson from the Oxford Changing Character of War Centre delivered an impactful lecture titled "Decision-Making in the Information Age." His presentation's ideas triggered a discussion on the agility and speed required to make decisions on today's modern battlefield. There was a consensus from young and old that operations orders do not need to be thousands of pages. In fact, most general officers present recommended mission-type orders, which provide a general commander's intent with an associated plan of action and tasks for each subordinate unit with enough detail to ensure adequate coordination. Tasks were to be outcomes based and not overly descriptive. There is value in saying less and providing increased freedom to operate to your subordinate units.

Dr. Johnson warned that adversaries use the speed of NATO decision-making to determine their range of options and make



calculations. It is key for the alliance to respond with appropriate measures to contest, compete, and impose friction that will force would-be adversaries to change their cost-calculus, giving them a realization that the costs outweigh any perceived benefits. This lesson applies to multiple adversaries and across all regions. It was intelligently discussed in this forum by participants from both corps to include the participants from the Romanian defense college.

2. **Bottom-Up Innovation.** A key presentation to the group was by members of Fight Club International, a wargaming experimentation group. The younger Romanian leaders expressed a high interest in stress testing ideas and concepts through gaming and simulations to discover winning ideas and innovations. This approach from the bottom-up will drive experimentation, but more importantly, it will garner long-term buy-in and improve professionalism across formations. The level of human interoperability at the most junior levels will increase between multiple nations as this effort expands across the alliance. I have been involved with this Fight Club from its earliest of days and watched its remarkable growth and impact in the British and now, US Army.

The output from some of the design thinking sessions pointed out the need to start from a blank sheet of paper. Similar to the US Marine Corps Commandant's Planning Guidance in July of 2019, our Romanian brothers and sisters know they have a unique problem frame and value proposition to NATO and their nation. Finding their niche and the intersection of mutual interests requires critical and creative thinking that can be informed by wargaming and more of these types of academic sessions. This was just the beginning and I know this new corps is devoted and committed to learning.

3. **Geography Matters.** The Romanian corps commander, LTG Tomiță - Cătălin Tomescu, provided sage advice on the vital importance of



the lay of the land. He has spent many decades learning the region and all the nuances of the geography that cannot be appreciated with satellite imagery and maps alone. This wisdom is another benefit of operating in an alliance where knowledge is shared horizontally and vertically.

In the Romanians we have a fully committed and devoted partner. They have invested in a number ground capabilities to include the Patriot missile defense system, Piranha armored vehicles, high mobility artillery rocket systems (HIMARS), and other key platforms, to strengthen our collective defense. After working with our Romanian counterparts over the past year, it is abundantly clear they will be successful in building this new corps that will serve as a strategic hub of activity in the region.

LTG Tomescu highlighted early last year that "trust and understanding are essential" and after this initial academic forum he confirmed "indeed, we not only have that, but we have also formed a strong bond of relationships across multiple generations that will endure for decades to come." In science, biodiversity drives evolution and this holds true for human society.

Amidst such diversity, in a multinational environment, this group of thinkers sought the intellectual high ground, and in no small way, made an extraordinary step in evolving the thinking behind the application land power in NATO. I was honored to be part of it all and the journey continues.

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# A Mutual Opportunity to Improve and Learn: Supporting the Development of MNC-SE



**MG Lorenzo D'ADDARIO, Deputy Commander ARRC**

A few weeks after I joined HQ ARRC, right in the midst of the first wave of the pandemic, COMARRC tasked me to travel to Commander MNC-SE, to discuss our support to their Headquarters, on a path to become a Graduated Readiness Forces (GRF) HQ. I was elated: in 2001 I had joined the nascent HQ NRDC-ITA, as Military Assistant to its first Commander, at the very start of their process to become a GRF HQ; in that occasion the British Army and HQ ARRC had supported us greatly, and this felt an opportunity to support, in turn, a sister organization in this exciting endeavour, thus returning the favour! On top of that, I had been in operations with the Romanian Army in several occasions and the opportunity was therefore fantastic, considering also the affinity between our two peoples.

In early June 2020 BG Griffith, our Chief G7, and I flew across a desert

airspace to Bucharest to scope the task. I met then MG Tomescu and I was overwhelmed by his energetic drive and contagious enthusiasm. I was also received by MG Berdilă, the Chief of the Army, and realised the focus and the strategic importance of the project for the Romanian Defence. Since then, I returned several times to Bucharest, with BG Van Wagenen, DCOS Ops, and BG Salgado, DCOS Sp, and other colleagues from HQ ARRC, to support HQ MNC-SE with Academics, each time to find progress and improvements, under the charismatic lead of Commander "Tom". I met MG Ciolponea, new DCOM MNC-SE, and we were friends.

The activities culminated in Ex Defender 21, when about a hundred of us integrated in the Staff of HQ MNC-SE for their Initial Operating Capability exercise. I was with BG Salgado, who led the team, and our

new DCOS Ops, BG Brooks, joined the exercise immediately after his posting to HQ ARRC. It was a moment of great professional and personal progress for both staffs, an opportunity to mutually learn and grow as military and as members of our great Alliance. We learned a lot in terms of style of command, regional perspective and novel approaches to manoeuvre. I returned home with the sense of having done something as useful to our Alliance as personally enjoyable: an opportunity of growth for all of us.

I am writing these lines during Ex Steadfast Leda 21... this time Romanian comrades have joined us in Germany to exercise with us. I sense this is only but the start! It is an honour and a privilege to be part of all this and work alongside fantastic new colleagues, to the overall benefit of our Alliance and our professional development.

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# HQ MNC-SE Operational Environment

 **MG Constantin-Adrian CIOLPONEA, MNC-SE Deputy Commander**



Current and future military confrontations are characterized by high-tempo operations, short decision-making cycles supported by automated Artificial Intelligence (AI) analysis processes, and efficient "sensor to shooter loops". In a highly volatile geopolitical environment, complexity is added by the nature of multiple threats, adversary military technological innovation, and digitalized global spectrum.

A NATO Corps HQ has a clear defined role and mission during different phases: competition, crisis, and conflict. The last phase, usually the most demanding for a Corps HQ, also involves a complex shaping operation, attuned to JFC/MC-LCC/SACEUR intent and end-state. *"The corps synchronizes the employment of land power in conjunction with joint and land capabilities provided by the JFHQ/LCC. Corps operations shape the operational environment and set the conditions for tactical activities by the division and lower echelons. In combat operations, the corps task-organizes and maneuvers divisions to destroy enemy land forces, seize key terrain and critical infrastructure, and dominate the land portion of the joint operation area"*<sup>1</sup>. Thus, critical to shaping the operational environment is the speed of delivering a cascade of effects, paramount to obtaining the desired operational objective.

*"The commander's concept of operations directs the manner in which the divisions cooperate to accomplish the mission, and establishes the sequence of actions necessary to achieve the end-state, expressed in terms of decisive, shaping, and sustaining"*<sup>2</sup>.

The governing principle in the decision-making cycle and effects delivery is based on the combat

principle: find, fix, maneuver, strike, exploit, and consolidate. The corps level has always been tactical, fulfilling at least 5 distinct war-fighting functions: C2 over 3-5 divisions, providing ISR capabilities above divisional level, engaging the adversary in depth with precision deep strike, air support for vertical maneuver and nonetheless-force protection /air defence in the area of responsibility (AOR). Warfighting Corps primary role is distinguished by the scope and scale of the operation. Furthermore, the right set of tools and staff skills is achieved, and then survivability and operational success are achieved.

*"When acting as a warfighting formation, the Corps HQ operates at the tactical level, providing the interface between the operational level provided by the Land Component Command (LCC) and the tactical level activities conducted by divisions. The tactical activities contribute to the effect being generated, which in turn leads to the achievement of operational decisive conditions"*<sup>3</sup>.

As part of the NATO Force Structure (NFS), HQ MNC-SE will contribute to deterrence and, on order, provide corps-level Command and Control for NATO land operations during crisis situations or war.

This structure is designated to facilitate operational coherence between national and Allied defensive plans, and operational integration with Allied forces to support the security architecture on the eastern flank of NATO. HQ MNC-SE was built in accordance with NATO standards for Army Corps and relies on military and civilian personnel from several NATO member states. Romania took over the Framework Nation (FN) responsibility.

From its Activation in February 2021 until June 2021, HQ MNC-SE went through the process of achieving its Initial Operational Capability (IOC) certification.

