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Dear WARRIOR readers,

An asymmetrical billion-dollar response — these or similar words could be used to describe the latest developments in the war, which for the aggressor Russia, thanks to the Ukrainians, are becoming increasingly familiar.

Of course, we are primarily referring to operation 'Spiderweb', which deprived the Kremlin of a significant portion of its strategic bombers deployed thousands of kilometres away from the zone where the war is being fought on the ground.

However, despite the extremely positive impact of the billions in losses that the operation carried out by the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) has caused Russia, it is worth emphasising the psychological and informational aspects. In the first case, one can only imagine the logistical obstacles that are already arising and will arise in the future throughout the territory of a 'country' living in a state of war psychosis, because now almost every truck can be suspected of being a potential carrier of combat drones. In terms of information, it can only be stated that both the long-term secrecy surrounding the preparation of 'Spiderweb', and the lightning-fast advertisement of its results were once again the result of flawless work by the Ukrainians.

On the other hand, when the first photos of the welcoming of soldiers most recently returned to Ukraine after being held captive by Russians were published in the social media, it became clear once again how 'faultlessly' those who have probably never deserved to be called human beings are capable of torturing people.

Sincerely,
Darius Varanavičius
Chief Editor

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EXERCISES 2025: UNPRECEDENTED MILITARY ACTIVITY IN LITHUANIA

ILONA SKUJAITĖ

With the implementation of NATO's new defence plans in our region, we have shifted into a higher gear — moving from planning to action. The international military exercise 'Griffin Lightning 2025', held from 5 to 23 May, featured a series of spring training operations across Lithuania, with more than 8 000 Lithuanian and allied troops taking part. For the first time, a German Army Aviation Brigade was deployed on Lithuanian soil, while the United States Army established an impressive field hospital, deployed a support

helicopter squadron and — together with Italy, France and Germany — landed over 800 soldiers.

Triple exercise

Throughout the month of May, simultaneous multi-level exercises took place in our region: NATO organised the international training exercises 'Steadfast Deterrence 2025' and 'Defender 2025', followed by 'Griffin Lightning 2025', led by the NATO Multinational Corps Northeast, to which the 1st Division of the Lithuanian Armed Forces is assigned. These included the international exercises 'Iron Wolf 2025-I', 'Swift Response 2025', 'Strong Shield 5', and

ED TY





During the international exercise, German Army Aviation Brigade helicopters played a key role in supporting operations on the ground.



the national training exercise 'Perkūno tvirtovė 2025' ('Fortress of the Thunder God 2025').

The names of the training exercises alone are enough to make your head spin, but Lithuanian soldiers — together with their NATO allies — had to organise and execute them in such a way as to achieve the set objectives. The primary goal of the 'Griffin Lightning 2025' exercise was to practise implementing NATO defence plans in our region, so activities took place not only in Lithuania, but also in Estonia, Latvia and Poland. Approximately 8 000 Lithuanian and allied soldiers, more than 1 000 pieces of military equipment, several dozen aircraft, and other support elements participated in the 'Griffin Lightning 2025' exercise in Lithuania.

"It is important to emphasise that these exercises are the practical implementation of the regional defence plans approved at the NATO summit in Vilnius in 2023. We are testing our readiness, command chains and interoperability with our allies. This is practical proof of how we are preparing to defend ourselves together — synchronising our national plans with NATO plans. I want to thank the soldiers for their dedication, and the soldiers of our

allies for their service and the sense of unity they provide. Together we are stronger, and this day proves it," said Lithuanian Minister of National Defence Dovilė Šakalienė while observing the 'Griffin Lightning 2025' exercise.

May, a combative month

One of the most important aspects of all exercises was regional cooperation between different military units.

"Nothing is more important for deterrence than the level of readiness demonstrated in field tactics exercises. It is important to mention the NATO Multinational Corps Northeast, which is participating in the synchronisation phase and assigning certain forces to operate in our region. Through cooperation between these forces, the 1st Division of Lithuania, the 'Geležinis Vilkas' ('Iron Wolf') Brigade and the 'Žemaitija' Brigade can carry out their planned tasks in the context of Lithuania's defence," emphasised Brig. Gen. Aurelijus Alasauskas, commander of the 1st Division.

With several exercises taking place simultaneously — involving large



Lithuania's May training marathon saw intense action across land, air, and sea domains.

numbers of allied forces — a complex, sophisticated and highly realistic battlefield environment was created, which the soldiers referred to as 3D.

"I don't remember ever seeing such a large-scale, multi-layered exercise in Lithuania. All at the same time, we had soldiers and equipment manoeuvring on the ground, drones flying above them, and even higher up, helicopters. This was probably the largest helicopter force we have ever had in an exercise in the history of Lithuania, and even for the German soldiers, their redeployment was an exceptio-

nal operation. The highest echelons of the air force consisted of American, Italian, French, Dutch and German aircraft — supported by fighter jets," said Maj. Edvinas Sriubas, the officer in charge of the 'Griffin Lightning 2025' and 'Swift Response 2025' exercises, who serves in the G-7 section of the 1st Division headquarters.

According to him, the Lithuanian Land Forces — in close cooperation with the Lithuanian Air Force and Logistics Command — were responsible for coordinating actions, providing logistical support, and ensuring integra-

tion and control during this marathon of exercises to keep everything running safely, on time, and in synchronisation.

The Lithuanian Special Operations Forces and the National Defence Volunteer Forces also took part in the May training, which took place not only on land and in the air, but also in the Baltic Sea. From 5 to 16 May, soldiers from the Lithuanian Armed Forces' Port and Coastal Defence Service conducted comprehensive exercises titled 'Storm Defender 2025' — designed to ensure the security of the Klaipėda State Sea-port, strengthen inter-institutional and



international cooperation, and improve the ability to respond rapidly and in a coordinated manner to security threats and extreme situations.

The 'Amber Arrow 2025' exercise also took place on the Curonian Spit from 19 to 23 May, during which the Air Defence Battalion of the Lithuanian Air Force trained and fired at airborne targets using RB-70 missile defence systems. May also saw the annual international ammunition search and disposal operation 'Open Spirit/EODEX 2025', which involved 12 warship crews and 19 diver teams equipped with underwater robots from 13 NATO countries. This year, the operation focused on protecting existing underwater infrastructure from potential threats and destabilising actions in the Baltic Sea.



A swarm of helicopters

One of the highlights of the 'Griffin Lightning 2025' exercise was the deployment of 32 helicopters from the German Army Aviation Brigade to Panevėžys. Four types of aircraft were flown in: *TIGER* attack helicopters, *NH90* transport helicopters, *CH-53* heavy transport helicopters, and *EC135* light multi-role helicopters. During the exercise, their flight paths covered most of Lithuania's territory and border areas — with some flights conducted at extremely low altitudes, as low as 150 metres above the ground.

Due to the frequent day and night

movements of military aircraft, specially adapted low-altitude no-fly zones were established in certain areas for training purposes. These measures ensured the safety of military operations, protected aircraft crews and the local population, and clearly delineated military and civilian airspace. All flights were carried out in strict compliance with safety regulations, and only within temporarily activated airspace designated for the exercise.

An impressively large Forward Operating Base (FOB) for the German Army Aviation Brigade was also established in the Panevėžys district. Designed for command and control, the base was equipped with substantial accommo-



dation, maintenance, ammunition, and refuelling facilities.

"All German helicopter air support flights were coordinated from there. The Germans also set up smaller fuel and ammunition supply points — Forward Arming and Refuelling Points (FARPs) — allowing helicopters across Lithuania to carry out their combat missions, transport troops and cargo, evacuate the wounded, and conduct reconnaissance smoothly," said Maj. Edvinas Sriubas, the officer in charge of the exercises.

GERMAN ARMY HELICOPTERS: A CLOSER LOOK

TIGER

Role: Multi-role helicopter used for both attack and reconnaissance missions.

Specifications:

- Crew: 1–2 personnel
- Armament: Various types of missiles and machine guns
- Cruising speed: Approx. 300 km/h
- Operational range: Approx. 800 km



NH90

Role: Military and civil mission helicopter designed for transport, rescue, reconnaissance, and combat operations. Highly versatile and capable of operating in diverse conditions.

Specifications:

- Crew: 2 personnel
- Armament: Machine guns
- Cruising speed: Approx. 300 km/h
- Operational range: Approx. 800 km



CH-53

Role: Heavy-lift transport helicopter designed for the movement of large cargo and troops. Spacious and capable of transporting heavy or oversized loads. Can support land and maritime rescue operations and provide logistical support.

Specifications:

- Crew: 2–5 personnel
- Armament: Machine guns
- Cruising speed: Approx. 280 km/h
- Operational range: Approx. 1 000 km



EC135

Role: Light multi-role helicopter commonly used for search and rescue (SAR), medical evacuation (MEDEVAC), and reconnaissance missions.

Specifications:

- Crew: 1–2 personnel
- Cruising speed: Approx. 250 km/h
- Operational range: Approx. 600 km



Information credit: Maj. Kęstutis Pilipavičius, Senior Public Relations Officer of the Land Forces Command



'Wolves' armed with drones

The 'Iron Wolf 2025-I' exercise, held as part of the broader international training event 'Griffin Lightning 2025', pursued its own specific objectives. Chief among them was the evaluation of the combat readiness and operational capabilities of the Duke *Vaidotas* Infantry Battalion and the 17th rotation of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroup. The assessment focused on their ability to

conduct both defensive and offensive operations.

These core units received support from additional Lithuanian Armed Forces elements as well as members of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union. In addition to standard command post and manoeuvre unit drills, the exercise also trialed the integration of *FPV* drones into infantry unit tactics — marking a step forward in adapting to evolving battlefield technologies.

"The 17th rotation of the Multinational Battle Group, consisting of approximately 1 300 allied soldiers deployed in Lithua-

nia for six months, has just reached the peak of its combat training. During these exercises, they trained to carry out offensive and defensive operations. Initially, the '*Vaidotėnai*' (Duke *Vaidotas* Infantry Battalion) defended against opposing forces and detained the enemy, then the Multinational Battle Group soldiers counterattacked the 'pinned down' enemy and took over the operation area from the Lithuanians. After the counterattack, they went on the defensive, and the '*Vaidotėnai*' became the brigade's reserve," said Maj. Edvinas Sriubas, describing the exercise scenario.

Allied forces deployed troops and equipment at the Gaižiūnai training area as part of the joint airborne operation.



