

Baltic Spirit News

19 September, 2006, Klaipėda, Lithuania

We need to learn to cooperate

Fifteen years ago, after Lithuania regained its independence, Lithuanian army started to build up. First steps were not easy. There was a lack of experience, equipment and weapons. Danish Home Guard was the first to come for help and to start to cooperate. Today we stand in one line with troops from other NATO countries, together participate in the international peace keeping operations.

International exercise "Baltic Spirit 2006" started on the 17th of September. After the opening ceremony we spoke to the Land Forces commander Brg Gen Arvydas Pocius. According to the general, one of the main tasks of the exercise for troops of the different countries is to learn to cooperate. To be able to work shoulder to shoulder. So it is very important to be able to understand each other (not only verbally) while reaching common goals.

Brg Gen Arvydas Pocius wished to work hard for all participants of the exercise because according to the saying if it is difficult in training it is easy in real fight. "Those troops who are participating in peace keeping operations have to be prepared at highest standards. Because their job could help to spare lives of a child, of another soldier or a man" – mentioned Brg Gen Arvydas Pocius.



From right side: Brg Gen Arvydas Pocius, Maj Christopher D. Ferrara, WO3 Jason Magill, Col Leif Pedersen

Pte Eglė Trataitė, photo: WO Lina Daugirdienė, PIC

International exercise "Baltic Spirit 2006" has started



The international exercise "Baltic Spirit 2006" started with a solemn formation on the bright morning of the 17th of September in the Grand Duke Butigeidis Dragunu training battalion. Land Forces commander Brg Gen Arvydas Pocius and the commander of the NDVF Col Antanas Plieskis paid visits and welcomed the participants of the exercise.

As Brg Gen Arvydas Pocius stressed in his speech, it is very important to improve skills, to be able to react according to the SOPs for the troops representing different countries in order to achieve common goals during peace keeping operations. And the exercise "Baltic Spirit 2006" is an excellent opportunity to exchange with the information and to gain a new experience.

International exercise “Baltic Spirit 2006” has started



KASP SOLDIERS



Royal Irish Rangers

“The cooperation among NDVF and Danish Home Guard, Pennsylvania National Guard and UK Royal Irish Rangers which started in difficult times for Lithuania is still continuing as cooperation among equal partners. And this exercise is the best prove of this” – said Col Antanas Plieskis. Flags of the participating countries and the exercise flag were raised on the opening ceremony. The band of the NDVF performed the anthem of Lithuania. The performance of the Honour Guards company was spectacular as usually.



Honour Guards company



Danish Home Guard

About 650 troops from Lithuania, Denmark, USA and UK are participating in the exercise this year. During September 17/23 the troops will improve their skills in order to be able to participate in the international peace keeping operations.

*Pte Eglė Trataitė, PIC
photo: WO Lina Daugirdienė, PIC*

THE DANISH HOME GUARD IS BACK IN LITHUANIA!

Copenhagen Airport, Saturday September 16th 18:30 hrs. And so they are in full swing! The 120 men from the Danish Home Guard are on their way to participate in the Baltic Spirit exercise in Lithuania. Most of the soldiers come from three total defence regions (TDRs) in Zealand (the island where the Danish capital, Copenhagen is situated), but also Jutland is represented with a squad because volunteers from many parts of Denmark have wanted to participate in this exercise. The soldiers have unloaded their baggage from the busses and while they are waiting for the DANİLOG (Danish Logistical Unit) to get the last things in place they all chatter and the air is full of expectations of the upcoming exercise.



Copenhagen Airport. Registration.

THE DANISH HOME GUARD IS BACK IN LITHUANIA!