The exercise DEFENDER Europe 2021 had a complex Command Post Exercise (CPX) scenario, in line with the Collective Defence primary mission, where USAEUR, V Corps (US Army) and HQ ARRC were in a supporting role and helped HQ MNC-SE to run through the planning and decision-making cycle in order to reach the desired end-state of defensive-shaping operation.

During the preparation phase, HQ MNC-SE staff went through laborious and extensive academic training in order to fulfill the positions required for the exercise, which culminated with excellent results in essential areas such as: operational planning, intelligence, targeting, current ops, communications, and logistic support. Besides NATO procedures (SOPs and SOIs), doctrine, language, communication protocols, teamwork and flexibility proved to be key elements while working to fit in, alongside our US and ARRC partners. During the exercise, the level of efficiency was measured by the HQ reaction time to solve a crisis or sudden situational change in the operational environment and to develop contingency options.

The exercise was a real success, appreciated by both NATO leadership and ROU authorities.

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<sup>1-3</sup> Army Field Manual, War-fighting Tactics-Part 2, HQ Land Warfare Centre, Waterloo Lines, Warminster, 2018, p. 2-1, 2-3, 3-5.

# Developing Corps' Lessons Learned Capability



**BG Valentin BRÎNZEI, HQ MNC-SE Chief of Staff**



In the NATO community, developing a robust Lessons Learned Capability is one of the instruments for the headquarters to ensure the quality of the Knowledge Management and organizational learning systems. The Lessons Learned process begins with observations on the structure, processes, tools, and training that enable a military organization to identify and assess weaknesses, then take appropriate remedial actions and disseminate best practices in order to improve the organization's performance. Finally, through information sharing, the Lessons Learned generate corporate memory, ensuring that the organization continues to utilize best practices and does not repeat previous mistakes.

Exercise Defender Europe 21 CAX/CPX represented the first opportunity for HQ MNC-SE to run the Lessons Learned process during major training event. Starting with the Academics, the Battle Staff Training, and ending up with the execution phase of the exercise, all participating personnel, both from HQ MNC-SE, HQ ARRC, and USAREUR-AF, were actively involved in

identifying valuable lessons to be learned. As one might expect, since the ambition is for HQ MNC-SE to reach its Full Operational Capability in 2024, most of the findings were related to issues to be further analyzed, developed, and implemented through the *Corps Lessons Learned Capability* towards this end state.

At the end of the exercise, after running the Lessons Learned Analysis Phase, we were able to identify the main lines of effort for the Implementation Phase, with the primary focus being on taking the appropriate remedial actions in several of the exercise areas: planning, manning, information management, Battle Rhythm synchronization, implementation and proper use of Functional Area Services, time management, and last but not least, to incorporate them in the revision of the existing SOP's and SOI's.

A successful learning organization must foster a culture that encourages the observations sharing, both positive and negative, in order for lessons to be identified, learned, and

finally exploited. It is about creating the mindset that allows each staff member to feel comfortable and motivated to share their knowledge and expertise in a productive way. This is what we are trying to achieve now. An identified lesson that does not find its practical application, in the end, reflects the incapacity of an organization to adapt or transform.

The challenge, therefore, resides in our ability to run the entire Lessons Learned process in order to effectively combine the new knowledge with existing organizational knowledge and to generate the desired transformation, which would improve the HQ operational performance and minimize the operational risk.

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When the Canadian Army asked me if I wanted to become the first Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL) for the MNC-SE, I answered positively without even thinking about it! What a great honor!

But what is a CSEL? The CSEL is the senior Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) integrated in the Command Group. He provides knowledgeable advice to the Commander. He has to be grounded in critical thinking. All aspects of his role have to be supported by a strong ethical reasoning. Finally, his practical experience is without a doubt great benefit to the organization.

Obviously, practical experience is not coming solely from the CSEL. All NCOs possess tremendous amount of hands on skills and they have to share it on every aspect of their daily routine. It is vital that the organization benefits from the NCOs either by soliciting their advice and

past experience or by genuinely considering their technical expertise. The CSEL are also reaching out to various NCO, soldiers and also officers to help forging a true picture of the operating environment. This is crucial to accurately advise Senior Officers.

I truly believe that Officers and NCOs complete each other by having one group highly educated and the other group highly experimented; this association is imperative to accomplish the missions from higher headquarters all the way down to the platoon level.

People of MNC-SE see this collaboration as the up most importance in these times challenged by a decreasing security environment and also in order for this HQ to achieve Full Operational Capability in 2024.



**CWO Yannick GODBOUT  
HQ MNC-SE Command Senior  
Enlisted Leader (CAN)**

I'm very fortunate to work alongside the people of this cohesive group of Officers, NCOs and soldiers in a Multi National environment.

**FORTIS IN UNUM!**



**LTC Mirel NISTE**

This year, between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of June, more than 400 soldiers of the HQ MNC-SE, 46<sup>th</sup> Support Regiment, HQ ARRC, V Corps (US), USAREUR-AF elements, as well as of different Romanian Armed Forces entities (Response Cells as Corps troops), participated in the DEFENDER EUROPE 2021 Computer Assisted Exercise/Command Post Exercise (DE21 CAX/CPX), conducted both in Romania (Romanian Land Forces, Bucharest) and Germany (Grafenwoehr).

The exercise focused on deterring aggression involved 26 nations, including the U.S., and around 28,000 multinational forces troops, all focused on building operational

readiness and interoperability between NATO allies and partners. On the national territory, the training sequences of Exercise DEFENDER-EUROPE 21 were synchronized with the ones of NATO's exercise STEADFAST DEFENDER 21 (Swift Response - airborne operations in Estonia, Bulgaria and Romania, Immediate Response - more than 5,000 troops from eight nations conducting live-fire training in 12 different countries, Saber Guardian - more than 13,000 service members doing live-fire training as well as air and missile defence operations) through the series of national exercises DACIA 21.

The exercise planning process was a series of complex planning and training activities, consisting of

theoretical preparation seminars for personnel - Academics, Key Leaders Training, Battle Staff Training (BST), deployment to Romania of HQ ARRC personnel, V Corps and their integration into the HQ MNC-SE modules. Moreover, almost 150 Romanian soldiers from all the Services of the Romanian Armed Forces were trained and deployed at the USAREUR-AF Training Centre from Grafenwoehr, Germany in order to fill in the Response Cells (RC) positions and set the necessary conditions for HQ MNC-SE to meet all training objectives.

The cooperation between HQ MNC-SE and HQ ARRC was based on the "Mutual Training Support Agreement" and helped develop a close training relationship between the two headquarters. Under the ARRC mentorship and with USARMY EUROPE-AF support, HQ MNC-SE quickly developed the Initial Operational Capability (IOC) and will continue training to achieve the Full Operational Capability (FOC) by the end of 2024.

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# Mutual Training Support Agreement - MTSA



**COL Dorin ILIE**

It is a generally acknowledged the fact that individual work is most rewarding when blended with collaborative work. Ideally, the project partners share the same values, beliefs, and also pursue similar objectives. Therefore, a team needs to be built and organized based on strong relationships and mutual trust. NATO is such a team - one of 30 nations, benefiting from the best of their experts. At Corps-level, ARRC has already managed to build up a solid team and this is what HQ MNC-SE is eager to put together.

From the very beginning, HQ MNC-SE started by looking around to find the mentors, partners and friends with the knowledge and expertise required to help the organisation grow into a real NATO Corps. "A friend in need is a friend indeed" was proven true in the case of the ARRC. They immediately expressed their availability and

consent to partner with HQ MNC-SE in order to cooperate and mutually support each other in specific domains. *High Expertise, Close Support and Boundless Friendship* were the guiding principles that the ARRC came up with while mentoring us onwards the Initial Operational Capability (IOC) milestone. All these principles were fully applied throughout all DEFENDER



21 Exercise's CPX phases until June 2021. The Mutual Training Support Agreement (MTSA), signed in September 2020 by ARRC Commander - LTG Sir Edward Alexander SMYTH-OSBOURNE and MNC-SE Commander, LTG Tomiță-Cătălin TOMESCU, was the capstone document to formalize and

lay the foundation for the essential areas in which the ARRC and HQMNC-SE decided to cooperate. Nevertheless, prior to signing the MTSA, a composite team of experts from both HQs worked together to develop a detailed programme to ensure the IOC requirements for HQ MNC-SE were met, but also for ARRC to benefit from the agreement - exercise LOYAL LEDA 20, the final step on their way to combat readiness evaluation (CREVAL), was one of these opportunities.

On June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the MNC-SE Commander declared the IOC - half a year earlier than planned, an outcome that became reality also thanks to the successful cooperation between the two NATO Corps HQs, the ARRC and MNC-SE.

