



# Exercise **STEADFAST JOIST 12**

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**T**HE REQUIREMENT FOR A NEW NATO COMMAND STRUCTURE (NCS), to better reflect the ongoing changes and challenges to the World's security and military landscape, was ratified during the 2010 NATO Summit in Lisbon. In a somewhat cruel and ironic twist, the new structure confirmed the reduction of NATO's operational Joint Force Headquarters capabilities from three to two with the announcement that Joint Force Command Lisbon would be closed by 2013. Shortly after this news, it was announced the next NATO Response Force Exercise, STEADFAST JOIST 12 (SFJT 12), would be used primarily as a conceptual exercise to develop, assess and analyse key elements of the new NCS and in particular the deployable Command and Control capability.

To their immense credit and notwithstanding the future of their own Headquarters, Lieutenant General Philippe Stoltz, Commander Joint Force Command Lisbon (JFC Lisbon), supported by his Staff, agreed to be the "lead" agency for the concept development and undertake the role of Officer Conducting the Exercise (OCE). As always, the Commander Joint Warfare Centre was cast in the role of Officer Directing the Exer-

cise (ODE) with responsibility for designing the exercise and providing a suitable vehicle to support the concept development, on behalf of both the Allied Commands and the Joint Force Commands, who would ultimately inherit the concept.

This placed the JWC in a unique position to be at the core of early discussions regarding the development work of the new concept. At the same time, the freedom of movement, in exercise design terms, allowed the JWC to examine the empirical and anecdotal evidence gathered on previous NRF exercises with a view to influencing and assisting with the new NCS development work. We were further helped by the fact that neither the nominated Joint Force Command nor any of the supporting Component Commands required NRF certification or formal training during SFJT 12.

Unlike previous NRF exercises, much of the time spent at the early Exercise Planning Conferences involved gaining an understanding of the NCS development work and how to support it through the exercise design. Early challenges included a requirement to gain individuals' understanding that SFJT 12 would be a very different exercise to previous STEADFAST exercises, a phrase that would come back to haunt the





The FCE Seminar participants at JWC with Major General Berger, Lieutenant General Stoltz, General (Ret.) Ramms, General (Ret.) Dr Olshausen, Rear Admiral Bauza, Rear Admiral Gilday, Rear Admiral Ruehle, Major General Reynes Jr, Brigadier General Weighill, Brigadier General Beulen, former Ambassador Peggy Mason and Mr. Victor Angelo. The Seminar provided a venue allowing for high level discussions on the roles and responsibilities of the FCE.

Officer with Primary Responsibility (OPR) throughout the next 15 months! A second challenge was to determine where in the exercise planning cycle to converge with the NCS development work and take the exercise design forward without detriment to either the concept development or the exercise. The NCS development work, of course, would continue throughout 2012 and the exercise design was adjusted when possible.

The early NCS concept development discussions and workshops determined that much of the existing structure could be retained in one form or another albeit with different terminology in true NATO fashion. There was, however, one new piece of the construct that attracted considerable attention and enthused many to think we could collectively make a real difference to NATO's ability to provide an even more ef-

fective deployable Command and Control capability. The so-called Forward Coordination Element (FCE) emerged from this early work. The problem was determining precisely where this new element would fit in the new NCS and its principle roles and responsibilities.

The questions posed by the creation of this "new" element provided the JWC with a natural culminating point to conclude the early part of the exercise design and planning process. An FCE Seminar was subsequently hosted by the JWC in early February 2012 to provide a venue allowing for high level discussions on the roles and responsibilities of the FCE, as the deployed element of the Joint Force Commander. A secondary aim of the Seminar confirmed the exercise design and optimized the opportunity to use SFJT 12 as an effective assessment and analysis tool for the new NCS concept.

The Seminar brought together a distinguished group of senior NATO Commanders and military/civilian Subject Matter Experts, including General (Ret.) Sir John Reith, a former DSACEUR, Lieutenant General Bouchard, former Commander Operation Unified Protector (Libya), UN Special Representatives and Ambassadors. As Commander JWC stated in his opening remarks the seminar allowed "the JWC to become an enabler in the concept development of the Deployed Joint HQ (DJHQ) model and the FCE. It is our mission to fully

support both ACT and ACO in this transformation effort and it is a privilege to be at the core of this effort to develop the new NATO Command Structure".