Roll-call. All the soldiers fall in and the DANILOG 1st lieutenant makes sure that the names in his lists match the soldiers that are actually present in the airport. The security check is unavoidable but fortunately the soldiers escape the passport control, as the airport police take it that all these people in Danish military uniforms actually are Danish citizens. It is nice to have an airplane all to

yourself, and that is exactly what the soldiers have to day: the Danish Home Guard has chartered the “Eskil Viking” from SAS to take the soldiers directly to Palanga airport where they arrive in due time with no problems at 9 pm local time. Even before the actual start of the exercise the soldiers get a demonstration of how you do escort duty in Lithuania. On the road to Klaipėda the Lithuanian military police escorts the busses with the Danish soldiers and they do

their job in a somewhat more determined way that the equivalent force in Denmark using flashing blue and red light and sirens all the way. The motorists are in no doubt that here come important people as the cars are virtually forced off the road to let the column pass.

After the long journey it is nice to be accommodated in the dragoon barracks

in Klaipėda and get some sleep before the parade and the start of the exercise the next day.

And Sunday morning it is really necessary to be well rested and prepared for the “worst”, as the opening parade involves both drilling and marching in a way the Danish soldiers are not used to, but after about half an hour of training the standard is high and in every way the Danish soldiers do equally well as the Lithuanian and British counterparts. But the Lithuanian drill unit that performs at the end of the parade really knock the Danes off their feet: they will never reach that high a level in drilling. The Lithuanians performs brilliantly their drummer controlling the show with a fast and rhythmical hand – this is really an experience to be remembered!

And then the soldiers are of to the real world in the exercise ground.

1st Lt Kim Bjerre, VOB
Photo: Capt Peter Thomsen, PIC

LANDING OF DANISH TROOPS FROM SEE ALSO

Next day a ship with Danish military equipment on board moored on international ferry. These goods would be used by Danish troops on exercises. An beautiful and fine Sunday afternoon buildings of Klaipėda’s downtown were shaken by buzz of powerful tracks. A column of tracks was escorted by military police. Horns of police warned: Stay away! Exercises “BALTIC SPIRIT 06” has started! At first sight threathful column of vehicles hasn’t threatened, but attracted curious passerbies.

capt Andrius Almanis, Pte Vladislovas Švenčionis, photos: WO Lina Daugirdienė, PIC



“I wish you fine weather, hard work and good, combat mood!”

On the 2nd day of exercise commander of NDVF Col Antanas Plieskis visited soldiers, who were preparing for active phase in Kairiai training area. Colonel assessed the training positive, because everything went as it was planned. There were no great changes. As NDVF commander said, motivation of soldiers- high, mood- well, work or instructors- good. An intensive work was in all training places. Soldiers have improved individual skills as well as collective skills.

Talking about future NDVF commander said that next time he wishes to see not only present participants, but also Latvians, Estonians, maybe Poles and representatives from other NATO countries. Colonel Antanas Plieskis wished to participants of exercise fine weather, hard work and good, combat mood.

Pte Vladislovas Švenčionis, photos: WO Lina Daugirdienė, PIC



19 September, 2006, Klaipėda, Lithuania





EXERCISE “BALTIC SPIRIT 2006” – AT A HIGH LEVEL

On the second day of the exercise “Baltic Spirit 2006” we took a glance at the preparation and training sites. We found Danish troops in front of the check point in Kairiai training area. The traffic flow at the check point was not heavy. Private Christian Nyland was asked to answer several questions.



Do you find any differences among troops participating in the exercise and their preparation level?

We were observing this and we are surprised. The level of preparation of Lithuanian troops is at a high level. But sometimes we are doing mistakes as well as you. It is impossible to avoid mistakes during the training. Here we are learning to execute tasks during peace times. In Denmark we learn to execute tasks during war period.

What about the mood of the troops?

Troops are feeling good. We are not tired so we expect to work very productively today.

Had you any problems during the first days of training?

No. Your barracks are really very good. We had a good rest. It is very important for our future activities.

What do you think about your colleagues from the other countries?

We had a little bit of time to talk to our Lithuanian colleagues yesterday. You are friendly and interesting people.

Do you feel language barrier?

Of course there are some problems. But we try to adapt to each other so we can communicate effectively.

And what about our food?

Today it was not too bad but yesterday... Your food differs from ours but when you are hungry everything goes.

What are your expectations from this exercise?