For the '*Geležinis Vilkas*' Infantry Brigade, these exercises provided an ideal environment to trial a wide range of innovations. One such innovation was the integration of a dedicated *FPV* drone squad into the infantry battalion structure — a first for the unit. The operators, trained over more than six months, worked directly alongside the infantry of the Duke *Vaidotas* Battalion. These teams not only conducted reconnaissance but also neutralised enemy targets.

"We experiment every year, and this year we focused on several new areas. During the exercise, *Parrot ANAFI UKR* reconnaissance quadcopters were used to locate and monitor enemy positions,



training area. Casualty evacuations were also conducted to the Lithuanian Role 2 field hospital and the American Role 2 Echo facility, with some cases transferred onward to civilian hospitals," Cpt. T. Žičevičius explained.

"Overall, the exercise, as we joked, resembled a 3D combat environment: infantry operated on the ground, while our reconnaissance and FPV drones manoeuvred overhead, and above them flew German helicopters and 'Swift Response 2025' aircraft transporting and deploying allied troops. What made it even more complex was that some aircraft and drones belonged to us or neighbouring units, while others simula-

while SHPAK FPV drones were employed to destroy enemy armoured vehicles. The drones were used during the exercises against opposing forces and in combat firing at the Kazlų Rūda training area," said Cpt. Tadas Žičevičius, officer in charge of the 'Iron Wolf 2025-I' exercise from the G-3 section of the 'Geležinis Vilkas' Infantry Brigade headquarters.

The latest strike capabilities of combat drones — designed to neutralise high-value targets such as command posts, logistics hubs, bridges, and enemy sensors — were demonstrated by representatives from Lithuanian private defence companies. "The equipment was tested during live-fire drills by the anti-tank and reconnaissance companies of the 'Geležinis Vilkas' Infantry Brigade. These units coordinated their actions to execute a so-called 'chain of destruction'. During the operation, reconnaissance teams identified enemy positions, and UAV operators — stationed deep in the rear — engaged and destroyed those targets with precision," said Cpt. T. Žičevičius.

One of the most notable highlights of the exercise was the close coordination between infantry units and German helicopter crews, who played a highly active role in the simulated battle.

"We carried out many joint actions with them — attack helicopters supported manoeuvre units on the ground, logistics and transport missions were executed, and combat live-fire took place at the Pabradė





ted hostile forces — meaning soldiers had to follow identification protocols set by headquarters to identify who was who. It was a multi-layered, challenging environment that provided invaluable experience in realistic combat conditions, working closely with our allies on the ground and in the air. We gained a lot of experience during these exercises," said the officer in charge of the 'Iron Wolf 2025-I' exercise.

Unprecedented airborne operation

The two-week 'Iron Wolf 2025-I' exercise concluded with a joint operation in which, maintaining the initiative after successfully completing active defence tasks, the 'Geležinis Vilkas' Infantry Brigade and NATO Multinational Battle Group soldiers carried out offensive actions that forced the simulated enemy to retreat. According to the exercise scenario, once Lithuanian and allied troops secured the take-off and landing strip at the Gaižiūnai training area, more than 800 soldiers from Germany, France, Italy, and the US 173rd Airborne Brigade — along with military equipment — were deployed to Lithuania from Slovenia and Germany. This operation marked the transition to the 'Swift Response 2025' exercise.

Transport aircraft appeared over the

training area, first flying a reconnaissance circle. On their second approach, they dropped pallets containing combat equipment and logistical supplies — dry food rations, water, sanitary and medical materials, and more — while paratroopers followed in subsequent flights. The entire operation, including all aerial manoeuvres, lasted around 12 hours, with

weather conditions posing the greatest challenge.

"Soldiers from the NATO Multinational Battle Group and the Lithuanian Air Defence Unit secured the landing zone so that American, French, Italian, and German paratroopers could land there. Their task after landing was to join forces with their allies, destroy the remaining enemy





forces, and continue defensive operations in Lithuania. This airborne operation — involving 1 400 paratroopers — was one of the largest in our history," said Maj. E. Sriubas, officer in charge of 'Griffin Lightning 2025' and 'Swift Response 2025'.

Brig. Gen. Steven P. Carpenter, commander of the 7th Combat Training

Center (USA), who observed the exercises at the Gaižiūnai training area, said: "The international exercises 'Griffin Lightning 2025' and 'Swift Response 2025' are part of the wider NATO exercises 'Steadfast Defender 2025' and 'Defender 2025', involving 25 000 troops from 30 NATO countries. During the exercises, troops from

18 different countries were deployed in parallel, conducting five airborne operations across the Baltic Sea region. Such exercises are an excellent opportunity for NATO allies and partners to test the rapid and decisive deployment of forces — both in Europe and anywhere in the world."



Continuation of exercises — in Pabradė

With this airborne operation in Lithuania, the international exercise 'Swift Response 2025' kicked off on 23 May. After successfully landing and conducting an

assault operation at the Gaižiūnai training area, the paratroopers were transported by German and American helicopters to the Pabradė training area the following day, where they continued their operations. Simultaneously, exercises were also held in Norway, Latvia, Sweden and Finland. The main focus was on airborne operations

and the use of modern military technology, demonstrating the capabilities of multinational forces in the Baltic Sea region.

In the context of the 'Swift Response 2025' exercise, soldiers from the US National Guard, Italian Special Forces, and the Lithuanian National Defence Volunteer Forces carried out tasks in the Pabradė area. "Our volunteers ensured the security of the landing zone, while US and Italian soldiers used helicopters to perform free parachute jumps at night, relocating from Latvia to Lithuanian territory. All participants in the exercise then carried out joint tasks — ambushes, sabotage, raids, etc. — against simulated enemy forces. The tasks were intense and interesting; many of them took place at night, so we paid a lot of attention to coordination and detailed planning. Communication and joint actions with partners provided excellent conditions for learning new things and identifying areas for improvement," said Lt. Edvinas Sinkevičius, commander of the 808th Company of the National Defence Volunteer Forces.

According to Maj. E. Sriubas, an important part of the 'Iron Wolf 2025-I' and 'Swift Response 2025' exercises was the *HOSPEX* training for military medics,

US military medics trained to respond to mass casualty scenarios and used drones to deliver blood to the battlefield.



FIRST-EVER US FIELD HOSPITAL IN LITHUANIA

during which two hospitals were set up: Role 2, run by MD Jonas Basanavičius Military Medical Service; and Role 2 Echo, operated by US Army medics. The hospitals were established in old buildings in civilian areas to create the most realistic conditions possible. The evacuation of casualties was practised along the entire medical assistance chain — from battlefield to Role 2 or Role 2 Echo via evacuation trucks or helicopters, and then to civilian medical facilities in Jonava and Kaunas. The exercises also simulated mass casualty scenarios and the delivery of blood to the battlefield using drones.

Then, in June, the second phase of the NATO Multinational Corps Northeast exercise, 'Griffin Lightning 2025', began. From 5 to 23 May, the so-called *LIVEX* phase of the exercise took place, during which units from 12 NATO countries conducted joint ground operations. From 2 to 13 June, command post exercises (the *CPX* phase) followed. The 1st Division headquarters was deployed in Kaunas, while subordinate units operated in Poland, using the *JCATS* and *JEMM* computer simulation systems to train and plan tasks at corps level. "This was the first time that the division headquarters operated as part of the Multinational Corps Northeast," said Maj. E. Sriubas.

During the 'Swift Response 2025' exercise, a fully equipped US field hospital was established in Lithuania — the first of its kind in the country — meeting the highest NATO standards. Its purpose was to provide a wide spectrum of specialized medical care in combat conditions, ensuring long-term treatment and rehabilitation for the wounded. The facility was designed to operate at full capacity even in the presence of chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear threats. Under a scenario closely simulating real-world conditions, the following capabilities were demonstrated:

- Complex surgical procedures;
- Orthopaedic care, intensive therapy, and resuscitation support;
- A laboratory capable of performing blood, microbiological, biochemical, and other tests;
- Blood supply storage and distribution;
- Diagnostic tools including ultrasound, X-ray, and ECG equipment;
- Multidisciplinary training for military medical professionals, including surgeons, anaesthesiologists, internists, infectious disease specialists, psychologists, and others.

EXERCISE PARTICIPANTS

US Army:

68th Theater Medical Command,
30th Medical Brigade,
519th Hospital Center,
512th Field Hospital,
Medical Support Company, 173rd Airborne Brigade,
160th Forward Resuscitative Surgical Team,
7384th Blood Support Detachment.

Lithuanian Armed Forces:

MD Jonas Basanavičius Military Medical Service.

Information credit: Maj. Kęstutis Pilipavičius, Senior Public Relations Officer of the Land Forces Command

Photo credit: Cpt. Robertas Mačys, Cpl. Andrius Jankauskas



Lithuania's defense plan tested

In May, Lithuania's defence plan was tested during the 'Perkūno Tvirtovė 2025' exercise. The Lithuanian Armed Forces Defence Staff, together with other elements of the Armed Forces, activated soldiers in planning roles, who trained to prepare a joint operational order for the defence of Lithuania.

"During the *Perkūnas* series of strategic and operational-level exercises, we continuously test the national defence plan, incorporate new capabilities, and address emerging challenges, taking into account modern military trends. The principle of 'train as you would fight' is applied at all levels of the Lithuanian Armed Forces' training exercises to maintain the highest level of combat readiness and be prepared to defend Lithuania or NATO allies at any time,"

Volunteers from the 5th Detachment of the Vytis District honed their skills in planning and executing defence operations.

said General Raimundas Vaikšnoras, Chief of Defence of the Republic of Lithuania, who led the exercise.

The 'Perkūno Tvirtovė 2025' exercise took place from 13 to 27 May and consisted of several phases: training,

drafting orders, and presenting them to leadership. At the conclusion of the training, participants submitted the prepared combat order documents for approval. These documents will later be used by Lithuanian Armed Forces





combat units taking part in the 'Perkūno Griausmas' exercises in the autumn. During those exercises, tactical manoeuvres will be conducted across various locations and training areas, in line with the national armed defence plan. As with all exercises, the aim is to identify any gaps and lessons to be addressed or improved.

Challenges faced by volunteers in the Panevėžys region

On 18 May, the 'Strong Shield 5' exercise concluded in the area of responsibility of the 5th Detachment of the Vytis District of the Lithuanian National Defence Volunteer Forces, located in the Panevėžys region. The exercise involved more than 1 000 soldiers from Lithuania, NATO allies Latvia and Portugal, as well as members of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union.

