THE LITHUANIAN ARMED FORCES

ready to respond
Today we have a professional, mobile, structurally developed Lithuanian Armed Forces, which have raised the national officers and is an equivalent NATO partner capable of carrying out all the tasks set not only in Lithuania, but also in the international missions. However, the Lithuanian Armed Forces is an institution existing much longer than several decades. Lithuanian soldiers were famous for their fighting capabilities already few hundred years ago. They proved their courage in the Battle of Saulė, the Battle of Grunwald (Žalgiris), the Battle of Durbė, the Giedraičiai Battle and the Perloja Defence. Contribution of the Lithuanian partisans and members of the underground movement is unforgettable. They all have been educating and still educate the Lithuanian – the patriot soldier.

A soldier is not only a man with a weapon. It is a man who loves his Homeland, his people, and is determined to make sacrifices for his close ones and fellow countrymen. I wish that you would never forget that your Homeland and all the Lithuanian people believe in you and that you are an example for the patriotic youth.

Carry the flag of the army loyal to our Homeland raised high, never put it down, protect it and cherish it.

Wishing you true fortitude and determination in raising real fighters – the patriots of own country.

The President of the Republic of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė

THE LITHUANIAN ARMED FORCES. Ready to Respond


Photographs also from: the archives of the Ministry of National Defence, the Lithuanian Armed Forces, the Lithuanian Central State Archive, the Museum of Genocide Victims and Albertas Daugirdas

Managing Editor Laimonas Brazaitis
Language Editor Rūta Gustaitė
Design Inga Dambrauskiene

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Introduction

Today’s Lithuanian Armed Forces is a part of NATO forces having over 2 million soldiers ready to defend the country along with the entire nation and its allies, while its motivated staff is ready to perform its duties and tasks. This army successfully participates in international operations and helps the people of Lithuania in extraordinary accidents. The Lithuanian Armed Forces are trusted not only by Lithuanian society, but also by the Lithuanian allies and partners.

The current Lithuanian troops have gained this trust by carrying out their duties since the day Lithuania restored its Independence to the present day. The Army has overcome all the challenges during the restoration period by preparing for the membership in NATO and collective defence and by participating in international missions.

Technologies introduced, mobilization reserve formed, cohesive cooperation with the allies as well as the society’s support will ensure that the new challenges will be successfully overcome, like were the old ones.

Such army is a reliable institution, which inspires Lithuanian soldiers to face the future with courage and faith.
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The Old State of Lithuania

In the late 12th century and the 13th century Lithuanian lands were defended by all men who knew how to handle the weapon. The army was formed in preparation to resist the enemy or start a military campaign. During each campaign, army commanders were elected, usually among the land dukes. Those have been forming regular military soldieries of the dukes. Most often, Lithuanians were arming with spears, axes, knives, helmets, chain armour and shields and using siege machines. The land was protected by the defence castle system. The Old State of Lithuania was manfully fighting with its Eastern neighbours for influence in the region; the invading campaigns were also a case. Since the first half of the 13th century, the Lithuanians had to fight against Order of the Brothers of the Sword and the Livonian Order; from the second half of the century – against the Teutonic Order.

In the 14th century, the duke military soldieries were enriched in the number of professional soldiers, whose hardware was markedly improved. A regular army was in the process of formation, while important campaigns were delegated to selected soldiers. Swords, crossbows, different types of armour got spread; brick castles were built at strategic points of the country, while in the late century heavy artillery came into use. The Lithuanian Army, fighting in the enormous territory - with the Order in the West and North, and with Moscow and Tatars in the East and South – has been crushing the armies and capturing fortresses, overrunning the enemy lands. While de-
fending the statehood in battles with the Order, the Lithuanians tried to lure
the enemy in their own territory and trap them in hardly accessible places
where hard-armed Order knights were losing the advantage of their wea-
ponry because they could not fight as one formation anymore.

In the late 14th century and the early 15th century the irregular army was
formed from nobility. Weaponry of the irregular nobility army was in line
with warfare means of the European knights: sword, heavy spear, plate ar-
mour, helmet and shield. The Order was brought to its knees in collabora-
tive efforts of Lithuania and Poland; Lithuania was expanding to the East
by annexing Russian lands exhausted by the Tartars, while exploding the
power of the Golden Horde in the Southeast. The hundred years of wars
have demonstrated the will and power of the Lithuanians. The Grand Duchy
of Lithuania has been skilful coordinating military and political diplomatic
measures.

Since the late 15th century, foreigners were employed to the army. In the
16th century, the irregular nobility predominating in the army has been
territorially forming into battle units, known as flags. One third of the total
force consisted of the best armed and equipped army put together by the
nobility. Military service was regulated by 1529 I Statute of Lithuania as well
as the hetmen’s articles. The army was formed by the Great Duke, while the
forces were commanded by the great and the field hetman. Since the 16th
century, firearms spread, i.e. harquebuses, muskets, field and fortress artil-
lery. The main striking force in the field battles was a concentrated cavalry
formation.

Since the 17th century, however, the recruited army has gained more impor-
tance. During the 16th – 18th centuries, military units of the Grand Duchy
of Lithuania were formed, i.e. the cavalry (hussars, petihors, Cossacks and
Tatars - the specific type of armed forces of Poland and Lithuania, as well
as riders and dragoons – units of the Western Europe of that time), artillery
(light wheeled gun battery, etc.), infantry („German“ and „national“ type).

The long wars with Muscovy, Sweden, the Great Northern War and inter-
nal strife exhausted the state. Attempts to reform the army and the state
in the second half of the 18th century failed and after the Third Partition
of the Commonwealth in 1795, Lithuania came under Russian rule for the
next 120 years. However, the Lithuanians would not reconcile themselves
to this, and, in 1812, together with Poles, organised military units to help
Napoleon during his campaign against Russia. In 1831 and 1863 there were
two popular uprisings in Lithuania and Poland, but they were suppressed.
Nevertheless, almost every new generation of the enslaved Lithuania with
guns in its hands participated in the struggles for Lithuania’s freedom.
1379 Kęstutis seal. This was the year when the ten-year peace treaty was signed between Lithuanian Grand Dukes Jogaila, Kęstutis, Lengvenis and Vytautas and the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order Winrich von Kniprode. The seal is the oldest iconographic source of Lithuanian shield survived to the present day.

Geometric ornament of the handle of Raudonė sword consists of wavy lines that form enclosed areas. There are no other close analogues of this ornament in Lithuania or similar swords found in the Baltic lands. There are only four similar swords in Europe.

Soldier of the Lithuanian army with a recreated clothing and military equipage of the XIV century soldier of Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

Lithuanian soldiers together with the members of war history clubs cherish Lithuanian history and participate in ceremonies of the State holidays.

Soldiers of the Lithuanian Armed Forces Honour Guard Company with recreated clothing and military equipage of the XIV century soldier of Grand Duchy of Lithuania – an integral part of the State holidays, visits and events.
THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BATTLES WON BY THE LITHUANIAN ARMY UP TO DIVISION OF LITHUANIA IN 1775:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Battle Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 September 1236</td>
<td>The Battle of Šiauliai (Saulė, Schaulen). The Samogitians defeated the Knights of the Sword. Between 48 and 60* knights were killed, including the Livonian Master Volkwin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 July 1260</td>
<td>The Battle of Durbė (Durben). The Samogitians and Coronians crushed the Teutonic Order. 150 knights were killed, including the Livonian Land Master Burchard von Hornhausen and Prussian Land Marshal Henrik Botel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 February 1270</td>
<td>The Battle of Karusė (Kerrus) or the Battle on the Ice. The Lithuanians defeated the Teutonic Knights of Livonia. 52 knights perished, including the Livonian Grand Master Otto von Lutterberg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 March 1279</td>
<td>The Battle of Aizkrauklē (Ascheraden). The Lithuanians defeated the Teutonic Knights of Livonia. 71 knights were killed, including the Livonian Grand Master Ernst von Rassburg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 June 1294</td>
<td>The Battle of Trojanów. The Lithuanians, led by the Grand Duke Vytenis, crushed the Polish forces of the land of Kuyavia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 June 1298</td>
<td>The Battle of Turaida (Treiden). The Lithuanians defeated the Teutonic Knights of Livonia. The Livonian Land Master Bruno and 22 knights perished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 July 1320</td>
<td>The Battle of Medininkai. The Lithuanians defeated the Teutonic Knights of Prussia that invaded Samogitia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn 1362</td>
<td>The Battle of Blue Waters. The Lithuanian army led by the Grand Duke Algirdas crushed the Tatars and occupied Podolia and Kiev.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 July 1410</td>
<td>The Battle of Tannenberg (Grunwald, Žalgiris). The Polish and Lithuanian army led by the Lithuanian Grand Duke Vytautas crushed the army of the Teutonic Knights marking the end of the Teutonic Order might.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 September 1435</td>
<td>The Battle of Ukmergė (Wilkomierz, Pabaiskas) is the biggest battle in the territory of the present-day Lithuania. This battle was compared with the Battle of Tannenerg by the contemporaries. The victory in the Battle of Pabaiskas completed the war between Lithuania and the Livonian Order that lasted almost 200 years. In this battle, the army of Žygimantas Kęstutaitis defeated the entire command of the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 August 1506</td>
<td>The Battle of Kletsk. The Lithuanian army crushed the Tatar army of Crimea that invaded deep into the territory of Lithuania. The forces of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were led by Mykolas Glinskis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 April 1512</td>
<td>The Battle of Wisniowiec (the Battle of Lopuszno). The combined Polish-Lithuanian forces under Grand Crown Hetman Mikołaj Kamieniecki and the Grand Lithuanian Hetman Konstanty Ostrogski defeated the raid of the Perekop (Crimea) Tatars led by Tatar khan Mengli Giray. In Lithuanian historical literature this battle is usually called the Battle of Wisniowiec because before the battle the armies of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland gathered near Wisniowiec castle, several kilometers from Lopuszno.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 September 1514</td>
<td>The Battle of Orsha. The Lithuanian army led by Constantine Ostrogski crushed the Moscovite army led by Ivan Chelyadnin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 January 1527</td>
<td>The Grand Lithuanian Hetman Konstantin Ostrogski and the dukes Mykolas Vyšnioveckis and Andrej Zbaražskis concentrated their army near Ostrog, chased the Tatars and crushed them completed near Olszanica.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 September 1605</td>
<td>The Battle of Salaspils. The Grand Lithuanian Hetman Jonas Karolis Chodkevičius with a small army of 3,800 soldiers defeated 14,000 army of Swedes and ended the siege of Riga.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*During XII–XIV centuries, each knight was served by about 15 soldiers.*
Between the Wars

1918 m. vasario 16 d. buvo paskelbtas Lietuvos Nepriklausomybės Aktas. On 16 February 1918, the Act of Independence of Lithuania was signed, and the state of Lithuania was restored, but the real restoration of the army did not begin until the end of the First World War. 23 November 1918, is regarded as the day of the restoration of the Lithuanian Armed Forces. On that day, the Prime Minister signed Order No 1, establishing the Defence Council. The first temporary statutes were adopted, and military were prohibited from participating in politics. By the beginning of March, there were already
some 3,000 volunteers, and during the first mobilisation, the creation of the military force gained momentum. In 1919 and 1920, volunteers fought for Lithuania’s freedom against the Bolsheviks, the White Russians, the disband- ded German army and Poland.