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# The First Training Event for HQ MNC-SE EXERCISE LOYAL LEDA 20



**COL Iulian SĂRĂȚEANU**



ARRC exercise – LOYAL LEDA 20 (LOLE20) was the very first training event attended by HQ MNC-SE personnel. It was a proactive measure aimed to prepare the HQ MNC-SE personnel for the upcoming training events. The intent was to upgrade our planning capability, deploying to the UK a team of four Staff Officers to take part in exercise LOLE20, thus gaining experience and learning in the operational environment, along with the personnel from the oldest and one of the most experienced corps in the NATO Force Structure.

While the Allied Land Command (LANDCOM) was responsible for conducting the Combat Readiness Evaluation (CREVAL), HQ AARC was the Primary Training Audience during LOLE20. The aim of LOLE20 for HQ ARRC was to complete their NATO CREVAL in order to be certified at Full Operating Capability (FOC) as NATO's first Warfighting Corps, held at high-

readiness until January 2022. It made them ready and on standby to conduct large-scale short-notice deployments for NATO, commanding and controlling up to 120,000 multinational troops across the full spectrum of military operations. Furthermore, this was

the first time a Corps-level headquarters was at readiness by NATO since the Cold War. LOLE20 involved approximately 1,200 troops conducting exercise operations at RAF South Cerney, RAF Fairford, and Imjin Barracks, United Kingdom.

As part of the Mutual Training Support Agreement, the HQ MNC-SE team members were integrated within the exercise as augmentees, filling in Staff Officers' positions provided in the ARRC Command Posts (CPs) – Main and Forward. Initially, it was agreed upon they acted more as observers; yet, during the process, the Staff Officers' jobs turned into those of fully involved performing members of the HQ ARRC's team. It was an opportunity for the HQ MNC-SE team to get a closer insight into how a 3-star HQ actually works. Additionally, working shoulder to shoulder with the ARRC's members enhanced our understanding of the complex

activities conducted during a Corps-level Command Post Exercise (CPX), providing us with a much clear image of what should be for our HQs in the future. Besides performing duties as Staff Officers, we had the chance to practice with and learn about their Standard Operating Procedures. Moreover, we saw at work a lot of best practices and lessons identified which we lately adopted in producing our own Standard Operating Procedures and our next exercise, Defender Europe 21.

All in all, LOLE20 will remain a milestone in the HQ MNC-SE's history as being the first training event attended by our personnel. Learning with and from the best will always further our development faster rather than learning from our own mistakes only. It only depends on us how we implement and build on what we have experienced.

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# DEFENDER EUROPE 21 - Training Challenges in COVID-19 Environment



 **COL Constantin-Cătălin CEPĂREANU**

The COVID-19 global pandemic has seriously affected not only people's health or way of life but has also impacted the conduct of military operations and activities.

From 25<sup>th</sup> May to 15<sup>th</sup> June, HQ MNC-SE, with the support of NATO ARRC and V Corps (US Army), conducted in Bucharest Phase III B of the exercise DEFENDER EUROPE 21 (DE21) – Command Post Exercise (CPX) / Computer-Assisted Exercise (CAX). Initially, HQ MNC-SE – with support from HQ ARRC Medical branch and ROU Medical Directorate, conducted a thorough Risk Assessment process to identify, analyze and manage COVID-19-related risks, and to ensure a smooth execution of the exercise.

The outcome was the development of a COVID-19 Mitigation Plan for DE 21 CPX/CAX, providing general regulations for all exercise participants deployed into Land Forces Staff barracks with a central focus on maintaining the health and safety of the staff and the supporting community. The execution of the Mitigation Plan was the Medical Treatment Facility ROLE 1's (MTF ROLE 1) responsibility, a young medical team from the 46<sup>th</sup> Support Regiment, supervised by ROU Land Forces Staff MEDAD (see photo). The medical staff provided daily epidemiological checking, rapid COVID-19 testing for all exercise participants and created an Epidemic Buffer Area, in order to isolate from the main group individuals that had presented COVID-19 specific symptoms.

Another important activity was performed by the sanitizer team of the 46<sup>th</sup> Support Regiment which performed the cleaning and disinfection of the exercise compound regularly.

The mitigation measures adopted were proven correct, ensuring the

required level of commitment and preventing even one single infection among the participants during the exercise. We were able to train and build readiness and capability, even under persistent COVID-19 challenges, through proactive coordination and mutual support between the different parties involved in the planning and execution of DE21 CPX/CAX. Although the pandemic is not over yet, the lessons learned during this major training event helped us a great deal enhance our resilience and flexibility. To conclude with, COVID-19 is a game changer that has to be considered in the planning and execution of future military exercises and activities.

In a crisis, like the one we are going through now, leadership and staffs can make a difference, using their experience and critical thinking to find the appropriate solutions to mitigate the epidemiological risk and achieve desired training objectives.

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 **CDR Liviu STRĂMBEANU**



# Defender Europe 21 CAX /

On June 13<sup>th</sup>, the Distinguished Visitors Day/ Media Day took place at the DEFENDER Europe 21 Command Post Exercise / Computer-Assisted (CAX/CPX). On this special occasion, the Chief of the Romanian Defence Staff, Lieutenant General Daniel PETRESCU, the Deputy

Commander of the United States Army for Europe and Africa (USAREUR-AF), Major General Joe JARRARD, the Chief of Staff of the Allied Joint Force Command Naples, Lieutenant General Ignazio GAMBA gave speeches at the press conference, also attended by numerous commanders and representatives of Allied Corps from NATO Force Structure as well as commanders of Romanian Armed Forces structures.

The Distinguished Visitors Day program included a presentation of the exercise's operational concept, training facilities visit, discussions with multinational personnel participating in the exercise, as well as an exhibition of military technique and equipment.





# CPX Bucharest Romania



In addition, the Media Day event gave the journalists access to the distinguished visitors and the exercise participants.

During the press statement issued at the end of the activity, the Chief of the Romanian Defence Staff stated: "At the end of this exercise, the Commander of the Multinational Corps South-East will declare the achievement of the Initial Operational Capability of this structure. This means that, from this point on, the Multinational Corps South-East Command has reached the necessary level of structural capability, to enable it to function as a corps command in NATO's Force Structure."

This capability will continue to grow progressively until it reaches Full Operational Capability in 2024. The MNC-SE Commander, Lieutenant General Tomiță-Cătălin TOMESCU, stated: "HQ MNC-SE is consistently going through the stages of a complex operational program according to NATO requirements".



# Developing an Army Corps Manual and Concept

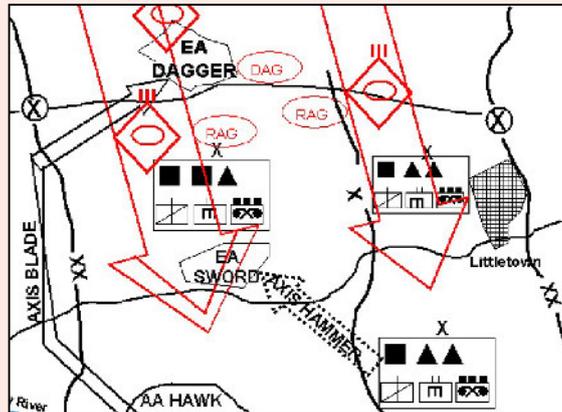


**COL Irinel APOSTOLESCU**

The building-up of the HQ MNC-SE came in the same package with the need to elaborate the doctrinal aspect incorporated in the **Army Corps Manual**, designed to describe the engagement of a modern NATO-like structured army corps. This manual is essential to give guidelines and formulate tactical patterns for the employment of such a unit in operations. Now, it remains necessary to consider an "Army Corps Concept" that will define the nature ("What?") and the role ("What for?") of the HQ MNC-SE, and hence the great

fundamental principles associated with that goal.

The **Army Corps Manual**, planned to be issued in 2022, is up to now only written in the Romanian



language. After a short description of the place & role of an Army Corps, the manual identifies the required units necessary to its implementation and the modules composing the Headquarters (HQ). Above all, the manual describes the employment of the Corps in decisive (offensive, defensive, and stability) and in shaping (movement, stationing, or meeting engagement,...) operations. Thus, it is quite comprehensive, and it determines for each action the scope, the principles, just as the type of missions that a Corps may have to address. Furthermore, for each mission, the manual presents the layout of the units and the task assigned for each warfighting function. Under current review, the manual is essential to envisage the way an Army Corps may be employed in a tactical manoeuvre. As such, it has to be acknowledged and assimilated by all personnel of the Corps to understand the global picture of the Army Corps in operations.