The soldiers of the 5th Vytis District trained in planning and executing defensive operations. The exercise evaluated the skills of the detachment's headquarters and infantry companies, and their cooperation with other units of the Lithuanian Armed Forces and allied troops. Particular focus was given to strengthening civil-military cooperation. Operating in a civilian environment, the Vytis Detachment's non-kinetic operations unit trained to carry out assigned tasks in collaboration

with state and municipal institutions, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector.

The exercise also included training in casualty evacuation. At the deployed Role 1 medical unit, Lithuanian National Defence Volunteer Forces and Lithuanian Riflemen's Union medics and paramedics provided emergency care to wounded soldiers, stabilising them and

saving lives. As previously agreed, those seriously wounded were transferred to civilian hospitals and handed over to local medical staff.

Col. Darius Vaicikauskas, commander of Lithuanian National Defence Volunteer Forces, praised the cooperation with the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union during the 'Strong Shield 5' exercise: "The riflemen provided excellent support to our volunteer soldiers throughout the exercises, especially in the final phase. Defending their occupied object and equipped with drones and skilled operators, they carefully surveyed the area from the air and knew where and how many of their opponents were before contact was made. It is important to have and use technological advantages, because when attacking the building, our volunteer soldiers lost the element of surprise, while the technology available to the Riflemen enabled them to predict the direction of our attack and the number of soldiers."

The 'Strong Shield 5' exercise is the final part of a three-year military training cycle for a component of Lithuanian National Defence Volunteer Forces — the detachment — and provides an opportunity to test and assess the readiness of specific soldiers for the defence of their country. ■

Lithuanian National Defence Volunteer Forces' and Lithuanian Riflemen's Union medics provided emergency care to wounded soldiers during evacuation training.





A Solemn Inauguration of the German Brigade '*Litauen*'

A solemn inauguration ceremony of the 45th German Brigade '*Litauen*' was held in the Cathedral Square of Vilnius marking the official activation of the unit in Lithuania.

"This is the first time Germany stations troops on the territory of another country. It is a historical example of leadership. The German military personnel who have already arrived will protect freedom and the Alliance while we in our turn are doing and will do everything to create the needed infrastructure on time, to ensure full Host Nation Support and to make the German troops feel that they belong in our freedom-loving



country," said Minister of National Defence Dovilė Šakalienė.

"Two years since taking the decision to station a German brigade in Lithuania, today we are able to celebrate its activation, in a testament to our commitment to bear the burden of Europe's strongest economy. It is a pleasure to experience such a close and friendly cooperation between Lithuania and Germany. I wish to express a particular gratitude to our servicemen and servicewomen, civilian personnel and the families. They are dedicated to making the *Zeitenwende* happen and contributing to building future security. ▶▶



Our partners know they can rely on Germany. We know what our duty is: to stand by Lithuania in defence of the eastern flank of NATO," said Federal Minister of Defence Boris Pistorius.

The solemn ceremony was conducted in the presence of President of the Republic of Lithuania Gitanas Nausėda and Chancellor of Germany Friedrich Merz.

Nearly a thousand troops lined up in the Cathedral Square for the ceremony. The Lithuanian Armed Forces' servicemembers stood side by side with staff personnel of the German 10th Armored Division, members of the 45th Armored Brigade, 122nd Armored Infantry and the 203rd Tank Battalions, and the NATO Multinational Battle-group Lithuania.

Two mission bands were bestowed on the 45th Armored Brigade.

The first one was presented by

◀◀ Federal Chancellor of Germa-



ny F. Merz and Minister of Defence B. Pistorius, and the second — by President of Lithuania G. Nausėda and Minister D. Šakalienė, officially naming the Brigade 'Litauen'.

The ceremony culminated in a fly-past by German Air Force helicopters.

The 45th Armored Brigade is being gradually stationed in Lithuania with its three maneuver battalions and





all combat support and logistical units. There are approx. 500 German troops serving in Lithuania on the ground currently. The Brigade is planned to reach full operational capability in 2027 amounting to the strength of 5 thousand German military and civilian personnel.

The decision to station a German brigade in Lithuania was made in 2023. This historical decision is a reflection of NATO commitments to collective defence and forms part of the Alliance's regional defence plans. The Brigade is the first German military units stationed outside Germany's borders in a significant step towards stronger security and stability across the region.



Information credit: MoD
Photo credit: Alfredas Pliadis



EU May Ease Off Defense-Industry Aversion

The European Commission is evaluating easing restrictions within the European Union's (EU) sustainability investment framework to grant defense companies access to more loans from financial institutions.

European defense companies have faced difficulties in fulfilling the Commission's Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investing criteria, primarily due to policy and ethical considerations stemming from their weapons production, which were viewed as contrary to some of the pillars.

This has previously led to criticism from the armament sector, which blamed the regulation as having discouraged banks from lending to companies, ultimately hindering their access to key investment opportunities. Such frameworks may be revised, a Commission spokesman told 'Defense News', as part of broader efforts to simplify rules for defense businesses across Europe and facilitate production.

"The Commission is assessing whether access to finance can be further reinforced, including through relevant adjustment of the sustainable finance framework," spokesman Thomas Regnier said in an email statement.

Such considerations are part of the defense 'Omnibus' proposal the EU is expected to present next month, which is "aimed at creating conditions for rapid industrial ramp-up across Europe and will propose to amend EU legislation accordingly," Regnier wrote. As part of the White Paper for European Defense Readiness 2030 adopted in March, the Commission collected data and suggestions from member states and industry to help remove EU regulatory barriers and discrimina-





Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, there has been growing pressure from defense officials to revise this exclusion to allow more security activities into both the EU taxonomy and ESG framework.

In 2023, EU defense ministers issued a joint statement that called for "strengthening Europe's defense technological and industrial base's access to finance and its ability to contribute to peace, stability and sustainability in Europe."

In March, the European Investment Bank heard this plea and modified some of its investment practices, including expanding the eligibility of companies for security and defense investments.

Information credit: www.defensenews.com
 Photo credits: www.defensenews.com,
www.flickr.com

tions affecting the continent's defense industry.

Another challenge concerns the EU Taxonomy regulation, which is responsible for defining which economic activities are deemed environmentally sustainable. The language

currently does not count most arms manufacturing as activities that contribute to the bloc's environmental or social sustainability objectives. For example, the classification centers on "do no significant harm" as a standard.



PHOTO ESSAY

**THEY C
THE ROOTS
INDEPENDEN**



GUARDED OF ICE

Historical moments of the ATAS activities captured in the photographs of Andrius Petrulevičius-Kipsas, and the personal archive of Col. Saulius Guzevičius (Ret.).

"After three months of struggle, on 5 June 1990, by Resolution No. I-267 'On the Structure of Units Serving the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania...'; the Presidium of the Supreme Council added another unit to the Supreme Council's organisational structure — the Guard Unit. Three days later, the Presidium approved its structure, staffing levels, salaries, and regulations, instructed the Government to address the Unit's financial, material, and technical support needs, and placed it under the parliamentary oversight of the Supreme Council's Standing Committee on National Defence and Internal Affairs," writes Artūras Antanas Skučas, initiator and head of the Supreme Council's Guard Unit (*Aukščiausiosios Tarybos Apsaugos skyrius*, or ATAS), in his book '*Pėstininko užrašai*' ('Notes of an Infantryman'), detailing how ATAS came to be.





ATAS became one of the foundational elements in the protection of Lithuania's newly restored independence, declared on 11 March 1990. As a specialised body under the Supreme Council, it laid the groundwork for several national security and defence institutions that continue to operate today.

One of A. A. Skučas's close colleagues, Jonas Užusienis — who at the time was frequently seen alongside Professor Vytautas Landsbergis, Chairman of the Supreme Council–Reconstituent Seimas — recalls that the roots of ATAS go back even earlier, to 27 March 1990. On that date, by decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Council, seven individuals, including J. Užusienis, were authorised to protect the Chairman and members of the newly formed Government of the Republic of Lithuania. Notably, the unit was then referred to by the same name it carries today — the Dignitary Protection Service (*Vadovybės apsaugos tarnyba, VAT*).

The ATAS played a vital role in the tense lead-up to the events of 13 January 1991. It observed and tracked Soviet troop movements in Vilnius and other Lithuanian cities and actively prevented KGB agents and 'Yedinstvo' provocateurs from storming the Supreme Council building during this critical time.

Working for ATAS meant constantly facing risk, pressure, and uncertainty. J. Užusienis recounts how ATAS personnel transported essential Western communications equipment and weapons across the border with Poland — then recognised by Lithuania as an international border but still viewed by the Soviet Union as a domestic boundary. These high-risk operations were carried out... under the cover of Soviet diplomatic passports, which were still formally issued to Supreme Council staff by Moscow, which continued to regard Lithuania as part of the USSR.

Later, ATAS members were involved in responding to the Medininkai massacre and safeguarding the only survivor, Tomas Šernas. The service also facilitated covert contacts with the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, led by Dzhokhar Dudayev, and benefited from the support of diaspora Lithuanians like Jonas Putrimas and Kostas Rimša from the US and Canada.





These individuals provided critical training to ATAS and other Lithuanian special services and introduced the country's first polygraph (lie detector).

ATAS was also responsible for protecting the arrival of Lithuania's first post-Soviet currency — the litas — and guarding visiting foreign dignitaries at the highest level.

In 1992, a group of ATAS operatives travelled to France to undertake an internship with the elite *GIGN* (*Groupe d'intervention de la Gendarmerie nationale*). According to former members Saulius Guzevičius and Darius Jauniškis, this experience planted the seeds for the eventual formation of Special Operations Forces of the Lithuanian Armed Forces.

Following political changes in 1993, ATAS was reorganised into the Dignitary Protection Department and placed under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior. Today, the service is once again known as VAT — the Dignitary Protection Service of the Republic of Lithuania. ■



FINLAND'S ARMOUR

DARIUS SUTKUS

Jan. 31, 1933.