The FCE seminar thus provided us with the opportunity to work closely with representatives from SHAPE, SACT and the three Joint Force Commands and allowed the SFJT12 Exercise Planning Team to have a sound basis to further plan and execute the remainder of the exercise.

Having overcome the early challenges associated with exercise design and adapting to changes in terms of concept development, the Planning Team were now presented with further potential challenges. Exercise SFJT12 would be the first major exercise, of any type, to be hosted and run from the new JWC Training Facility at Jättå, following the closure of our more familiar training site at Ulsnes Naval Base north of Stavanger. In addition, JWC learned that the JFC Lisbon core staff, augmented from elsewhere within the NATO JFC structure, would deploy in entirety to Norway to exercise the early transition from the FCE to the full deployed Joint Force Headquarters.

As one can imagine the three month period between the FCE Seminar and the culminating Execution Phase of SFJT 12 passed very quickly. To accentuate the short timeline even more, the JWC supported two additional exercise events in Lisbon although these ultimately did much to pro-



vide the entire training audience and Exercise Control (EXCON) staff with a useful introduction to the final phase of the exercise. Mindful of the administrative challenges that we were anticipating with a first use of the new training facility, it certainly helped to have an “away team” that were able to complete a highly efficient bed-in at Jättå at the beginning of May in preparation for the all important test of concept.

The new deployable HQ concept is based upon a stepped, scalable and flexible Command and Control model providing for a progressive deployment of Command and Control capability “blocks” each maintaining key operational functions tailored to the mission and situation. In order to facilitate this stepped approach, the FCE and DJHQ were physically separated upon their arrival in Jättå with the FCE staff housed in a former bunker facility, to simulate their “deployed” status with the remainder of the Deployed JHQ staff accommodated in the new JWC training facility. The first four days of the execution phase focused on providing the FCE Commander and staff with the environment and issues that they would most likely encounter in the early days of a Crisis Response Operation. The JWC remit was to deliver a scenario that would assess the effectiveness of the FCE to prepare an environment for the deployment of a more robust Command and Control infrastructure and a Joint Force.

On the fifth day of the exercise, the FCE was subsumed into the full DJHQ, which then worked through the early challenges associated with the initial arrival of a Joint Force Commander into a Theatre of Operations. There was a particular emphasis placed on the management of the transfer of authority from what was effectively a coordinating function, to that of commanding an operation through the deployment and employment of a Deployed Joint Headquarters.

Another new element to SFJT12, and key to its success as a conceptual exercise, was the so-called A2R Community. This group of analysts, drawn from the Operational Preparation Directorate (OPD), Joint Analysis and Lessons



Lieutenant General Stoltz receiving media training from JWC’s media team

Learned Centre (JALLC), and JFC Lisbon’s and JWC’s respective Analysis Sections, provided broad coverage throughout the execution phase, assessing and analyzing a wide range of processes and activities associated with the new Command and Control concept. Their collective efforts will prove invaluable as ACO and the remaining JFCs

look to further development of the new concept. The execution phase of Exercise SFJT 12 appears to have been a success judging from an early assessment from Lieutenant General Stoltz who was quoted as saying “From my perspective, the Forward Coordination Element achieved great results with a highly trained small core of staff working in a simulated environment. During SFJT 12 we were able to fully test the FCE’s ability to ‘connect’ and ‘understand’ whilst beginning to look into the ‘preparation’ of the Initial Command Element, as part of the scalable C2 option”.

From a JWC perspective, with over 800 personnel spread across the training audience and EXCON, coming from at least 12 different NATO organisations, the new training facility was put to the test and delivered, providing an effective and efficient venue to successfully assess and analyse the NCS, neatly summed up by Lieutenant General Stoltz as JFC Lisbon’s “lasting legacy to the Alliance”. †



The visit of His Majesty King Harald V of Norway occurred while the exercise was running at the JWC with 631 personnel. (Read about the visit on page 48). Photo shows the author with His Majesty and Major General Berger, prior to the tour of the training facility. Photo by MSgt Berger.