# DE 21 - Gender Perspective



**CIV Daniela ROMAN**  
**MAJ Ioana ALEXE**

On January 4th, 2021, I discovered HQ MNC-SE when being invited to take part in the Corps's team as Gender Adviser (GENAD) during the exercise DEFENDER Europe 21. A number of positions within critical areas for the conduct of the exercise had to be filled in with augmentees provided by various national military structures. After a challenging year, the news came as a breath of fresh air. The exercise was also an opportunity to reconnect with my friend and former colleague, MAJ Ioana Alexe, the Corps's Gender Focal Point, who acted as a liaison between me and the training audience.

Prior to the Battle Staff Training, I had my first meeting with the HQ MNC-SE Commander, clearly understanding his expectations for the GENAD role in the exercise scenario, and I also attended the related online NATO courses. As the DE21 CAX/CPX kicked off, I dedicated the first week to immersing myself in the exercise scenario, observing and understanding the HQ's processes. It enabled me to create guidelines for each branch to follow in order to incorporate gender perspectives into their actions.

I concluded that GENAD has a three-level approach: to provide counseling



on gender matters to the Commander during the planning process and in the execution phase; to provide guidance to the planning team; and last but not least, in real life. Finally, I prepared guidance for each branch in order to include gender perspectives in their future activities.

Given that this was the MNC-SE HQ team's first exercise of this magnitude, working with augmentees from HQ ARRC and US V Corps, I was impressed by the personnel spirit of cooperation, willingness to learn, and professionalism in completing their tasks. As a GENAD augmentee and yet a civilian, they patiently answered all my questions, and the information shared was crucial to me so that I could successfully grasp the concepts that the group was at ease working with.

One of my first findings was that gender perspective must be an element of all branches. For example, G1 should include the variable gender as an element in staff reports. Furthermore, the need for the employment of female

military personnel in certain areas such as intelligence, MP, and medical should be taken into consideration. For G2, the gender perspective is again mandatory. Not only because military women find it easier to gather more information from civilian women in the area of interest, but gender analysis of personnel movements is an important indicator for assessing the mission's progress. All in all, an important part of my job was to advise the whole team while providing GENAD inputs during the exercise.

In the execution phase of the Defender Europe 21 exercise, a Gender Focal Points (GFP) network was set up. One of the tasks was to daily collect and report gender-related incidents in the area of operation.

Based on my participation in the DE21 exercise, I learned that for an effective GENAD, it is critical to become familiar with the mission objectives, and be able to provide sound advice and solutions to the Commander.

It is important to implement CEP rules, namely Clarity, Empathy, Predictability.

As GENAD, I had the opportunity to be engaged in a lot of conversations regarding *gender perspective* in operations with HQ MNC-SE and HQ ARRC personnel. I was grateful to be invested with such credit and to have the chance to expand my knowledge during DE 21 CAX/CPX.

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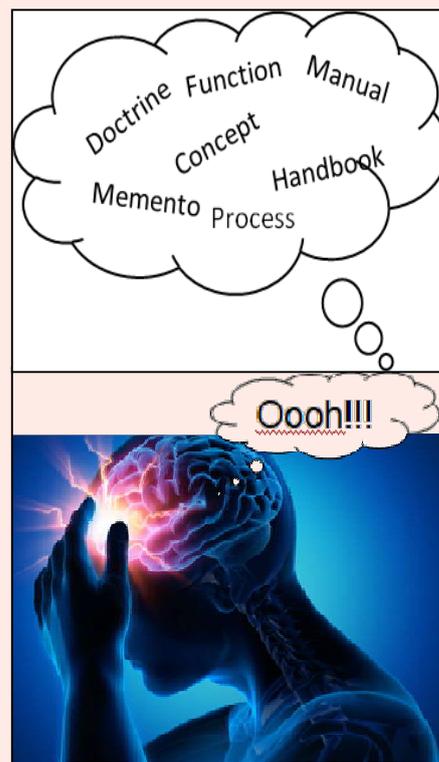
At this moment, the **Army Corps Manual** still needs to be completed by a more conceptual document applicable to the specific MNC-SE situation and operational environment, the "Army Corps Concept". Such an approach shall first focus on the ever-changing operational environment in which the HQ MNC-SE will operate, determining the necessary capabilities HQ MNC-SE shall develop, including the necessity to integrate the multi-domain operations. Moreover, the document will describe the HQ MNC-SE as a regionally focused Multinational Corps that has to enhance core warfighting functions such as in priority C2, ISR, deep strike fires, air support, and sustainment. The concept will also analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the HQ to evaluate potential limitations in its employment and develop strategic planning.

Finally, if the HQ MNC-SE is designed to provide a Corps level Command and Control (C2) capability to strengthen NATO's deterrence and

defence posture on the Southern theatre (Black Sea region) of its Eastern flank – currently, the most vulnerable sector. This implies the consideration of principles or operational superiority factors. For instance, when talking about deterrence, one shall associate the principle of credibility as a prerequisite. Furthermore, the interoperability should be worked out as a key enabler to allow the HQ MNC-SE to integrate with higher echelons just as with subordinate units in a necessary "plug and play" *modus operandi*.

As presented, the **Army Corps Manual** - essential to guide the HQ in its tactical function, has to be reinforced by an Army Corps Concept – currently under development – that will clarify the specific nature and role of the HQ MNC-SE and will enact the principles and factors necessary to accomplish the mission.

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## Challenges in Setting Up the Peacetime Establishment



COL Mihăiță CIOBANĂ

HQ MNC-SE is an Allied Corps-level Land Component Command and Control capability, assumed by Romania at the July 2018 Brussels Summit, with the clear mission to enhance the deterrence and defence posture on the Alliance Eastern flank. HQ MNC-SE has the status of an international military Headquarters, outside of the national command structure and subordinated to SACEUR.

Setting up a Corps-level HQ in the NATO Force Structure implies multiple organizational, functional, and workforce aspects as well as other details necessary to fulfilling its mission. All of these aspects were subject to Technical Agreements discussed, agreed



upon and signed with NATO Military Authorities and the contributing Allies during the MOU and Posts Allocation Conference held in Brussels from 3 to 5 March 2020. The aim was to give NATO member states the opportunity to choose and bid for a wide range of positions within HQ MNC-SE, ensuring that all multinational positions are allocated and filled in.

Building up the Peacetime Establishment (PE) for this HQ was the part

of the Main Effort. The organisation charts developed at the national level by the Corps Initial Working Group aimed at providing national inputs to the HQ MNC-SE Development Plan approved by JFC Naples.

We took full advantage of the vast NATO Corps-level knowledge and expertise in the field of workforce. However, going through most of the NATO

Corps HQs PEs developed over time, it was quite challenging to get to an appropriate comprehensive PE solution. The major impediments we faced while getting to a robust PE were the limited number of Subject-Matters Experts available, time constraints, the requirements imposed by minimum military requirements and the number of authorised positions at the national level. In the end, the key for a successful output was the team effort and

dedication of each member of the working group along with J1/JFC Naples representatives' contribution to the refinement of the final version of the PE's documents. Currently, the implementation of the HQ PE is on track; moreover, the representatives of Canada, France and Germany have already joined HQ MNC-SE. The Way Ahead, from the organisational perspective, having SACEUR's endorsement on the HQ MNC-SE's Development Plan in spring 2020, the HQ MNC-SE Peacetime Establishment adaptation will continue until reaching the Full Operational Capability (FOC) in 2024. Good practices and lessons learned got on the road to FOC will be a trigger for constant assessment of the organisational chart to better support HQ processes and operational tempo.

All in all, although the way towards FOC seems to be a long one and each contribution to the lines of effort is critical, in my view the most important is the HQ MNC-SE team's determination and willingness to succeed.

# HQ MNC-SE from Slide to Foundation



**COL Horea-Gheorghe PUȘCĂU**



July 2018, at the NATO Summit in Brussels, the President of Romania, his Excellency Mr. Klaus-Werner IOHANNIS, after a sound decision-making process at political level, announced Romania's offer to build up a Corps-level Headquarters on its territory and to transfer it under SACEUR's Operational Command (OPCOM). Following strategic-level developments, the Romanian Land Forces was chosen to be the development body.

By August 2018, orders were issued by the Chief of Defence (CHoD) to the Chief of the Land Forces Staff, MG Ovidiu UIFĂLEANU, to initiate the process. Late August, BG Iulian BERDILĂ, at the time Director of Strategic Planning at the Defence Staff presented CHoD's vision and main milestones - IOC 2021 and FOC 2024, for the future HQ MNC-SE's development. It seemed to be a simple slide deck, but it was actually the event that paved the way for the establishment and future development of the new HQ.