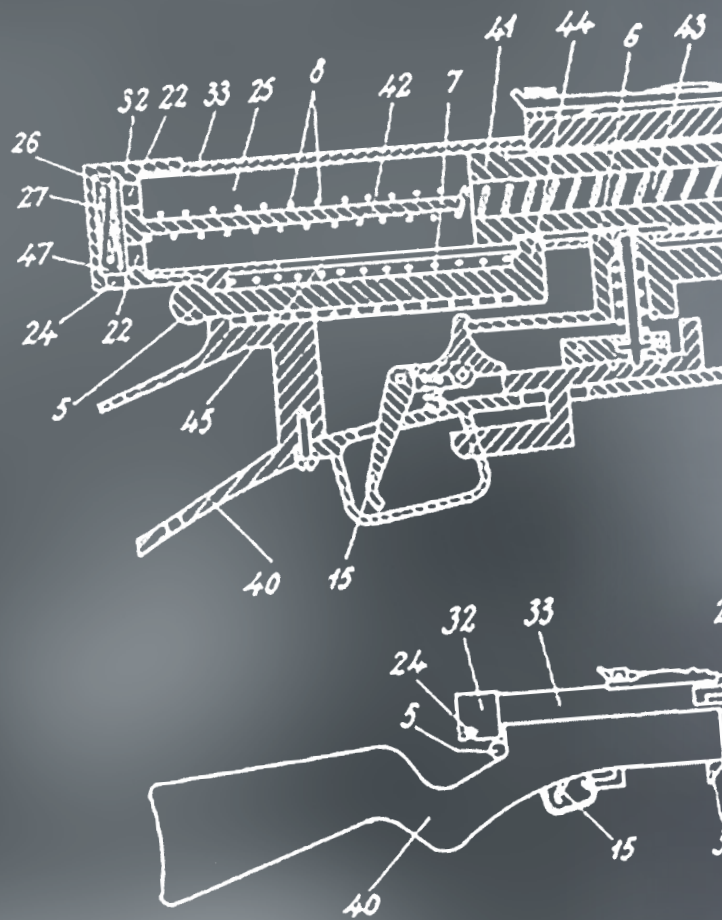
A. J. LAHTI
AUTOMATIC FIREARMS
Filed Dec. 26, 1911

In this story, we explore how the young Finnish state began forging its own weapons-making tradition in the early XX century — and meet the man who carried much of that burden on his shoulders.

But first, let's rewind and take a look at the historical twists and turns that set the stage...

Finland: fighting for the right to be

The Finns declared their independence slightly earlier than we Lithuanians did — on 6 December 1917 — when the former Grand Duchy of Finland, which had been part of the Russian Empire, became a sovereign republic. However, the *Bolsheviks*, who had dispersed the Provisional Government and seized power in Petrograd just a month earlier, reacted rather indifferently

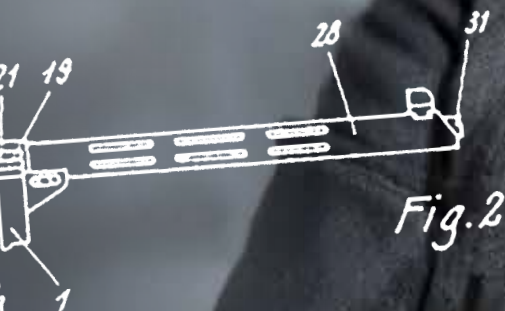
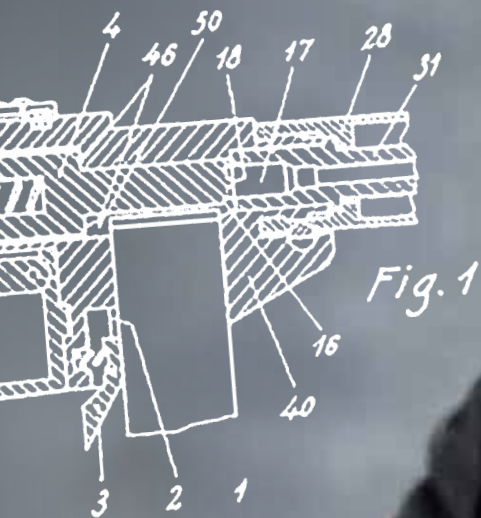


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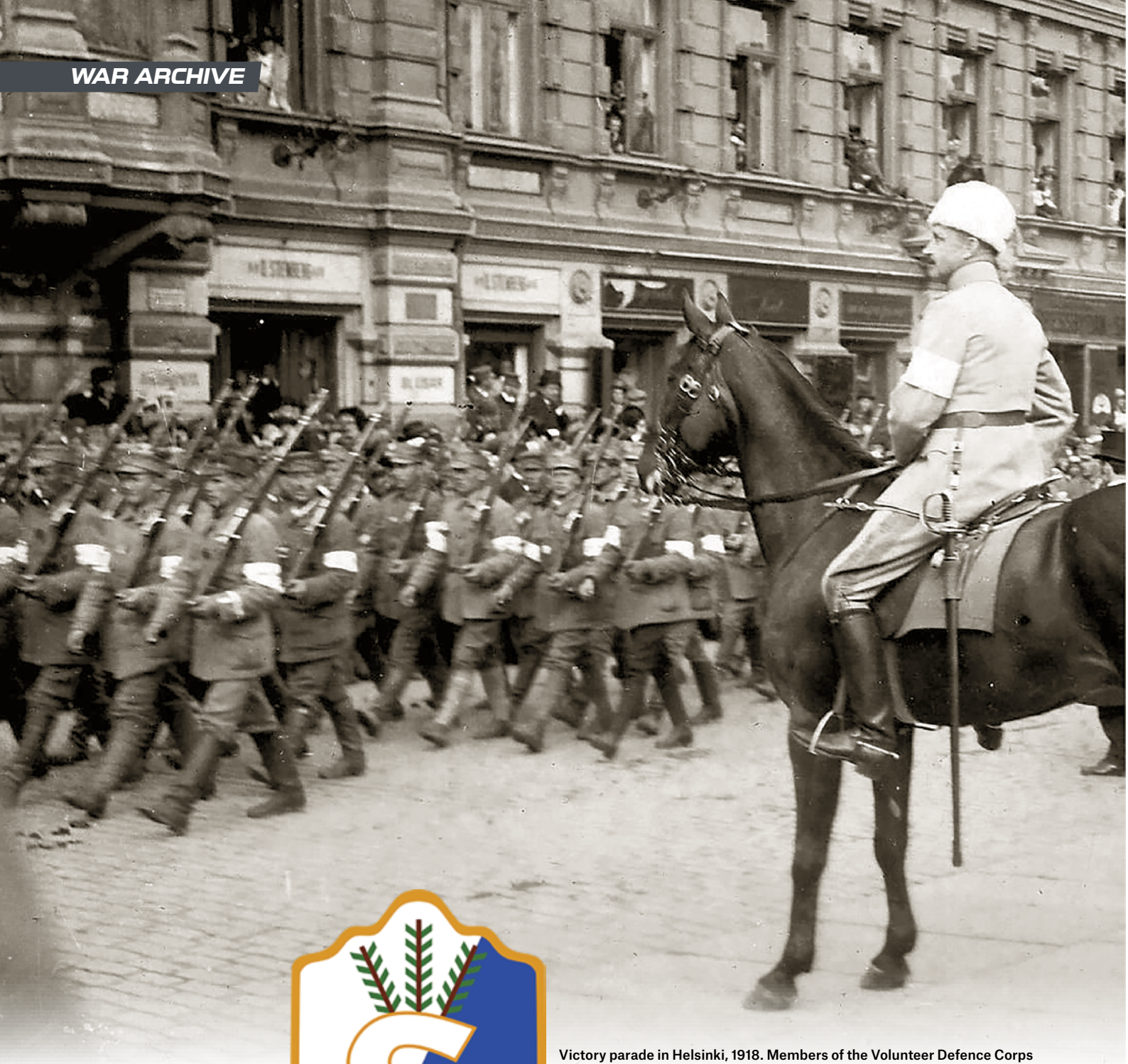
A. J. LAHTI
AUTOMATIC FIREARM
Filed Dec. 26, 1930

5 NO. 1 RER

1,895,719



Aimo Lahti
(1896-1970):
an armorer,
designer and
inventor.



Victory parade in Helsinki, 1918. Members of the Volunteer Defence Corps (*Suojeluskunta*) march to celebrate the country's hard-won independence from *Bolshevik* forces. The spruce twig on the armband was no accident — during the war, Finnish fighters often wore spruce sprigs as a form of identification.



to this development. They had more pressing matters to contend with at home.

Even today, the idea persists that good old Uncle Lenin so deeply respected the right to national self-determination that he granted freedom to the nations once oppressed by the Tsar. In reality, however, nothing of the sort occurred: every national state that seceded — or attempted to — faced proxy wars instigated by the *Bolsheviks*. These were nominally organised by local 'people's govern-

ments' but in truth were orchestrated and supported by Lenin's regime.

Finland was no

exception. Though the *Bolsheviks* formally recognised the independence of the northern neighbour, their operatives in Finland were anything but idle. Agitators worked intensely among workers and peasants, and the results soon became evident: 'Red Guard' formations — militant left-wing units with a clear

revolutionary agenda — sprang up like mushrooms after rain.

On 28 January 1918, encouraged by Soviet Russia, the Finnish Reds seized government buildings in Helsinki. The coup soon spread across the entire southern part of the country. Those who still insist on describing it as a purely domestic 'civil war' should be reminded that the so-called people's government was supported by at least 10 000 Red Army soldiers from Soviet Russia.

The national government, which had

retreated northward, was defended by the nascent Finnish Defence Forces, led by Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim. By early May, the Red forces and their Soviet allies had been defeated and expelled from the whole of Finland.

The young, war-ravaged republic may have had the will to fight, but its arsenal was meagre — composed largely of out-dated remnants from the Tsarist military.

It is truly remarkable, then, that in the interwar years, Finland managed to establish a home-grown arms industry within a remarkably short time — a system capable of producing everything from pistols to anti-aircraft cannons for its armed forces. These weapons would soon serve in the defence of Finland's very right to exist.

Even more astonishing is that the vast majority of these original Finnish weapons were designed by a single man — a man without any formal technical education.

His name was Aimo Lahti.

The fascination with shooting mechanisms

Aimo Lahti was born in 1896 in the south of Finland, in the village of Viiala — a place that no longer exists on the map, as the modern town of Akaa now stands on the site of several former villages. Lahti was the eldest of five sons, and his childhood was short-lived: after finishing sixth grade, he began working in a local glass factory.

When he received his first paycheque, the 13-year-old decided to invest his hard-earned money — and he did so in a rather unusual way. He bought himself a single-shot second-hand *Berdan* rifle, model 1870. It was as long as he was tall and cost just five marks — you couldn't get one cheaper than that.

