



Swedish Armed Forces HQ



Swedish National Defence College

National Report from Sweden Officer Training and Foreign Languages in the Swedish Armed Forces 2006

1. Background

Training for Swedish officers is currently undergoing great change as a result of enormous budget cuts due to the ongoing transformation from the present “top-heavy” military structure to smaller, networked and deployable forces focused on international operations. The changes, which started at the top, are now most pronounced 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 is an authority directly controlled by the Ministry of Defence, whereas the two remaining Swedish Military Academies are controlled by the Armed Forces Headquarters.

2. Officer Training

2.1 The Regular Officer Programme (1-3 years)

Until only a few years ago, the structure for officer training has been more or less the same since the sixties with a strong focus on military preparedness, tactics and field exercises. Swedish international activities have been increasing in importance, at the same time as improved forms of international co-operation are being developed and consequently training for the future officer will be changed as of 2007. The training will be shared between the two Military Academies and the arms and service schools all over Sweden, based on course plans produced by the Swedish National Defence College. Another major change is that from 2007 onwards, 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 will be obligatory throughout all the years of training, being taught regularly as a subject in its own right as well as integrated into as many other subjects as possible. 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.

2.2 “The Gap”

Between the two long periods of training, i.e. the above mentioned ROP and the Advanced Command Programme, there is going to be a gap of approximately 10-15 years, to which a complete solution has not yet been found. However, it is obvious that the onus will be put on the officers and that we shall have to rely more heavily on unit commanders. 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.

2.3 Advanced Command Programme (2 – 2½ years)

The Advanced Command Programme (ACP) represents 80-100 university credits, depending on whether students attend the regular or the 6-month longer technical course. The aim of this programme is to prepare the officer for command appointments or staff appointments at a tactical, operational, national or international headquarters.

3. STANAG 6001 English Language Standards

At various steps of officer training, testing and evaluation will ascertain attainment of the specified STANAG level to be achieved, as illustrated by the following table.

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

4. Other Language Training

Apart from the officer training described above, 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. 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 Teachers

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 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. In order to uphold the standards and quality of teaching, regular training under the auspices of the Swedish National Defence College is provided for all language teachers in the country. The college language teachers are also always available for advice and consultation.

6. Materials

A series of files used during the first three years of officer training, *Military English for Officer Training*, are in the process of being revised to correspond with new officer requirements and defence roles, etc. There is one study file for each armed service, dealing with military aspects, such as ranks, orders, drill, international work, radio communications, doctrine etc. For Tactical Training, as officers become more specialised in their military roles, appropriate service-to-arms English material is used.

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 and also some other schools. Nowadays, the Internet is being used increasingly frequently as a source of language information and practice. French and German students strive to improve their standard and about 75% succeed in passing the Certificat militaire de langue française 1 (CMLF 1).

For the two-year Advanced Command Programme, English language is mostly 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 or partly 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 is still in the process of looking into the possibility of digitalizing English language tests; this work has been temporarily shadowed by the current transformation and new responsibilities for officer training. There is an item test-bank of words and phrases, which is ready to be utilised for this purpose and hopefully this project will re-start this year. Apart from the tests already mentioned, a **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 international 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.

8. Summary

Over the next couple of years, material development projects will continue to involve the revision and updating of the officer trainee files in accordance with the changing shape and size of our armed forces. To ensure success, all language teachers are being called upon to contribute to the work of material production and lesson planning. The aim is to achieve not only uniformity of standards but also “inter-changeable” material and lesson ideas, which can be shared, and thus save colleagues time and effort. 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 collaboration with each and every language teacher and unit in Sweden. Although the Swedish Armed Forces are decreasing in numbers, language requirements are definitely going to increase rather than the contrary.

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