



Lithuanian Military Digest

JUNE 2019. NO 6 (13).

NEWS

ALLIES' WARSHIPS TOOK PART IN THE OPEN SPIRIT EXERCISE



PREPARATION FOR EXERCISE DEFENDER 2020



eFP PRESENT AT KLAIPEDA'S HARBOUR PROTECTION



SPECIAL

STING FOR THE RED BEAR: STINGERS IN AFGHANISTAN



Photo credit: Kotryna Gureviciūtė

Not Giving Up: Following the Path of Soldier and Teacher

THERE ARE MORE THAN 1,000 NATO TROOPS DEPLOYED IN LITHUANIA WHO SPEND THEIR DAYS WORKING FOR THE SAFETY ALL OTHER PEOPLE. LITTLE OF US KNOW WHAT PERSONALITIES HIDE BENEATH THEIR UNIFORMS. AND HERE WE MEET **JAN** — 31 YEARS OLD, CORPORAL AND BOXER DRIVER AT THE DUTCH ROYAL ARMY. TEN YEARS AGO, JAN QUIT HIS JOB IN A SUPERMARKET TO JOIN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE NETHERLANDS AND IS NOW PARTICIPATING IN THE eFP (ENHANCED FORWARD PRESENCE) NATO MISSION. TODAY, JAN IS HALFWAY IN HIS BACHELOR STUDY TO BECOME AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER. DURING THE MISSION IN LITHUANIA THERE IS A PILE OF STUDY BOOKS LAYING ON JAN'S DESK AS WELL AS A COUPLE OF FANTASY NOVELS. IN ADDITION, THERE IS ONE THING WHICH IS ALWAYS WITH JAN DURING EXERCISES, HIS NINTENDO SWITCH. "I TAKE IT WITH ME ON LARGE EXERCISES TO HELP ME RELAX AND TAKE MY MIND OF WORK WHEN THE SITUATION ALLOWS IT", SAYS CORPORAL JAN. WHILE SITTING IN OF THE ROOMS OF DUTCH BARRACKS HE SHARES HIS STORY.

See page 10



Content

NEWS

ALLIES' WARSHIPS TOOK PART IN THE OPEN SPIRIT EXERCISE	3
LITHUANIAN TROOPS TRAINING IN THE UK-LED JOINT EXPEDITIONARY FORCE EXERCISE.....	4
U.S. BOMBERS IN TACTICAL AIR CONTROL EXERCISE	5
PREPARATION FOR EXERCISE DEFENDER 2020.....	5
NATO TO INTEGRATE OFFENSIVE CYBER CAPABILITIES OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS.....	6
LITHUANIA TOOK PART IN NATO CRISES MANAGEMENT EXERCISE.....	7
eFP PRESENT AT KLAIPEDA'S HARBOUR PROTECTION.....	7
HUNGARY TOOK THE LEAD OF THE NATO AIR POLICING MISSION IN THE BALTIC STATES.....	8
LITHUANIAN SOLDIERS TRAINING AT NATO COMMUNICATIONS EXERCISE IN ROMANIA.....	9
SNIPERS FROM NATO ALLIES COMPETED FOR THE TITLE OF THE BEST IN LITHUANIA.....	9

NATO'S PRESENCE

NOT GIVING UP: FOLLOWING THE PATH OF SOLDIER AND TEACHER.....	1, 10
---	-------

SPECIAL

STING FOR THE RED BEAR: <i>STINGERS</i> IN AFGHANISTAN.....	16
---	----



Photo credit: Flickr.com

Afghanistan.

For some people it associates with inaccessible lands, far-away wide deserts and dusty peaks of forbidding mountains. However, there are people whose memories of this name will be always covered by a dark shadow of the Soviet military campaign which took tens of thousands young men's lives. Almost 30 years ago, the Soviet Union pulled its last troops out of Afghanistan, ending more than nine years of direct involvement and occupation. The USSR entered neighbouring Afghanistan in 1979, attempting to shore up the newly-established pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. These times left a deep scar in Lithuania's relationship with this country. The older generation cannot forget the aforementioned Soviet military campaign during which our young men found themselves in a battlefield which they did not choose. Forced to serve in the Soviet Army, they ended up in regiments which were flown straight to the war zone. These people were fighting in a foreign and distant land sacrificing their own blood for the state which occupied their Homeland. Almost 1,000 of them were returned home to Lithuania in zinc-lined coffins.

After the Restoration of the Independent State of Lithuania and re-establishment of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, our country took all the international commitments as the future member of NATO. From the summer of 2005, Lithuania was in command of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Ghor, part of the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). More than 2,500 Lithuanian troops helped the Afghan government to expand its influence in the province, ensure security and create the appropriate conditions for the province's recovery. After eight years of this contribution Lithuanian soldiers left Afghanistan's soil marking the end of the first and the biggest Lithuanian civilian-military mission. Also, from 2002 the Lithuanian Special Operations Forces (SOF) squadrons "Aitvaras" operates in the most dangerous zones of Afghanistan. For the first two years they were deployed to the operation "Enduring Freedom", and from the autumn of 2007, the SOF took part in the NATO-led ISAF mission in the southern part of Afghanistan. At this time, the soldiers rendered military assistance to the Afghan troops as well as carried out other tasks.



Photo credit: Lithuanian SOF



Military Press Office of Lithuanian Armed Forces
 Totorių str. 25, LT-01121, Vilnius;
 Phone (370 5) 210 3897, GSM (370 6) 28 75851; fax (370 5) 273 5550;
 Kotryna Gurevičiūtė
 Correspondent
 Phone (370 5) 210 3897, GSM (370 6) 28 75851; fax (370 5) 273 5550;
 Email Kotryna.Gureviciute@mil.lt

Publisher — Lithuanian Armed Forces. The opinion of editorial office does not necessarily coincide with the opinion of the authors. Pictures, manuscripts are not returned and reviewed. Circulation is 300 copies. Printed by the Cartography Center of Lithuanian Military, Muitinės str.4, Domeikava, LT-54359 Kaunas dist. Order GL-278.



Allies' Warships Took Part in the Open Spirit Exercise

Roughly 15 warships from Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, UK, Germany, Latvia, Poland, France, and Turkey moored at Klaipėda Seaport on 3rd of May. The majority of them were sailing in to take part in international maritime operation Open Spirit, the largest exercise so far organised by the Lithuanian Navy this year. Lithuanian warship also participated in the exercise.

The international operation was aimed at clearing the Baltic seafloor of naval mines remaining from World War I and World War II and that way minimise the threat to maritime navigation, fishery, and other economic activities, as well as improves the ecological condition of the Baltic Sea. Approximately 55 thousand naval mines and 7.5 thousand other obstacles have been planted in the Baltic Sea during the World War I, and approximately 95 thousand naval mines and nearly 16 thousand various obstacles during World War II. Over 80 thousand of the naval mines are estimated to be still under the water and posing a great threat. In 2005 Belgian fishermen caught a mine in their nets in the North Sea — four people were killed as it exploded. It is not the only fatal accident of that kind.

"Ships that will be ensuring protection of the Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group during Open Spirit in Klaipėda have been peered at the Warship and Cruise Ship Terminal since April 25. The exercise will not disrupt daily seaport activities, civilian lives or tourism. The event is co-organised by the Lithuanian Navy and the NATO Centre of Ex-



Photo credits: Lithuanian Navy

cellence for Operations in Confined and Shallow Waters, it is also attended by soldiers of the German Naval Force Protection Battalion and the Bundeswehr Research Institute," said Cdr Tadas Jablonskis, Staff Officer for Operational Requirements at the NATO Centre of Excellence for Operations in Confined and Shallow Waters.

MORE ON SEAPORT SECURITY EXERCISE

"Port protection modules are equipped with sensors for detecting divers, mobile radars, electro-optical equipment, other sen-

sors, and C2 equipment. Such modules can be place on board in any port, a friendly port or a port without infrastructure. The exercise trains Lithuanian Navy personnel to coordinate deployment of allied forces, to counter threats from the air (UAVs), water and land," Cdr Tadas Jablonskis said.

The operation comprised 6 stages. The first three were preparations for port control interception in specific areas. The module was in operation independently since April 27 ensuring security of the port from the Warship and Cruise Ship Terminal. ■

Lithuanian Armed Forces inf.



Lithuanian Troops Training in the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force Exercise



Photo credit: Royal Navy

On May 24 inaugural deployment of the United Kingdom-led Joint Expeditionary Force (Maritime) (JEF) M) Baltic Protector began in the Baltic Sea. Exercise training audience include soldiers of the Lithuanian Armed Forces and one of the final phases of the exercise will take place on Lithuania's coast.

The exercise involves 3 thousand soldiers and 17 warships from all nine JEF countries: the United Kingdom, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Finland, and Sweden. The exercise command will be delivered from aboard HMS Albion of the United Kingdom Royal Navy.

