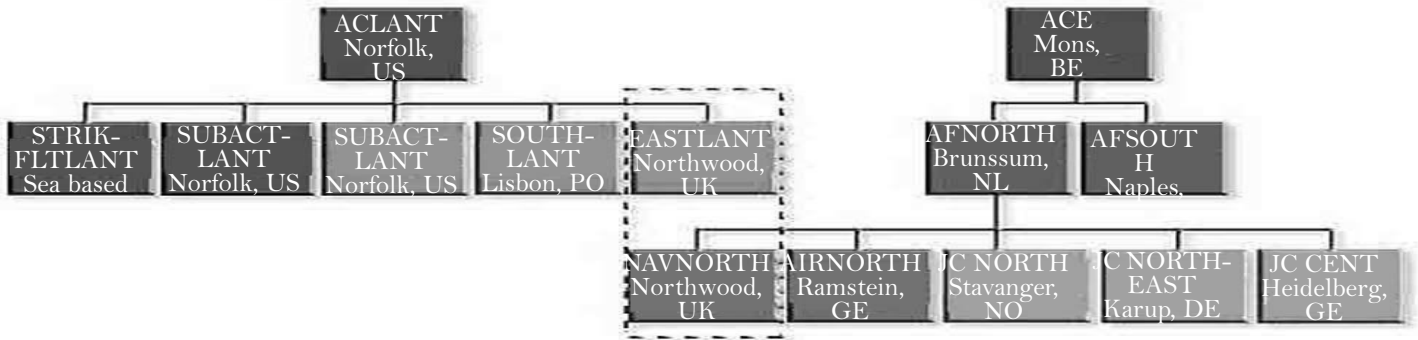


Northwood headquarters

The centre of British military interventions

Situated in the London suburb of Northwood, conveniently accessible for activists via the Metropolitan Line, is Northwood Headquarters, also known as HMS Warrior. From the outside it is not immediately apparent that the HQ plays a crucial role in the increasingly interventionist military strategies of Britain - or more generally NATO and the Western countries. This article takes a closer look at the role of Northwood; looking at its role within the NATO command structure; next month's sequel will look at it's role as the UK's Permanent Joint Forces Headquarters.



Northwood HQ is not just one headquarters - it consists of several HQs all with specific roles. Currently they are:

- 1) NATO Regional Command East Atlantic (RC EAST)
- 2) NATO Component Command Naval Forces North (NAVNORTH)
- 3) British Permanent Joint Forces Headquarters (PJHQ) (1)

The National Command of Fleets (CINCFLEET) was based at Northwood too, but moved to new headquarters at Whale Island, Portsmouth. Only a few staff remain at Northwood. (2)

Northwood & NATO

NATO's history with Northwood began in 1952, when the NATO Eastern

Atlantic Command moved to Northwood. Nowadays Northwood plays a double role within NATO's command structure (see graphic): As NATO Regional Command East Atlantic (RC EAST) it is part of the Allied Command Atlantic (ACLANT), based in Norfolk, Virginia, USA. According to the NATO website, "the primary task of ACLANT is to contribute to security in the Atlantic area by safeguarding the Allies' sea lines of communication, supporting land and amphibious operations, and protecting the deployment of the Alliance's sea based nuclear deterrent". (3)

In addition, Northwood is part of the structure of the Allied Command Europe (ACE), based in Mons, Belgium. ACE is responsible for the whole area from the Northern tip of Europe to the South, including the whole Mediterranean region from the Atlantic coastline to the eastern border of Turkey.

Here Northwood has a sub-regional responsibility as

Component Command Naval Forces North under Regional Command North.

According to NATO, "this link is a crucial element of NATO's ability to conduct joint operations effectively in Europe". (4) And: "In response to the end of the Cold War and the advent of Partnership for Peace (PfP), NATO reviewed its infrastructure and defence plans to prepare it to face the rather more diverse risks inherent to the post-Cold War period. This has led to expanded roles and tasks for the combined Regional Headquarters East Atlantic and Headquarters Allied Naval Forces North". (5)

These "more diverse risks" are described in NATO's new strategy, which was passed during NATO's war on Yugoslavia in 1999.

Besides war, nuclear and conventional weapons, and access to natural resources, NATO defines security risks as follows: "However, Alliance security must also take account of the global context. Alliance security interests can be affected by other risks of a wider nature, including acts of terrorism, sabotage and organised crime, and by the disruption of the flow of vital

resources. The uncontrolled movement of large numbers of people, particularly as a consequence of armed conflicts, can also pose problems for security and stability affecting the Alliance." (6)

Northwood is part of the response to these "security risks", and plays a crucial role for NATO operations within Western Europe. This might become even more important in the near future, when the European Union develops its military wing, which probably will involve the use of NATO assets for EU military operations. Northwood then will be part of European Union military interventions.

Continues over...