It's hard to say what exactly motivated the future gunsmith to buy a second-hand *Berdan* rifle, but this small investment would soon prove surprisingly fruitful.

Why 'second-hand'? The key detail lies in the price. At the time, a *Berdan* rifle typically cost at least twice as much — a brand-new one, three times the amount.



M-26. Lahti's early prototypes looked odd by design standards, but each new model marked clear technical progress.

So it's safe to assume that Lahti's rifle wasn't in great condition. In fact, it might be more accurate to say it was in particularly poor condition.

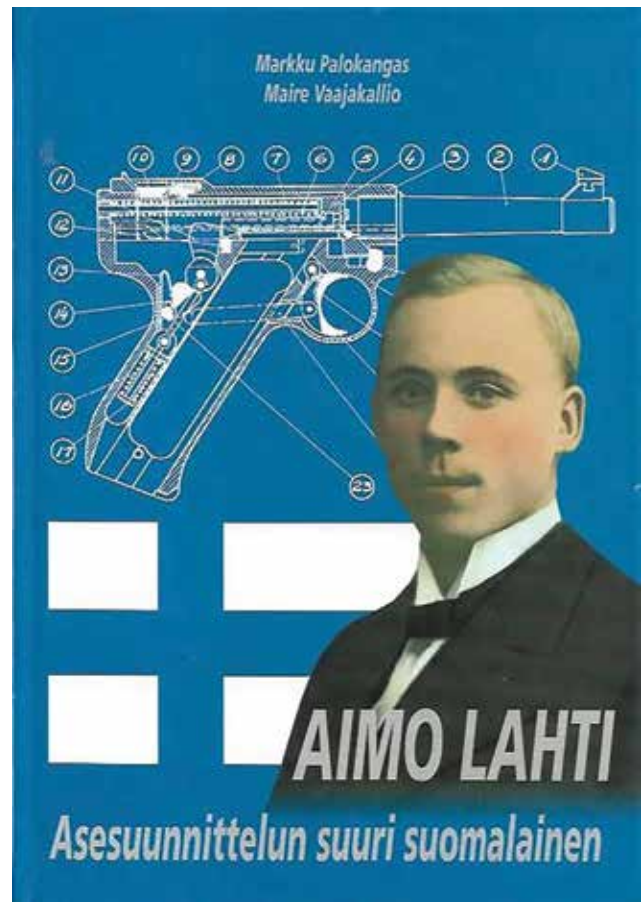
Seeking help, young Lahti brought the rifle to the local blacksmith. The blacksmith turned out to be a kind and generous man: not only did he help repair the weapon, but he also let Lahti examine some of his other weapons and shooting mechanisms.

From that point on, Aimo Lahti's fascination with the inner workings of firearms took precedence over any boyish desire to hunt for sport.

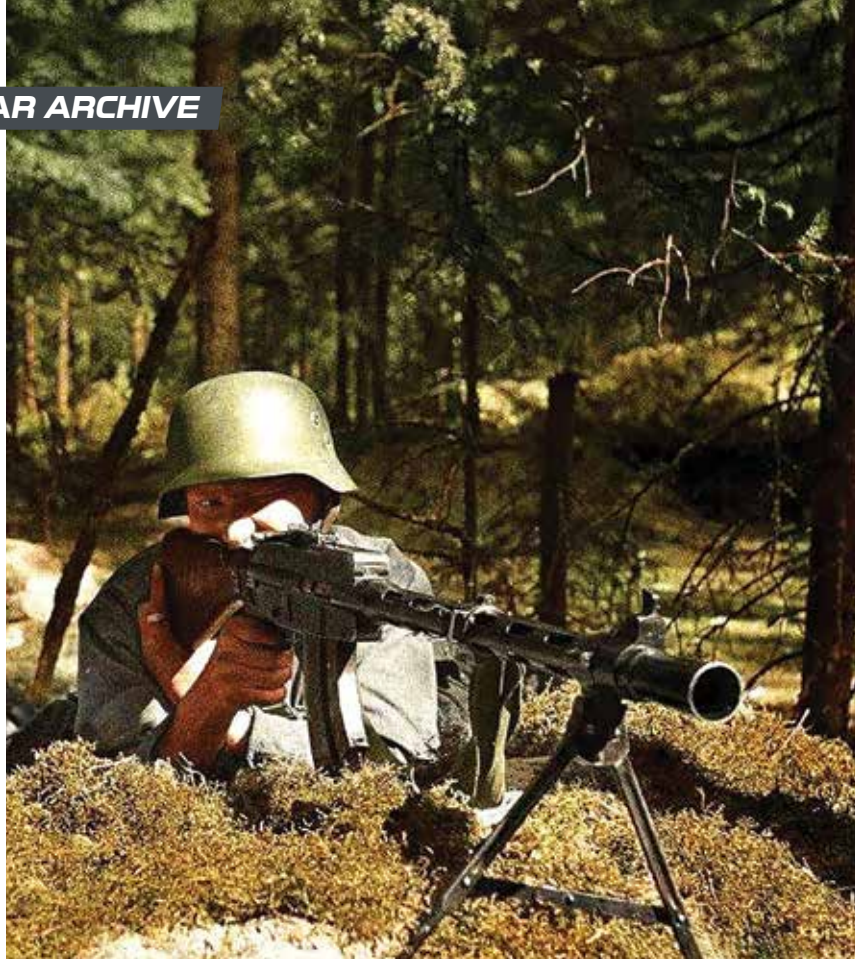
The armourer becomes a designer

Lahti soon got the chance to legally hold a rifle when he served in the army from 1918 to 1919. Right after finishing his service, he started a family. He worked as a railroad worker for a while, but found shooting more appealing than steam engines. In 1921, at the age of 25, Lahti was back in the army, this time as an armourer in a regiment stationed in central Finland.

While cleaning weapons, Lahti once came across an intriguing artefact — one



Could Aimo Lahti — who left school after just six years — have imagined that books would one day be written about him?



The LS-26 machine gun in position. It served in the Finnish Armed Forces for more than four decades.

of the earliest prototypes of a submachine gun: a German *MP-18*, most likely brought back by Finnish *Jäger* troops who had trained in Germany. At the time, it was a complete novelty — a weapon used by elite assault units.

For some reason, this creation by Hugo Schmeisser caught the attention of the Finnish armourer. Lahti found the *MP-18* fascinating, but overly complex — what if he could design something better?

So, while maintaining the regiment's arsenal, Lahti also began designing weapons of his own. Naturally, he lacked funding — who would back a project devised by a man with just six years of formal education?

But nothing could stop a determined Finn. By 1922, Aimo Lahti had already produced tangible results: the *Suomi M-22* submachine gun. It may have looked odd at first glance, but as one of the earliest examples of its kind, it was a promising start — albeit one with room for improvement.

Unfortunately, neither the *M-22* nor its subsequent refinements attracted the interest of the armed forces, despite Lahti's regimental commander personally vouching for him. Still, the groundwork

had been laid. Helsinki was far away, but fellow enthusiasts could be found closer to home — or so Lahti thought. And he was right.

After speaking with several officers in his regiment — a captain and a couple of lieutenants — a joint-stock company was established in 1924: '*Konepistooli Osakeyhtiö*'. The initial investment was modest, but even these limited funds allowed Lahti to improve his design incrementally, experimenting with various *Suomi* prototypes. To jump ahead slightly — the shareholders would have to wait, but eventually, the project paid off handsomely.

After that — a machine gun

When news of the self-taught weapons designer reached the Finnish Ministry of Defence, the initial reaction was cautious — officials followed the principle that "a good person is not a profession". However, Lahti's achievements, particularly his improvements to the *M-26* submachine gun, gradually began

to melt the scepticism of the military establishment.

Lahti was soon given a challenging commission: to design a light machine gun that could fire *Mosin-Nagant* rifle cartridges. There was, however, one condition — Lieutenant Arvo Saloranta, a graduate of a Danish technical college, was to be part of the project.

Lahti, who was used to working alone, was not particularly fond of this arrangement. But in time, a constructive partnership developed: Lahti focused on the design, while Saloranta handled the organisational aspects without which the project would never have progressed.

The result was the *Lahti-Saloranta* light machine gun, unveiled in 1926. Given that the era of light machine guns was only just beginning, the *LS-26* made a strong impression. Compared to the Danish *Madsen*, it was every bit its equal — and it far outclassed the infamous French *Chauchat*. Most importantly, it was a fully domestic product, chambered for ammunition the Finnish military already had in abundance.

Interestingly, production of the *LS-26* was also undertaken in a variant chambered for 7.92×57 mm *Mausers* cartridges. This version had been ordered — perhaps surprisingly — by the Kuomintang government in China. A contract was signed for 30 000 machine guns. For Finland, this represented a welcome boost to the national defence budget. However, after just 1 200 units had been manufactured, Japan expressed its disapproval — and under intense diplomatic pressure, the rest of the order had to be cancelled.

The only serious complaint about the *LS-26* came from its magazine: it held just 20 cartridges. This wasn't merely a matter of limited firepower — it also meant soldiers had to carry a greater number of magazines, each adding weight and requiring reloading in the field. This drawback was soon addressed by the development of a drum magazine capable of holding 75 cartridges.

By 1942, roughly 6 000 *LS-26* machine guns had been produced for the Finnish Armed Forces. Their production was discontinued for a somewhat unusual reason: during the Winter War and the subsequent Continuation War, Finnish troops captured such large quantities of

Soviet *Degtyaryov (DP)* machine guns — which used the same calibre — that there was simply no longer any need to produce more of the *LS-26*.

Nonetheless, the existing guns proved remarkably durable. The *LS-26* remained in active service until 1966, and was stored in military depots for another two decades before a formal decision was made to decommission them.

Time for some upgrades!

It is sometimes believed that Finnish soldiers were armed exclusively with submachine guns. However, this is a misconception. Finnish infantry units typically had only three automatic weapons: one light machine gun and two submachine guns. Soviet stories about 'Finnish ma-

chine gun platoons' were little more than propaganda intended to justify their own military failures.

central role. In 1927, together with other specialists, he developed a programme to upgrade the ageing rifles. The barrel was shortened, protective wings were added to the front sight, the sight scale was recalibrated in metres (rather than paces, as previously), the needle-type bayonet was replaced with a knife bayonet, and the trigger mechanism was made more sensitive.

