



Swedish Armed Forces HQ



Swedish National Defence College

National Report from Sweden

Officer Training and Foreign Languages in the Swedish Armed Forces 2010

1. Background

The Swedish Armed Forces (SAF) form an agency of the Swedish government, which is responsible to the Ministry of Defence. However, since 1 January 2008 the Swedish National Defence College (SNDC), which provides basic officer training and higher education of civilian and military leaders within the total defence forces, is accountable to the Ministry of Education. This is a result of the SNDC gaining accreditation as a university college. The Swedish Armed Forces are in the process of transformation to smaller, networked and deployable forces focused on international operations. The process and implementation of change are in line with similar developments in other countries; this has affected and will continue to affect the training of Swedish officers. Language matters have recently come more into focus, as a result of demands of interoperability to meet the needs of a deployable force.

2. Current work

SAF Headquarters has continued the work on a Language Strategy which aims to provide guidelines for all language-related issues. The Language Strategy is to be fully developed and implemented by 2014, concurrently with a new officer education and training system. The Language Council that was established in 2008 has continued its work. The Council is led by the HQ/HR and is an advisory body to provide and coordinate information into the Language Strategy process. This forum has proven to be very valuable for discussions on language matters: issues ranging from STANAG-levels in English to recruiting local interpreters have been discussed. One result from this year is a recently issued document, Guidelines for Military English, which is to serve as a tool for quality assurance and, among other things, includes templates for Course Plans. There are still ideas on closer cooperation within the Nordic framework (NORDEFECO), which are not yet formalised.

3. Officer Training

Officer Programme is three years and after graduating, the career path will look different for every individual, depending on the position he or she will have in the system. A future goal is that language requirements are connected to all job descriptions. An objective in the new system is to aim at SLP 3,3,3,3 in English after completion of three years' Officer Programme. Finally, on completion of the Advanced Staff Programme (equivalent to Masters) the students should have attained SLP 3+, 3+, 3+, 3+.

Officer Training SNDC – 3 yrs → Modular courses – 10 yrs (SAF) → Advanced Command Programme – 2- 2½ yrs (SNDC)

2.1 Officer Programme (OP) Swedish National Defence College

The Officer programme, which is the first stage in an officer's career, comprises 3 years (6 terms) and is equivalent to 120 credits (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, i.e. ECTS). Terms 1 to 3 and term 6 are carried out at the Military Academy Karlberg, Stockholm (MHS K) and terms 4 and 5 at Service/branch schools all around the country. Military English is obligatory throughout the three-year programme, being taught regularly and related to the various military subjects. At the Military Academy

Karlberg, this mainly reflects the theoretical content of war studies, whereas the military English during terms 4 and 5 is more practical and integrated into their professional work.

2.2 Swedish Armed Forces “in-house” Training and Education

Education and training for all OR, OF2, and some of OF3 and OF4 is the responsibility of the SAF. A network of language teachers exists. The teaching of military English is very much integrated into the other subjects; usually teaching in the classroom is followed by training in the field or applied in e.g. tactics. This period of officer training is very much focussed on specific terminology and proficiency in the areas of describing the officer’s own position and work.

2.3 Higher Staff Training (HSU) OF4

The Higher Staff Training of 2 years, 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 in a tactical, operational, national or international headquarters. English language training takes place on a weekly basis, though only the first year, and is strongly linked to the other subjects and military exercises at the college. French is available to the students who have studied it for at least 3 years previously.

2.4 Specialist Officers (NCOs)

Education and training for Specialist Officers/OR is the responsibility of the SAF and this is carried out at the respective branch schools. The STANAG level is set to a minimum of SLP 2,2,2,2, and the courses focus on branch-specific needs. Methods and content vary greatly depending on the needs of the specific branch. Generally, lessons are provided weekly, on an average 2 hrs per week.

3. Other Language Training

Language training including Arabic, Russian and Dari for job-related positions, such as interpreters, is provided at the *Swedish Defence Language School (SDLS)*, which comes under the *Armed Forces Intelligence and Security Centre* in Uppsala, north of Stockholm. The SDLS also offers courses to SAF personnel and government establishments. The SDLS has a framework agreement with Uppsala University, and all its teaching staff conduct research for 20 %, as part of their job.

In 2010, SWEDINT (The Swedish International Training Centre) will conduct two pilot-courses in Military English for Multinational Staff work, which is a course that has been designed and delivered in cooperation with Defence School of Languages in Beaconsfield, UK. Both courses will be evaluated, and then it will be decided on whether they will be a permanent part of the overall curriculum of language courses.

Other language courses are designed and conducted on demand, either in-house or outsourced.

4. Tests and Teacher Training

SAF HQ has tasked SNDC to be head of the STANAG 6001 system for Sweden and at various levels of officer training, testing and evaluation measures are applied to ascertain attainment of desired STANAG levels. Although for practical reasons, tests in English for career officers do not usually cover all four language skills (listening/speaking/reading/writing) for practical reasons, they are aligned with 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. Most SAF branch schools have access to an English language teacher on site and oral ability is evaluated continually by the language teacher, who is familiar with STANAG requirements.

In order to uphold the standards and quality of teaching, regular teacher seminars are conducted at least twice a year and coordinated together by the SAF and the SNDC.

In January 2010, a one-week Language Testing Seminar was conducted in Stockholm with most of the teachers involved in teaching at the National Defence College and Swedish Armed Forces, including the Interpreter School. The course was a condensed version of the two-week LTS and was aimed at levels 3 and 4. It was taught by Ms Jean Meakin of DSL and Mr James Dirkin of DLI-FLC. It has proved to be a real stand-off in building up the competence on STANAG 6001 for the Swedish system.

5. Materials

The Officer Programme students are issued with material produced by the Defence College, which is relevant to their military studies. *Campaign 3* is introduced during term 3 and continued at certain branch schools during terms 4 and 5. The Internet is frequently used as a source of language information and practice. For the training of OF 2, 3 and to a certain extent OF4, materials are generally adapted to specific needs. For the two-year Higher Staff Programme, military English is directly related to international staff work and courses in the other college subjects, such as, doctrine, GOP, leadership, organisational theory etc. English is the language of all military exercises and international staff and crisis management exercises.

6. The future

The future development of the Language Council and Language Strategy has been approved by SAF HQ and work that started in 2008 has shown results. A further aim is to form a unit that will govern all language-related matters within the SAF, facilitate development, deter redundancy and ensure quality assurance.

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