I expect to return to my country better prepared, to gain new experience and knowledge and to come back here again.

Suspicious vehicle appeared in the check point. Danish troops examined it very carefully. Weapon was found inside the vehicle and the driver and passengers were arrested. We had an opportunity to talk to corporal Audrius Drūkteinis, the volunteer of 3rd district of the NDFV Gargzdai company while Danish troops were busy at the check point.

According to corporal Audrius Drūkteinis it is difficult to draw any conclusions because the exercise is just starting. The training went very smoothly if to compare with a previous day. He mentioned that it would be nice to have hot food. And language barrier is not very big.

Sgt Olegas Zaičenko, PIC

Greatest wealth- human communication

Soldiers learn to fight, but we should do everything to avoid use of this knowledge in real life. It is the greatest meaning of soldiers' job. The meetings of USA and Denmark delegations and Lithuanian children in schools of Klaipėda city give sense of soldiers' mission.

Exercise- is not only training how to keep peace, not only a consolidation of skills, not only a communication among soldiers. Exercise is spreading of messages about your own country.

Grand Duke Vytautas gymnasium in Klaipėda city was visited by USA delegation and Ažuolynas gymnasium-



by Danish delegation. Stories of foreigner soldiers and demonstrations of armament and equipment made sharp impression to teenagers.

About 140 children came to meet American troops in Grand Duke Vytautas gymnasium. At the beginning all three troops introduced themselves. The presentation of maj. Ch. D. Ferrara about Pennsylvania National Guard was very expressive. Maybe one of the reasons for this is that he is a former school teacher? He told that 19 of the American presidents served in National Guard. One hour elapsed as one minute. Schoolchildren enjoyed the meeting very much. They said that Americans are interesting and very friendly people. A large number of schoolchildren stayed after the presentation for a discussion. The discussion was very alive, schoolchildren told Americans about themselves and shared their future expectations.

Americans gave a present- two books for the school library. Schoolchildren got small gifts with symbols of USA and Pennsylvania National Guard. Director of the school gave to representatives of USA a book about the school and buttons with signs of the school.

USA troops very enjoyed this trip. Such meetings will be organized during

future exercises as well, because one of the greatest wealth is human



communication.

Next time read about a visit of Danish representatives in schools of Klaipėda and Palanga cities.

Capt Andrius Almanis, PIC

Photos: Pte Vladislavas Švenčionis, PIC

WO Lina Daugirdienė, PIC

LITHUANIAN INSTRUCTORS TEACH THE DANISH SOLDIERS

As soon as the parade at the barracks is through, the Danish soldiers prepare themselves for the Lane Training Sunday just before noon. All the soldiers get their gear and rushes back to the Lithuanian trucks, which bring them to the exercise area. Our own vehicles are still on the ferry and are due to arrive at 11:30 local time.

The Danish soldiers are excited to get going and are curious to meet the Lithuanian instructors.

Once in the exercise area the DK COY gets ready for the lessons. 3rd platoon meets 1st lieutenant Skiezigilas, who teaches the subject observation post. The instruction is well carried through and the Danish soldiers listen carefully. It is not the first time that they hear about the subject, but every instructor has his own way of teaching. Every time you hear about a subject you learn something new. 1st lieutenant Skiezigilas has prepared his lesson well and uses flipovers to emphasize his point. The questions are few, but it might be because our senior representative is present or because speaking English is not an everyday event for most Danish soldiers.

How ever, the 1st lieutenant does get some questions, and answers them promptly and willingly.

Nearby the Danish 2nd platoon is taught about patrolling. Captain Sladkevicius is the instructor. His English is very understandable and his lesson is open minded. He asks questions through the lesson and gets the soldiers to engage themselves in the subject. "Why is it that we use this formation when we patrol the streets?" he asks. The Danish soldiers have a few suggestions, but at last there is one of the soldiers that come up with the answer that he is waiting for. "Very good" he says, "it is because you have the ability to cover your squad better" and continuous his lesson.