From 1921 to 1934, the Armed Forces averaged 20,000 military personnel (in case of war, up to 200,000 could be mobilised). Between 1935 and 1938, state finally completed the legal basis for obligatory military service and carried out reform of the armed forces. The troops were better trained and used modern weaponry.

The country constructed its first light aircraft and embraced flying. Brigadier General Antanas Gustaitis designed ANBO training and reconnaissance aircraft. In the early 1930s, a group of pilots led by him flew around Europe in three ANBO-IVs, covering a distance of more than 12,000 kilometres.

Alas, Lithuania found itself caught between the territorial ambitions of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and hesi- tancy on the part of the Lithuanian political and military leadership sealed the country’s fate. In the summer of 1940 the Soviet Union occupied and annexed Lithuania, and during the occupation disbanded the Lithuanian military and deported many officers to Siberia or executed them.

Since the outbreak of the Second World War Soviet positions weakened, in June 1941, Lithuanians instigated an insurgency against the existing go- vernment and managed to form the Lithuanian Government, thus denying both myths that Lithuania voluntarily joined the Soviet Union and was libe- rated by Germany. In a few days the German army occupied Lithuania.
Colonel Antanas Gustaitis greets the graduates of the Military Aviation Academy at Kaunas Airfield

Dive bomber ANBO-VIII, one of the most advanced of that time, with characteristics outperforming even the famous Ju-87 “Stuka”
8-10 February 1919
The Battle of Kėdainiai. During the fight for the Independence, between 8 and 10 February 1919, one of the first battles of Lithuanian army took place when Kėdainiai and its suburbs were defended from the invading units of the Soviet Russian army. Having defended Kėdainiai, Lithuanians defeated the plans of the Russian military authorities to occupy Kaunas and suppress the striving for the Independence. The battle has claimed the first victim of the Lithuanian army - volunteer Povilas Lukšys perished.

19 November 1920
The Battle of Širvintos–Giedraičiai. On 19 November 1920 near Širvintos and 21 November 1920 near Giedraičiai the Lithuanian army, under command of the General Silvestras Žukauskas, successfully counterattacked the attacking Polish army led by General Liucijan Zeligovski and forced the Polish to stop the attack. The battles of Širvintos and Giedraičiai have stopped the Polish from invading Lithuania and preserved Lithuania’s independence.

10 January 1923
Klaipėda Revolt – Military campaign for the recapture of Klaipėda Region by Lithuania. On 10 – 15 January Klaipėda Region was entered by the volunteers of Lithuania Minor, who suppressed an insignificant resistance and took the control of the region. International negotiation ended with transfer of sovereign rights in Klaipėda Region to Lithuania, this way consolidating the country’s strategic positions on the Baltic Sea shore.
Flash and coarse heavy caftan of the Lithuanian Armed Forces volunteer, 1919

Parade of tanks. Kaunas, 1936

Motorcyclists of Motor Territorial Unit, 1928

Machine-gun shooting training, 1930s

“Prezidentas Smetona” warship. Lithuanian Fleet founded on 1 August 1935
The War after the War

By 1944 the tide had turned. The Soviet Union reoccupied the country, signalling the start of the anti-Soviet armed resistance. This partisan war continued for nearly ten years (until 1953), and more than 20,000 freedom fighters (žaliūkai) were killed during this period. During this time, the partisans numbered about 50,000 fighters and had about 50,000 active supporters. These were former militaries in the armed forces, who fought alongside farmers, students and teachers. Partisan units wore the uniforms of the interwar Lithuanian Armed Forces, established a central command and prepared military and political documents, which stated that “The ultimate goal of the struggle was an independent Lithuania.” The partisan war disapproved the lies spread by the Soviets about the voluntary accession of Lithuania to the Soviet Union. Although an active partisan fighting movement was suppressed in the 1950s, the ideals for which men and women laid down their lives in Lithuanian forests remained in the hearts of Lithuanians. The struggle (only in other forms) for the Independence of Lithuania never ceased.

Tauras District staff officer Vytautas Gavėnas-Vampyras and Juozas Ališauskas-Klaidas in reconnaissance operation. 15 August 1948.

Training exercises of partisans of Dainava District Dzūkai Territorial Unit Margis group.
16 May 1945

The Battle of Kalniškė took place on 16 May 1945. This is one of the largest and the most tragic partisan fighting struggles in the history of Lithuania’s post-war years. The Soviet occupant army surrounded the forest of Kalniškė (Alytus County, Simnas District) and hoped for an easy victory against a group of 60 partisans. Lithuanian partisans were led by the officer of the Independent Lithuania – Jonas Neifalta-Lakūnas. During the fight, partisans defeated about 400 occupants and about 20 partisans managed to escape from the entrapment.

16 February 1949 Declaration of the Council of the Movement of the Struggle for Freedom of Lithuania and Signatories

2 – 22 February 1949, a convention of Lithuanian partisan commanders was organized with participation of representatives from all regions of Lithuania. During the convention meetings it was decided to call the Lithuanian armed resistance organization as the Union of Lithuanian Freedom Fighters or Movement of the Struggle for Freedom of Lithuania (Lithuanian: Lietuvos laisvės kovos sąjūdis or LLKS). The command of LLKS was formed, political programme of the Movement, the program and tactics of armed resistance, political, ideological, organizational and other activities of the Movement were discussed, as well as LLKS Statute, partisan uniforms, marks of positions and ranks, etc. Appeals to the Movement’s participants and other residents of Lithuania were accepted.

However, the most important document prepared at the time was the Declaration passed on at LLKS Council’s meeting on 16 February 1949 and signed by eight participants of the meeting: chairman of LLKS Council Presidium Jonas Žemaitis-Vytautas and members of LLKS Council: Aleksandras Grybinas-Faustas, Vytautas Gužas-Kardas, Juozas Šibaila-Merainis, Bronius Liesys-Naktis, Leonardas Grigonis-Užpalis, Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas and Petras Bartkus-Žadgaila.

The Declaration, along with the other documents adopted at the convention of Lithuanian partisan commanders, have constituted the legal and political base of Lithuanian armed resistance, gave new character to the struggles for freedom, validated LLKS as an organization of universal organized armed resistance to the Soviet occupation, whereas its Council – as the only legal government in the territory of occupied Lithuania.
President of Lithuania Brigadier General Jonas Žemaitis-Vytautas
(15 March 1909 – 26 August 1953)

The Chairman of the Presidium of the Council of the Movement of the Struggle for Freedom of Lithuania (LLKS), the Partisan General, was announced as the President of the Republic of Lithuania on 12 March 2009.

After completing six grades of Raseiniai Gymnasium, he entered into the Military school. In 1933 completed the Artillery Department of Vytautas the Great Courses for Officers. Between 1936 and 1938 studied in Fontainebleau Artillery School in France. After returning to Lithuania, he has been commanding the Training Troop of the Fourth Artillery Regiment until the Soviet occupation. Was awarded with the Lithuanian Independence Medal (the Medal was issued in 1928 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Republic).

In 1945 Jonas Žemaitis-Vytautas entered the Lithuanian Freedom Army and gave the oath. Same year he was appointed as Chief of Žebenkštis Forces Staff, later – Commander of the same Forces. After Kęstutis District commander, the Captain of Lithuanian Aviation, one of initiators of the creation of the united command of Lithuania partisans Juozas Kasperavičius-Visvydas perished in 1947, J. Žemaitis was elected to be the District Commander. He continued the recruitment started by the partisan command.

In 1949, he called the convention of the commanders of the Lithuanian partisans that announced the creation of the unified resistance organization, i.e. the Movement for the Struggle for Freedom of Lithuania. Also, the political Declaration was adopted stating that LLKS Council is the supreme national political authority governing the fight for freedom of the nation to restore the independent and democratic republic.
J. Žemaitis was elected as LLKS Chairman and the Partisan General in a unanimous vote. He was implementing the functions of the supreme commander of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Lithuania and the supreme officer leading the country’s political fight for freedom.

On 30 May 1953, the bunker where J. Žemaitis was hiding was discovered. By throwing sedative gas hand grenade into the ventilation duct it was attempted to avoid the suicide of the underground President that was traced for so long. He was delivered to Moscow’s Butyrka prison, interrogated and tortured. Until his very execution on 26 November 1954, Jonas Žemaitis-Vytautas remained loyal to his oath to the Lithuanian State.
“The Independence was not created in offices. It was created by people who were standing near Seimas through their strength. Without defenders of freedom we would not have what we have today.”

The first Commander of the Voluntary National Defence Service Staff, Colonel JONAS GEČAS

Independence

After the restoration of independence on 11 March 1990, the state needed armed forces in order to ensure its independent existence. On 25 April, the National Defence Department was set up, which had to develop and implement the concept of the national defence and create a national defence system.