"The Joint Expeditionary Force is one more measure of deterrence and defence which strengthens the security of both, Lithuania and the Baltic region, and helps to maintain the close cooperation with our allies, and Baltic Protector demonstrates the ability of this multinational rapid response force to project security in the Baltic region," Minister of National Defence Raimundas Karoblis says. Ministers of Defence of the JEF countries agreed on the Baltic Protector deployment in April earlier this year in London when testing the political decision-making process.

The first of the three phases of the deployment is taking place in Denmark. Military personnel and warships of the nine JEF countries will begin integration exercises in the western part of the Baltic Sea and the eastern part of the North Sea.

In June the JEF will showcase not only its ability to act independently but also to integrate with and support forces of international organisations — in the second phase of the exercise the JEF will act alongside NATO allies conducting the annual U.S.-led Exercise BALTOPS. The training forces will carry out tasks near the coast of Germany and Sweden.

The closing phase of Baltic Protector will focus on amphibious operations and landing on the Baltic coastline, and interoperability with the NATO enhanced Forward Presence in the Baltic countries. JEF troops will complete a night-time amphibious landing operation on the Baltic Sea coast and proceed to train tactical operations in Kairiai Training Area near Klaipėda with Lithuanian colleagues.

The UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force was established at the NATO Summit in 2014 and became operational after one year. The force reached Full Operational Capability in June

2018 with the signature of the Comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding in London and announcement of the force to be ready to act. Today the high-readiness rapid response force comprises 10 thousand troops can be activated to respond to emergencies in Europe and beyond any time necessary.

The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania gave a mandate for the Lithuanian Armed Forces to take part in military operations as part of the NATO Response Force, European Union Battle Groups and the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force, therefore, once there is a political decision, there is also the legal basis to deploy our soldiers at short notice and ensure crisis management.

One Lithuanian officer has been serving in the JEF operational headquarters in Northwood, United Kingdom, since early 2016. Lithuania is also contributing a company sized unit assigned to the Combat Group of the Danish Armed Forces and a military medic assigned to the UK field hospital. Up to 190 Lithuanian civilian and military personnel can take part in the JEF activities on the basis of the mandate provided by the Seimas this year. ■

Lithuanian MoD inf.

U.S. Bombers in Tactical Air Control Exercise

On May 6th the "Jolly Rogers" fighter aircraft of the Strike Fighter Squadron 103 of the Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group took part in a Close Air Support exercise at Kazlų Rūda Training Area. Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTAC) of the Lithuanian Special Operations Forces coordinated the CAS by identifying ground-based targets.

Two U.S. F/A18-F Super Hornet fighter jets whose pilots are also trained in calling in and controlling air support of other aircraft were attacking ground-based targets according to the scenario of the exercise that trained them to integrate with JTACs of the Lithuanian Special Operations Forces and act on the information they provide.

"We are accomplishing our mission by supporting our allies and showing the world we are prepared and capable of executing missions in our allies' airspace on short notice," said Lt Cmdr Stephen Gay, a Jolly Roger pilot and coordinator of the CAS exercise. "I've got a ton of confidence that if we have to work with these guys in a non-training scenario, it will be seamless."

"We can feel mutual trust and un-

Photo credit: Lithuanian Special Operations Forces



derstanding between the pilots and our JTACs, and nothing feels better than to understand while you on the ground that a pilot coming from many miles away is doing everything in his power to provide fire support and to protect the friendly forces. Within a minute of communication it already feels like you know the pilot perfectly. Such exercises prove that we are capable of fighting and training together anytime and anywhere. Our respect and appreciation go to VFA-103 and the Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group and all of its components and personnel who enabled the training and brought the "Sound of Freedom" of the F/A18-F Super Hornets to Lithuania," said a Lithuanian Special Operation Forces JTAC.

According to the exercise scenario, JTACs of the Lithuanian Special Operations Forces trained calling in and coordinating close air support by voice and digital battlefield control systems. The fighter aircraft took off from aboard the carrier in the Ionian Sea and flew over 1,000 nautical miles to the exercise in Lithuania with several air refuellings. ■

Lithuanian Armed Forces inf.

Preparation for Exercise Defender 2020

On May 16 the Lithuanian Armed Forces Defence Staff, Lithuanian Land Force Staff, and the 1st Territorial Unit of the National Defence Volunteer Force held a meeting with representatives of Marijampolė municipality to present Exercise Defender 2020 organised by the United States of America in Lithuania next year.

The Lithuanian Armed Forces representatives briefed the representatives of Marijampolė municipality on the character of the planned exercise, discussed exercise sites outside of the military training area, challenges arising from that, and possibilities to minimise them. Lithuanian officers also pointed out the importance of locations selected for the Exercise and the benefit it would have for strengthening national security.

Exercise Defender 2020 will be conducted by the U.S. European Command to demonstrate the ability of the United States to deploy a division at no notice to the theatre of operations in Europe. It will be the largest military exercise in 20 years testing military echelons larger than a brigade in operational level military action.

The Lithuanian Armed Forces supports the Exercise, plans to take part in it alongside other NATO allies and to develop our own division-level headquarters capability at the Exercise. The Lithuanian Armed Forces is assisting in ensuring a proper preparations, Host National Support, and seamless organisation of the Exercise on the territory of Lithuania.

Exercise Baltic Defender 2020 will start in April next year and will run



Photo credit: Lithuanian Armed Forces

until the end of May. The region of Marijampolė is next to the Suwalki Corridor — the territory called "the Achilles' heel" of NATO, therefore the military training actions spanning as much as 21 thousand hectares and involving nearly 3 thousand military personnel of Lithuania and our allies have been planned in the area. ■

Lithuanian MoD inf.



NATO to Integrate Offensive Cyber Capabilities of Individual Members



Photo credit: Flickr.com

A relative latecomer to the cyber game, NATO is beginning to "operationalize" cyber capabilities into its overall structure by integrating those tools of member nations, said the alliance's secretary general.

"We are tackling increasingly complex cyber threats faster and more efficiently. And we are more aware of the threats, more resilient to incidents," Jens Stoltenberg said at the Cyber Defence Pledge Conference in London. "We also need to consider how we can deter attacks in cyberspace."

Top NATO officials have long maintained that the 29-nation alliance is defensive in nature with a mission of deterrence, implying that the body itself doesn't engage in offensive manoeuvres, including in cyberspace.

As such, Stoltenberg noted that part of deterring cyberattacks is attribution. "Cyber attackers must know that they will be exposed," he said, citing a thwarted attempt by Russian intelligence operatives to hack the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in the Hague in October.

Conversely, Stoltenberg said, NATO must be ready to use cyber capabilities to fight enemies.

NATO has walked a fine line as a defensive organization, relying on the individual capabilities of member states. As an example, Stoltenberg pointed to allies conducting cyber operations against the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria.

"By using national cyber effects, or offensive

cyber, they suppressed ISIS propaganda, degraded their ability to coordinate attacks and disrupted their recruitment of foreign fighters," he said. "We have agreed to integrate national cyber capabilities or offensive cyber into alliance operations and missions. All of this has made NATO more effective in cyberspace."

Several experts have said member states that are both willing and capable of offensive operations number about a half dozen. Without a NATO-owned offensive capability, officials have noted that contesting adversaries in cyberspace is no simple endeavour.

The challenge is making sure cyber capabilities are available as much as those of other domains, according to Maj. Gen. Wolfgang Renner, the deputy chief of staff for cyberspace at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe. "This is true for the air, the land, the maritime domain, and it has to become true — I'm careful on that — for the cyber domain or cyberspace as a domain of operations," he said at a November 2018 conference. "This is what really we have to find out, and I address this is a difficult part because NATO is defensive and is a defensive alliance."

"For 70 years, NATO has kept our people safe in the physical world. Now NATO needs to do the same in the cyber world," Stoltenberg said. "We have seen that now in cyberspace we had a remarkable increase in our capabilities to defend our networks to stand together, to integrate offensive cyber intermissions and operations, and we have done that over the last years."

However, NATO is not responsible for defending individual member nations in cyberspace; members agreed in 2016 to boost their respective cyber defense capabilities.

But in July 2018, NATO created a Cyber Operations Center. It opened in August 2018 with a three-pronged mission: provide situational awareness in cyberspace, plan allied cyberspace operations and manage the execution of operations.

The center's deputy director, U.S. Air Force Col. Don Lewis, wrote that it serves as the theater component for cyberspace similar to how geographic commands cover specific physical domains. The center executes operational-level and strategic missions to provide commanders with domain advice, planning support and capability integration. ■

Fifthdomain.com inf

Lithuania Took Part in NATO Crises Management Exercise



Photo credit: www.nato.int

For the 10th time Lithuania was taking part in NATO's NATO Crisis Management Exercise 2019 (CMX19) on

May 9–15. The exercise was designed to test in practice methods of the Alliance's consultations, decision-making and crises response

measures at political and strategic levels.

