



Swedish Armed Forces HQ



Swedish National Defence College

National Report from Sweden Officer Training and Foreign Languages in the Swedish Armed Forces 2007

1. Background

Training for Swedish officers is still in the process of great change as a result of the transformation to smaller, networked and deployable forces focused on international operations. The changes are now quite evident at the National Defence College, which is responsible for the higher education of civilian and military leaders within the Total Defence Forces. The National Defence College (NDC) has until now been an authority directly controlled by the Ministry of Defence, whereas the two remaining Swedish Military Academies as well as arms and services schools are controlled by the Armed Forces Headquarters. From January 2008, the National Defence College will become a university college and thus be under the auspices of the Ministry of Education.

The current work of reforming the Swedish Armed Forces is intended to ensure that Sweden can make an active contribution to the development of a joint EU crisis management capability. Sweden has agreed to assume responsibility for coordinating a Nordic rapid reaction force, the Nordic Battle Group, to which Norway, Finland, Estonia and Ireland also contribute. Although the battle group, in terms of volume, will only represent a small part of the Swedish Armed Forces' operational capability, approximately 2000, its formation will have a major effect and will set the requirements for change within many areas of officer training including languages.

2. Officer Training

After the recent reorganization, training for officers now consists of a combined system of programme-based training, independent courses and unit service. Professional development is the main thread that runs throughout an officer's career. Training takes place at the Swedish Armed Forces' units, schools or centres and at the National Defence College, based on course plans produced by the NDC. The National Defence College in its new role is supervised by The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, which means ensuring that it complies with the laws and regulations of higher education.

2.1 Officer Programme (OP)

The present intention is to make this training equivalent to 120 credits (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, i.e. ECTS) corresponding to approximately three years' higher education. This training will be carried out at the Military Academy Halmstad (MHS H) or the Military Academy Karlberg (MHS K) and at professional and specialist schools. About 400 young men and women embark on this training each year. A major change from 2007 onwards is that prospective officers will be able to choose 1 of the following career alternatives: a) Specialist officer – 3yrs training (e.g. logistics), b) General military officer – 2 yrs training (possible subsequent academic route), c) Dual profile officer – 1 yr (has a civilian academic degree). Military English is obligatory throughout the three-year programme, being taught regularly as a subject in its own right as well as integrated into as many other subjects as possible.

2.2 Advanced Command Programme (ACP)

The Advanced Command Programme (40 men and 2 women 2007) is equivalent to 50, 80 or 100 ECTS credits depending on the level of training involved and is carried out at the Swedish National Defence College. The aim of this programme is to prepare the officer for command appointments or staff appointments at a tactical, operational, national or international headquarters. English language training takes place on a weekly basis and is strongly linked to the other subjects and military exercises at the college.

2.3 Reserve Officer Programme (ROP)

The Reserve Officer Programme is equivalent to 40 credits. The programme will be carried out within the framework of the courses offered by the military academies and the professional and specialist schools. After completion of the ROP, the cadet will be promoted to second lieutenant and be posted to a job, such as instructor at platoon level.

3. STANAG 6001 English Language Standards

At various levels of officer training, testing and evaluation will ascertain and ensure attainment of the desired STANAG level to be achieved, as illustrated by the following:

<u>Officer Training</u>	<u>Minimum SLP on completion</u>
Officer Programme* (3 years)	3 3 2 2
Tactical Training (1 year)	3 3 3 2
Staff Training (1 year)	3 3 3 3
Advanced Command Programme** (2-2½ years)	3 3 4 3

3.1 The “Gap”

At the moment, between the two periods of training, i.e. the OP* and ACP**, there is the risk of very little or sporadic language training because of short courses and training at various specialist schools, to which a complete solution has not yet been found. However, it is clear that the responsibility is on the officers themselves, their unit commanders and local English teachers to ensure language training does occur according to the progression required. This in turn means that unit commanders must be provided with clear guidelines and tools in order to both maintain and improve officer language skills.

4. Other Language Training

The opportunity of studying German or French is only offered in the Staff Training Course and the Advanced Command Programme at the National Defence College for those who have a basic knowledge of these languages and also a high standard of English. At the moment there are 74 officer students doing English in the Staff Training Course, 9 reading German and 4 French. In the Advanced Command Programme there are 6 German and 6 French students. Most of the students doing French will succeed in passing the Certificat Militaire de Langue Francaise 1 (CMLF 1).