However, immediately after the events of 13 January 1991, when the Soviets resorted to military force and killed 14 peaceful civilians, the Voluntary National Defence Service was founded, and the volunteer activity was legitimised by law.

After the failure of the August Putsch in Moscow, and with international recognition, on 16 October 1991, the Lithuanian Government established the Ministry of National Defence. On 31 August 1993, the territory of Lithuania was deserted by the last units of the occupational army.

An active process of the building of the Lithuanian Armed Forces and their integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures began. It was crowned by the country’s accession to NATO and the EU in 2004.
The first solemn military forces formation, when the first conscripts swore an oath to serve the Republic of Lithuania. The same day the 1st Airborne Brigade of the Land Force (mechanized infantry brigade since 2012) was awarded as Brigade „Iron Wolf“. Vilnius, the Cathedral Square, 6 June 1992.
Lithuanian defence policy is formed and implemented in order to ensure protection of vital national security interests, i.e. sovereignty, territorial integrity, democratic constitutional system, civil society, respect for human and citizen’s rights and freedoms and their protection, peace and prosperity in the country, protection of other national security interests.

One of the main principles of Lithuania defence is its universality and unconditionality. Before membership in NATO, this principle meant that for its defence Lithuania was ready to use all the resources of the state and withstand using all methods allowed by the international law; however, it would defend in essence using entirely own efforts. When Lithuania joined NATO, the acquired collective defence guarantees highly enhanced security in Lithuania: as per Articles 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, in case of danger Lithuania would no longer defend itself alone, yet together with the allies. However, this does not mean that now Lithuania can devote less attention to its security and defence. Capacity of NATO to ensure its members’ security and defence depends directly on contribution of the Member States to the strengthening of the Alliance. Therefore, coordination of independent and collective defence principles, national needs and international obligations is the foundation of Lithuanian defence policy and capacity planning.

Lithuania seeks to develop modern, well trained and fully equipped troops, capable of ensuring credible deterrence and defence together with the allies, contributing to the collective defence outside Lithuania, participating in maintenance of regional and international security, implementing the tasks inside the state in time of peace. In order for the Lithuanian Armed Forces to comply with the high requirements set for today’s military forces, there is the military oriented transformation towards the development and modernization of military forces and increase of the operational efficiency of the National Defence System that correspond with defence policy priorities.

“Lithuania implements defence policy through strengthening military capabilities equally necessary for national defence, proportionate input into the collective development of NATO and the EU crisis management and quick response capabilities, and contribution to the international efforts to spread peace and stability beyond the territory of the Alliance and the European Union.”

Minister of National Defence JUOZAS OLEKAS
Since defence is the task of not only the armed forces, but also of the entire state, attention is focused on the reserve formation, mobilization and the development of the host nation support system, as well as training of the units ascribed to the armed forces. A comprehensive system of preparation of citizens for the country’s defence, based on will, determination and development of skills, is being developed. In order to expand the possibilities for the voluntary military training for the defence of the state, the Basic Military Training and Reserve Junior Rank Officers Commanders Training programmes are organized, the National Defence Volunteer Forces are strengthened. A great attention is paid to both civil and patriotic education: The Armed Forces are in close cooperation with schools, non-governmental organizations; activities of the Lithuanian Riflemen’s Union are supported and developed.

As Lithuania’s NATO membership is an integral part of a reliable deterrence and defence, Lithuania supports the practical initiatives for the consolidation of security guarantees and the building of collective forces, such as the increase of NATO visibility in the Member States, Smart Defence, Connected Forces Initiative (CFI), etc. As an active and responsible member of the Euro-Atlantic community, Lithuania participates in NATO operations to respond to the security challenges outside the Euro-Atlantic zone, also supports the ongoing operations of the EU and efforts of the United Nations and the OSCE (The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) to stabilize or prevent the regional conflicts.

Active bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the Baltic and Nordic countries, the USA, Poland, and other NATO and the EU countries contributes to the development of collective capabilities, increases interaction of the Lithuanian Armed Forces with military forces of the allies and contributes to the enhancement of NATO visibility in Lithuania and the region. Coope-
ration with the neighbouring countries in the East benefits in developing closer relations between them and the Euro-Atlantic community, reflects the long-term strategic goal of Lithuania to promote European and Euro-Atlantic integration of these countries.

In a changing and dynamic security environment the new security challenges gain more and more importance, especially in the fields of cyber and energy security. Although most of them are non-military in nature, they pose a real threat to the security of the countries and their citizens. Lithuania itself is making a great effort to enhance the ability to respond to new security challenges, and supports corresponding efforts of NATO and the EU. For Lithuania, achievement in the field of energy security – establishment of NATO Energy Security Centre of Excellence in Vilnius - is of special importance. The Centre, in which activities the representatives of the national defence system have been actively involved, directly contributes to strengthening NATO ability to respond to the challenges of energy security. In addition to the efforts to ensure energy security, Lithuania also develops the capabilities that would help in ensuring security and defence of the national cyberspace and contributes to the development of NATO cyber defence policy and forces.

Lithuanian Riflemen’s Union unites about 7,000 riflemen with over half of those - young riflemen
Soldiers at the night-time shooting
“Today’s Lithuanian Armed Forces are motivated, ready to defend the country along with the entire nation and its allies, successfully participate in international operations and help the people of Lithuania in extraordinary accidents. The Lithuanian Armed Forces are trusted not only by Lithuanian society, but also by the Lithuanian allies and partners. We have come a long way in restoring and developing our armed forces. Doors to NATO and the EU have opened, when we proved that we are a liable partner and are able to fulfill our obligations.”

Chief of Defence of Lithuania Lieutenant General ARVYDAS POCIUS

When Lithuania returned to the global map after several decades of occupation, it was not easy for the country’s military forces to regain trust. It had to overcome essential challenges. Between 25 April 1990, when the Department of National Defence was established, and 29 March 2004, when Lithuania became the member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the country needed not only to create the military forces anew, but also prepare it as per requirements of NATO membership and collective defence.

During the first years after restoration of Independence, Lithuania had to restore the armed forces having no weaponry, trained soldiers and officers, and equipped military facilities. Resolution, activity, patriotism have helped quickly to restore the regular armed forces and form the National Defence Volunteer Forces capable of ensuring the defence of the country.

When Lithuania declared its goal to become NATO member, the military forces got the task to prepare for this mission successfully so as it would meet NATO requirements of the use of the armed forces of all the allies for the purpose of collective defence and security.

In 1994, Lithuanian troops began participating in international operations, which also brought regular international military field exercises, intensive bilateral and multilateral military cooperation with the allies. All of this allowed adapting to collective defence thinking and planning for the successful completion of actions for NATO membership.

Lithuania’s membership in NATO was the evaluation of the achievements of the Lithuanian Armed Forces. Furthermore, it was realized that new challenges are yet to be overcome. Military forces of Lithuania, as NATO and EU member state, must always be prepared to, when necessary, participate in the Alliance’s collective defence campaigns and NATO, EU or UN-led international operations, contributing to the overall efforts of the international community to ensure security.
“We are facing important tasks related to peace time missions, multinational operations and armed defence of the country. It is clear that all together we have to prepare to fulfil these tasks, as nobody else will carry them out.”

Commander of the Lithuanian Land Force Major General ALMANTAS LEIKA

- Mechanized Infantry Brigade “Iron Wolf”
- National Defence Volunteer Forces
- Juozas Vitkus Engineer Battalion
- Land Forces Juozas Lukša Training Centre
- Lithuanian Grand Duke Butigeidis Dragoons Battalion
- King Mindaugas Hussars Battalion
- Grand Duchess Birutė Uhlans Battalion

Land Force

Land Force is the largest part of the Lithuanian Armed Forces and form the backbone of the country’s defence force. The Land Force is developed in accordance with NATO standards by increasing operational effectiveness and enhancing capacities to act smoothly together with the forces of other NATO member states. The soldiers regularly improve their skills and abilities in military training and exercises in Lithuania and in the other countries of the Alliance, are on duty in the Lithuanian operational forces for peacetime tasks, contribute to NATO Response Force (NRF), and the EU Battle Groups (EU BG).

The long-term objective of the Land Force is to prepare for the defence actions, which require ability to sustain trained, deployable and mobile forces for national needs and international operations.

There are about 8,000 soldiers and civilians, including over half of the number - volunteer soldiers, serving and working in the Land Forces.
Amphibious landing operation, which included land, sea and air units, with Lithuanian soldiers and U.S. Marines delivered to the landing beach from the sea - the first of its kind in Lithuania. “Baltops”, Nemirseta, 2012

Birutė Battalion troops at training exercises and preparation for the international mission in Afghanistan

The troops of the Algirdas Battalion, as a part of the Baltic Battalion, were on duty NRF-14
National Defence Volunteer Forces:

As an integral part of the Land Force, the National Defence Volunteer Forces have been developing since the beginning of the national movement for independence.

The National Defence Volunteer Forces continue deep traditions of the Lithuanian volunteer soldiers. The origin of today’s Volunteer Forces traces back to the period of Restoration of the Independence, when following the initiative of the Movement of the Struggle for Freedom of Lithuania, guard groups were formed. In 1990, volunteer units have been formed over the entire Lithuania. The National Defence Volunteer Forces were officially founded as a response to Soviet military aggression, on 17 January 1991. At the time it was called Voluntary National Defence Service, VNDS.

Today, the Volunteer Forces are an active part of the armed forces ready to carry out a variety of tasks. The volunteers work and train together with the Allies during military operations and have been assigned new missions: to augment the regular forces, to deploy individual units and specific capabilities for international operations, to assist host nation support and to support civilian authorities.

The National Defence Volunteer Forces are formed of volunteer soldiers and professional soldiers of military services.

“National Defence Volunteer Forces are active reserve forces formed on a voluntary basis that continue the traditions of previous generations of volunteers and are ready to carry out tasks both in Lithuania and outside.”

Commander of National Defence Volunteer Forces Colonel ROMUALDAS MOLDARIS
National Defence Volunteer Force troops together with troops of the US Pennsylvania National Guard participate in joint training exercises.

