



Swedish Armed Forces HQ



Swedish National Defence College

National Report on Foreign Languages' Activity in the Swedish Armed Forces

1. Background

In December of 2004, a new Defence Review was passed which meant a 30% cut down in the number of personnel employed by The Swedish Armed Forces. A number of units are to be closed down and quite a few have to move to new locations. This has resulted in one of the most turbulent times in modern history of the Swedish Armed Forces. This has affected every part of the organisation in some way. For example, a decision has been made that no training is going to start at the Military Academies and the National Defence College in the autumn of 2005, this is in order to come to terms with the heavy budget cuts that was one result of the Review. The education and training at the academies and Defence College will recommence in the autumn of 2006.

In spite of the restructuring into a more financially viable defence force transitioning from an anti-invasion defence to one of operational crisis response, the aim is still to promote active participation in European security efforts and to be able to fulfil and even increase international commitments! This implies efforts in the field of foreign language training, mainly English, but also in other major European languages, such as French and German. Additional languages are catered for where special needs exist, such as, for example, Russian, Spanish and Arabic.

Basic officer training has until now been carried out at three **Military Academies**: one in the north of Sweden (Östersund), one in Stockholm (Karlberg) and one in the south (Halmstad). In the Defence Review it was decided that the Military Academy in Östersund is to be closed down. Military English has been phased into all levels of our officer training system with the overall aim of rendering a progression and “main theme” throughout all stages of the officer’s educational programme; from Cadet, through the initial officer rank of Ensign/Second Lieutenant/Midshipman up to Lieutenant Colonel.

While the academies have the operational responsibility for foreign language training at their own academies and branch schools, **the Swedish National Defence College** has the general responsibility for seeing that the line of progression is being adhered to.

2. Languages taught

As mentioned above, the main language is English. This is a prerequisite for any Swedish officer, irrespective of armed service, branch or level! The standard language level to be achieved in English is as follows, related to the STANAG Language Descriptors and using decimals:

Educational programme	No. of credits	STANAG level
Career Officer Programme (yrs 1-2)	6	2.5
Tactical Programme (Capt Course, 1 yr)	1	2.5 (maintaining!)
Staff Programme (Maj/LtCdr Course, 1 yr)	2+	3.0
Advanced Command Programme (2 yrs)	2+	3.5

The Military education and training system is also under reorganisation and most probably the Tactical Programme will be taken as shorter residence courses or as distant learning courses in the future. This means we will have to come up with specific tools to raise, or just maintain, the proficiency of our officers.

The Career Officer Programme and the *Tactical Programme* have until now been carried out at the three above-mentioned Military Academies and at Branch Schools (two in the future). Although considerable efforts have been put into the training of primarily Military English, the instruction of German and French has also been well established over the four-year period of the officer training system.

The Military Academies offer language instruction in Military English during years 1 and 2 up to STANAG 2.5 and rendering 6 credits; in German at a level of STANAG 1.5 - 2.5 ; in Russian at beginner's level and in French running along the same lines as German.

A diagnostic test in English is given to all officer cadets on entry to the basic officer training programme.

At *the Swedish National Defence College*, English is the main language together with French and German for officer-students who have shown above-average standard scores on the entry test in English and who have previous knowledge in German and French. Spanish, Finnish and Russian have been carried out on a self-study basis by individual students. No courses for beginners are offered.

3. Intensive language training for special purposes

Apart from the academies and the Swedish National Defence College, special 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, involving languages such as Russian, Serbo-Croatian and Polish. Russian is taught on a regular basis for a twelve-month period for conscripts.

Also, specialized English language training is offered by the *Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters* for officers with job-related needs 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 also 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.

A positive development has been that some branch schools, such as *the Swedish Army Combat School* in Skövde and *the Armed Forces' Military (Branch) Schools* in Halmstad, organise their own regular teaching of English.

Also, the *Swedish Armed Forces' International Command (SWEDINT)* in Kungsängen, north of Stockholm, organises a military English language courses for personnel going out into PSO missions. The course precedes the UN Junior Officers Course and is offered within the scope of PfP (Partnership Work Plans) for Swedish nationals and participants from NATO/PfP nations.

It is also worth pointing out that the academies offer in-depth study courses in Swedish for both foreign students and for Swedish nationals!