In 1932, Lahti also began modernising the heavy *Maxim* machine guns. The rate of fire was increased, the opening of the water-cooling reservoir was widened (so that, instead of pouring in water, one could pack it with snow — a clever adaptation), the archaic Russian *Sokolov* wheeled mount was replaced with a much lighter tripod, and the fabric ammunition belts were swapped out for metal ones.

simple and precise — at least on paper. In practice, Lahti was unable to organise production on his own. Fortunately, the weapon caught the attention of others and was quickly appreciated. Lahti and his partners were offered a contract: the company '*Tikkakoski*' would pay handsomely for the exclusive manufacturing rights. The designer shared the profits with his shareholders, and the company they had founded was dissolved.

The new manufacturer had substantial production capacity, and the weapon made its public debut in the autumn of 1930 at a shooting competition. The military immediately ordered a hundred test models, followed by further batches. In 1931, the *Suomi KP-31* was officially adopted into service. Over the next few years, several improvements were made based on feedback from the field. Overall, the weapon gained an excellent reputation among soldiers.

This project also brought Aimo Lahti wider recognition. When word of his work reached the United States, he was soon dubbed the 'Finnish John Browning' and invited to visit. Sensing they might lose him, the Finnish Ministry of Defence stepped in with a counteroffer: three million marks and a permanent position. It's possible Lahti might have found great success in America — but he chose to stay in his homeland.

Incidentally, the *Suomi KP-31* saw its first combat not in the Winter War, as one might expect, but in South America — during the 1932–1935 conflict between Bolivia and Paraguay. Combat experience there demonstrated that dense fire from submachine guns at close range (under 200 metres) could repel attacks even when defenders were outnumbered. This came as a revelation to many military theorists, although some argued it only applied to complex terrain, such as jungles, where close contact was inevitable. Still, this insight suited the Finns well: it suggested that their own forests and terrain were also ideal for automatic weapons, even those of lower power. That assumption would later be confirmed.

In total, over 55 000 *Suomi* submachine guns were produced by 1944 — not including licensed versions made in Sweden, Denmark, and Switzerland.



Accurate and dependable, the *Suomi KP-31* proved to be an outstanding automatic weapon, especially in close combat and ambush scenarios.

The main weapon of the Finnish infantry in the first half of the XX century remained the *Mosin-Nagant* rifle — a legacy of the Tsarist era. Re-equipping the entire army with a new type of rifle would have been prohibitively expensive. And what would have been done with the old rifles and their ammunition?

A more pragmatic solution was chosen: to modernise the existing *Mosin-Nagants*. And Aimo Lahti, of course, played a

A weapon named *Suomi*

The *Suomi KP-31* is one of the most iconic classic submachine guns — a source of pride not only for its creator, but for the country itself. Thanks to historical circumstances, the *Suomi* became an integral part of Finland's image. If children know this northern nation as the home of Santa Claus, then weapons enthusiasts will always mention that the *Suomi* was created here.

The *KP-31* was a logical evolution of the earlier *M-26*. It was elegantly

HOW THE SOVIETS DEVELOPED THEIR OWN 'VICTORY WEAPON'



PPD-40

Comparison: the *Suomi* (1930) vs. the *PPD* (1932–1933 prototype). Soviet designers clearly took notes from the Finns.



Suomi KP/-31

Ever heard of the *PPSh*? Colloquially, people called it the 'round submachine gun' — a nickname inspired by its round drum magazine. In truth, it's almost impossible not to know this iconic Soviet submachine gun: so many were produced that they equipped not only the 'liberators' (who, once they liberated a place, often forgot to leave), but also their local collaborators — and later, various 'liberation movements' across the Third World. Soviet propaganda played a major role in popularizing the weapon, helping establish the *PPSh* as the definitive "weapon of victory over Nazism".

But behind that story lies another — one rarely discussed, and sometimes omitted entirely.

In 1932–1933, Soviet weapons designers experienced a sudden surge of interest in submachine guns. During that short span alone, at least 14 (!) different prototypes were developed and submitted for testing. These came from the hands of famous designers like Degtyaryov, Tokarev, and Korovin, as well as lesser-known names like Kolesnikov and Prilutsky.

Degtyaryov's design proved the most

promising. Interestingly, it bore a striking resemblance to Lahti's *Suomi*. If that was a coincidence, it had a name: Vilho Pentikäinen. A seemingly unremarkable lieutenant in the Finnish Armed Forces working in the Photographic Department of the General Staff of the Defence Forces, Pentikäinen was secretly recruited by Soviet intelligence. Around 1930–1933, he was

The *PPD* was too complex for Soviet mass production. Its simplified successor, the *PPSh-41*, could be manufactured in just six hours. It became a symbol of Soviet firepower — used not only by Red Army troops, but also their collaborators. Pictured: *PPSh*-armed collaborators in Griškabūdis and a pro-Russian separatist in Donbass.



actively passing information to the USSR about Finland's defence plans, fortifications... and weaponry. Few doubt that blueprints of the *Suomi* ended up in his hands. When he realized he was close to being exposed, Pentikäinen fled to the Soviet Union.

The Finnish groundwork helped, but the Soviets' first submachine gun to see any success — the *PPD-34* — turned out to be far too precise and complex for mass production. Only small batches were issued, primarily to *NKVD* units. Although the *PPD* was modernized in 1938,

the following year its production was halted by order of the People's Commissariat of Defence.

One of the strongest opponents of submachine guns at the time was Marshal Grigory Kulik, who dismissed them as inferior weapons and claimed that full-auto fire was a waste of ammunition.

The Soviets would quickly learn just how 'inferior' such weapons really

22 - ПЕРЕКЛЮЧАТЕЛЬ РЕЖИМА ОГНЯ
 23 - ОСЬ ШЕЛТАЛА
 24 - ВОЗВРАТНЫЙ МЕХАНИЗМ
 ШТОК ВОЗВРАТНОГО МЕХАНИЗМА
 26 - ВОЗВРАТНАЯ ПРУЖИНА
 27 - ОПОРНАЯ ВТУЛКА
 28 - СПУСКОВАЯ РАМА
 29 - ПРУЖИНА КУРКА
 30 - ШТОК КУРКА
 31 - ОСЬ КУРКА
 - ПРЕДОХРАНИТЕЛЬ
 ВОЛЬНОЙ КОРОБКИ

were — after they invaded Finland. In March 1940, during a Central Committee plenum of VKP (b) (Bolsheviks), Defence Commissar Kliment Voroshilov presented a report summarizing the Winter War. It stated:

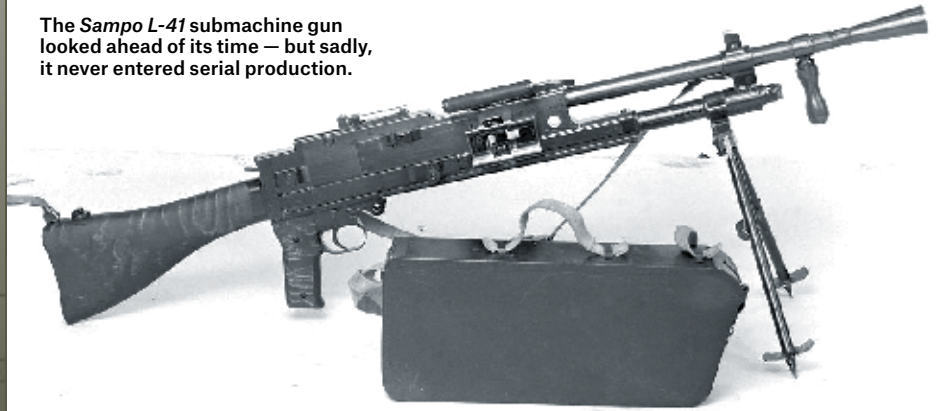
"...Among other things, the Finns had a well-designed, modern submachine gun with a drum magazine holding 70 cartridges, which functioned flawlessly under all meteorological conditions. <...> Small ski units, operating at night — and sometimes even during the day — would infiltrate our rear lines, armed with dozens of *Suomi* submachine guns, and inflict serious losses on our units positioned along roads and highways."

This report was censored by Stalin before being read publicly. But the 'Leader of Nations' took note. And in a closed meeting, he reportedly asked:

"The Finns have a good weapon. Why don't we have one?"

That was all the signal needed. The PPD was modernized and mass production resumed immediately — factories working round-the-clock in triple shifts. Then, in August 1940, a cheaper and easier-to-manufacture replacement appeared: the PPSH-41.

The *Sampo L-41* submachine gun looked ahead of its time — but sadly, it never entered serial production.



1934 projects

Let's return to Finland. That year, the designer was working on two new projects. The first was the *L-34*, a rapid-fire 20 mm cannon originally intended as an anti-aircraft weapon.

The technical concept was interesting, but it had a fundamental flaw: the German 2 cm *Flak* cartridge proved too powerful for Lahti's design. He proposed developing a custom cartridge specifically for the *L-34*, but this solution was ultimately deemed too expensive for Finland. Moreover, the cannon's rate of fire was insufficient for effective air defence. As a result, the *L-34*s that had already been manufactured were repurposed and mounted on coastal patrol boats.

Lahti's second project was a light machine gun. Yes — again. This time, however, the weapon was given a suitably epic name: *Sampo*, taken from the Finnish national epic, the '*Kalevala*'.

The *L-34 Sampo* was designed with the shortcomings of the *LS-26* firmly in mind. It was 1.5 kg lighter, consisted of half as many parts, and cost only half as much to produce. Field tests showed that it was reliable, less maintenance-intensive, and much easier to handle — particularly when it came to replacing a hot barrel, which could now be done quickly and with minimal effort.

Despite these improvements, General Aarne Heikinheimo, then chairman of the Field Equipment Committee, unexpectedly opposed the new machine gun. He argued that a weapon without belt feeding would not meet the military's operational needs. In addition, he claimed that introducing a second type of machine gun would complicate training and hurt the military's logistics and budget.

Although these two points were somewhat contradictory, the general's opinion ultimately sealed the weapon's fate.

During World War II, Aimo Lahti introduced a second version of the *Sampo*: the *L-41*. This was essentially a universal machine gun, now featuring belt feeding — and in many respects, it still looks modern even by today's standards. A small trial series of 35 units was produced.

But once again, history intervened. The war left no time or resources for large-scale production. And by then, the Finnish Armed Forces no longer had much need for a new domestic machine gun: the German *MG-42* had already proven itself as a superior option.

An arctic pistol?

Although Aimo's 1934 projects were unsuccessful, he made a strong comeback the following year. This time, he presented the evaluators with an original design for a sidearm — the *Lahti L-35* pistol.

