

Starting in July, Ulm-based military components are scheduled to receive an important task as part of the NATO defense alliance.

As one of ten mobile headquarters in Europe, the Multinational Joint Headquarters Ulm could then lead a NATO mission in case of a crisis.

But first, the soldiers are currently in Norway to pass a "NATO test": a virtual exercise simulating the challenges to come.

Annette Schmidt and Bernd Schlecker are reporting.

Seventy meters underground: the Joint Warfare Centre in Stavanger, Norway, used to be a Wehrmacht bunker. Now, it serves as a NATO training centre.

For about a week, the multinational HQ from Ulm has been training for a NATO crisis mission.

Morning update with the Commander, Juergen Knappe: the situation is worsening, separatists are fighting a civil war in Arnland: chaos, displaced persons... and NATO has deployed 40,000 troops under the leadership of Ulm's HQ.

The newsbreak is produced in a specially equipped studio. It is part of the exercise.

The Ulm HQ's 400 men and women have been preparing for months but still...

[COM]: Yesterday was a slight low since we saw some things that did not exactly go as planned. On the first day, we were very optimistic and thought nothing could challenge us.

Today, we are getting back to the point where we are satisfied with our work.

The complex exercise scenario is planned at the Joint Warfare Centre, with new surprises every day.

Dealing with militias, protecting civilians and conducting joint operations;

"But the team from Ulm is getting better and better," even their exercise opponents have to admit.

[LTC Judt]: Of course, the team from Ulm have learned a lot in the last five days.

Now, they know what we as their enemy are up to and they are starting to poke us.

So far, 140 million euros have been invested to establish a NATO-ready infrastructure in Ulm-based military installations, so it is important to pass the certification.

NATO's evaluators are quite optimistic:

[GEN Pfrengle]: "I am very pleased with what I've seen so far. Personally, I'm not nervous about the outcome. I don't know how the people from Ulm feel about that, though."

[COM]: "We can say one thing for sure: on Monday, everybody will be glad the exercise is over."

In July, the Ulm Command will know whether they have achieved NATO's certification.