Volunteer soldiers are ready to serve the Homeland.

National Defence Volunteer Force reconnaissance in training.
pasirengusi iššūkiams
Reconnaissance officers, along with all the qualities of a good soldier, require foresight.
The Air Force protects Lithuanian air space. The surveillance and control of the country’s airspace, the ground-based air defence, the air transportation of troops and cargo, search and rescue, support for special operations, and host nation support to Allied Forces – these are the responsibilities of the Lithuanian Air Force.

One of the most important tasks of the Air Force is supporting, along with the forces of other Baltic countries, soldiers of the allies carrying out the NATO Air Policing mission. The goal of the Alliance countries’ fighter-jets coming to the Air Base in Šiauliai is to protect NATO airspace over the Baltic countries. This mission is an excellent example of solidarity of NATO member states. The Baltic Air Surveillance Network and Control System (BALTNET) established in Lithuania is also integrated into general NATO airspace defence system and allows expeditious control of fighter-jets carrying out the NATO Air Policing mission. Tactical transportation by air is another important task of the Air Force. Air Force soldiers have a considerable experience in transporting military personnel and military cargo in operation zones. The main task of Air Defence Battalion is protecting the airspace over important national objects and supporting the Land Forces.

“I would like to express my sincere gratitude to those who were born, grew up together with aviation, to those who believe that there will be enough Land and Sky for everybody. May endless desire to fly goes along with you.”

Commander of the Lithuanian Air Force Major General EDVARDAS MAŽEIKIS
Instructors of the Lithuanian Military Academy Parachute Training Center organise courses for the students of A. Gustaitis Aviation Institute. September 2011

Pilots of the Lithuanian Air Force transport airplane C-27J “Spartan”

Training exercises of the Lithuanian Air Force rescuers in icy waters of the Baltic Sea.
The Navy

The Lithuanian Navy is tasked with a wide range of missions: observation, control and protection of territorial waters, the exclusive economic zone and continental shelf of the Republic of Lithuania, explosive ordnance search and disposal operations, organization, coordination and direct search and rescue as well as pollution liquidation operations, support of special operations, and ensuring safe navigation.

Naval Flotilla is the most important unit in these forces. As part of NATO, Lithuania specialises in the area of mine countermeasures operations, sustains and develops the appropriate capabilities for its contribution to the Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group and the NATO Response Force.

The Lithuanian Navy (along with Estonia and Latvia) contributes to the Baltic Mine Countermeasures Squadron (BALTRON) with one mine hunter and a command and support ship. Its main task is to conduct MCM operations.
Crew of the Lithuanian Navy vessel M52 “Sūduvis” participates in mine trawl training exercises in the Baltic Sea using robot diver PAP104

“Hunt” class mine countermeasures vessel of the Lithuanian Navy M53 “Skalvis” during combat training exercises,

Soldier of the Lithuanian Navy observes the sea during international training “Open Spirit” in the Baltic Sea
The Lithuanian Navy vessel returns to Klaipėda port after tactical training “Baltic Desert 2011”
“Soldiers of Special Operations Forces gain real combat experience in combat missions in Afghanistan, thus contributing to national defence. In case of threat, Special Operations Forces’ soldiers will be ready to defend our country and fight in Lithuania.”

Commander of the Lithuanian Special Operations Forces

Special Operations Forces

The Lithuanian Special Operations Forces (SOF) emerged in 1995 as a small counter-terrorist unit and have developed into a separate branch within the Lithuanian Armed Forces. Special Forces were officially established in 2002 with unification of all special operations units under one staff into the Special Operations Unit (SOU). In 2008 Special Operations Unit of the Lithuanian Armed Forces became de jure Special Operations Forces.

The purpose of the Special Forces is special military operations (counter-terrorism, hostage recovery, etc.). Lithuanian Military Doctrine approved on 10 march 2010 names special operations as operations conducted by specially trained and equipped military forces to achieve military, political and (or) psychological objectivities of operation and (or) strategic importance bringing closer to the operation’s goal. The goal of such operations is to affect the important objects of the enemy and form the operations’ environment in a favourable manner.

Troops of the Lithuanian SOF Squadron “Aitvaras” have been deployed in NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan since 2007
Special Operations Forces are manned along with the principles of voluntary accession, selection and special training.

Forces are responsible for the following tasks: special reconnaissance, direct actions, and military support. They also include other specific tasks, e.g. from protection of VIP in peacetime to guerrilla-style warfare and other unconventional fighting techniques in wartime.

Lithuanian Special Operations Forces are ready to be evoked within the territory of Lithuania when law enforcement institutions do not have sufficient or necessary capabilities to react to terrorist attacks. Capabilities of the Special Operations Forces make them the main national response force responsible for counter-terrorism operations and operations to prevent violations of sovereignty in the Baltic Sea and Lithuania’s territorial waters.

Founders of the Special Operations Forces have named their combat squadron “Aitvaras”. In the Baltic mythology this creature is a guardian of atmosphere, waters, and clouds, and maintains connection with land and its riches. Aitvaras - a remarkably swift, dynamic, and powerful spirit - was associated with the four elements of the Universe: fire, water, air, and earth. It was the protector of good people and the punisher of the bad ones in the shape of a twister or fire grass-snake. Lithuanian partisans, the participants of the armed anti-Soviet revolt between 1944 and 1953, also carried this name.

The SOF Squadron “Aitvaras” was deployed to Afghanistan on the operation “Enduring Freedom” from 2002 to 2004. Since 2007 the troops of the SOF were deployed to the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan. During the mission, the soldiers render military assistance to the soldiers of Afghanistan national security forces (ANSF), organize seminars and military training for Afghanistan National Police (ANP), carry out other tasks.

In 2011–2012, along with Lithuanian SOF Squadron, troops of Latvian Special Operations Forces were also deployed to the NATO ISAF operation in the south of Afghanistan. This was the first time, when Lithuanian SOF squadron “Aitvaras” was formed together with troops of another country.
Mobile and aggressive tactics that was started to be used by Lithuanians in Afghanistan became an effective novelty. KTM EXC-RS30 motorcycles used by the troops of the SOF Squadron “Aitvaras”
Lithuanian Force for duty in peacetime tasks operations forces

Lithuanian Operational forces for peacetime tasks are formed to react to violation of the sovereignty of the Republic of Lithuania, when necessary, enhance defence of the state border, carry out defence of important state or municipal objects, protect from terror or massive violence attacks, provide help to the state authorities in extreme cases. Training of the forces began in 2009.

In 2012 Lithuanian Operational forces for peacetime tasks has started the two-year long duty with almost 950 soldiers shift. Operational forces for peacetime tasks are made of Land, Navy, Air and Special operations forces elements.
Lithuanian troops assistance is required during annual spring floods.

The Lithuanian Navy Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre officers are ready to respond to different potential situations related to organization and coordination of search and rescue operations.

The Lithuanian Operational forces for peacetime tasks and institutions under the Ministry of the Interior work together in peacetime emergency situations.
Lithuanian Force for duty in peacetime tasks operations forces after field tactical exercise "Strong Shield 2011"
Lithuania as a member of NATO and the European Union participates in the most important regional and Euro-Atlantic cooperation forums. Lithuania carries out an active multilateral and bilateral cooperation in defence policy, participates in multilateral projects strengthening the Alliance's security and readiness to respond to security challenges.

**Contribution to Collective Defence**

The most important goal of NATO is to ensure the security of all its members and to promote peace. The members of the Alliance are pursuing this objective by putting together a defence planning, advising on security issues, addressing problems through diplomatic channels and in the case of a threat – through collective military measures.

The foundation of Lithuania's security policy is its membership in NATO, as the Alliance is the most effective cross-border system of collective security in the world. NATO member states are guided by the same democratic values as Lithuania.

After the Baltic countries became NATO members in March 2004, fighter-jets of NATO countries began patrolling the airspace of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. As the Baltic States do not have adequate combat aircraft for independent protection of their airspace, NATO allies send their troops and fighter-jets on a rotation basis to the Lithuanian Air Force Base, located in Šiauliai, for participation in the NATO Air Policing mission in the Baltic States.

At the beginning of 2012 the North Atlantic Council has passed the decision to continue the open-ended NATO Air Policing mission in the Baltic States, which in the past has been given the mandate until 2014. Air Policing mission in the Baltic countries is a good example of smart defence. The Baltic States do not need to purchase and maintain expensive fighter-jets as NATO has enough of those, and the available resources of three Baltic countries are used where NATO needs the most, for example, by sending their troops to international operations. Fighter-jets protecting the Baltic airspace are
ready for the quick take-off and take disciplinary or any other actions needed against offenders of the Baltic countries’ airspace.

Since 2004 the Baltic airspace has been patrolled by troops from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Turkey and the United States.

Lithuania is an active member of NATO. It takes not only the advantage of the security guarantee, but also makes a thorough contribution to the Alliance’s political and military activities, undertakes and fulfils international obligations, and participates in NATO international operations.

Lithuania contributes to the development of NATO collective capabilities as part of different initiatives and programs. For example, Lithuania participates in the NATO C-17 Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC) project. The C-17 aircraft allows deploying troops over long distances without landing, transporting heavy and bulky cargo, military equipment, machinery, ammunition and logistical supplies, especially in international operations. Moreover, strategic transport aircraft would be of particular importance in the case of collective defence, when prompt redeployment of Allied units is required.

Lithuania supports Georgia’s goals of Euro-Atlantic integration, actively

Lithuanian military equipment and machinery exported from Ghor province by the military transport aircraft C-17, 2013
contributes to the development and improvement of NATO partnerships with Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, as well as the South Caucasus and Central Asian countries. The Ministry of National Defence funds the studies for the troops of partner states in the Lithuanian Military Academy and the Baltic Defence College, cooperates with the ministries of defence of the partner states by organizing consultations and seminars on the relevant issues of defence policy. Lithuania also contributes and financially supports NATO assistance programmes, and, in partnership with the Nordic and Baltic countries, implements practical assistance projects in Georgia and Ukraine.