The exercise had a fictional but realistic scenario of comprehensively responding to a crisis — a complicated civilian-military situation in hybrid environment.

The exercise involved civilian and military participants from institutions of all members of the Alliance, NATO Headquarters and both strategic commands.

Also, the European Union participated in the exercise at institutional representative level in order to refine the NATO-European Union coordination in crisis response. NATO partners Sweden and Finland also actively contributed to the exercise.

Just like before, forces were not deployed for this exercise.

This was the 22nd iteration of a NATO exercise of such nature since 1992. ■

Lithuanian MoD inf.

eFP Present at Klaipeda's Harbour Protection

An international detachment of NATO enhanced Forward Presence battle-group (eFP BG) soldiers and material was present at the closing ceremony of the naval Harbour Protection Exercise 2019. Together with representation from NFIU, the NATO forces joined an interesting day full of demonstrations and presentations.

For the Lithuanian navy and vessels of the SNMCMG1 (Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group One), who were simultaneously clearing mines in Lithuanian waters during Open Spirit 2019, this moment brought a lot of NATO assets together in Klaipeda on this day.

The demonstrations showed the ability of setting up an advanced secure area in the Klaipeda port from which underwater, water based, land based and UAV threats could be neutralized. Such a secure area can be used in any hostile environment to secure a port area which can then be used by friendly vessels to set up logistical lines or put troops ashore.

The whole secure area and water and land based response teams were manned by the Lithuanian navy in coordination with other NATO troops. After the demonstrations, the Lithuanian troops were introduced to eFP weapons and equipment. All-in-all a perfect cooperation of NATO troops from different services.



Photo credit: Sg. Spc Ieva Budzeikaite

NATO DEFENSIVE SYSTEM

The cooperation showed how different NATO elements all work together in a larger defensive system. Should any threat occur in Lithuania, a first line of defence is formed by Lithuanian troops and the NATO eFP BG, consisting of German, Dutch, Czech, Norwegian and Belgian rotational forces based in Rukla. These troops will defend the country while the NATO's Force Integration Unit (NFIU) will coordinate the deployment of the NATO's response force (NRF). The NRF is a technologically advanced, multinational force made up of land, air, maritime and Special Operations For-

ces components, that are rapidly deployable. It provides collective defence and a rapid military response to an emerging crisis.

The NRF consists of an initial force called the VJTF (Very high readiness Joint Task Force) which can be deployed in a matter of days. After that troops from the Initial Follow-on Forces Group (IFFG) can be deployed. These troops are followed by larger units from the Follow-on Forces Group (FFG) and additional troops from all NATO countries. This ensures the readiness of NATO to counter any threat posed to a member nation. ■

eFP BG Lithuania inf.

Hungary Took the Lead of the NATO Air Policing Mission in the Baltic States

Photo credits: Antanas Gedrimas (LITHAF Air Base)



During NATO Baltic Air Policing Mission changeover ceremony on May 2nd at the Lithuanian Air Force Base in Šiauliai soldiers of the Hungarian Air Force took over the lead of the mission from their colleagues of the Polish Air Force. A Spanish Air Force Detachment augmented the mission conducted from Lithuania and a British Royal Air Force Detachment — the mission conducted from Estonia.

"The symbolic 50th rotation of the NATO Baltic Air Policing Mission in Šiauliai begins with reinforced capabilities deployed by Hungary and Spain. We appreciate our NATO allies' contributions to the mission that ensures

the security and integrity of both, airspace of the Baltic States and the whole Alliance," Vice Minister of National Defence Vytautas Umbrasas said.

The Hungarian Air Force deployed four JAS-39 Gripen fighter aircraft to the Lithuanian Air Force Base in Šiauliai for the mission period. It is the second time since 2015 a Hungarian Air Force Detachment is in the lead of the NATO Air Policing Mission conducted from Lithuania.

Spain deployed the augmentation of five F-18 fighter aircraft to Šiauliai Air Base. This is the sixth time Spain is contributing to the mission: in 2006 and 2016 the country had the

lead of the mission in Lithuania, and in 2015, 2017, and 2018 it provided augmentations deployed to Estonia.

At the ceremony Vice Minister of National Defence V. Umbrasas thanked the Polish Air Force Detachment for impeccable performance and reliable protection of the three Baltic States' airspace. "Poland remains to be one of the most active contributors to the air policing effort in the Baltic States and plans to participate as soon as 2020 again," V. Umbrasas said.

The outgoing Polish Air Force Detachment were protecting the Baltic skies with four F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter aircraft. The mission was manned by approx. 130 soldiers — pilots, technical and medical personnel, supports teams, communications and other specialists.

While deployed in Lithuania, the Polish soldiers engaged with the community of Šiauliai, hosted tours of students and schoolchildren, took part in the town events, and the celebration of Lithuania 15th anniversary of NATO membership together with Lithuanian colleagues.

It is a special rotation of the NATO Air Policing Mission in the Baltic States — it is the 50th time the mission is conducted over the 15 Lithuania's years in the Alliance. NATO has been providing Air Policing for the Baltic States which do not have suitable air capabilities of their own non-stop since 2004 when Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia became members of the Alliance. 17 NATO members have conducted the mission already since then. ■

Lithuanian MoD inf.



Lithuanian Soldiers Training at NATO Communications Exercise in Romania

Communications specialists of the Lithuanian Armed Forces trained at international NATO communications Exercise Steadfast Cobalt 2019 in Bucharest (Romania) as of mid-May. The annual training event of the Alliance tested readiness of the NATO Communication and Information Systems Group (NCISG) to ensure information exchange among NATO forces and headquarters and communication worldwide.

The exercise involved over 1,000 soldiers from 25 NATO allies and 35 different communications units and ran until early June. Lithuania is represented at the exercise by soldiers of the Defence Staff, Headquarters Company of the Mechanised Infantry Brigade Iron Wolf and the Communications and Information Systems Battalion.

NATO Exercise Steadfast Cobalt 2019 is defensive in character, it trains capabilities of communications units and tests deployable communications and information system capabilities of the Alliance ensuring successful execution of tasks of the NATO Response Force and other headquarters in any place of the world at any time.

This was the second consecutive year soldiers of the NATO enhanced Forward Presence Battalion Battle Groups in the Baltic States and Poland joined the exercise — their role in the training was to ensure interoperability with information systems of the NATO Response Force.

Held in Romania this year, Exercise Steadfast Cobalt was previously organised on Lithuania's territory three times — in 2014 (at Division



Photo credit: <https://shape.nato.int/>

General Stasys Raštikis Lithuanian Armed Forces School in Kaunas), 2017 and 2018 (Vytautas the Great Jaeger Battalion in Kaunas). Both, as a participant and the host, Lithuania has proved it is capable of hosting an exercise of such scope and has informed the organisers of its readiness to do it again in the future. ■

Lithuanian MoD inf.

Snipers from NATO allies Competed for the Title of the Best in Lithuania



Photo credit: MSgt. Cimašius Mauricas

Sniper Day 2019 competition organised by the Lithuanian Land Force Juozas Lukša Training Centre took place in Rukla (Jonava region) on May 29-30. At the event over 160 sharpshooters and snipers from

15 countries competed for the Lithuanian Land Force Commander's Prize and showcased characteristics of their equipment and their abilities of high-precision firing at targets of different complexity.

It is the 10th anniversary of Sniper Day competition. This year the abundance of participants was extraordinary — they represented 15 NATO allies: Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom, Canada, Poland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovenia, and Germany. Also, snipers from Ukraine and Sweden competed against NATO colleagues. The event was also attended by members of the Lithuanian Rifleman's Union and Lithuania's Long-range Shooting Federation.

On the first day of the competition participants shot in and shared experience, and May 30th was the main competition which lasted until late night and presented the best.

The already traditional contest fosters traditions of sniper shooting, experience exchange, comparison of skills, establishing friendships, and to increase the appeal of sniper profession and marksmanship among Lithuanian and other NATO allies' militaries and force structures. ■

Lithuanian Armed Forces inf.



Photo credit: Kotryna Gaurevičiūtė

Corporal Jan: "Not giving up and completing my task is something that I'm always proud of doing and it gives me great satisfaction."

Not Giving Up: Following the Path of Soldier and Teacher

From page 1

– What gives you the hardest time during this deployment in Lithuania?

Not being able to see my wife and daughter of course! The little one is 1 year and 2 months old right now. She's currently learning to stand up straight and I think she's going to make her first steps before I get back home. I really hate that I'm going to miss that, but it doesn't influence my willingness to contribute to the mission.