Other language training for job-related positions is provided at the *Swedish Defence Language School*, which comes under the *Armed Forces Intelligence and Security Centre* in Uppsala, north of Stockholm. This can involve languages such as Arabic, Russian, Serbo-Croatian and Polish. Specialized English language training for officers with job-related needs is offered by the Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters in co-operation with a language institute in the UK. Courses are organised both as residential courses in Sweden and as individual (one-to-one) courses at the language centre in the UK. In this connection, individual courses are arranged for officers who are assigned to key posts within an international HQ, (e.g. UN service, NATO/PfP, the EU etc.) or who have been appointed defence attachés and need to be able to use other languages than English in their work.

5. Tests and Teacher Training

Although formal tests in English for career officers do not usually, for practical reasons, cover all four language skills (listening/speaking/reading/writing), they are aligned with general STANAG requirements and cover items such as: vocabulary, acronyms, reading comprehension, grammar, and for applicants to the Swedish National Defence College, also a short essay. In most military units and schools, oral ability is evaluated continually by the language teachers, who are familiar with STANAG requirements. The Swedish National Defence College is responsible for creating tests for the academies and schools, which is a way of ensuring progression and uniformity even in outlying regions.

Since the last BILC national report, all but the Naval Schools (in the process of advertising a post) have acquired English language teachers, though not all are fully employed. In order to uphold the standards and quality of teaching, regular teacher training under the auspices of the Swedish National Defence College is provided for all language teachers in the country. A much appreciated and very successful course in English for Specific Purposes was run in Stockholm by two professional trainers from Slovenia. This was also an opportunity for new and established teachers to make contact.

6. Materials

A series of files (one study file for each armed service) used during the first three years of officer training, *Military English for Officer Training*, are still in the process of being revised to correspond with new officer requirements and defence roles, etc. For Tactical Training, as officers become more specialised in their military roles, appropriate service-to-arms English material is used. Nowadays, the Internet is used frequently as a source of language information and practice.

A CD-ROM, *Self-study Course in Military English* is available from the National Defence College for students revising and preparing for an entry test or personnel preparing for overseas service or courses. It consists of military texts, listening comprehension plus exercises with keys and grammar references. Reference and exercise materials, such as the *Campaign English* series and *Check Your Vocabulary for Military English* (Peter Collin Publishing) are increasingly being used when appropriate at the various levels of training. For revision or recreational purposes there are also computerized spelling and vocabulary programmes in French and German available at the Swedish National Defence College.

For the two-year Advanced Command Programme, English language is often directly related to international staff work and materials used in other college subjects, e.g. doctrine, GOP, organisational theory etc. English is also aimed at the college's increasing number of international staff and crisis management exercises, entirely held in English. The study of French and German at this level focuses on enhancing knowledge in socio-political, historical and military matters in French and German speaking countries.

7. Other projects

The Swedish National Defence College has made no progress in digitalizing the English language entrance test prior to Tactical and Staff Training and NDC. This work has been temporarily shadowed by the current armed forces' transformation and new NDC responsibilities for officer training. An item test-bank of words and phrases is ready and installed to be utilised for this purpose.

In the late 90s, a **STANAG 6001 Level 3 Test** was devised by the college to test any officer or officer-student who was expected to take part in some kind of international activity. The test, which covers the four skills of listening, oral interview, reading and writing (essay plus letter) was co-ordinated with standards evolved from the SHAPE Language Testing Centre in Mons, Belgium. This test has been used on very few occasions and when the idea of creating a "Nordic" STANAG test arose it became an opportunity to not only validate our testing items but also gain experience from experts in the field.

Collaboration and joint effort with the testing team from Norway (Denmark has also expressed an interest) has resulted in reading and listening comprehension tests; the latter will be trialled on student officers and willing staff at the NDC soon after this report has been submitted. The aspiration is to create a valid and credible test appropriate for our “Nordic” candidates and fulfilling STANAG criteria. Sharing ideas, experience and compiling the tests has proved to be rewarding and efficient as well as creating more opportunities for trialling them.

8. The future

Over the next couple of years, material development projects will continue to involve revision and updating of the officer trainee material files concurrently with the changing shape and size of our armed forces. The Swedish National Defence College has been commissioned to act as “quality assessor” for language activity throughout the whole system of officer training and this implies continued close cooperation and contact with each and every language teacher and unit in Sweden.

We are grateful to have established fruitful collaboration with Ola-Johan Berntsen and Patricia Aresvik in Norway on the STANAG test project and indebted to Dubravka Zupanec and Tadeja Hafner from Slovenia for the successful teacher training course in Sweden this spring. Swedish participation at BILC conferences and seminars has led to valued and valuable international contacts.

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