Lithuania participates in NATO Response Force (NRF). Considerable attention is given for the training of the units, because only modern, mobile, highly trained and well equipped forces comply with the standards of the NRF. If needed, these forces can be redeployed to any point of the world in a short time.

On 1 January 2013, about 200 soldiers from Lithuanian Air Force, Juozas Vitkus Engineer Battalion, Special Operations Forces and Lithuanian Grand Duke Algirdas Battalion began their duty in NATO Response Force, NRF.

Norwegian fighter F-16 performing patrol in the airspace of the Baltic States joined the Lithuanian Air Force aircraft L-39 “Albatross” (airplane wing with Vytis cross is visible), February 2008
EU Common Security and Defence Policy

Since becoming a part of the European Union Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in 2004, Lithuania has been actively contributing to strengthening the Euro-Atlantic community’s ability to counter the emerging security threats. Lithuania maintains a stance that enhanced EU-NATO relations and close coordination between the two organisations is crucial in the process of adopting key solutions regarding the provision of security in the neighbourhood and international crisis management.

Through participation in the activity of political and military EU institutions and commissioning national military capabilities to the EU Battlegroups (EU BGs), high readiness multinationally formed units tailored for rapid response operations, in the capability development process, Lithuania seeks to contribute actively to CSDP decision-making and implementation.

In the second half of 2013 Lithuanian military will be on standby in a UK-led Battlegroup. Lithuania has commissioned a light manoeuvrable force protection company from King Mindaugas Hussars Battalion. The EU BG will also include military staff from Sweden, the Netherlands and Latvia.

The Lithuanian Armed Forces have already provided capabilities for half-year duty in the EU BGs in 2010 and 2011. Lithuania is also expected to contribute to the Sweden-led Nordic Battlegroup which will be on standby in the first semester of 2015.

Lithuania contributes actively to the EU operations and training missions.
Since 2011 Lithuania has been participating in the European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) - Operation ATALANTA and making its input into cutting off the rates of piracy at the coast of Somalia. As well, from the second half of 2013 Autonomous Vessel Protection Detachment (AVPD) has been deployed and protecting a UN World Food Programme (WFP) chartered ship from pirates and deterring potential raiders as part of Operation ATALANTA.

In March 2013 two Lithuanian troops commenced Lithuania’s participation in a Nordic Infantry Training Contingent in the European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali). Lithuanian troops are performing their tasks in training and mentoring the Malian Armed Forces.

Lithuania supports the European Defence Agency (EDA) and expands national involvement in the projects concerning defence research and joint procurement: Lithuania is participating in the Maritime Surveillance (MAR-SUR) project and the European Air Transport Fleet (EATF) programme. Under the coordination from EDA the Baltic States endorsed a Joint Procurement Arrangement on joint acquisition of ammunition for Carl Gustaf anti-tank systems.

Through the implementation of projects facilitating environmental protection and cost efficiency in military operations and exercises (such as, Go Green and Military Green models) with support from EDA Lithuania seeks enhanced military efficiency and stronger links with the CSDP in the context of energy security.
Baltic Solidarity

Cooperation of the three Baltic States was of particular significance in symbolic, political, and practical sense as these countries were in preparation for joining NATO. Now being full NATO members, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia aim to further strengthen the trilateral cooperation to expand it to new spheres and proceeding with successful projects.

One of the main directions of cooperation of the Baltic States is the host nation support for the countries participating in NATO Air Policing mission. Implementation of the air policing mission is assisted by the Control and Reporting Centre (CRC) in Karmėlava, Lithuania. The airspace command and control unit is formed from military personnel of the three Baltic countries. The Centre is an integral part of the Baltic Air Surveillance Network and Control System (BALTNET).

The Baltic Defence College (BALTDEFCOL) in Estonia (Tartu) plays a significant role in the preparation of top-ranking officers and civil servants working in the defence field of the three countries according to NATO standards. Officers and civilians from the United States, the Nordic countries, the South Caucasus and other European countries also participate in the courses organised by the College.
Over 2,000 military and civilians from seven NATO member states: Canada, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Norway and the USA as well as two NATO partners participating in the Partnership for Peace (NATO PfP) programme – Georgia and Finland, took part in the international training “Amber Hope 2011”, June 2011

Baltic Mine Countermeasure Squadron (BALTRON) participates in international exercises and operations for mine and unexploded ordnance search and harmfulness disposal at the bottom of the Baltic Sea. Squadron is the basis for the preparation for deployment in NATO unit.

The Alliance’s focus on exercises for the protection of skills acquired during operations increases. For this reason, the largest recent NATO exercises “Steadfast Jazz 2013” are planned in the territories of the Baltic States and Poland.

Lithuania, along with Latvia and Estonia, is contributing to the organization of and participates in other NATO and the allies-led international exercises, such as “Baltops”, “Amber Hope”, “Baltic Host”, “Open Spirit”, “Strike Sabre”, “Jackal Stone”. Other NATO and the EU partners, along with military units of the Baltic countries, actively participate in these exercises.

Over 2,000 military and civilians from seven NATO member states: Canada, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Norway and the USA as well as two NATO partners participating in the Partnership for Peace (NATO PfP) programme – Georgia and Finland, took part in the international training “Amber Hope 2011”, June 2011
Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation

Lithuania supports the close cooperation of the North European countries (Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark and Iceland) and the three Baltic States in the sphere of defence. The Nordic and Baltic countries are able to implement the projects for the development of the armed forces in various fields jointly: science and technology, peace-keeping, environmental safety, logistics, special operations forces, etc.

Lithuania has been actively developing bilateral relations in the field of defence and security. The development of relations with Lithuania’s strategic partner - the US - is one of the priority tasks of the defence policy and one of the most important conditions for long-term security. Lithuania supports the US efforts in the development of global peace and stability, fight against terrorism and terrorism supporting regimes, and spread of weapons of mass destruction.

Close cooperation in the field of defence also links Lithuania with Poland and Denmark. An intensive bilateral cooperation based on the ongoing political consultations, mutual support, exercises and joint participation in international operations takes place between Lithuania and Poland. For example, for ten years (1999-2009) Lithuanian troops have been deployed in the Polish-Ukrainian battalion to participate in NATO operation in Kosovo. Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine are preparing to form joint brigade LITPOLUKRBRIG, which is expected to take part in international organizations-led operations from 2014.

Denmark has been an important partner of Lithuania for a long time. Denmark, along with Sweden, contributed the most to the reform of the Lithu-
anian Armed Forces and provided them with weapons and equipment complying with NATO standards. The Mechanized Infantry Brigade “Iron Wolf” has been affiliated to the Danish Army division. Lithuanian and Danish troops are often involved in joint exercises.

Cooperation of the Nordic and Baltic countries in the field of defence is especially important. In particular, the format of NB8 consisting of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland. NB8 cooperation does not have any separate institutional structures, and does not include any organisation. NB8 was not formed for the purpose of new political or military alliances between the countries. NB8 cooperation is based on the assumption that mutually beneficial improvement of defence forces through cooperation can be achieved without negative impact on different foreign and security policies of the parties involved or obligations of NATO, the EU and the UN membership. On the contrary, NB8 format is aimed at enhancing practical cooperation, which contributes to strengthening NATO, the EU or the UN forces.

The importance and relevance of the regional cooperation has especially grown at the time of economic crisis because NATO Smart Defence and the EU Pooling and Sharing initiatives require flexible regional cooperation oriented to building forces and mutual benefit. NB8 cooperation each year is coordinated by different country: in 2012 NB8 was chaired by Lithuania, in 2013 - Sweden, in 2014 - Estonia, in 2015 - Denmark.

Lithuania also develops bilateral military cooperation with the countries of the South Caucasus, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, creating relations with the Western Balkans, Central Asian countries, China, Japan, and Israel. The main focus is on the Eastern Europe and South Caucasus countries. Close cooperation with these countries is taking place in the fields of military medicine, military training and military ecology. The Ukrainian and Georgian troops, together with Lithuanian soldiers, participate in NATO ISAF operation in Afghanistan.

Lithuanian reconnaissance officers along with the troops from Canada, Poland and Ukraine took part in training exercise "Maple Arch 2011" in Poland.
“If you want to have security, you need to give it as well. This is why we are all around the world - from Bosnia to Iraq and Afghanistan. Sometimes we question – why so far? However, let us remember that Lithuania has been fighting quite far beyond its borders in the past. As long as we had our country we had no question of whether it makes sense to fight for own values away from our homeland.”

Professor Dr. ALFREDAS BUMBLAUSKAS

When the World Needs Help

Lithuania is an active member of the international community. The participation in NATO, EU, OSCE and UN international operations and missions is of fundamental importance to these organisations. Through participation with its troops in a variety of operations Lithuania contributes to the world’s security and stability, while ensuring its security interests. In the 21st century, the main threats for the states and their citizens are terrorism, spread of weapons of mass destruction, poor and unstable countries. When threats are international in their nature, the most effective prevention and combating of threats requires international efforts. Active counteract of the threats at the point of their origin is the fundamental challenge of this era, which requires political will of the parties and coordinated actions with the use of a wide range of measures ranging from economic to military.

For the implementation of its foreign policy priorities and security of the national and the international community, and increase of the role of NATO, the EU and the UN in the management of international conflicts, Lithuania participates in international operations and missions. Support of the Lithuanian Armed Forces in the context of international obligations is provided with consideration of the actual military capabilities and needs of specific operation.
Lithuanian troops have been taking part in international operations since 1994. Since then, over 6,000 Lithuanian military personnel have served in NATO, the EU and the US coalition-led missions and operations, the UN-led peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, also in OSCE training and surveillance missions. The geographical range of military deployments, where Lithuanian troops were and are still serving, is wide - Afghanistan, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iraq, Kosovo, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Mali, Pakistan, Syria and Somalia.

Permission of Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania is required to deploy the troops in operations with combat missions expected. The troops are deployed to non-combat missions and training (educational, surveillance) without a separate consent of Seimas.