Another example, I really love running — full

marathons, obstacle runs and competitive running — but because my knees are getting weaker, I'm getting older, I've decided that it's time to quit running. That was hard for me because it's a hobby that I would have loved to continue for many years.

Also, during the mission we aren't allowed to drink any alcohol. And I can tell you a nice blonde beer on a warm summer day goes a long way.

– How does this mission differ from your previous experience?

I've been in the army for more than ten years and this is my third time being away from home. The first tour was in Afghanistan where I conducted airport security. I was guarding a couple of F-16 fighter planes for four straight months, making sure that only Dutch personnel had access to them. I have to admit that it was quite boring. The second tour was two and

a half years ago in Middle America on an island named Curaçao. Previously the island was a colony of the Netherlands, nowadays it's an official country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Dutch still keep a standing force of close to 800 people of the military in Curaçao and in the Dutch Caribbean area. Comparing these past missions with the eFP mission is impossible. They are all so very different.

– What does your ordinary day and tasks here look like?

It differs from day to day, but mainly I'm the driver of an APC (armoured personnel carrier). I drive a *Boxer* vehicle and am responsible for getting people safely from point A to point B during the exercises. I do maintenance and clean the vehicle, make sure that everything's stocked up and ready to go at a moments notice.

My second task is to support the company commander and his staff in every possible way. Anything from copying orders to setting up an area suited for briefings and much more. On one occasion I've made a huge 25m² map for my commander to conduct a staff exercise. I've even made some buildings so that everyone had a better view of the village on the map.

” **The comradery in the army is really a unique thing that you couldn't experience anywhere else. And that's what I absolutely want in my job.**

Lastly I'm the deputy commander for the eFP marching team during the International Four Day Marches event in the Dutch city of Nijmegen. It's a walking event in the Netherlands that's been going on for more than a century where people just walk 40 km every day for four days. We hope that the eFP marching team adds to the recognition of the eFP mission in Lithuania because a lot of Dutch people aren't aware of the Dutch contributes to this mission. Therefore, one of the ways that we're trying to increase awareness is by participating in the march with an international eFP detachment. I organise training marches for the participants.

– What made the biggest impression on you here?

The thing that I like most about Lithuania is the gratitude we get from locals and civilians. I've done a couple of static shows and people act really appreciative towards NATO soldiers. The younger generation speaks better English and tell me that they feel more comfortable living in their own country because of NATO presence. The older generation doesn't shy away from us either. Despite the language barrier they still try to interact, even if it's just a smile or simply shaking hands. At most static shows, I offer people to put on my helmet and make a picture. They always have to laugh when they put it on. I remember one man — he didn't speak English — gesturing for pen and paper, he drew a tank and tried to tell that he was a tank driver back in his younger years. I showed him that I was the driver of the *Boxer* vehicle which was standing there and he shook my hand and smiled warmly. Those moments really stick with you. I hope everybody feels a bit more secure with us being here.

– What motivated you to put on a soldier's uniform in the first place?

From a young age I always knew I would either



Photo credit: Koryna Gureviciūtė

NATO's presence

become a teacher or a soldier. But at the age of 21 I was still working in a supermarket. I wanted to contribute to society as well as to be able to stand on my two feet. I made a conscious decision to join the army because I knew that I could become a teacher later in life, like my dad did when he was young. Joining the army later in my life just seemed a lot less of a possibility. When I applied to become a soldier I had this image that everyone in the army is really tough and best of the best. I wanted to be a part of that and prove to myself and everyone else that I could be just as tough. Times have changed and these days I experience it as my duty and an honour to contribute to this mission for our Kingdom and for the safety of Europe.

– So, what happened next after you applied to join the army?

First of all, when I applied I didn't pass my physical so I couldn't join the infantry, the one thing I wanted. But I was offered to be a driver at the infantry, so I took a chance. Four or five months later I arrived in Utrecht where was this man in a uniform yelling at me to get in a bus and I answered "Yes, Sir". He replied by saying he's not a sir, he's a Corporal. The next man in uniform told me something similar and when I replied with "Yes, Corporal" he told me he's a Sergeant. Finally, when a third man started talking I called him Sergeant and, apparently, he was Lieutenant. Those first couple of days were so confusing.

“ I've learned to 'let go' and not worry about every little detail. Most importantly I've learned how to place trust in the people I work with.

When we got on a base on the first day we were divided into groups and got four person rooms. Suddenly I was sleeping, eating and living with people I'd never seen before. And then the training course starts. Basically, you have trainings from early morning until late evening and during the last ten minutes before I go to bed I was asking myself if this was what I wanted to do.

– How did you answer to that question?

While I endured basic training I got stronger and better. I started to enjoy sports, the obstacle course, putting on camouflage and patrolling the woods. That's what answered that question for me.

Two years later I got back from my tour in Afghanistan. The barracks were mostly empty, the company was off on a different mission, it felt lonely. I was just back from a four month

mission without seeing family and friends. I started to ask myself the same question again, is this what I wanted to do? At that moment I felt like quitting the army. The only thing that prevented me from this decision was the return of the company. Being reunited with the comrades and friends from the company. The comradery in the army is really a unique thing that you couldn't experience anywhere else. And that's what I absolutely want in my job.

– What do you love the most about being a soldier?

Lots of things. For instance, driving on a narrow road or just making a path through the bushes and the trees. But also exercises on foot. When it's sunny weather I just enjoy working outside. But sometimes the weather is rough and being able to endure and complete the objective is a challenge. Not giving up and completing my task is something that I'm always proud of doing and it gives me great satisfaction.

During an exercise in Curaçao my squad was tasked with the assault on a building while the platoon would provide covering fire. Before the opening salvo's were fired our squad commander found an opportunity to get into the building unnoticed. After coordinating with the platoon commander we sneaked in and caught the 'enemy' completely by surprise. They never noticed us until we were right on top of them. I just love it when a plan comes together like that and to contribute to it. It's really exciting to be in the thick of things and to make sure that you get your mission right.

– Given such situations the team work is kind of a big thing, isn't it?

Oh yes. We didn't plan on doing a sneak attack and had to improvise on the spot. It was night so we could hardly see and we couldn't talk because the 'enemy' would've heard us. If we didn't know one another so well we could not have performed such a manoeuvre. Knowing and trusting each other isn't optional, for us it's mandatory.

– Would you say that those years spent in the armed forces has changed you as a person at some point?

Yes, absolutely. After serving for so long it's impossible not to change. For instance, I've learned to handle stress and work in stressful situation. But I've also learned to 'let go' and not to worry about every little detail. Most importantly I've learned how to place trust in the people I work with. Sometimes that's hard, I mean, we can't pick who we work with. But we



Photo credit: Koryna Gureviciute

Study books and fantasy novels laying on Corporal Jan's desk.

can choose how to work with each other. And of course you can learn from anyone and everyone.

– Your dad served in the Navy for five years. Do you ever talk about it?

Over the years we've talked a lot about my service in the army and his service in the Navy, even before I started my military career. I feel that, once I saw his pictures and heard his stories, we are more alike than I ever realised. He has this old black and white photo of himself in his early 30's, sitting at a bar enjoying a beer. If you wouldn't know any better you would've said that was me, that's how much we're alike.

Funny thing about my dad, back when I was in training he always cooked dinner when I got home in the weekends. He knew I'd be tired from training and exercising so he made a big pan of pasta carbonara. Little did he know that all we got for dinner that week was canned pasta carbonara. I was so sick of that dish, but he worked so hard on the dish I didn't dare to tell him until years later.

– Without being a soldier you're also on your way to obtain a Bachelor's degree in teaching. How do you manage to do both of these at the same time?

Yes I am studying to become an elementary school teacher. Becoming a teacher is fun because you get to teach different kinds of subject like math, Dutch, topography, English, and much more. But the first year is also very tough because you can't afford to miss a test or fail a subject. If you miss one or two subjects then you won't complete your first year and you get sent home, it's that simple. In that same year, me and my pregnant wife bought a new house, we did a lot of small construction and had to move, we had our first child and I started a new job within the army. It was really difficult and I don't know how I managed to make it all work. I've had a lot of help from friends, family and colleagues, without them, I could not have done it. Of course I'm really lucky with the support of my commanders that encourage me to develop myself. I'm glad that I passed that first year. Looking back on it now, those long days of work and longer nights at school, I'm never going to do that again. Though, I must admit, my second year of school isn't much easier. Because of the eFP mission I'm forced to study 'long distance'. Keeping contact with my school is hard and the internship which I had to do throughout the year I squeezed



Corporal Jan: "The thing that I like most about Lithuania is the gratitude we get from locals and civilians."

my classes too. During my last internship the children just started learning to do multiplications. I didn't ask them 'what's eight times eight?' but I would ask how many kills their Fortnite team would have if all four team mates would have seven kills. So, they're not just doing schoolwork but they are doing something that interests them. And that's basically what teaching is all about — making sure that something is interesting enough that you want to learn it.