Notes: (1) http://www.eastlant.nato.int/Your_Community/your_community.htm and http://www.eastlant.nato.int/hq_info/structure.htm; (2) <http://www.navynews.co.uk/articles/2002/0204/0002043001.htm>; (3) and (4) http://www.eastlant.nato.int/hq_info/structure.htm (5) http://www.eastlant.nato.int/hq_info/eastlant_history.htm; (6) The Alliance's Strategic Concept, Approved by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington D.C. on 23rd and 24th April 1999, Press Release NAC-S(99)65, 24 Apr. 1999



A spontaneous blockade of Northwood in March. Photo: d10

"As well as 24 surface ships and two nuclear-powered submarines, more than 2,000 British troops have already been deployed in Oman, a figure that will rise to 24,000 nearly a quarter of the British army by the end of the month. They will be supported by 400 armoured vehicles, squadrons of fighter-bombers, and a Commando brigade. Their role will be to intervene in a war that began in the early hours of July 9 when the first hostile tanks crossed the border, their tracks thundering across the sweltering desert plains of northern Oman." (1) What Jamie Wilson and Richard Norton-Taylor describe here in a *Guardian* article was Britain's

creation of the Permanent Joint Headquarters. It recommended permitting "a proper, clear, and unambiguous connection between [government] policy and strategic functions and the conduct of operations at the operational level to be achieved". In July 1994, the creation of a single, permanent joint headquarters under a chief of joint operations (CJO) was announced. At the same time the formation of a rapid deployment force was announced. Both should become operational by April 1996 (2).

Phase 1 of these developments was completed in 1999. Culmination of phase 2 development of the full capability was supposed to be Exercise Saif Sareefa. If this exercise

term joint planning didn't happen. In 1996 PJHQ put an end to this (3). Joint Command & Control Structures

The PJHQ are commanded by the Chief of Joint Operations. The role of Northwood is "to be responsible ... for the planning and execution of UK-led joint, potentially joint, combined, and multinational operations, and for exercising operational command of U.K forces assigned to combined and multinational operations led by others, in order to achieve military strategic objectives." (2)

In order to be able to do so, Northwood permanently plans and evaluates. It classifies conflicts in four categories

mately the recovery of the assigned forces. In addition it has to be proactive and responsive towards the Ministry of Defence and supporting commands (2).

Outlook

If which we all hope won't happen in some months/weeks time the US and Britain will attack Iraq, then PJHQ at Northwood will be the centrepiece of the British part of this aggression. The plans are drawn up now at Northwood.

If we want to stop a war on Iraq and I hope we do then Northwood is one important "target" for our activities. Not only it is conveniently accessible via the Metropolitan line, but even more so because it

Joint Force Headquarters Deployments

Operation	Location	Timeframe	Operation	Location	Timeframe
Caxton	Montserrat	Mar 1996	Ladbrook	Congo	Aug-Sept 1998
Purposeful	Central Africa	Nov -Dec 1996	Desert Fox	Middle East	December 1998
Determinant	Congo/Zaire	March-June 1997	Basilica	Sierra Leone	Jan -Feb 1999
Alleviate	Albania	June-July 1997	Agricola	Kosovo	June 1999
Bolton	Kuwait	Feb-April 1998	Langar	East Timor	Sept-Dec 1999
Carrick	Indonesia	May-June 1998	Barwood	Mozambique	Feb-March 2000
			Palliser	Sierra Leone	May-June 2000

Source: Connaughton 2000, page 90

biggest ever military exercise, called Saif Sareefa, and marked the full operationality of the Permanent Joint Forces Headquarters in Northwood, and the Joint Rapid Reaction Force (JRRF).

It might not be a coincidence that this huge war game and commando exercise took place in Oman, a desert region with a climate similar to Iraq.

Effective military interventions

Northwood the PJHQ is the result of efforts to improve effectiveness of military operations. The 1994 Defence Cost Study led to the requirement to separate policy from operations, a consequence of which would be the

went ahead as planned after 11 September 2001 is not known to me.

"Jointery" is the new buzzword, and the Permanent Joint Headquarters is one of the consequences. While joint operations are not entirely new the Falklands war was a joint operation but before 1996 the command structures for joint operations were always set up on an ad hoc basis, with those in command who seemed to be most appropriate. The Falklands war was commanded from the Fleet Headquarters, then at Northwood, and the Gulf War 1991 was commanded by the Royal Air Force Strike Command Headquarters at High Wycombe. This was often inefficient and long-

quiescent, stirring, quickening, and surfaced which then led to three categories of interest. At the lowest level which probably includes the whole world "intelligence is maintaining a watching brief on areas of operational interest and creating a priority list". If it is evident that a crisis is emerging, then a multi-disciplinary contingency planning team is organised, which is expected to master the situation in order to advise the entire chain of command. The third level of interest and we can be sure Iraq is on that level right now involves the formation of an operations team. Their role is to deal with the details of command, deployment and sustenance of forces, and ulti-

plays the crucial role in any British military operation overseas. Northwood is the heart of the (military) beast meet you soon at Northwood?

This briefing originally appeared in the July and August issues of Nonviolent Action and was prepared by a member of The d10 Group

Notes:

- (1) British forces flex military muscle for £93m 'desert war'. The *Guardian*, 3/11/2001
- (2) Richard M Connaughton: Organizing British Joint Rapid Reaction Forces. *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Autumn 2000, p87-94
- (3) Jeremy R. Stocker: Jointness in Defence of the Realm. *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Spring 1997, p137-140

Contact: D10, Box 666, c/o 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1 9DY, email: d10northwood@gmx.net; www.northwood.cjb.net