Lithuanian military units currently deployed in operations are provided with modern equipment, weaponry and communications equipment. Before going to the mission area, all soldiers not only undergo mission-specific training, but are also trained to interact with multinational contingent deployed in the regions. Lithuanian officers also serve in various positions in international operations headquarters. The mandate granted by the Seimas for participation in:

1) three NATO-led operations:
   - in Afghanistan (up to 290 troops and civilians till 31 December 2013; on the basis of a new mandate – up to 200 civilian and military personnel from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015);
   - KFOR in Kosovo (up to 5 civilian and military personnel);
   - Counter-piracy operation OCEAN SHIELD (up to 30 civilian and military personnel);

2) one EU-led operation:
   - European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) Somalia - operation ATALANTA (up to 30 civilian and military personnel).
Afghanistan

Lithuania was one of the first NATO member states that began directing the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Ghor province in Afghanistan. PRT is the civilian-military mission of NATO ISAF in the country’s provinces. Soldiers and civilians from Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Iceland, Japan, Poland, Ukraine and the USA have been serving in Ghor province along with soldiers and civilians from Lithuania.

In the process of delegating the responsibility for security to the Afghanistan national security forces and at the end of 2012 involving the entire Ghor province into the process, the main task of PRT operating in Ghor was to strengthen the skills of local authorities and security forces by focusing mostly on the advisory function. Since 2010, Lithuanian troops and soldiers from the other counties cooperating in the Gohr province have trained over 700 Afghan national police (ANP) officers. Furthermore, Lithuanian troops regularly cooperate with the Afghan national army (ANA) battalion unit deployed in Chaghcharan: consult and advise, organize training, assist in the preparation for the joint operations.

“I have been addressing major member states of NATO asking to contribute to reconstruction of Afghanistan and to establish PRTs many times. However, I used to get the answer that the nations would not afford headquarters in Afghanistan. My response each time was the same: please, go to Vilnius and ask Lithuanians how they manage to maintain their PRT and fulfil commitments to NATO. This is the reason that makes me respect Lithuania and its people greatly.”

NATO Secretary General 2004–2009 JAAP DE HOOP SCHEFFER
Ghor is one of the poorest provinces in Afghanistan. About 80 percent of Ghor population is illiterate; health services are almost non-existent, due to the poor vegetation and highland areas local people have problems with food and drinking water.

The PRT military doctors working in the field hospital provide necessary medical services to local residents, advising and preparing a wide variety of courses for the staff of Chaghcharan hospital. Lithuanian military medical staff reaches the farthest villages of Ghor province to provide necessary medical aid.

The Special Mission of the Republic of Lithuania, to which civilians are delegated, supports the activities of the PRT and implements long-term cooperation projects, including construction of security structures, schools, power plants, training centres, improves competence of the public administration sector in the province, promotes entrepreneurship of local residents and increase in small and medium business earnings.

Lithuania has adopted the decision to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan Ghor province and end the mission of Provincial Reconstruction Team by the end of 2013. After the completion of the PRT mission in Ghor province, the NATO operation in the Southern Afghanistan will be further continued by the Lithuanian Special Operations Forces and the Lithuanian Air Force Air Advisory Team (AAT), which trains Afghan helicopter pilots. Lithuanian troops will continue serving in various ISAF headquarters as well. Furthermore, Lithuania considers cooperation with the Nordic and Baltic partners regarding participation in Northern Afghanistan after 2014.
Lithuanian troops in Ghor province perform general patrols with the troops of Afghanistan National Army (ANA)

PRT-12 troops present socks knitted by people of Lithuania to pupils of Soltan Razieh girls’ school, February 2011

Military doctors of the Provincial Reconstruction Team, provide medical aid to Ghor residents
Somalia

Lithuania has been participating in the European Union naval operation ATALANTA since the beginning of 2011, when one officer of the Lithuanian Navy was deployed to the operating headquarters in Northwood (United Kingdom). From the second half of 2013 Lithuania has been increasing participation of the country’s military personnel in the EU-led operation and has send the Autonomous Vessel Protection Detachment (AVPD) to the counter-piracy operation off the Somali coast and one officer to the Dutch-led headquarter vessel.

Up to the end of 2013, the troops serving in the AVPD will be protecting the vessel of the World Food Programme delivering humanitarian aid to African countries from the acts of piracy and the armed robbery off the Somalia coast. This group will consist of 16 soldiers; most of them are from the Lithuanian Grand Duke Algirdas Battalion.

Lithuania’s military contribution to ATALANTA is the largest input of Lithuania to EU operations so far and the first naval operation that Lithuanian military will be part of.
Through the participation in the EU-led international operations and missions, Lithuania enhances the common security and defence policy of the EU and the EU’s capabilities to respond the crisis. On 23 April 2013 Seimas has extended the mandate for the participation of Lithuania in the EU-led counter-piracy operation ATALANTA until the end of 2015. Up to 30 military and civilian personnel may be delegated annually.

The largest EU military operation ATALANTA was commenced in the late 2008 as a response to the upsurge of piracy cases off the Somali coast. Warships participating in the operation in the Gulf of Aden and the territorial waters of Somalia escort the vessels of the World Food Programme delivering aid for Somalia residents. Forces deter, prevent and repress piracy and armed robbery in the operation region, and monitors fishing activities, etc. Currently, the operation involves 23 EU and 3 non-EU Member States deploying up to 2 thousand soldiers.

The troops of Lithuania are deployed to protect a World Food Programme (WFP) chartered vessel transporting food from Kenya to Somalia from acts of piracy.
LITHUANIA’S PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

AFGHANISTAN
From 2002 to 2006 – the Lithuanian Armed Forces provided military contribution to the US-led military operation “Enduring Freedom” in Afghanistan.

In June 2005 – Special Mission of the Republic of Lithuania to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Lithuanian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Ghor province were established.

From 2007 – Squadron of the Lithuanian Special Operations Forces was deployed to the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operation in the South of Afghanistan.

From November 2010 till May 2012 – Lithuanian-led Police Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (POMLT) was deployed in Ghor province.

From January 2008 till January 2012 – Lithuanian Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) was deployed in Helmand province, where served under Danish command in their contingent.

Since the beginning of 2011 – Lithuanian-led multinational Air Advisory Team (AAT) advises and mentors the Afghan National Security Forces in the South of Afghanistan.

From May to November 2012 – Police Advisory Team (PAT) provided advice to the Afghan National Police in Ghor province.

Since May 2012 – Military Advisory Team (MAT) advises and mentors the Afghan National Army contingent in Ghor province.

November 2012 – Operational Coordination Centre Province - Advisory Team (OCCP-AT) advises and mentors the Afghan-led Operational Coordination Centre personnel in Ghor province.

January 2012 – implementation of the transition process started in Ghor province. In June 2013 the Afghan National Security Forces took full responsibility of security in the province.

SOMALIA.
From January 2011 – Lithuania deploys one staff officer to the Operational Headquarters of the EU Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) Somalia – counter-piracy operation ATALANTA.

From August to December 2013 – Military personnel of the Autonomous Vessel Protection Detachment (AVPD) to be deployed on the EU NAVFOR – ATALANTA for the protection of a World Food Programme (WFP) vessel transporting food from Kenya to Somalia.

From July 2013 – one Lithuanian staff officer posted to the Netherland’s operated staff vessel.

MALI.
From March 2013 – the Lithuanian Armed Forces contribute three military instructors to EU Training Mission-Mali (EUTM Mali) to help to train Mali forces.

KOSOVO.
Since December 2012 – Lithuania has 1 logistics specialist posted at the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) Headquarters in Pristina.

Between 1999 and 2009 – Lithuania deployed 800 troops in total to the NATO KFOR operation “Joint Guardian”.

From June 2008 to December 2009 – 14 Lithuanian troops served within the NTT-K (NATO Training Team Kosovo).

From April 2001 to July 2003 – transport aircraft with its crew and maintenance personnel of the Lithuanian Air Force took part in the NATO-led KFOR and SFOR (Bosnia and Herzegovina) (in total, 98 troops).

CLOSED OPERATIONS

IRAQ
From 2003 to 2011 the Lithuanian Armed Forces participated in the operation "Iraqi Freedom". Between April and October 2003 – 8 logistics specialists and 4 military medics were deployed to the area. Their mission was, respectively, to provide maintenance services to the allied forces’ transportation aircrafts and to render medical services for local population.

From June 2003 to August 2008 – ten Lithuanian military contingents (LITCONS) served in Basrah and in Al Kut (in total, 540 troops).

From August 2003 to January 2006 – five Lithuanian detachments (LITDET) served in Al Hillah and Al Kut (in total, 245 troops).

From November 2003 to August 2008 – in total, 34 Lithuanian military staff officers conducted service in Basrah.

From January 2004 to August 2008 – in total, 23 soldiers and 15 military staff officers served in the Division Headquarters in Ad Diwaniyah.

From September 2003 to December 2008 – Lithuanian military officers served in the Coalition’s Headquarters - CJTF, MNF-I, MNSTC-I CAFTT, MNC-I (in total, 21 soldier).

CROATIA
From August 1994 to February 1996 – Lithuanian platoon (LITPLA) took part in the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Croatia (in total, 90 troops). It was the first international operation Lithuania contributed to.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
From February to August 1996 – Lithuanian platoon LITPLA-4 was deployed to the NATO IFOR operation "Joint Endeavour" (in total, 34 troops).

From October 1996 to March 2000 – LITCOY, LITPLA and BALCON units participated in the NATO SFOR operation “Joint Guard”, “Joint Force” (in total, 471 troops).

From March 2000 to February 2003 – a BALCON unit served in the operation (in total, 177 troops).

From February 2003 to November 2004 - 1 Lithuanian staff officer served in the US Brigade Headquarters, in the NATO SFOR.

From November 2004 to December 2010, when the European Union’s forces replaced NATO in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 12 Lithuanian staff officers took part in the EU operation “Althea”.

GEORGIA
From April 2007 to July 2009 – 5 Lithuanian military officers assisted the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG).

From June 2000 to May 2005 – 9 Lithuanian military observers were sent to the OSCE Border Monitoring Mission (BMO) in Georgia.

From May 2005 to June 2007 – 1 military specialist was delegated to the OSCE Georgian Border Guards training programme.