"But didn't Aimo just copy the *Parabellum*?" — you might ask.

A good question. At first glance, the silhouette of the *L-35* does indeed resemble Georg Luger's famous design. But form is only skin-deep — let's look at the internals. The *L-35*'s mechanical components differ significantly, and some of its features are quite original. For example, it includes a bolt accelerator, a device that improves cycling reliability. This and other technical solutions make the pistol highly dependable, especially in harsh winter conditions — extreme cold, snow, and ice.

Moreover, the *L-35* was manufactured with great precision. It is ergonomically designed, has a smooth trigger pull, low recoil, and excellent accuracy.



22 - ПЕРЕКЛЮЧАТЕЛЬ РЕЖИМА ОГНЯ
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 27 - ОПОРНАЯ ВТУЛКА
 28 - СПУСКОВАЯ РАМА



The *Lahti L-35* pistol was an exceptional design, manufactured both in Finland and neighbouring Sweden. Original Finnish *L-35*s now sell for \$4 000–5 000 apiece.

Of course, such size came at a cost — the *L-39* weighed nearly 53 kg — but the anti-tank teams did not complain. The weapon was adopted at a critical moment: in September 1939, just before the Soviet invasion. And so, even the few *L-39*s that had been produced in time became invaluable allies to the Finns defending their homeland. They could pierce the armour of any Soviet tank of the time. Moreover, the mere rumour that the ‘elephant gun’ would be deployed in a combat zone was enough to significantly boost Finnish soldiers’ morale.

During the second clash with the Soviets, the rifle was no longer quite as effective against tanks, which had since grown much thicker armour. The *L-39* found a new role: it was repurposed for use against unarmoured vehicles and

In fact, the pistol’s accuracy is partly due to its heft. The *L-35* is a heavy pistol — when loaded, it weighs over 1.2 kilograms. But this wasn’t a major drawback: the *Lahti* performed well in combat, and its Swedish clone, the *Husqvarna m/40*, remained in service until the 1980s, when it was gradually replaced by the *Glock*.

A name that boosted morale

This time, the story is about another truly impressive creation by Aimo Lahti. Its bureaucratic name — *L-39* — was formed from the initial of the designer’s surname and the year it was adopted into service. But the soldiers had a different name for it: the elephant gun.

And indeed, it was a monstrous thing. At a time when ‘armoured vehicles’ referred to anything welded from sheet metal and no one had even heard of grenade launchers, the primary anti-armour weapon was the anti-tank rifle — long-barrelled and heavy. But next to the *L-39*, they all looked like small-calibre toys.

A twin-barrel automatic cannon, based on Lahti’s *L-39* design, became Finland’s most widely used anti-aircraft weapon.





The L-39 team usually consisted of two trained soldiers. This image shows just how massive the weapon truly was.

fortified firing positions. Reports indicate that a 20 mm high-explosive fragmentation projectile could completely take out a truck, and if it struck a firing embrasure, it gave no chance to the machine gun crew or artillery spotter inside.

The weapon also proved effective in counter-sniper operations. The L-39 allowed soldiers to fire safely from a much greater distance than a standard rifle's effective range. A direct hit wasn't even necessary — an explosive impact within a couple of metres could be enough to neutralise the threat. Incendiary projectiles were also used against light cover and fortifications.

In 1940, the L-39 played a role in the development of a light anti-aircraft gun: Lahti simply paired two of the rifles together and modified the mechanism for automatic fire. By the end of the war, this twin-barrel design had become the most widely used weapon of its type in the Finnish Armed Forces, remaining in service until 1988.

Many L-39s eventually found their way to the United States — American law does not prohibit citizens from acquiring these rifles for self-defence purposes.

Something for aviators

As Finland's Air Force continued to modernise, it sought to equip its aircraft with a heavy-calibre machine gun. Unfortunately, the manufacturer of the 13.2 mm Belgian *Browning* aircraft guns — the model they had their eye on — couldn't keep up with demand. There was already

a queue of clients ahead of the Finns, and while they waited, World War II broke out. In a rush, they had to settle for the American 12.7 mm *Colt MG 53-2*, a machine gun that failed to impress Finnish pilots with its performance.

So, the Finns chose a different approach. They asked the Swedes to send over one Belgian gun, which was then used as a prototype for a domestic version. Adapting the weapon for local needs meant it had to be redesigned to fire 12.7 mm ammunition,

along with many other modifications.

Naturally, this task was entrusted to Aimo Lahti.

In 1942, mass production began on the new aircraft machine gun, designated the *LKk/42*. By the following year, these guns were already being mounted on planes. Around the same time, Finland also began manufacturing its own fighter aircraft — the *Myrsky* ('Storm') — which, armed with *LKk/42s*, were not afraid to engage even armoured Soviet fighter aircraft *IL-2s* in dogfights. A focused burst from four *LKk/42s* — each with a



AL-43. A remarkably compact automatic weapon, chambered for intermediate cartridges. Shown here without its bipod.



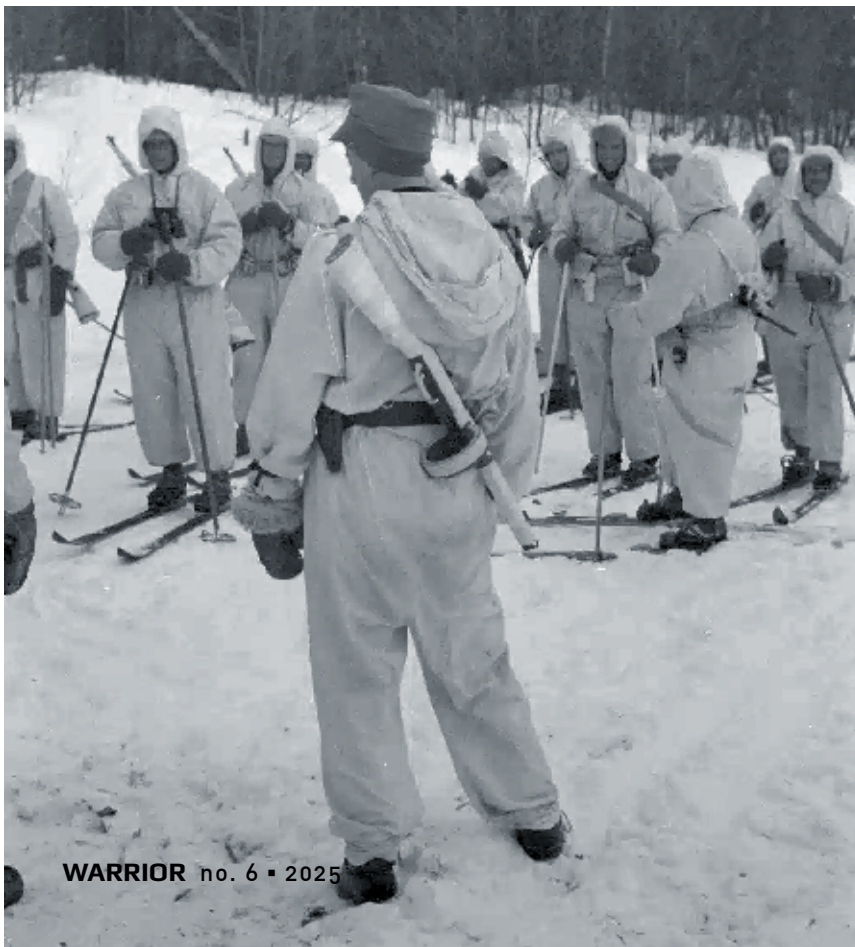
Finnish soldier with a *Suomi* submachine gun in a defensive position. Photo from the Continuation War, circa 1942.

rate of fire of 1 000 shots per minute — would leave a target riddled like Swiss cheese.

The post-war fate of these machine guns is quite interesting. After the war, they were put into storage, and in

the 1950s, efforts were made to repurpose them for air defence — but this proved unsuccessful. Instead, the *LKk/42s* found a second life as training weapons: they were installed in aircraft used for gunnery instruction in place of the more expensive

Finnish ski patrol in the Leningrad region, March 1942. The *KP/-31* submachine gun camouflaged in white.



20 mm cannons, helping to significantly reduce training costs.

Assault rifle or machine gun?

It is commonly accepted that the concept of an intermediate cartridge and the assault rifle designed to use it originated in Germany. And yes, the German *MKb 42* and the later *StG 44* already met the standards for this new type of weapon.

But word travels fast. Somehow, rumours about the intermediate cartridge reached Lahti, prompting him to begin his own research in that direction. He first designed a 9×35 mm cartridge, then a 7.62×35 mm, but the most successful was his 9×41 mm *Lahti* cartridge — essentially an extended version of the 9×19 *Parabellum*.

In the autumn of 1943, an experimental firearm was built: the *Ratti AL-43*.

It strongly resembled the well-known *Suomi* submachine gun, only larger and capable of accurate fire at ranges up to 400 metres — twice the effective range of typical submachine guns. Its rate of fire was respectable at 800 shots per minute. With a magazine inserted, the *AL-43* weighed around 7 kg — nearly two kilograms heavier than the German *StG 44* — and so a bipod was mounted at the front of the weapon.

These unusual specifications blur conventional classifications. In different sources, Lahti's creation has been referred to as a "heavy submachine gun," and sometimes even a "submachine gun/machine gun hybrid".

However, the new project was met with resistance. Lahti was even accused of wasting valuable time and the resources of the state arms factory on what were essentially personal whims.

He had to go under the radar. Drawing on his connections, the designer managed to smooth over the conflict. To avoid attracting further attention, he renamed the weapon "light machine gun 43/L" and signed contracts with two other companies — one to manufacture the weapon, the other to produce drum magazines. A trial batch was produced in 1944, but just as the project was picking up momentum, Finland announced it was ending hostilities — and the project came to a halt.



Aimo Lahti beside his company car.

Brief personal details

The end of the war was not a happy time for Aimo Lahti. In 1944, his only son, Lieutenant Olavi Lahti, a war pilot, was killed in action. To make matters worse, the designer was also accused of concealing 30 prototype carbines. But it's widely

believed he did so deliberately, not wanting them to fall into the wrong hands of we know who. The Allied Control Commission removed him from his post, and by its order, Lahti was prohibited from designing weapons.

To avoid any misunderstanding though it's worth noting that this article covers only a fraction of the roughly fifty projects this

talented man worked on. His *Suomi* submachine gun became a symbol of Finland itself, and several of his weapons gained popularity abroad, where they were either purchased or produced under licence.