Consequently, the Chief of the Romanian Land Forces Staff designated COL Horea-Gheorghe PUȘCĂU as Chairman to set up a Working Group and start the problem framing, understanding of the processes, and finally, finding a solution by conceiving a multi-year resourcing plan.

The Initial Working Group (IWG) consisted of a Chairman, a Staff Assistant, MSG Viorel-Dorian MANOLACHE and a planner, LTC Iulian SĂRĂȚEANU, each of them with clearly designated and very complex tasks. While the logistics, infrastructure and budget leads were taken by the Chairman, the implementation of the integration

tasks, both within the Romanian Armed Forces and NATO, were considered by the planner. At the same time, an organization and manning specialist was required as well as a CIS expert. COL Mihăiță CIOBANĂ joined the IWG to take the G1- related issues and COL Silviu ARDELEANU started the management of CIS process. Thus, the DOTPMLFI-1 program was ready to start. In the process, the need to design and stand-up the Corps' support capabilities arose, so COL Paul SZUCS and COL Vasile NICOLAU joined the team by the end of 2018 to carry out this task.

In the meantime, the PRINCE 2 management methodology was chosen in order to have the military leadership involved on development decisions and be informed on the execution status.

The first duration and resources estimations were developed by October 2018. Two challenges were immediately identified: time was not sufficient for a normal process and high expenses were required from the Land Forces budget, competing with other Chief of the Romanian Land Forces Staff's objectives. Initial estimations pointed out a need for around 200 million-equivalent EUR budget and a 7-year period for infrastructure development.

Yet another challenge came up: no information whatsoever was available to commence with the infrastructure process and design. Therefore, the initial parameters for the infrastructure were chosen by comparison to the projects of the existing Corps HQs from the NATO Force Structure and discussions began with the former Deputy

Commander of NRDC-TUR, MG Tomiță-Cătălin TOMESCU.

Analyzing the dependencies between the processes involved, the civil works were assessed as the most time-consuming ones, along with the requirement to get the Romanian Parliament decision for the Corps establishment.

Basically, the Gantt Chart involved the interrelated processes as follows: infrastructure works (from requirements to Government Decision, acquisition and construction), Army level budgeting (for every fiscal year) to allow a high intensity civil works, legal processes, coordination with NATO authorities, organization processes for both Corps HQ and support units, endowment process for CIS infrastructure, interim locations, security accreditations, training and support for current activities. In order to control the parameters and maintain a high rate of accuracy, the planning assumptions were continuously revised and enriched to the level that, by Christmas 2019, the Corps Barracks Type B Cost Estimate (Feasibility Study) was finalized after a tremendous effort of the Military Infrastructure Studies and Design Center of the Ministry of National Defence led by COL Andrei STANCIU, establishing a required budget estimation of 110 million EUR. That provided the backbone of building up the development calendar which was subsequently proposed to NATO authorities. Based on the close cooperation and continuous dialog between the Coordination Committee, which followed the Initial Working Group, led by MG Iulian BERDILĂ and JFC Naples, the HQ MNC-SE Development Plan was developed, approved by COM JFC Naples and endorsed by SACEUR in the spring of 2020.

The JFC Naples Development Plan combined with Romanian resources plans and the 250 million EUR budget programming at the Romanian Land Forces provided the foundation of all processes to roll-out in order to grow and make the HQ MNC-SE a solid military body.

The first milestones - the establishment of the HQ MNC-SE on 15 July 2020 and the designation of the first Corps Commander, LTG Tomiță-Cătălin TOMESCU, marked the end of development planning and the start of the HQ MNC-SE journey to the FOC.

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# Corps CIS from Inception to Full Connectivity



**COL Marius-Gabriel VÎRTEJ-LERNER**



After the Brussels Summit in 2018, when the Romanian President announced the offer to build a Corps-level Command and Control (C2) capability with regional responsibilities on the NATO's Eastern flank, the journey to build-up a Communications and Information System (CIS) capability for HQ MNC-SE began.

Thanks to the successful cooperation between several CIS stakeholders, from Romanian and NATO CIS community and procurement agency, the required expertise, science and experience were made available to set up a Working Group (WG) aiming at supporting the development of the CIS capability. It is worth mentioning the valuable support of the specialists from the Communications and Information Technology Directorate, Cyber Defence Command, Communications and Information Command, Romanian Land Forces, Military Equipment and Technologies Research Agency, General Directorate for Armaments, the 45<sup>th</sup> CIS Battalion, the Romanian National Expert at NCIA, and last but not least, of HQ MNC-SE DCOS Support. The WG started back then to translate the mission needs and operational requirements into technical specifications for the system that will support the Corps C2 over affiliated units starting with the declaration of Full Operational Capability (FOC) at the end of 2024 and beyond.

Taking into account the vast experience in both systems design and implementation across all

NATO, in 2020, General Directorate for Armaments (GDA) - the Romanian contracting authority, invited the NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCIA) to provide design, procurement, and implementation of CIS for HQ MNC-SE. Consequently, in December 2020 GDA and NCIA signed the Technical Arrangement for CIS setup and support.

The complexity of the system is a challenge in terms of architecture, design, technology, capability implementation, operation, and maintenance (O&M). The implementation of both static and deployable CIS (DCIS) will be a fascinating yet arduous journey which motivates us, the CIS Team, to maintain a high level of professionalism, focus and objective-oriented, proactive stance.

Meanwhile, although working with a small team of G6 personnel, reinforced with the G6 Head of the Land Operational Command, COL (ret.) Petre-Adrian PETRICA - an officer with a vast experience and knowledge in IT and Communications, we managed to provide real-life CIS support to Exercise DEFENDER EUROPE 21 (DE21) in parallel with the HQ MNC-SE CIS project. To achieve this, our support unit, 46<sup>th</sup> Support Regiment, 13<sup>th</sup> CIS Centre and its specialists along with the master of the IT services, COL Traian NICULA from the Land Forces made an enormous effort.

This article is a great opportunity for me to recognise their efforts and thank them all for their

professionalism and dedication to the mission.

The convolution of the CIS project comes from a multitude of factors that have an impact on calendars, one of the most important being the provision of the building infrastructure needed to accommodate the staff and the state-of-the-art IT equipment. Therefore, both of the teams - construction and CIS, worked meticulously to maintain the synchronisation of the activities and reach the milestones with all objectives achieved.

The first important milestone in the CIS implementation project is the delivery of the first batch of the Static CIS that will connect HQ MNC-SE with NATO enterprise network placing our Headquarters in the network as a stand-alone entity with an advanced planning capability by the end of 2022. In 2023, the delivery and implementation of DCIS will start in parallel with the development of static CIS. DCIS will give us the opportunity to train with our own deployable capability in preparation for achieving FOC criteria for another year, to December 2024.

At the end of 2024, HQ MNC-SE will meet the standards expressed by the Commander's Vision namely to have full connectivity with our allies, ready to accomplish Corps roles within the NATO Force Structure in both static and deployable configurations.

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# Building a New Home for HQ MNC-SE



**COL Cătălin SĂRACU**

Based on the Development Plan approved by the JFC Naples Commander, with the Feasibility Study approved according to the Romanian laws, as well as based on the Romanian Parliament Decision no. 8 dated June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, establishing Sibiu as the new location of the HQ MNC-SE barracks, the work for construction of infrastructure facilities within Corps barracks started. After integrating all details needed for the project in the procurement documentation and conducting the acquisition procedures, the contract of service was signed in March 2021. It was for the first time in Romanian Ministry of National Defence's projects history when one project contained different specifications from various domains (buildings, utilities, structural cabling and security systems).

The compound has a long history - more than 100 years, and it had different functions, mainly as training facilities for Logistics, then Artillery personnel, during the last 50 years. The existing buildings needed to be partially rehabilitated but others will be built from scratch.

During the design phase, all necessities identified for developing the HQ facilities were taken into consideration. Thus, working spaces, conference rooms, CIS support functional areas, roads and platforms, dining facilities, infirmary and base support facilities were designed in such a way to opti-

mize the available space, increase functionality, with a fine and modern architecture, observing NATO HQ infrastructure requirements.

With such a complex working facility that meets all operational requirements, the HQ MNC-SE personnel will be able to conduct specific C2 actions, as stated in its mission. Some of the rooms have been designed for dual or multi-functions, offering the necessary flexibility in case of multiple tasks or activities that may occur simultaneously. The endowment of the operational facilities and a robust and reliable CIS network will provide a perfect training environment and an appropriate place for planning and conducting operations.