ALBANIA
From May to September 1999 – Lithuanian military personnel (in total, 10 officers) took part in the NATO’s humanitarian efforts in Albania - the operation “Allied Harbour”. Main task was to render medical services to local residents.

FYR MACEDONIA
From April to December 2003 – 1 staff officer took part in the EU-led military operation "Concordia".

PAKISTAN
From November 2005 to January 2006 – Water purification unit of the Lithuanian Armed Forces was deployed as a part of the NATO Response Force humanitarian (earthquake relief) operation.

SYRIA
From June to August 2012 – 1 military observer was delegated to the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS).
HIGHLY TRAINED PERSONNEL

Highly trained forces with great competence in contemporary warfare are ready to defend their Homeland in case of war, able to contribute to multinational forces and work in wide range and different intensity operations. It is the most significant and indispensable investment of the National Defence System. Therefore, a considerable attention is paid to the military training. Constant need to deepen the knowledge and the development of skills and professionalism are the exceptional characteristics of the soldiers.

Requirements for the soldiers, as well as the military training, depend on military positions, military service, military rank, and military speciality. However, all soldiers are required to adhere to the values of the soldier, such as duty, patriotism, loyalty, self-sacrifice, honesty, courage, honour, generosity and respect. These values are the foundation of the Lithuanian soldier’s main objective – to accomplish the task.

Graduates of the Lithuanian Military Academy – lieutenants in the formation for the graduation ceremony at Simonas Daukantas Square in Vilnius
Joining the Military Service

Training of the troops is distinguished by requirements for high stamina, discipline and responsibility; therefore, already at an early stage – joining the service – it is important to select the candidates fitting the military service. Candidates can apply and join the service, if they have no previous convictions, meet age, education, physical training, health status and other criteria.

Military service newcomers should be responsible, ready for novelties and challenges and seeking to acquire military training. The Armed Forces are also in need of professional specialists in different spheres, such as medical personnel, information technology specialists and other specialists, who make it possible for the Armed Forces to complete the tasks successfully.

Selection criteria vary depending on the desired military rank and other position requirements. Specific selection criteria are applied in respect of those entering the General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy, which provides the officer rank. Some of the positions require special knowledge and skills.

Only citizens of the Republic of Lithuania can swear an oath and become Lithuanian troops – defenders of the Lithuanian State.

Troops of the Basic Military Training after four weeks of training swear an oath to the Lithuanian State, while the best training soldier is granted with the right to take the salute for the Training Squad battle flag.
Basic military training is the possibility to complete military services stipulated by the Constitution. A 12-week Basic Military Training is conducted on a voluntary basis for conscripts from 18 to 38 years old - men and women who have not completed the Compulsory Basic Military Service and have not acquired the military training by other methods.

The Basic Military Training is delivered at the Lithuanian Great Hetman Jonušas Radvila Training Regiment in Rukla. During the training, participants are taught weapon handling, using communication devices, rendering first medical aid, elements of tactics, topography, military engineering, and military formation.

During the training period, soldiers receive full state maintenance, which includes feeding, lodging, clothing, social and life insurances, allowances for daily living needs, and other bonuses.

Graduates of the Basic Military Training are considered to have undergone the Compulsory Basic Military Service, a part of them sign professional military service contracts, and the others are drawn into the trained military personnel reserve list of the Lithuanian Armed Forces.

Basic Military Training soldiers complete the 12-week training in the field exercise
Reserve Junior Rank Officers Commanders Training

Reserve Junior Rank Officers Commanders training is an opportunity for the students of higher educational institutions to acquire another, officer’s, qualification within three years after their graduation from civilian educational institutions. The graduates of the training will benefit by acquiring one more qualification and a military rank, along with that they fulfil the duty to their homeland - the Compulsory Basic Military Service, and have the opportunity to join the Lithuanian Armed Forces and seek officer’s career.

The training takes three years: once a week students of the higher educational institutions are studying warfare theory, which they apply in approximately two-week long field training held during their summer holidays. Participants of the training receive comprehensive maintenance.

The Junior Rank Officers Commanders training is organised in Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda.
Active Reserve - Service in the National Defence Volunteer Force

Today the National Defence Volunteer Force (NDVF) is an active segment of the Lithuanian Armed Forces reserve ready to complete a wide range of tasks. While conducting the service, volunteer soldiers obtain a military qualification, participate in military exercises and multinational missions.

Military volunteer service is discontinuous military service compatible with civil work or studies of the volunteer soldier. Military training events for volunteer soldiers take up from approximately 20 to 50 days per year. Exercises are usually held on weekends, however, various courses and longer training events may be held during workweek as well.

On the basis of voluntary and selective principles, citizens of the Republic of Lithuania between the age of 18 and 55 can enrol into the NDVF. Contract of a volunteer service cannot span less than 3 and more than 5 years. A person who signs the contract makes an oath of allegiance to the Republic of Lithuania. The contract may be extended once it expires.

Volunteer soldiers are trained in the Great Lithuanian Hetman Jonušas Radvila Training Regiment, Land Force Juozas Lukša Training Center and improve their skills in selected territorial units.

Training and exercises of volunteer soldiers are organised on the weekends and are compatible with civil work or studies.
Repeated Military Training

The conscripts that completed the Compulsory Basic Military Training are allocated to the trained military personnel reserve units on the compulsory basis or upon request. These persons, along with the military unit ascribed to, undergo training and refresh their military skills and only in extreme situations may be invited to complete tasks.

Professional Military Service

Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania up to 35 years old, without previous conviction record, who have completed the Compulsory Basic Military Service and the Basic Military Training, who have graduated from the Lithuanian Military Academy or serve in the NDVF, are able to join the professional military service on the basis of voluntary and selective principles. The professional military service is joined via signing a professional military service contract.
THE FOLLOWING MILITARY TRAINING INSTITUTIONS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE NATIONAL DEFENCE SYSTEM TO ENSURE DIFFERENT NEEDS IN MILITARY TRAINING:

- The General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy prepares commanders-leaders and organizes courses of tactical career, qualification and specialty for the officers.

- Training and Doctrine Command of the Lithuanian Armed Forces implements military training policy in the National Defence System, trains Lithuanian soldiers to be able to complete different military tasks.

- Other specialised military training centres are preparing specialists necessary for the forces (Land, Air, Navy, also military engineers, reconnaissance officers, etc.).
Military Career and Military Training

Military training and selection requirements and procedures differ in terms of current military status, current and intended military rank, and other military position requirements. Training of professional military service officer is a continuous process, whereas training of a volunteer soldier takes place after the call to the training. The military training is linked to the military career.

The mission of the Lithuanian Military Academy is to train officers by developing their leadership, intellect, providing professional knowledge and practical skills required for a commander position in the Lithuanian Armed Forces. Graduates should be motivated and ready to command military units at the time of war and peace by serving the Lithuanian State. Successful completion of the Academy ensures first officer (lieutenant) rank, qualification of unit commander, Bachelor’s degree in Public Administration or Political Science. They are usually appointed to the position of unit commander in the units of the Lithuanian Armed Forces.

The Lithuanian Military Academy, in cooperation with Vilnius Gediminas Technical University Antanas Gustaitis Aviation Institute, prepares pilots, flight supervisors and aviation engineers for the Air Force.

Since 2012, Lithuanian Military Academy, together with the Lithuanian Maritime Academy in Klaipeda and the Navy, have been training the Navy officers. In the course of the training, the future officers may acquire the basic naval officer military education in the Military Academy, or may acquire higher education in the Lithuanian Maritime Academy.

Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) conducts individual training for the soldiers of the Lithuanian Armed Forces and organize personnel training of the National Defence System, develops doctrine documents in the military field, supports military units with collective training, supplies with training areas, simulation systems and training objects, supervises implementation of provision of documents regulating evaluation of collective training and combat readiness of military units.

Officers of the Lithuanian Navy
Highly qualified and experienced instructors and developed infrastructure are important for military training. Training areas in Pabradė, Gaižiūnai and Kazlų Rūda with the training infrastructure developed in accordance with NATO requirements are allocated to combat (field) training. Lithuania organizes national and international exercises on an annual basis. Some of those exercises have already become traditional, comprising one or more types of military forces.

Training and Doctrine Command consists of Division General Stasys Raštikis Lithuanian Armed Forces School, which prepares sergeants, non-commissioned officer commanders and specialists; the Great Lithuanian Hetman Jonušas Radvila Training Regiment – prepares officers, who acquire the status of the Compulsory Basic Military Training officer after completing the Basic Military Training; General Adolfas Ramanauskas Combat Training Centre uses a Joint Conflict and Tactical Simulation (JCATS) system allowing universal and realistic imitation of conflicts and other military and civil operations. It is designed for combat training for the purpose of planning and implementing combat and crisis control operations.

**Land Force Juozas Lukša Training Center**, located in Rukla, organizes and conducts military training for the Land Forces troops, modular tactical training for subunits and provides subject matter expertise in military training areas in the Land Forces. The Training Center conducts 60 different courses, which are open not only for the Land Force, but, also, for the other Lithuanian Armed Forces troops and units.

Regularly changing military requirements stimulate military training institutions to adapt new programmes to ensure high level of military training and quality. For the purpose of the military training and qualification refreshment, soldiers are commissioned for studies in foreign military training institutions, one of them - **Baltic Defence College**.
The Lithuanian Armed Forces modernize their military equipment and implement a variety of projects for weaponry procurement on a regular basis. After Lithuania restored its independence, formation of country’s defence forces meeting the Alliance’s standards has began. The Lithuanian Armed Forces had to start from the scratch by rebuilding the destroyed infrastructure left behind by the withdrawing Soviet army in 1993. NATO and the EU Member States (the United States, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, France, and Norway) have assisted Lithuania in the development and procuring weaponry to its troops. These countries have transferred to Lithuania a number of used but sufficiently good quality armament and military equipment.

The defence of the country is one of the spheres of public administration which activities are based on long-term planning. Taking into account the changes in the National Defence System and the possible risk factors, projects for the military modernisation and military equipment procurement are established.