4. Materials and course development

4.1 Military Academies:

English: there is a set book-list for courses. Apart from purely structure-related materials (grammars, etc), CDROM material is used for both self-study purposes and classroom work

with contents related to the three armed services: *Military English*, produced by the Swedish National Defence College. A set of files for the three armed services, *Military English for Officer Training*, is also used. Reference materials and exercise materials, such as *Check Your Vocabulary for Military English* (Peter Collin Publishing) are widely used. Materials from the *DLI/ELC in the US* (Lackland Air Force Base) are also used as reference materials.

A *Military English self-study interactive computer programme* has previously been developed at the Military Academy of Karlberg enabling individual practice in English specialised vocabulary via PCs. The interactive programme covers service terminology, military medical care and specialised terminology for UN police officers plus pronunciation exercises (multiple choice).

There are also computerized spelling and vocabulary programmes in French and German, where grammar and certain important set phrases are also covered. These three computer programmes in English, German and French are also accessible at the Swedish National Defence College.

French and German – materials are related to the further development of previous knowledge in the two languages through compendiums and articles related to the German and French speaking societies, e.g.: military conditions, organisations and structure, social life and institutions, history and cultural life.

Materials in French also include a specially devised compendium, *Milicontacts*, with information on military matters, organisation, units and equipment.

Materials in German comprise, among other things, Austrian and German handouts on military matters as well as materials helpfully supplied by the *Bundessprachenamt* in Germany.

4.2 Swedish National Defence College:

English: for the one-year Staff Programme (Major/LtCdr Course), a special compendium on *International Staff Work* has been produced, which includes items related to the standard five main staff branches and PSYOPS, plus exercises. This material is revised and updated regularly.

For the two-year Advanced Command Course, the language programme focuses on both international staff work and on materials related to other subjects being taught, where there is course literature in English (e.g. doctrine, NATO publications, organisational theory, strategy). Materials and course content are directly related to the actual study programme offered to the students of that programme.

In general, courses in English are adapted to and integrated into the College's increasing number of international staff and crisis management exercises, entirely or partly held in English.

French and German: as in the academies, the College offers materials such as *Milicontacts* in French and the relevant materials in German. The study of French and German aims at enhancing knowledge in socio-political, historical and military matters in French and German-speaking countries.

5. Special projects

The Military Academy in Stockholm organised a remedial course in Swedish for officer cadets with basic needs in their own language. Apart from English, also regular studies in Military French (4 students) and German (5 students) for student-cadets who have previous knowledge in these languages. A beginner's course in Military Russian (10 students) has been organised at the Academy. Courses in English, French and German have also been offered to the academy's civilian and military employees.

The Swedish National Defence College

The possibility of "digitalizing" the annual language tests in English for entry to the College's Staff and Advanced Command Programmes has been looked into and development in this field will begin in the autumn of 2005. The first phase is to construct the test through the systematic use of an item test-bank of words and phrases – the second phase involves the delivery of the test to local military units and schools as well as being able to make item analyses for constant revisions and updating of tests. Although these tests, for practical reasons, do not actively cover all four language skills (listening/speaking/reading/writing), they are aligned with general *STANAG* requirements and mainly cover items such as: vocabulary, acronyms, reading comprehension, grammar, and, for applicants to the Swedish National Defence College's programmes, also a short essay.

Apart from the entry tests and achievement tests mentioned above, a special **STANAG 6001 level 3 test** has been devised by the College to test any officer or officer-student who is expected to take part in some kind of overseas activity.

The test, which covers the four skills: listening, oral interview, reading and writing (essay plus letter) is adapted to demands for STANAG 6001 level 3 and has been co-ordinated with standards evolved from the SHAPE Language Testing Centre in Mons, Belgium.

6. Summary

The aim of streamlining language activity throughout the whole system of officer training and education is currently being maintained by the "division of labour" between the two military academies and the Swedish National Defence College. A further aim for language efforts is the possibility of co-ordinating and streamlining foreign language teaching assets within the country. Although the Swedish Armed Forces are decreasing in numbers, language requirements are likely to increase rather than do the opposite.

Stockholm, May 2005

Monica Larsson
Swedish Armed Forces HQ

Ingrida Leimanis
Swedish National Defence College