The construction will benefit from a modern Building Management System (BMS), which will allow optimization of energy consumption, resulting in the HQ MNC-SE barracks being environmentally friendly due to advanced technology integration and materials used.

During the initial discussions with the entrepreneur, it was established

that the first elements of the compound and the core from the CIS perspective will be delivered in 2022 in order to accommodate part of the personnel. Then, a second part is to be completed by summer of 2023, following that late 2023 or beginning of 2024 to have all facilities fully functional. In perspective, three domains must be very well synchronized - constructions, CIS budgeting procurement and of course, workforce - in order to allow the phased development of HQ MNC-SE and assure the necessary conditions for Full Operational Capability (FOC).

The accomplishment of this objective is a challenge for all main actors involved in this project: ROU Defence Staff, ROU Land Forces, HQ MNC-SE, ROU Infrastructure Directorate and, of course, the contractors. Multianual budget requirements, the complexity of the project, different experts working in various domains, fluctuation of prices for materials and the COVID-19 pandemic are just a few examples of what the ROU great team involved in this endeavour has to face. Despite the challenges, we are fully confident that all these projects will be completed in due time and that the new establishment will become operational within the time limits stated in the contract, enabling us to look with confidence to the successful FOC declaration.

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# MWR Preparations for Welcoming the Multinational Staff



**LTC Ciprian POJAR**

2020 and 2021 were very busy, challenging and intense years for HQ MNC-SE on its way to obtaining Full Operational Capability (FOC). Amid tremendous work for overcoming all the challenges posed by the complex activities of establishing the HQ MNC-SE, Morale, Welfare & Recreation (MWR) Section struggled to manage issues related to preparation for welcoming the multinational personnel.

The Family Support & MWR Section started to fulfill its mission of serving the needs, interests, and responsibilities for the HQ's multinational staff and to their dependents by setting the condition for assuring the rights, immunities and entitlements resulted from the Agreement to Supplement the Paris Protocol, ratified by the Government of Romania, on 02 December 2015. Started at the leadership level, the initiative was taken over by the HQ MNC-SE specialists from Family Support & MWR Section, G8 Finance Branch and LEGAD Office.

At the beginning, our activity mainly consisted of building a strong relationship with national and local authorities. The main outcomes of this continuous liaison, cooperation and coordination with the

appropriate authorities and institutions of Sibiu revolved around the identification of the preliminary contacts and areas of mutual interests. The participants in all the relevant meetings made suitable arrangements to ensure the opening of the cooperation lines and the establishment of the responsibilities



in different domains resulted from the Framework Nation's role that Romania assumed.

Our first publication was a magazine with brief information on the HQ and its famous location, Sibiu, offered on the occasion of our IOC-attaining exercise Defender 21 DV Day. **Newcomers' Guide** – a very dear project of ours followed, a comprehensive document intended to familiarize the newly posted multinational personnel with their new assignment at HQ MNC-SE, a living paper for whose drafting we benefited from the valuable support of authorities and institutions of Sibiu.

July 2021, the month when the HQ MNC-SE started to officially operate in a temporary location in Sibiu Garrison was also the time when its first international military arrived. On this occasion, internal administrative procedures established at the HQ



MNC-SE level and at national level were tested, adapted and harmonized in support of this new NATO corps structure. All of these procedures will continue to be further developed and continuously improved as future deployed members and their dependents come and relevant identified lessons will turn into useful lessons learned and best practices.

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# Key Leaders Engagements with Sibiu Local Authorities



COL Marcel Horia ARAMĂ

**Developing solid relationships with Sibiu Authorities is key to community integration!**

At the beginning of February, MNC-SE Commander, MG Tomiță-Cătălin TOMESCU conducted several meetings with the heads of the local government institutions as well as with the representatives of the local private sector in Sibiu. This endeavor was an essential prerequisite prior to Headquarters' relocation from Bucharest and the effective start of its operations from Sibiu Garrison, planned for July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.

In this context, on February 1<sup>st</sup>, the MNC-SE Commander, MG Tomiță-Cătălin TOMESCU, accompanied by the Land Forces Academy and Sibiu Garrison Commander, BG Ghiță BÂRSAN, held bilateral discussions with the Sibiu County Prefect, Mr. Mircea Dorin CREȚU, with the Mayor of Sibiu, Mrs. Astrid Cora FODOR, as well as with the President of the Sibiu County Council, Mrs. Daniela CÎMPEAN, at the premises of the respective institutions.

The agenda for this initial engagement was aimed primarily at establishing preliminary contacts with the relevant authorities of the city and to identify and open the lines of cooperation necessary to set optimal conditions for the Headquarters' smooth relocation and integration in the Sibiu community.

The MNC-SE Commander underscored that the construction works for HQ MNC-SE's temporary location was on track and everything was ready to accommodate the personnel as scheduled; however, in the long term, the focus is on creating the necessary conditions, in concert with the city's appropriate authorities, to meet the deadlines that Romania as Framework Nation has assumed within the Alliance with



regards to setting up the headquarters. Therefore, due to the complexity of the works for the new Corps Headquarters' infrastructure, at some stages, the support and assistance of the local authorities were required, and specific areas of cooperation were defined to ensure no delays or setbacks would come across.

The engagements continued also on February 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Aula of the Land Forces Academy with a wide-ranging meeting that brought together the heads of the local government, national defence, and other institutions as well as from the private sector. The venue offered the opportunity to Sibiu authorities to get acquainted with MNC-SE leadership, mission and role, key milestones in the Headquarters' capability development, and it was a perfect forum to identify areas of mutual interest for cooperation and support.

Most of the participants had a vested interest in issues related to the potential impact and the opportunities created in the local community by the presence of a NATO Command in Sibiu, to include the education and health system, real

estate, transportation, community event, etc.

An important outcome was that HQ MNC-SE assumed the role to create a comprehensive Newcomers' Guide, with the agreed support of relevant local institutions, in order to assist the multinational personnel and their families to accommodate quickly upon their arrival in Sibiu.

Another important topic to debate was how to facilitate access to the education system for the children of the Allied and Romanian military personnel and to ensure a quick integration in Sibiu community for the personnel and their families. Later on, various options were assessed together with Sibiu County School Inspectorate and with other private and international schools, to identify and move towards a viable schooling solution for the multinational personnel children by the summer of 2022.

HQ MNC-SE will continue to engage regularly with Sibiu authorities and other local institutions and promotes the value of a partnership that definitely pays back in benefits both for the Alliance and for the local community.

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# HQ MNC-SE Redeployment in Sibiu Garrison Military Ceremony

 **COL Liviu GALEA**

The end of Defender 2021 CAX/CPX complex activities in Bucharest has seen HQ MNC-SE ready to quickly complete another milestone in its development, the relocation to Sibiu Garrison. Certainly, such a challenging project demanded proper planning and preparations that have started way back in 2020. The immediate task for the HQ 46th Support Regiment was to ensure the infrastructure works for HQ MNC-SE temporary location were timely finalized and ready to accommodate the HQ staff. For the completion of this important project, several agencies and entities worked together with Romanian Land Forces HQ to meet the necessary standards and a tight timeline. The outcome was outstanding, besides the necessary communications network configuration, the new premises were fully equipped, up and running, to ensure a smooth shift of the HQ's operations from Bucharest to Sibiu, without any disruption.

On July 1st, 2021, a military ceremony was held, to mark HQ MNC-SE redeployment from Bucharest and the start of its operations in Sibiu Garrison. The event was attended by the Chief of Romanian Defence Staff, LTG Daniel PETRESCU,



representatives of central and local government, commanders from the national defence system, public order and national security from Sibiu, military attachés, Romanian Land Forces Academy students, HQ MNC-SE and the 46th Support Regiment personnel, as well as their family members.

At the ceremony, the Chief of Romanian Defence Staff emphasized, *"the relocation of the Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East to Sibiu, following the Supreme Council of National Defence Resolution from April 2020, is, without any doubt, a strategic decision of geographical positioning of this capability. Sibiu, on the other hand, will prove to be a successful choice for all of the Headquarters' staff, given the city's cultural richness and multiculturalism, as well as the hospitality of the inhabitants and the beauty of the area"*.