– How your students take the fact that behind the school boundaries you're a soldier?

I'm careful about telling children or parents that I'm a soldier. Don't get me wrong, I'm proud of being a soldier. But so far, most classes I've taught have had immigrant children, some of which came to the Netherlands as refugees. I don't know how those children, or their parents, would react to my current profession. It bothers me that I can't be open about that. But when I'm at an elementary school I want people to see me as a teacher, not a soldier.

– How do you deal with children who do not behave?

I'm honest to them and let them see that I care. I remember one of the older boys in my first internship. He would never listen and didn't pay attention, but he did want help when he didn't understand something. I was strict with him and he didn't like it, but he also knew he could always count on my help. On the last day of that internship I taught my students the word 'anonymous' and let them anonymously write an essay about me, what they liked or hated about me. That boy was the only one to put his name on the paper and wrote 'You're an awesome teacher, keep on going!' So, as I said, you just have to be honest and don't give up. A lesson I've learned as a soldier and use as a teacher.

– What awaits for you when the mission in Lithuania comes to an end?

My eFP mission will end when I complete the Four Days Marching event. Pretty soon after that my third year of school starts and I will participate in a minor of sports and education, start a new internship and continue my regular work in the Dutch Royal Army. But first I will take my wife and child on a long awaited and well deserved holiday to Scotland. Drink some fine ales and hopefully see my daughters walk for the first time. ■

in eight weeks. But with the help of my commander we made it work.

– When did you first realised you want to become a teacher?

At the same time I realized I wanted to join the army. My dad has been a high school teacher since he quit the Navy. He taught so many different subjects, one of those guys that knows everything about anything. Except for Dutch grammar — he was a horrible Dutch teacher and I must admit I don't excel at it either. In his classes he would try to get the interest of his students. Therefore, a math question wouldn't just be a sum of math — instead it'd be about an actual problem that a teenager could have involving math. That's something that I try to do in

” You just have to be honest and don't give up. A lesson I've learned as a soldier and use as a teacher.

Kotryna Gurevičiūtė



The discount is applicable only upon presentation of a service card.

Conditions and applicable discounts may change.

* There are additional conditions.

** Expositions are free of charge to the Lithuanian Military Academy (LMA) cadets, Permanent Mandatory Initial Military Service (PMIMS) soldiers serving in the LMA, and soldiers from the Gediminas Headquarters Battalion (GHB).

*** Coordinate with the regional Conscription and recruiting service department.

**** Due to a match of the football club "Atlantas" coordinate with the Grand Duke Butigeidis Dragoon Battalion's S5 division of the Motorized Infantry Brigade "Samogitia". Due to a match of the basketball club "Neptūnas" coordinate with the National Defence Volunteer Force's S5 division of the Samogitia district 3rd team. Due to a match of the football club "Sūduva" coordinate with the Lithuanian Grand Duke Vytenis General Support Logistics Battalion's S5 division.

***** The discount is applicable to persons who serve or have served in the Lithuanian Armed Forces, also to those who are in the prepared personnel reserve of the Lithuanian Armed Forces (for the entire study period both for the first and second cycle studies).

***** The discount is applicable on February 16, March 11, July 6, and November 23.



National Defence System employees (soldiers, civil servants and employees working under an employment contract)



NPPKT

Soldiers of the Permanent Mandatory Initial Military Service



Members of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union



Lithuanian soldiers



Soldiers of the National Defence Volunteer Forces



NATO soldiers



Negotiation issues

ACCOMMODATION SERVICES



Hotel and SPA center "DAINAVA" **up to 20%**
www.hotel-dainava.lt



Hotel "IMPERIAL" **up to 30%**
http://www.imperialvilnius.lt

FOOD SERVICES



Pizzeria "MILANO" **15% *******
www.facebook.com/milano.picerija



Restaurant Network "SAKURA" **up to 15% ***
www.sakuratime.lt



Pizzeria "ARDARTAS PICA" **10%**
www.ardartaspica.weebly.com



Pizzeria "EVOPIZZA" **up to 15% ***
www.evopizza.lt



Restaurant "IMPERIAL" **15% ***
www.imperialrestaurant.lt



Bar "CALIFORNIA TAPAS & WINE" **up to 15% ***
www.california.lt

CLOTHING, SHOES, ACCESSORIES



ARMIJAI IR CIVILIAMS **10%**
www.aic.lt



TACTICAL FORCE **10%**
www.tacticalforce.lt



SURVIVAL **10%**
www.survival.lt



LUKLA **15%**
www.lukla.lt



ATRIBUTAS **up to 15%**
www.facebook.com/Atributas-130235750751139/

LEISURE TIME



M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art (and museum departments) **50%**
www.ciurlionis.lt



Vytautas the Great War Museum **Free**
www.facebook.com/



Kaunas Ninth Fort Museum **50%**
www.9fortomuziejus.lt



Open-Air Museum of Lithuania **50%**
www.llbm.lt



Lithuanian aviation museum **50%**
www.lam.lt



Maironis Lithuanian Literature Museum (and museum departments) **50%**
www.mairioniomuziejus.lt



Museum of Lithuanian Education History **50% ***
www.lsim.lt



Lithuanian sea museum **50% ***
www.muziejus.lt



National museum of Lithuania * **Free ****
www.lnm.lt




Lithuanian art museum (and museum departments) **50%**
www.ldm.lt




Šiauliai "AUŠROS" museum (and museum departments) **50%**
www.ausrosmuziejus.lt




Kelme regional museum (and museum departments) **50%**
www.kelmesmuziejus.lt

 **The Samogitian Museum "ALKA"** **50%**
(and museum departments) www.muziejusalka.lt

 **Basketball Club "NEPTŪNAS"** **Free ******
www.bcneptunas.lt

 **Mazeikiai museum (and museum departments)** **50%**
www.mazeikiumuziejus.lt


 **Handball Club "DRAGŪNAS"** **Free ******
www.rkdragunas.lt

 **Lithuanian Museum of Ethnocosmology** **50%**
www.etnokosmomuziejus.lt

 **Football Club "SŪDUVA"** **Free ******
www.fksuduva.lt

 **Trakai History Museum** **50%**
www.trakaimuziejus.lt

 **Basketball Club "LIETKABELIS"** **Free *****
www.kklietkabelis.lt

 **Contemporary Art Centre** **50%**
www.cac.lt

 **Football Club "PANEVĖŽYS"** **Free ***
www.fk-panevezys.lt

 **Botanical Garden of Vilnius University** **50%**
www.botanikos-sodas.vu.lt


 **Football Club "STUMBRAS"** **Free ***
<http://fcstumbras.lt>


 **Church Heritage Museum, Vilnius Cathedral Bell Tower and Catacombs** **50%**
www.bpmuziejus.lt


 **Football Club "PARABELIS"** **Free ***
www.facebook.com/parabelis

 **Summer camp "KOVINIS EŽIUKAS"** **10%**
www.koviniseziukas.lt

 **Football Club "GELEŽINIS VILKAS"** **Free ***
www.fcgelezinivilkas.lt

 **Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum** **50%**
(and museum departments) www.jmuseum.lt

 **Sport Club "TAURAS"** **up to 25% ***
www.kulturizmoklubastauras.lt

 **Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema museum** **50%**
www.ltmkm.lt


 **Sport Club "SPARTA COMBAT FITNESS"** **up to 20% ***
www.spartagym.lt/sparta-combat-fitness

OTHER SERVICES

 **Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania** **50%**
www.valdovurumai.lt

 **Trade in fish products "ŠAMŪKIS"** **up to 10%**
www.samukis.lt

 **"VICHY" aqua park** **between 20-50% ***
www.vandensparkas.lt

 **Kazimieras Simonavičius University** **50%**
<http://www.ksu.lt/>

 **Bowling "APOLLO"** **up to 15% ***
www.apollo.lt


 **Adventure Park "TARZANIJA"** **11%**
www.tarzanija.lt
www.facebook.com/TARZANIJA

 **AIRSOFTAS.LT** **11%**
www.airsoftas.lt

 **Car Service Centre "EOLTAS"** **up to 30%**
www.eoltas.lt


SPORT CLUBS

 **Football Club "JONAVA"** **Free ***
www.fkjonava.lt

 **Military entertainment KARIAUK.LT** **D**
www.kariauk.lt

 **Basketball Club "ŽALGIRIS"** **Free *****
www.zalgiris.lt

 **Military entertainment TANKS.LT** **up to 50%**
www.tanks.lt

 **Basketball Club "HOPTRANS-SIRENOS"** **Free *****
www.facebook.com/Kauno-rajono-Hoptrans-Sirenos-176265212454136

 **Photo and video services "MUDUABU"** **up to 15%**
www.muduabu.lt

 **Football Club "ATLANTAS"** **Free ******
www.atlantas.lt


 **Ecological Clothing Cleaning "CLEAN GREEN"** **15%**
www.cleangreen.lt

Sting for the Red Bear: *Stingers* in Afghanistan

THIRTY YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE SOVIET ARMY LEFT AFGHANISTAN WITH THE "SCORE" OF THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS LOSSES (KILLED SOLDIERS WERE CALLED *GRUZ 200* (RUS.)) AND WITHOUT ANY SIGHT OF VICTORY OVER MUJAHEDDINS.