The main focus in terms of the long-term development of the forces of the National Defence System is on the development of airspace surveillance and defence, improvement of the capacity of the military units to manoeuvre on land, as well as the development of communication and medical assistance capabilities.

The funds for the development and modernisation of the Lithuanian Armed Forces are planned on a regular basis. The ongoing projects for the weapons, military equipment and technology procurement are complex and take a number of years. Each year the Lithuanian Armed Forces plan the procurement of armament and military equipment to meet the immediate needs of today’s Lithuanian troops. The available armament and military equipment directly affects the success of the tasks performed, effectiveness during operations and ensures safety of military units and troops.

To meet the needs of the search and rescue forces of the Republic of Lithuania, the Lithuanian Armed Forces plan to purchase helicopters and multifunctional rescue and pollution control ship.

Currently, Lithuanian Armed Forces proceed with the projects for airspace surveillance and defence, procurement of communications and transport
means, logistics and other equipment, which is necessary to prepare for participation in international operations. Infrastructure of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, military training units, the host nation support (Šiauliai Air Base) is being developed.

Through the majority of the armament modernisation and procurement projects the Lithuanian Armed Forces are seeking to enhance the combat power of the military units. Medium-range anti-tank defence systems (Javelin, short range anti-aircraft defence missile systems (RBS-70, Stinger), heavy machine guns, automatic grenade launchers (GMG), mine search and mine-clearance devices, night vision equipment, collective and individual Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) protection equipment were purchased, light infantry weapons (G-36, GLOCK-17) were renewed. Purchases of warfare, communications, command and control and logistical vehicles were made.

Even with a reduction in the national defence budget, a considerable attention is paid to the Lithuanian troops, taking part in international operations and exercises, having the appropriate military weapons and military equipment, which makes it possible to carry out the tasks successfully and, most important, to ensure the safety of the soldiers.

To fulfil its obligations to NATO and to strengthen the surveillance and defence of the country’s airspace, the Lithuanian Armed Forces plan to purchase long range air surveillance radars including the entire infrastructure required. Those radars would replace the available outdated Soviet radar technology.

Seeking for a more efficient and rational use of sea surveillance forces managed by different public institutions, a national integrated maritime sur-
Surveillance system is being implemented since 2011 on the basis of marine surveillance system of the Navy. The system creates a national identified maritime image, which is very helpful for all the monitoring authorities. The integrated system makes it possible to identify objects in the Curonian Lagoon and the Baltic Sea area in a shorter period of time, ensure continuous surveillance of the sea, which would increase the effectiveness of the search and rescue operations and enhance vessel security and control in the port. The unified surveillance system markedly saves the funds allocated by the country for the purpose of this function and allows the rational and economic use of the sensors.

The Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES) project is the integration of new technologies into combat training of the Lithuanian Armed Forces units. This technology will help the troops in more realistic comprehension of the mistakes and achievements made in the simulated situations.

The development and enhancement of the security of strategic communications and advanced information system of National Defence System is a priority at all times. Recently, the national defence telecommunications network interconnecting all branches of the defence system is modernized; mobile tactical communication modules with state-of-the-art US production radio stations and measures ensuring secure communication are purchased; the Armed Forces have various types of satellite systems at its disposal as well. Lithuanian specialists, together with the military, have worked out the Tactical Automated Command Control Information System, designed for the planning of combat operations and execution control. Competence and skills of the personnel working in the command and control centre is very important. In the past, it was considered that the technical means and procedures would solve all the problems, but this is not the case. Man will always be the most important element in the process.

Guided missile system “Javelin” in use in anti-tank armament training exercises at Pabradė training field, October 2011
The Armed Forces are important for its country not only in times of war, but in times of peace as well. When a real danger arises to people or nature, troops, who react fast, are well trained and equipped, can save many lives. The military are used to eliminate the consequences of natural disasters and industrial accidents, complete explosives disposal operations, during search and rescue operations.

In Times of Emergency

The Lithuanian Armed Forces and Fire and Rescue Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania work together in peacetime emergency situations. The Lithuanian troops are ready and their assistance is required to perform reconnaissance during floods, forest and peatbogs fires, liquidation of a wide range of incidents, evacuation or transportation of people, etc.

The troops contribute aid to the population in the western regions of Lithuania during annual spring floods. Amphibian, crawler-transporters and helicopters deliver food, products and other necessities to the flooded locations; residents, their property, animals are evacuated in emergency.

At the time of the drought, soldiers assist foresters and fire-fighters in extinguishing forest and peatbogs fires. The fire-fighting operations involve soldiers, Air Force helicopters with special fire-fighting system.
Mine Clearance

Troops remove explosives which are still found in considerable numbers when roads or buildings are built, and which also rise to the surface of the sea. Military explosives, ammunition and other dangerous ordnance left since wars and occupation of Lithuania. Now, Lithuania is divided into 7 regions, each of them having on duty the Mine Clearance Squads of the Engineer Battalion Demining Unit. During warm season the battalion soldiers complete dozens of de-mining operations on a daily basis and neutralize thousands of dangerous explosives found by the population per year.

These bomb disposal groups promptly respond to messages regarding explosives found. Moreover, Mine Clearance Squads continuously check for mines and aviation bombs in the locations where battles took place, warehouses or training areas were located.

Lithuanian military demine the unexploded mines left after the World Wars and found in the Baltic Sea and in the shore sand, July 2011
Search and Rescue

The Armed Forces also help in searching for missing people. Air Force helicopter crews provide emergency support by transporting patients and donor organs. The pilots of the Air Force helicopters are on duty in two posts – in Nemirseta (part of Palanga) and Kaunas. They are ready to implement search and rescue operations in the Baltic Sea and on the land.

Since 2009, the Naval Rescue and Coordination Center organizes, coordinates and commands search and rescue operations in region, which includes the sea, Klaipeda Sea Port waters and the Curonian Lagoon. It organises and coordinates liquidation of pollution incidents at the Baltic Sea as well.

The troops assist during spring floods in the western regions of Lithuania – deliver food, products and other necessities and, in critical situations, evacuate people, March 2010
Military is a Part of Society

By cherishing close relations with the society, the Armed Forces seek to get the citizens familiarized with the specifics of military service, promote interest in officer profession and military service. One of the greatest priorities of the Lithuanian Armed Forces is attention and openness to all the members of society. Anyone interested in military life can find ways to try it. According to the surveys published in the media, the institutions of the National Defence System, among other state institutions, are trusted the most in the recent decade.

All residents of Lithuania are invited to participate in the events on 23 November to commemorate the Day of the Lithuanian Armed Forces. 23 December 1918 is the official day of restoration of the Armed Forces of the independent Republic of Lithuania. The day of the Armed Forces is celebrated everywhere, where there is at least one Lithuanian soldier – from the smallest Lithuanian town to Afghanistan. A solemn military formation and marching events are held in every bigger city.
Other public holidays and events can hardly be imagined without participation of the Armed Forces units: Lithuanian Flag Day (1 January), the Day of Freedom Fighters (13 January), the Day of Restoration of the State of Lithuania (16 February), Lithuanian Independence Day (11 March), the State Day–King Mindaugas Coronation (6 July).

The Armed Forces cherish the historical traditions, soldiers dressed in ancient warrior or knight clothing participate in state holiday events, living history days and improvised knight battles organized by the history clubs.

The largest annual event of communication between the Armed Forces and the society is Day of Commemoration of Partisans and Unity of Military and Society. The big event is held in one of the towns of Lithuania and usually organized on the third weekend of May. Thousands of people can explore military machinery and equipment available to the military forces, try out the weapons or uniforms, adrenaline seekers can try to ‘demine’ a field, took part in ‘surgery’ in a field hospital. Smaller events of the Day are also organized in all units of the Armed Forces. The Day of the Military and Society is one of a very few when the public may observe the troops performing tasks and military operations from up-close.
Cooperation with Educational and Research Institutions

The Lithuanian Armed Forces cooperate with the Lithuanian educational institutions. Joint projects are implemented in the sphere of civic education of students and youth, school camps, competitions, lectures in schools, exhibitions for national defence-related topics are organized. Teachers are provided with methodical support for the country’s national security and defence issues. The Armed Forces units work closely with municipal authorities and individual schools: organise interest groups and a wide range of other leisure activities for schoolchildren.

In the field of science and education, the Lithuanian Armed Forces are represented by the General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy, which actively cooperates with Lithuanian and foreign universities. The cooperation is developed in scientific and educational aspects: the international scientific research studies are conducted, faculty and students exchange programmes are implemented, scientific and methodological conferences, collaborative scientific publications are organized; cultural and educational projects are implemented as well. Together with EU higher education institutions the Lithuanian Military Academy is seeking for the main objectives of the Bologna process and, therefore, has been participating in the Erasmus exchange programme since 2005.
Civic Education

The civil will is the foundation of the national defence; therefore, civil, national and patriotic attitudes must be introduced from the early age. This is namely the area where non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can do a great job. Perhaps, the deepest traditions of cooperation between the institutions of the National Defence System are those with the Lithuanian Riflemen’s Union. Every year, several thousands of young riflemen take part in the joint project of the Lithuanian Armed Forces and the Lithuanian Riflemen’s Union called “Mobile Camps”. In those camps, children and young people get familiarized with military life and discipline, do sports, and participate in contests and competitions.

The Lithuanian Riflemen’s Union, consisting of about 7,000 riflemen, with over half of those - young riflemen, supports the Armed Forces in assisting other state and municipal authorities.

The National Defence System cooperates with many various NGOs and in the future this cooperation should increase because only by means of joint efforts of the state authorities and non-governmental institutions it may be able to fight new global security challenges.
Training event using lighting of 120 mm mortars. 6 discharges at the Pabrade Training Field
THE LITHUANIAN ARMED FORCES. Ready to Respond


Photographs also from: the archives of the Ministry of National Defence, the Lithuanian Armed Forces, the Lithuanian Central State Archive, the Museum of Genocide Victims and Albertas Daugirdas.


Managing Editor Laimonas Brazaitis
Language Editor Rūta Gustaitė
Design Inga Dambrauskiene


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