The local authorities and population also received with interest the Corps' relocation and welcome the NATO presence in Sibiu. In her speech, Sibiu's Mayor, Mrs. Astrid Cora FODOR, highlighted that *"Sibiu has been marked on the map of Romania and Europe as a successful economic location, already for many years [...] Sibiu is now on the strategic and military map of Romania and of the entire world, thanks to the official opening of the Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East in our city."*

Finally, LTG Tomița-Cătălin TOMESCU, Commander of HQ MNC-SE, stated: *"the redeployment of the HQ MNC-SE in Sibiu, known as the European Cultural Capital in 2007,*



*represents the official registration of Sibiu among other important European cities hosting NATO Corps Commands, which will undoubtedly bring more notoriety and well-deserved international visibility - a NATO flavor to the city's well-known business card. Starting July 1st, 2021, the tenth Corps-level Command in the NATO Force Structure (NFS) establishes a permanent presence in this garrison, which opens new opportunities for Sibiu, for Romania, and the entire region"*.

The relocation represented a challenge for the HQ also from a social perspective. Housing, families' relocation and integration, schooling, personal administrative documents and more, were just few of the initial issues the HQ personnel had to deal with in a short time.

The development of HQ MNC-SE planned infrastructure projects remain a priority for the Corps that will require close coordination between the local authorities and even more for private local companies directly involved in this process, for the next 4-5 years.

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# Enablers of Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East



**COL Adrian COMAN,  
Commander 46<sup>th</sup> Spt Regt**

The 46<sup>th</sup> Support Regiment was established in the Sibiu garrison on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, with the mission to provide communications, IT, and logistical support for HQ MNC-SE. Since its inception in the Romanian Army force structure, this unit has acquired a distinct personality as a direct consequence of the entrusted mission, and it has been designated as Tailored Forward Presence (TFP) due to its unique package of forces made available to NATO.

The unit was able to ensure functional independence within its main areas of interest until the establishment of HQ MNC-SE under the professional and rigorous management of tasks, support matter and with the staff's sustained efforts.

The Regiment's main objectives for its first year of existence were to develop the necessary and relevant capabilities to support HQ MNC-SE in exercise DEFENDER-EUROPE 21, to achieve its Initial Operational Capability (IOC), to provide HQ MNC-SE and its own infrastructure in Sibiu Garrison.

Simultaneously with the establishment and the set up of HQ MNC-SE

operations, the 46<sup>th</sup> Spt Regt has structured and prioritized the development of its capabilities in the area of workforce, procurement of essential equipment, and ensuring the appropriate training of forces to be able to respond to any requests for support, continuously and on time.

for the staff to demonstrate the skills and capabilities acquired and to improve them. The CIS battalion specialists from the 46<sup>th</sup> Spt Regt demonstrated their knowledge and specialty skills, substantially contributing to the installation, configuration, and uninterrupted operation and maintenance of the HQ MNC-SE communications system.



In 2021, the 46<sup>th</sup> Spt Regt's focus in terms of training was the planning and execution of communications, IT, and real logistical support for HQ MNC-SE during their participation in "DEFENDER EUROPE 21 CAX/CPX". For this major training event, the 46<sup>th</sup> Spt Regt took full responsibility for the preparation and execution of Real Support of HQ MNC-SE during DE21 CAX/CPX, a perfect opportunity

of the HQ MNC-SE communications system.

The real logistical support on the field was concentrated on ensuring timely delivery of supplies and necessary equipment as well as on providing accommodation, meals, and transportation at standards required by the multinational exercise. The tasks performed created a motivating and professional working environ-





ment, conducive to the successful fulfilment of the HQ MNC-SE missions, thus contributing to the achievement of its Initial Operational Capability (IOC). The participation of the Regiment personnel in this exercise also represented a morale boost and venue to prove skills in a multinational environment.

Another primary objective for the 46<sup>th</sup> Spt Regt was the completion of physical infrastructure, appropriate preparation of workspaces, communication, and IT networks so that HQ MNC-SE could smoothly relocate in its temporary location in the Sibiu

Garrison as planned. Acting as Enabler with foresight and judicious planning, the Regiment ensured the necessary conditions for HQ MNC-SE to redeploy and start its operations from Sibiu Garrison.

Concurrently, the 46<sup>th</sup> Spt Regt took over the destined barracks in Sibiu and monitored the development, implementing most modern IT infrastructure and investment projects, making sure the planned world-class buildings in Sibiu prove that the required infrastructure is adapted to the operational requirements of HQ MNC-SE.

The capabilities the Regiment demonstrated in support of "DEFENDER EUROPE 21CAX/CPX" as well as those for setting conditions for HQ MNC-SE to operate in Sibiu Garrison were sufficient guarantee for declaring the 46<sup>th</sup> Spt Regt IOC on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

The complexity of operations and activities highlighted the Regiment personnel's efforts and professionalism, their ability to fulfil tasks and missions in good conditions and at high-quality standards.

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## 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021 HQ ARRC Commander visit to HQ MNC-SE during Senior Leader Academics



On 20th January, HQ ARRC Commander, Lieutenant General Sir Edward SMYTH-OSBOURNE, paid a visit to HQ MNC-SE. He was welcomed by HQ MNC-SE Commander, Major General Tomiță-Cătălin TOMESCU. The visit was an opportunity to discuss various topics, including future Senior Leader Academics organization and the planning process for Defender Europe 21 Command Post Exercise (CPX).

## 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 Romanian Minister of National Defence visit to HQ MNC-SE



On January 28th, the Romanian Minister of National Defence, Nicolae-Ionel CIUCĂ, conducted a working visit to HQ MNC-SE. Major General Tomiță-Cătălin TOMESCU, presented the objectives accomplishment that will allow HQ MNC-SE to attain, this year, the initial operational capability, as well as for the NATO activation of this new regional allied headquarters.

## 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2021 HQ MNC-SE Commander met Local Authorities from Sibiu



On the 1st and 2nd of February, HQ MNC-SE Commander had meetings

with the heads of the local government institutions, as well as with representatives from the local private sector. The main objective was to identify the cooperation elements necessary to set optimal conditions for the establishment of this NATO military structure in Sibiu garrison.

## 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021 Deputy Commander of the V Corps visit to HQ MNC-SE



On Wednesday, 24th February, HQ MNC-SE Commander, Major General Tomiță-Cătălin TOMESCU, welcomed Deputy Commander of the V Corps, MG Terrence MCKENRICK. The visit solidifies the military relationships between MNC-SE and US V Corps.

## 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021 HQ MNC-SE Commander visits Brunssum



On Thursday, 4th March, HQ MNC-SE Commander paid a visit to Joint Force Command Brunssum. The Romanian delegation was welcomed by JFCBS Commander, General Jörg VOLLMER. The agenda of the discussions included the presentation of HQ MNC-SE status.

## 6<sup>th</sup> March 2021 Canadian Ambassador to Romania visits HQ MNC-SE

H. E. Annick GOULET, the Canadian Ambassador to Romania, visited HQ MNC-SE barracks. During the visit, HQ MNC-SE Commander, briefly informed



the distinguished visitor about the missions, projects and role of this headquarters in protecting the South-Eastern flank.

## 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021 Turkish Minister of National Defence visit to HQ MNC-SE



H.E. Mr. Hulusi AKAR, Minister of National Defence of the Republic of Turkey, visited the premises of HQ MNC-SE. The visit was a great opportunity for strengthening relationships between allied regional headquarters.

## 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021 Spain CHOD visit to HQ MNC-SE



The Spanish Chief of Defence, Admiral General Teodoro Lopez CALDERON, alongside the Romanian Chief of Defence, Lieutenant General Daniel PETRESCU, visited HQ MNC-SE premises.

## 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021 V Corps of the U.S. Army Commanders visit to Romania and Bulgaria for DEFENDER-EUROPE 21 CAX/CPX



Chief of the Romanian Land Forces Staff, Major General Iulian BERDILĂ, U.S. Army V Corps Commander, Lieutenant General John KOLASHESKI and HQ MNC-SE Commander, Major General Cătălin Tomiță TOMESCU held a press conference at Land Forces Staff at the end of the visit.

**26<sup>th</sup> May 2021**  
**NRDC-Turkey Commander visit to HQ MNC-SE**



NRDC-Turkey Commander, Lieutenant General Kemal YENI and Deputy Commander, Lieutenant General Gaetano ZAUNER, visited HQ MNC-SE. During the visit HQ MNC-SE Commander briefed them about the role and the mission of this NATO Headquarters and the security on the Eastern flank of the Alliance. Lieutenant General Kemal YENI stated "I am very honored to visit and witness your planning capability in Exercise Steadfast Defender 2021".