WE ALL KNOW THAT WHEN TALIBAN CAME TO POWER IN AFGHANISTAN SOME OF MUJAHEDDINS STOOD UNDER ITS FLAGS, BUT DURING THE PERIOD FROM 1979 TO 1989 THEY WERE FULLY ON THE SIDE OF UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION WHICH INVIDED THEIR COUNTRY.

THIS THE STORY ABOUT THE MAIN WEAPON WHICH BROKE THE SOVIET MILITARY CAMPAIGN IN AFGHANISTAN DOWN.



Painting "The First Sting", aut. S. Brown. CIA Headquarters, Langley.

An extra contingent is coming to Afghanistan from the Soviet Union (USSR). Among the officers — Olgierdas Žemaitis, the son of the Soviet General Feliksas Baltušys-Žemaitis. Already on the plane, the Lieutenant of the Soviet Army noticed a detail that he had never seen before: "<...> all the planes at Kunduz aerodrome take off and land in a spiral, firing many signal missiles. As I learned later, this is being done in order to reduce the possibility of being shot down from a portable zenith missile complex whose missiles fly autonomously in response to infrared radiation. Signal missiles should lead the missile away from the target due to their thermal radiation. It is not for nothing that the pilots' service time here is only one year, while everyone else serve two years."

O. Žemaitis had to participate in a fake suppression event of "limited contingent of Soviet

holding on a shoulder. The first version had four barrels which fired 20 mm projectiles weighing 90 g. Micro missiles were flying up to 350 m/sec speed and it would have been enough to target and shoot at the air target flying nearby. However, the chances of hitting and shooting down were more hypothetical. The scatter of missiles at a distance of several hundred meters was too big, and the 16g explosive cartridge was too weak, unless miraculously would have touched a vital component of an aircraft.

The second modification of *Fliegerfaust*, also known as the *Luftfaust*, was an improved version with nine 1.5 meters-length barrels and weighed 6.5 kg. Rocket warheads did not fire immediately, but one after another with short pauses between shots. This should have allowed the shooter to follow the flying target. Now the effectiveness of this weapon can be considered questionable, but we should not

lery and machine guns were used for fighting against air targets. Of course, one person was not able to take care or transport them.

The situation changed when electronics began to push out electrotechnics. In the late 1950s, the American constructors have already become able to implement the idea of a tactical chain of zenith missile complex.

Several projects were developed at the same time: company "Audiosonix" offered a promising NZRK Harpy, whose main advantage was low cost: the company's representatives claimed that it would only cost a couple of hundred US dollars to produce one such complex. The project was widely presented at press conferences and in authoritative defence publications.

Unfortunately, a month later, the US Congress reduced its defence budget by \$3.6 billion. Therefore, all prospective programs, in-



Fliegerfaust — the first prototype of portable weapon "surface-to-air".

Army" — it was a showcase for foreign media representatives.

Neither O. Žemaitis himself nor anyone else would have thought that after two and a half years the Soviet army would actually be withdrawn, and the zenith missile complex (NZRK) described in his diary, would play not the last role...

THE BEGINNING: "AIR FIST"

1943–1944 can be considered as the beginning of the history of compact air defence systems, when Hugo Schneider's company "Hugo Schneider AG" (HASAG) based in Leipzig constructed and produced a never-seen-before weapon which was named *Fliegerfaust*. And really: if it was already easy possible to shoot armored technics on the ground with man-portable rocket launcher *Panzerfaust*, why not create an analogical weapon against air targets?

Fliegerfaust was a never-seen-before multi-barrel reusable weapon, designed to shoot

forget that at that time the Nazis lived in hope of winning with "magic weapons". Therefore, it was managed to produce not so small number of weapons *Fliegerfaust* — up to 10,000 and the number of missiles reached 4 million. In combat positions, they were found in Saarbrücken and Berlin. Judging by the situation, they were used more as the ordinary weapons *Panzerfaust*: soldiers in a battle are always guided by the practice, and according to technical and tactical data, the machine gun MG42 suited better to shoot a low flying target. HASAG's ambitions and intentions were good, but the project was not yet technologically mature.

THE SEARCHES FOR THE ZENITH BAZOOKA

After World War II, the development of anti-aircraft defence began — long, medium and short-range missile complexes, consisting of radar stations, launchers and other infrastructure equipment. A good old high-speed zenith artil-

cluding the guided missiles "surface-to-air", were closed or frozen. This episode became known in the US media as "a missile fiasco".

Another analogical project was company's "Amrock" universal anti-tank or anti-aircraft grenade launcher *Thunderstick*, presented in 1961. The manufacturer's vision was this: if a person is able to shoot with a gun, he will be able to shoot out from *Thunderstick* without extra training. Probably over time, the constructors encountered many problems they could not solve, and the project went off by itself.

Only the "Red eye" project was able to survive. The manufacturer of this portable NZRK was a concern "General Electric", which introduced it for the first time in 1957. Since then, the "Red Eye" was regularly introduced at various events, and increasingly modified. Redeye which was accepted to weaponry in 1969, was significantly different from his predecessor. Later, individual parts of the complex were be-



Bulky British Blowpipe was manually operated.

ing improved: not only technical data of the missile improved, but also the targeting system. The last model missile was already able to "see" not only the silhouette of the aircraft, but targeted to the engine turbines.

Constructors, convinced by the achievements of the Americans, took actions in the old continent. It is interesting that the Soviet NZRK *Strela 2* was created in the way of the so-called reverse engineering, copying Red-eye according to the intelligence and samples obtained. Western European countries tried to find their own solutions. In France, this was done by the "Nord" company, "Bölkow" in Germany, and "Shorts" in the United Kingdom. Various concepts were chosen. Finally, it became clear that the best prospects belonged to the system "fire-and-forget". And it was best implemented in a new American example — defence missiles system *Stinger*.

THE DANGEROUS STING

"Probably it should be uncomfortable, knowing that you would release 70.000 dollars in the air," respectfully but with a little bit of irony said the US Senator W. Radman when responding to the NZRK *Stinger* presentation.

The new work of "General Electric" was really not cheap. However, the 1.5 m long and 70 mm wide barrel, which contained a "smart"

missile, turned out to be the masterpiece of technology at that time. It took 30 seconds to prepare it for shooting. There was no need to open launching barrel lids to launch the missile — as the engine started, rocket pushed it off itself, later the main engine used to start working and the missile followed the target by itself, responding to the hot flow of the air turbines. Its sensor reacted not only to the IR, but also to the UV spectrum. The missile's speed — about 1,500 km/h and nearly 5 km of flying distance allowed to chase almost any air target, as well as unarmed vehicles on the ground and on the water. The system has an installed "familiar-foreign" sensor that allows to recognize targets.

Stinger was taken into armament around 1981 — during the very peak of the Cold War. Therefore, this weapon was first received not by the US troops, but American enhanced forward presence deployed in the then Federal Republic of Germany. A year later, the new NZRK was also received by the US 82nd Airborne Division.

In Europe, *Stingers* would be used only after the invasion of the Soviets, but the bloc of the NATO and Warsaw Pact was just competing and trying to psychologically affect each other, understanding that any reckless move could mean a great war, or even a mutual de-

struction. Therefore, it is natural that in such circumstances the first implied combat debut of *Stinger* will be some distant local conflict.

And that happened: In 1982, the British Special Forces (SAS) received six missiles, which they intended to use during the Falklands conflict. The trained soldier, who was supposed to instruct others, suddenly died on a helicopter catastrophe on May 19th, but after two days the stinger was used and successfully shot down the Argentine assault aircraft *Pucara*, and on May 30th — a helicopter carrying a group of Argentine Special Forces troops. The British (and the Americans) were convinced that stinger completely meets the expectations, besides, it is a much more efficient weapon than *Blowpipe*.

AT THE CROSSROADS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Another "local" conflict at that time was the Afghan-Soviet war that began immediately after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan. Initially, the resistance of the mujaheddin began spontaneously, but after some time it became organized, particular organizations with constant leaders settled. Finally, anti-Soviet resistance was supported by external forces: China, Pakistan. One of the most important actors supporting the mujaheddin, was the US

The Soviet *Strela-2* — Redeye which was copied in reverse engineering way.



Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Assistance to the anti-Soviet Afghan movement matched the so-called Reagan's doctrine and is known as "Operation Cyclone".

Seeking not to create the impression that the US is directly involved in the conflict, the CIA supplied non-US production weapons and equipment to Afghanistan. Finally, some lobby groups (one of the most influential — "Free the Eagle") began to express dissatisfaction and blame the CIA for negligent attitude. Influential public figures (such as V. Cannistrar, M. Pillsbury) began to push the intelligence forces with all the bureaucratic leverage. One of their most important demands was to start supplying *stingers* to Afghanistan.

One of the "Free the Eagle" activists was of Lithuanian origin A. Eiva (Eitavičius), a former US Special Forces Captain. He remembers: "It was clear to everyone that Afghanistan's freedom defenders needed influential anti-aircraft weapons <...> I was able to convince Congress members and senators to send 200 *Stinger* mis-

siles to Afghanistan, and the CIA's Deputy Director, who did not want to make this decision, was forced to resign."

US Congressman Charlie Wilson from Texas expressed his support for stingers very actively.

From point of view of the entire lobbying team, *Stingers* would not be a panacea, but only another component of the long-term Afghan strategy developed by M. Vickers, whose total number of components would eventually prove to be lethal to invasive forces.

Finally, on March 27, 1985, US President Ronald Reagan approved a new directive to strengthen military effectiveness of Afghan resistance. The goal was achieved.

"ENGINEER GAFAR" HITS

September 26, 1986. A group of approximately 35 mujaheddin belonging to G. Hekmatyar's Resistance Force, led by a fighter called "Engineer Gafar", secretly reaches access to the Jamalabad aerodrome. Here mujaheddin

positioned in triangle. Each subgroup had one *stinger*.

After some time, the chain of *Mi-8MT* assault helicopters of the Soviet separate 335th aviation regiment started to approach the runway. Two other missiles hit two helicopters. It was a miracle that the co-driver, who was thrown out of the window by the explosion, survived. Rapidly repairing the *stingers*, men fired twice more and hit another helicopter that was forced to try to land and crashed. The aircraft commander died of injuries, the other two crew members survived.

There was a video in their hands — a testimony that the fight aviation, which was the worst enemy of the fighters, is no longer so scary.

In fact, until then Afghan resistance fighters had received *NZRK SA-7* (Egyptian *Strela-2* clone), but their effectiveness was poor. As A. Eiva wrote, "almost for six years inefficient missiles, which did not hit any aircraft, were being sent, and freedom fighters who launched



The first *NZRK Redeye* which was controlled by the principle "fire-and-forget". 85 thousand units of this weapon were produced.



Everything what has left of Mi-8 after a successful shot. South Afghanistan, 1988.

them were noticed from the air and immediately killed."

Another source claims that the efficiency of SA-7 did not exceed 3 percent.

In the same year, mujaheddin also received several NZRK *Blowpipe*. But compared to the *stinger*, the British product was really worse. This is also confirmed by British General J. Thompson, who learned that only 9 of these 95 missiles hit their targets, saying, "This is an attempt to shoot pheasants with a rain pipe."

Until then, in order to hit the aircraft that bothered them, mujaheddin usually used the large caliber machine guns DŠK. There were cases when they even tried to hit helicopters with hand grenade launchers RPG-7.

Stingers cardinally changed the situation. The Gafar's group soon hit more targets. The members of the resistance movement felt euphoria. As a Pakistani intelligence officer, coordinating the distribution of *stingers*, recalls, "every group of mujaheddin wanted to get a *stinger* — this became a matter of prestige." Until the end of 1986, i.e. little bit more than within three months, Soviets lost 23 aircrafts and helicopters in Afghanistan.

TACTICS

The following year was a headache for a "limited Soviet military contingent," although not all shots were successful: some missiles did not start, miss the target or did not destroy the target after hitting it. The data on the ef-

fectiveness of *stingers* are very ambiguous. The Soviets claimed that possibilities to hit their aircrafts increased by only 20%, while US military advisors reported that at least 8 out of 10 missiles had reached their targets. According to various counts, the loss of Soviet aviation caused by the NZRK increased by about four times in 1987.

For the successful use of *stingers*, the briefing of use and shooter's training course lasting for 2-3 weeks was not enough. Certain tacti-

cal schemes were invented and implemented. During marches *stingers* were never being transported at the front of the column and was well protected. After choosing a location for an air ambush, position used to be installed. If there were several launching devices then fire posts used to be positioned away from each other so the firing sector would be as broad as possible.

There also used to be a scheme of an active ambush: a column of several *Toyotas* or other 4X4 vehicles deliberately tried to make as much dust as possible, hoping to draw the attention of Soviet aviators, and in case of successful provocation fire used to be opened.

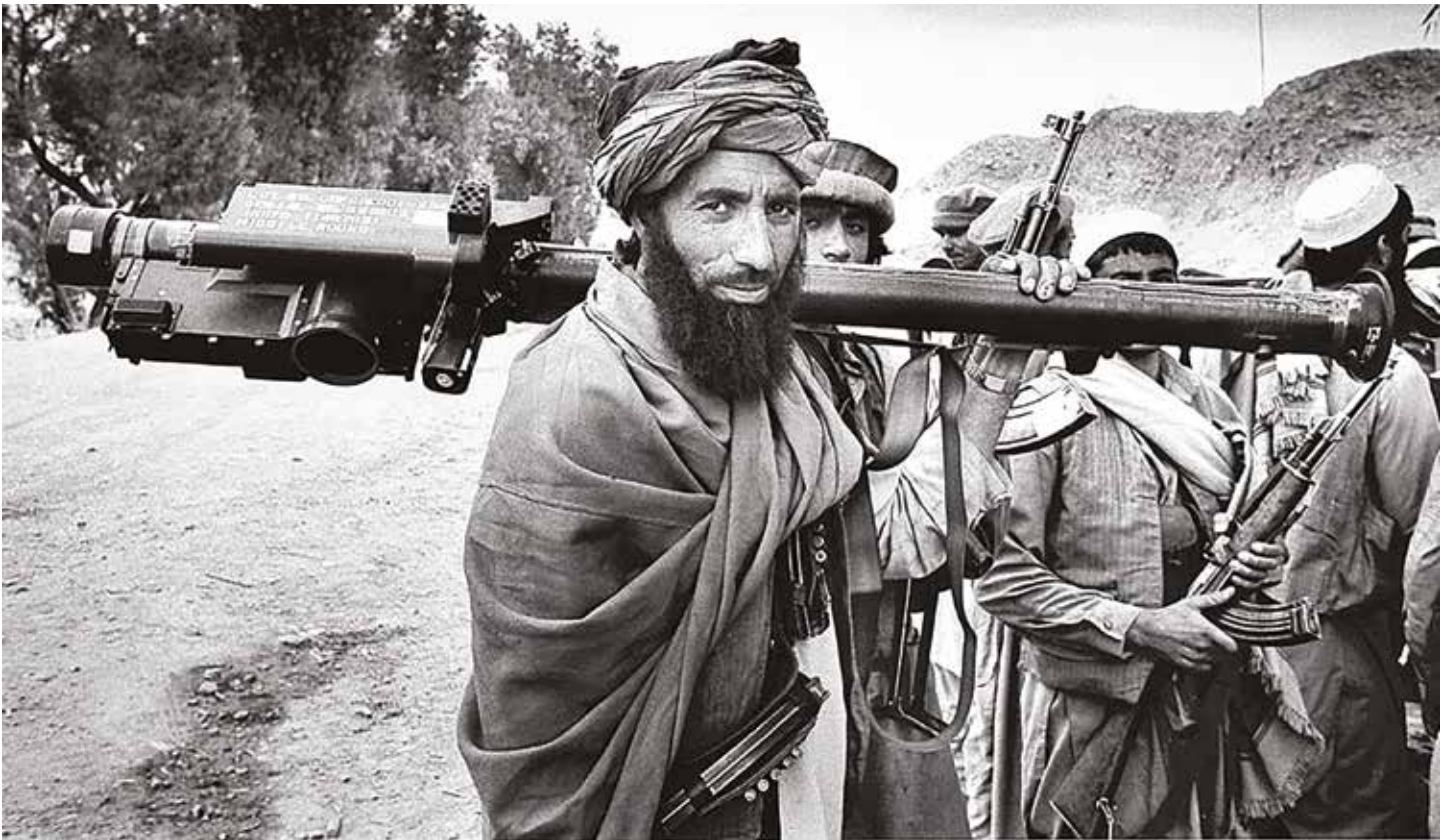
Stingers were also used as well protection of fighters' camps and support bases.