During the lesson, the Danish trucks arrives form the ferry, ready to take the squads to the next lesson.

The first day of Lane Training, every platoon goes through 3 lessons. They arrive back at the barracks around 19:00 hours after having had a MRE (meals ready to eat) in the exercise area. *Capt Peter Thomsen, PIC*



The passive phase for CIMIC has started actively

Intensive work in CIMIC started from a very first day of the exercise. The specialists in CIMIC had to refresh their knowledge gained during previous exercises and to put them into practice from the very first moments of the exercise.

CIMIC is one of the key elements during international peace keeping operations. The main tasks for CIMIC is to help to accomplish the plan of the operational commander by helping to make contacts with various government and non-government organizations, local authorities, police, local population and to determine the needs of the local population, to carry out the planning and the prevention of the emergencies. It is the office of CIMIC witch is contacted first of all by the representatives of the confronting fractions. This is the reason why the skills of negotiation and mediation are compulsory for all CIMIC troops.

Contacts were made with international and non governmental organizations already on the first day. There was prepared and given a presentation about 2nd multinational battalion, CIMIC section's functions and general contact information.

The first news was received from Red Cross organization about 12 refugees, who were detained in Klaipeda's jail. CIMIC specialists had to estimate the situation, collaborating with NGO to determine needs of refugees and decide what help they can give. Also CIMIC section received information from leadership

that the sponsorship was given from EU for industry rehabilitation in Priekule town. So CIMIC officers have to prepare this project using CIMIC tactical and technical procedures collaborating with various organizations.

The next day CIMIC section went to reconnaissance of exercise area, estimate the situation. Also they started to execute one of most important projects- establish CIMIC houses. In CIMIC house will work CIMIC officers, so permitting the commander objectively estimate the situation in region of the mission.



Pte Eglė Trataitė, PIC

Photo: Sgt Ramūnas Kemežys, CIMIC

LOGISTICS WARRIORS

All participants are equally important but not all of them are equally noticeable during the exercise. Several troops from logistics with ladles, pencils and shovels in their hands are needed to maintain one troop on the ground with a gun to fight.

The job of the always smiling cook is really important. For how long soldier would be able to fight without food ??? The cook is not complaining though it is not easy to feed this huge number of people all day round.

According to the cooks, some of the troops are complaining that the food is not tasty enough (for example smoked sausage witch is difficult to cut into pieces). But there is no fault of the cook – the troops are provided with a food witch is suitable for field exercises. There is no doubt that it is necessary to discuss about menu but it is hardly possible to change anything during the period of this exercise because most of the products are already bought. It would be best that a person who was responsible for composing menu would took part in the exercise.

- From PIC job... (Folklore of exercises)
- Even before exercise opening ceremony. An PIC officer calls to offices of newspapers additionally informing about exercise. He is calling to ordinary office and introduces himself: "Captain X, PIC officer of exercise "Baltic spirit". A journalist asks if exercise will be on sea. No, exercise will be on land, answers officer. And then he hears a crushing question:
- -Why did you introduce yourself as a captain???

WEATHER FORECAST (KLAIPĖDA)

20 SEP, WEDNESDAY

Day 17°C Night 13°C
Showers possible

21 SEP, THURSDAY

Day 19°C Night 15°C
Mostly cloudy

22 SEP, FRIDAY

Day 21°C Night 15°C
Sunshine

VISITORS AND MEDIA DAY

22 SEP

FRIDAY

1000 – 1030	Arrival of Visitors to Klaipėda training battalion (Liepojos St. 5, Klaipėda)
1030 – 1100	Exercise Command briefing (Conference hall)
1100 – 1130	Familiarization with HQ
1130 – 1210	Departure to the exercise area
1210 – 1300	Observation of the Exercise
1300 – 1330	VIP press conference (field conditions, in the tent)
1330 – 1430	Lunch (field conditions)
1430 – 1500	Drive to Klaipėda training battalion
1500	Departure of visitors

UNEXPECTED PICTURES FROM EXERCISE

Cartoons by Maj. Antanas Bunikis