**31<sup>st</sup> May 2021**  
**Chair of the NATO Military Committee visit to HQ MNC-SE DE 21 barracks**



Chair of the NATO Military Committee, Air Chief Marshall Sir Stuart PEACH and Chief of the Romanian Defence Staff, Lieutenant General Daniel PETRESCU visited HQ MNC-SE Command Post for the exercise DEFENDER Europe 21 CAX/CPX. A special moment during the visit was the promotion to the rank of Lieutenant General, of the Commander of the Headquarters Multinational Corps South-East (HQ MNC-SE), Tomiță-Cătălin TOMESCU.

**2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021**  
**Montenegro CHOD visit to HQ MNC-SE**

Montenegro Chief of Defence, Brigadier General Milutin DJUROVIC, visited HQ MNC-SE. This visit highlighted the role and mission of



this NATO headquarters on the Eastern flank of the Alliance.

**13<sup>th</sup> June 2021**  
**Exercise DEFENDER Europe 21 CAX/CPX DVD Day**



Chief of the Romanian Defence Staff, Lieutenant General Daniel PETRESCU, Deputy Commander of the United States Army for Europe and Africa (USAREUR-AF), Major General Joe JARRARD, Chief of Staff of the Allied Joint Force Command Naples, Lieutenant General Ignazio GAMBA, numerous commanders and representatives from the Allied Corps from NATO Force Structure, as well as commanders of Romanian Armed Forces structures participated in the Distinguished Visitors Day/ Media Day of the Command Post Exercise DEFENDER Europe 21 CAX / CPX.

**30<sup>th</sup> September 2021**  
**Visit of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Defence Attaché to Romania at HQ MNC-SE**



Commander of HQ MNC-SE, Lieutenant General Tomiță-Cătălin TOMESCU, received the visit of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Defence Attaché to Romania, Commander Matthew Rodney NELSON. This visit highlights

the role, mission and level of operationalization, as well as HQ MNC-SE priorities towards reaching the Full Operational Capability, in 2024.

**5<sup>th</sup> October 2021**  
**Visit of a military delegation from Republic of North Macedonia**



A military delegation led by Brigadier General Simion TRAJKOVSKI, head of the J-5 Military Planning and Organization of Forces in the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of North Macedonia, paid a visit to HQ MNC-SE. This visit solidifies the role, specific missions for the current readiness stage as well as HQ MNC-SE development perspectives towards reaching Full Operational Capability in 2024.

**10<sup>th</sup> November 2021**  
**Visit of a military delegation from NATO JALLC**



HQ MNC-SE Commander, Lieutenant General Tomiță-Cătălin TOMESCU, welcomed NATO's Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre (JALLC) Commander, Brigadier General Bogdan CERNAT. During the visit, JALLC commander emphasized his structure's availability in providing guidance and assistance in developing a reliable lesson learned corps' capability.

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# Taking the Fight is a Life of a Hero



## COL Adrian TEODORESCU

History and life are abundant in heroes. Military life does not make an exception. Over the last eight years, **Invictus** movement has provided military – regardless of rank with opportunities to get to know heroes in person, get acquainted with their stories, and their struggle, as most of us would never know the full horrors of combat.

**Invictus** is, among other things, about enhancing understanding and fostering respect for those who serve their country. It is about challenging minds and changing lives.

HQ MNC-SE has quickly adhered to this cause, recently participating in the “2021 **Invictus Veterans’ Relay**” event with a large enthusiastic team of runners who cried out as one: “*We are Invictus! HQ MNC-SE is Invictus!*”

In 2021, the “**Invictus Veterans’ Relay**” reached its 8<sup>th</sup> edition, and it was intended to link up veterans, tombs, monuments, and military units on a distance of about 3800 km by running. The relay race was established on three itineraries, honoring the colors of the Romanian flag. On the occasion of



Romanian Armed Forces Day - October 25<sup>th</sup>, the three “colors” symbolically reunited into a national flag presented to the “Romanian Soldier’s Monument” at Carei.

During the event, for three days, the HQ MNC-SE volunteers took over the lead for about 170 km, on the YELLOW leg, from Boița monument to Câmpia Turzii Air Force Base. Those days were in fact of a journey through the mountains, which provided the participants with a memorable opportunity to remember the milestones in the history of our country on the sacrifice of the fallen soldiers while celebrating the present.

During the first day, the HQ MNC-SE team, along with partners and friends, ran for about 30 km, from Boița to Sibiu. Multiple stops were made to allow the team to meet cheering people at monuments, churches or streets and witness the gratefulness of the locals in the memory of fallen heroes. The most memorable moment of the day was meeting a 97-year old veteran, **Constantin Dinu Lotrean**, who handed over the relay to the MNC-SE DCOM, MG Adrian Ciolponea. Later on, the runners arrived at the “**Mihai Viteazul Tomb**”, a mass graveyard built in the aftermath of the Battle of Șelimbăr from 1599.

On the second day, a larger pack of runners gathered at places of remembrance from “**Nicolae Bălcescu**” Land Forces Academy in Sibiu. The

team ran on a 75 km distance to the “**Union Hall**” in Alba Iulia, and throughout the journey, commanders, officials, priests, and teachers delivered speeches and words of encouragement in appreciation of the **Invictus** cause. The running team was proud to present themselves in front of active military veterans serving within HQ MNC-SE, near the “**Infantry Officer’s Monument**” that honors a number of 1658 officers who lost their lives between 1916 and 1918.

The final day of the relay - on the YELLOW leg, consisted of running for a distance of 65 km and ended at Câmpia Turzii Air Force Base.

“2021 **Invictus Veterans’ Relay**” reached its final destination - as intended, on October, 25<sup>th</sup>. It will always speak of a great effort on the participants’ side, of civilians honoring the military with their support, and of our team spirit as they were crying out as one:

*I am Invictus! We are Invictus! HQ MNC-SE is INVICTUS!*

To conclude with, I would like to extend my special thanks to **Sibiu Sport Community Club**, the **Land Forces Academy**, the **Artillery and Air Defence Training Center**, the “**Mihai Viteazul**” **Military College**, and the **Sibiu Veteran Association** in support of this event and particularly, of HQ MNC-SE first participation.

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# En avant !



**LTC Olivier ROUANET**

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2021, I joined HQ MNC-SE in Sibiu as the Head of Policy & Doctrine Section within the Plan Division / G5. Coming from the 1<sup>st</sup> (FR) Division headquarters located in Besançon, and as an already experimented (not to say ancient!) officer already often committed in the South-eastern area of Europe, I am really enjoying addressing a new professional challenge, this time in a NATO framework, and in a quite atypical environment. As one of the first international military assigned to this HQ, first of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my colleagues for their outstanding warm welcome received here since my arrival.

Let me consider my appointment in Sibiu a logical continuation of the Romanian-French long-lasting tradition of military coop-

eration. Let it be remembered here that the liberation of the Romanian Principalities of **Moldavia** and **Wallachia** in 1854, and the creation of Romanian nation state at the Paris Treaty in 1859 was obtained with the sacrifice of French (and British) soldiers who fought during the Crimea War (1853-1856) when about 90, 000 French soldiers died.

Above all, the French military mission sent in Romania during the 1<sup>st</sup> World War from October 1916, under the command of MG Berthelot, nicknamed "Papa Berthelot" by Romanian soldiers, reached up to 2000 personnel. They provided a decisive support to Romanian Armed Forces when the French Army of LTG Berthelot, altogether with some British brigades, returned from Greece in June 1918 to help free Romanian territory. In all, between 602 and 875 French military lost their lives in Romania.

Much more recently, during the last years, France has enhanced its interest in the Black Sea Area and actually played a major role in the diplomatic efforts to solve regional conflicts, especially in the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and in Ukraine. This general movement led to the more specific development of mutually benefi-

cial defence cooperation with Romania, with a strengthened bilateral strategic dialogue let aside traditional cooperation activities just as the exchange of cadet officers or a reinforced French maritime and Air presence in the Black Sea region. The apex of this cooperation, the Romanian military committed in the Sahel-Saharan area alongside their French colleagues will gain a new dimension with the incoming participation of Romanian Forces in the Task Force Takuba in Mali and Niger.

Supported by such a successful, long-lasting and close Romanian-French military cooperation and



driven by my country's recent re-engagement in strengthening NATO's deterrence and defence posture in Eastern Europe, I am proud and honoured to take part in this tremendous challenge of building up a new NATO Corps Headquarters in Sibiu. As reciprocity of the Romanian engagement in the Rapid-Reaction Corps-France in Lille, I'm ready and fully committed to contributing to the success of the HQ MNC-SE's mission: *En avant* for the FOC in 2024!

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# GO INVICTUS!

2021 Invictus Veterans' Relay Race



NATO  
+  
OTAN

Multinational Corps  
South-East



Sibiu | Romania

#WEARENATO