Sometimes the *stinger* missile seemed to be exceeding its technical capabilities: there were cases when an aircraft used to be hit at more than 5.000 meters height. This used to happen if the ambush position was chosen in highlands.

Aircrafts' personnel caused bigger threat to mujaheddin than the aircrafts itself. There are many aircrafts and helicopters and it takes time and money to prepare the personnel. Therefore, special search group was sent towards the crashing place of a hit target. Depending on circumstances, survived crew members were liquidated or captured by the mujaheddin. This was exactly how Alexander Ruckoi (former vice-speaker of Russian federation Duma, 1991 – 1993) ended up in mujaheddin hands. At that time A. Eiva convinced mujaheddin not to kill the Soviet captives. A. Ruckoi survived. Later he became the right-hand person of Boris Jeltsin.

A. Eiva among Afghan opposition fighters in Afghanistan.





All mujaheddin groups wanted to receive *Stingers*. It became a matter of prestige.

COUNTER-MEASURES

Finally, inert Soviet military administrative machine started to work. New directives were started to be confirmed. A lot of attention was committed to the direct protection of military airports. Secret posts of scouts were nearby all locations, suitable to set up air ambushes. Defence perimeters were set up, where on duty assault helicopters used to patrol. In case of using NZRK operational quick response groups used to be sent to its implied start place.

In the autumn of 1987 an order came into force which declared new aircrafts' flight regulations. Aircrafts were forbidden to fly below than at 4.500 meters height. On the contrary, aircrafts' pilots shifted to flights at the lowest possible altitude (30–60 m) because *stinger* missile used to active only at the 180 meters height. Take-off and landing was related with bigger risk of being hit, thus, as it was already mentioned, aircrafts used to land and take off on a quite vertical trajectory, launching many signal missiles. Transport airplanes which were taking off instantly sometimes were followed by the helicopters which also fired in volleys. Unexperienced passengers were nervous and vomiting due to overloads.

At that time, V. Babak, the chief instructor of assault fighter *Su-25*, went to Afghanistan and took the collected fragments of the shot air-

crafts. Expertise revealed that the stinger missiles used to damage the engine compartment from the bottom. The planes of the spinning turbines scattered due to explosion after being affected by the huge centrifugal force, this way destroying airplane's construction even more than the missile itself. As a result, since the end of 1987, *Su-25* with increased capacity has been provided to Afghanistan. But the moral of the pilots dropped. They began to fear: behind every rock ledge or shrub they saw mujaheddin targeting at them with *stinger*. The number of "Criminal Actions", which were conducted firing at Afghans' villages from the air, significantly decreased.

"HERO'S STAR" WHICH NEVER SOARED

For more couple months Soviets did not believe that mujaheddin have some kind of NZRK. There is a case described when the same Gaffar group in Jalalabad surroundings organized an ambush and tried to hit two assault helicopters with five missiles. Three hits were registered. The crew of one helicopter died, the other managed to leave the burning technique. At that time General who was visiting the Jalalabad's crew did not believe the report and blamed the crews that they, according to him, hit themselves in the air.

However, at the end of 1986 Soviet intelligence was suspecting that stingers appeared in Afghanistan. Both military intelligence and the KGB began collecting information on this topic. Quite soon a common supply picture and approximate implied number of launching devices and missiles formed.

In 1986, a telegram of the then USSR Defence Minister was sent to the military intelligence units with an order to get an example of *stinger*. Soldiers who will be the first to do that will get an award — the Gold star medal of the Hero of the Soviet Union. Of course, the Golden Star itself played only a symbolic role here — various privileges, which belonged to the owner of "Hero's" mark, should have been more enticing: career opportunities, access to deficit products, services, etc.

STINGERS HUNTING BEGAN

Unfortunately, method of operational search groups was little effective. "We were about 15 km from the aerodrome when we first saw shooting *stinger*. Three helicopters were hit in front of our eyes. We were immediately sent to the incident place, but we did not find anything there," remembers the deputy commander of one intelligence team.

After a few shots mujaheddin immediately used to retreat leaving no traces of their pres-



Fighters armed with *Stingers* were using special marching and fighting tactics.

mer member of intelligence company from already mentioned 66th separate motorized infantry brigade, claiming that they were the ones who found the first *Stingers*. "On December 25, 1986 company has landed near the villages (kishlaks) of Milava and Landicheil and immediately began to fight. The opponent retreated with casualties. Company Commander ordered to divide into groups and scout the kishlak and its surroundings. One group found a well covered larder which was leading to couple of caves full of weapons. There were two unknown *NZRK* among trophies. At that time, these people did not know how those *stingers* look like. Trophies were brought to the brigade deployment location by helicopters <...> The next night authorities contacted the company Commander. They asked about the questionnaire data of scouts who found the "barrels" — to prepare the award documentation as it was explained. *Stingers* were sent to Moscow with the special plane at the night.

From the beginning of 1987 until 1989, Soviet troops in Afghanistan managed to find 8 working *stingers*. Ironically, no one has received the promised award.

EPILOGUE

The USSR lost 450 aircraft in Afghanistan. It is being considered that approximately 270, i.e. more than half were shot down by using the *NZRK*.

Stingers were not the main reason which determined the ending of Soviets and Afghans war, but for the war progress itself they un-

ence (strict accounting of empty containers was made), and it was impossible to find them in mountainous area. Only a coincidence or negligence of mujaheddin could increase the chance of taking over the *stinger*.

On November 29, 1986, after mujaheddin hit a couple of helicopters, an order to sweep the area was given — one battalion of 66th separate motorized infantry brigade and a group of troops of 154th separate special tasks platoon was formed for that purpose. Forces left too late (only the next day), but finally they found some missile start engines of *stinger*. It was a sign that the assumption of intelligence was right.

Other tactics taken by the Soviet intelligence were more promising: more attention was started to be paid for illegal weapons delivery channels, aiming to take over the desired trophy before the moment when it ends up in the hands of executors of an air ambush. A big hopes of GRU (soviet military intelligence) were related with its agents.

In addition, the date when the first *Stinger* was captured by soviets is still controversial. Several institutions are trying to take the credits for that.

Traditionally it is being considered that this was done on January 5, 1987 by *specnaz* who was deployed in Kandahar. This data is confirmed by the Pakistan intelligence which curated the use of *stingers* in Afghanistan. They say that *stingers* were lost due to the irresponsibility of mujaheddin group. Some say, that the group under command of mullah Malang, after receiving these weapons, carried them wrongly during the march and did not manage to save them when was suddenly attacked by *specnaz*. This event is being similarly described by the

Soviet sources as well. It is mentioned that two helicopters *Mi-8* with the group of 16 soldiers left to check the district between Ghazni and Kandahar, where, according to agency intelligence's data, a caravan with weapons was supposed to pass. Air support was provided by two more *Mi-24*, whose crews suddenly saw a few motorcycles and began shooting at them. Unexpectedly attacked group did not manage to resist, and *specnaz* group disembarked from *Mi-8* started to haunt the mujaheddin who were trying to hide. Afterwards, troops found three *stingers* when exploring the battle scene.

This date was recently disputed by the for-

The Soviet scout poses with a trophy *Stinger*.





Stingers were not the only determinant factor during the Soviet-Afghan war, but its use marked particular breakthrough moment at that time.

doubtedly made an impact. Their appearance in the weaponry of the Afghan opposition marked a certain breakthrough point.

Justification for this thought is simple: modern combat actions are impossible without aviation. Aviation was the main enemy of mujaheddin. Long-term Soviet domination in

the air could have led to the end of the partisan movement. But there is another moment: air domination is determined not only by the abundance of aircrafts, but also by effective air defence. In this case, *stingers* answered the purpose not only as an aircraft destruction measure but also as a powerful psychological weap-

on, which left a huge mark in Soviets' memory. Interesting fact: in 1991, when A. Eiva arrived to organize the defence of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania, panic rumours that he brought *Stingers* to the defenders of Parliament instantly were spread among Soviet soldiers.

In fact, immediately after the 1990s, the US began buying up unused *stingers* in Afghanistan. About 300 million missiles have been redeemed spending about 55 million US dollars for this purpose. Not brought back *NZRK* could have done way more damage if various terrorist movements would know about them. A small number of these weapons, however, began to uncontrollably travel from hand to hand. Individual cases of using the *Stingers* happened in Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, and probably in Chechnya. The Taliban movement has also inherited an undetermined number of these missiles. At the moment, more than 30 years later, the validity period of the then *Stingers* should be expired. ■

Darius Sutkus

Photo credits: Militaryimages.net, rarehistoricalphotos.com, altcenter.org, defence.pk, redstate.com, videofact.co





Photo credit: Sgš. Spe. leva. Budzelkaite