That said, Lahti's personality shouldn't be overly romanticised. Alongside his exceptional talent, he had a rather unpredictable temperament — and a fondness for a pastime shared by many of his compatriots.

As you might have guessed, Aimo enjoyed a drink, especially when the occasion allowed. And since his work often took him on business trips, there were plenty of such occasions. Sometimes, this became a concern for the top brass. It's said that General Karl Rudolf Walden once raised the issue directly with Mannerheim. After listening, Carl Gustaf Emil reportedly replied, "That's not our concern. Let him drink — the important thing is that he works."

The story eventually reached Lahti, who later boasted that he was the only Finn with official permission from the Marshal to drink...

In the end, the Finnish Armed Forces gave a fitting farewell to its No. 1 armorer: Lahti was placed in reserve and awarded a general's pension. Still, he never gave up his passion for engineering and continued to work on various 'peaceful' mechanisms. ■

Commander of the Finnish Defence Forces, Maj. Gen. Lauri Malmberg, holding the *Suomi* submachine gun designed by Lahti and manufactured by 'Tikkakoski Oy'.



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MESSAGES OCCUPIED L TO THE FREE WORLD

SEVERINAS VAITIEKUS



S FROM THE AND PART III

During World War II, Lithuania experienced multiple occupations: The Soviet occupation (1940–1941) and subsequent reoccupation (1944–1990), and the Nazi occupation (1941–1944). During these periods, the Lithuanian resistance played a pivotal role in maintaining communication with the diaspora and the democratic West, providing them with accurate information about the domestic situation and mobilising various resistance forces to fight for the restoration of an independent Lithuanian state. However, due to the conditions of occupation and war, this cooperation could only be conducted in secret, necessitating the implementation of various conspiratorial and intelligence measures. Western governments, their secret services and the public were keen to understand the situation in the Baltic States. The purpose of this article is to reveal how the Lithuanian resistance contributed to the Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) of the Western democracies, also known as 'white intelligence', by gathering information about the situation in occupied Lithuania...

OSS Stockholm station

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the American military base in Hawaii (Pearl Harbor), and on December 11, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States. The legation in Berlin was moved to Stockholm and merged with the one already there. According to American historian of Lithuanian descent Augustinas Idzelis, the American legation in Sweden had become a "*kind of information gathering or espionage*

centre." Due to Sweden's neutrality, American military intelligence activities were very limited, with the main burden falling on the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) station in Stockholm, which operated under the cover of the US Legation. According to historian and political scientist Thomas Remeikis, the legation performed OSS functions to a certain extent and provided information to this intelligence service. During World War II, the main target of the US Legation in Stockholm was the territory occupied by the Reich, called *Ostland*. It consisted of the Baltic States (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia) and Belarus.

According to Latvian historian U. Neiburgs, a specialized section dedicated to the Baltic States was established at the OSS headquarters in Washington in 1942. In 1943, A. Vokietaitis wrote from Stockholm to the head of the Lithuanian diplomatic service, Jurgis Šaulys, who was based in Bern, that "*interest in the Baltic States is growing*" and that "*since the beginning of 1942, America has had a special section here for Baltic affairs.*" It is not clear from A. Vokietaitis' letter whether this was the same institution referred to by U. Neiburgs.

Bruce Hopper was appointed the first head of the OSS station in Stockholm, a position he held for two years. B. Hopper was a World War I pilot, journalist, writer, and historian. He had been interested in the USSR since the 1930s.

The first head of the OSS station in Stockholm, Bruce Hopper.



He was a professor at Harvard University and one of the best experts on the Soviet Union in the US. He was not chosen by chance. Washington wanted to ascertain the real capabilities and intentions of the USSR in the war. B. Hopper was also tasked with observing and assessing Soviet actions in the Baltic region, as well as organizing and conducting intelligence operations in Germany and its occupied territories. B. Hopper's official position was political analyst at the US Legation in Sweden. He was brought to Sweden secretly: he crossed the Atlantic Ocean (from New York to Liverpool) as a member of the crew of a whaling ship and was then flown from a secret airfield in Scotland to Stockholm. Initially, the OSS station in Stockholm had only a few employees, but by 1945 their number had grown to 75. The huge increase in the number of American spies clearly demonstrated Washington's exceptional interest in this region of Europe.

According to W. Donovan, director of the US OSS and a diplomat by profession, espionage, covert intelligence or sabotage operations abroad, and support for national resistance movements were not the OSS's greatest contributions to the fight against the Axis powers in Europe and Asia. The most important achievement of the OSS was the creation of professional OSINT.

Press Reading Sections (PRS) were established in the capitals of neutral European countries near Germany, in Bern and Stockholm, where US legations were located. These sections collected information from periodicals in Germany and its occupied territories, as well as from anti-Nazi underground publications. An analysis of reports on the situation in Lithuania from the US legation in Stockholm between 1942 and 1944 shows that the Americans had access to German-language newspapers published or distributed in Lithuania and received Lithuanian press publications. PRS employees selected press publications that were significant from an intelligence point of view and translated them into English. The most valuable material and the most important documents (originals together with translations) were sent to Washington by telegram, diplomatic

communications (dispatches), and diplomatic couriers.

No later than August 1942, the Special Reporting Section (SRS) was established in the US Legation in Stockholm. Its employees prepared comments on the information and documents collected, as well as informational and analytical reports, which were sent as dispatches with accompanying documents signed by US Envoy Herschel Vespasiano Johnson or Chargé d'affaires Winthrop Stephenson Green to US Secretary of State Cordell Hull. In this way, not only was information about the Baltic states collected in the Swedish capital, but the collected information was also evaluated for intelligence purposes. The SRS employed individuals who translated documents, press publications, and people's statements and testimonies from foreign languages (including Lithuanian) into English.

On February 4, 1943, Harry Edwin Carlson signed a dispatch to the secretary of state, indicating his position as first secretary of the legation and head of the Press Reading Section. In 2013, Latvian historian U. Neiburgs wrote, without citing sources, that H. Carlson was also head of the Special Reporting Section of the legation. In 1999, Indrek Jürjo, his colleague from Estonia, again without citing sources, claimed that in 1944, Estonian resistance activist T. Hellat, who had traveled to Stockholm in 1944 to establish contacts with democratic intelligence services of the democratic West, met with, among others, US Legation Secretary H. Carlson, who "*was in command of the American secret services in Sweden.*" As noted, B. Hopper was head of the OSS station in Stockholm from 1942 to 1943, followed by Ty Wilho Tikander from August 1944. It is possible that I. Jürjo's information about H. E. Carlson's high-ranking intelligence position is completely accurate, but some other historical sources indicate that there was another person with the same surname working at the US Legation, suggesting that he may have been the head of this OSS station. Thus, the intrigue regarding this fact remains.

It is important to note that the first secretary of the legation personally communicated with Lithuanians in

Sweden: Lithuanian diplomats Vytautas Jonas Gylis and Vladas Žilinskas, writer Ignas Jurkūnas-Šeinius, and Algirdas Vokietaitis, an envoy and representative of the Lithuanian resistance movement who secretly arrived in Stockholm via the Baltic Sea in the summer of 1943.

Overall, H. E. Carlson had long-standing ties and connections with both Lithuania and other Baltic countries: from March 1924 to June 1926, he served as the US consul in Lithuania. After completing his term in Kaunas, H. Carlson was transferred to Tallinn. From 1926 to 1937, he served as US Consul, First Secretary, and finally as chargé d'affaires. After completing his mission in Tallinn, Carlson worked as consul in London and Vienna. In 1941, he was sent to Stockholm, where he served as US consul general in Sweden. In December 1942, Carlson's official position was first secretary of the legation.

An analysis of US embassy dispatches to Washington on the situation in Lithuania and the Baltic states shows that H. Carlson was responsible for obtaining press and documents from Germany and its occupied territories, and for searching for individuals who had the desired information or access to it. He maintained personal contacts with sources of information and was able to interview individuals arriving in Sweden from abroad. According to T. Remeikis, who studied the diplomatic correspondence between the US Legation in Sweden and the State Department in Washington, H. E. Carlson is likely to have written some of the US Embassy dispatches and provided comments on other authors' reports and documents that were sent to Washington regarding the situation in Lithuania.

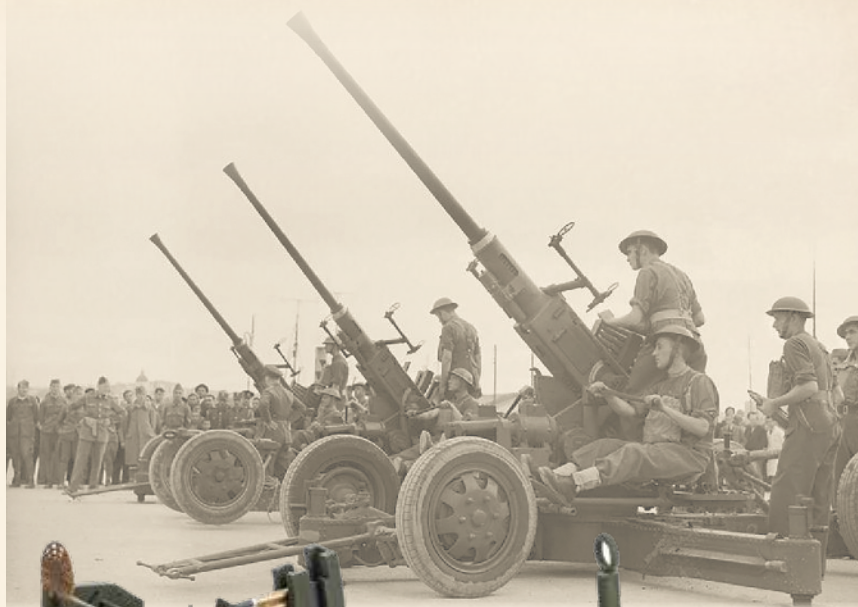
Jonas Mažonis

In 1943, A. Vokietaitis reported from Stockholm to Jurgis Šaulys, head of the Lithuanian diplomatic service, indicating that "*a Lithuanian named Mažonis [...] works at a specialised section for Baltic affairs [...]*" in the US Legation. On May 31, 1944, a report from the Kaunas Gestapo to Berlin stated that in Stockholm, A. Vokietaitis "*was in close contact with the secretary of the US Legation,*

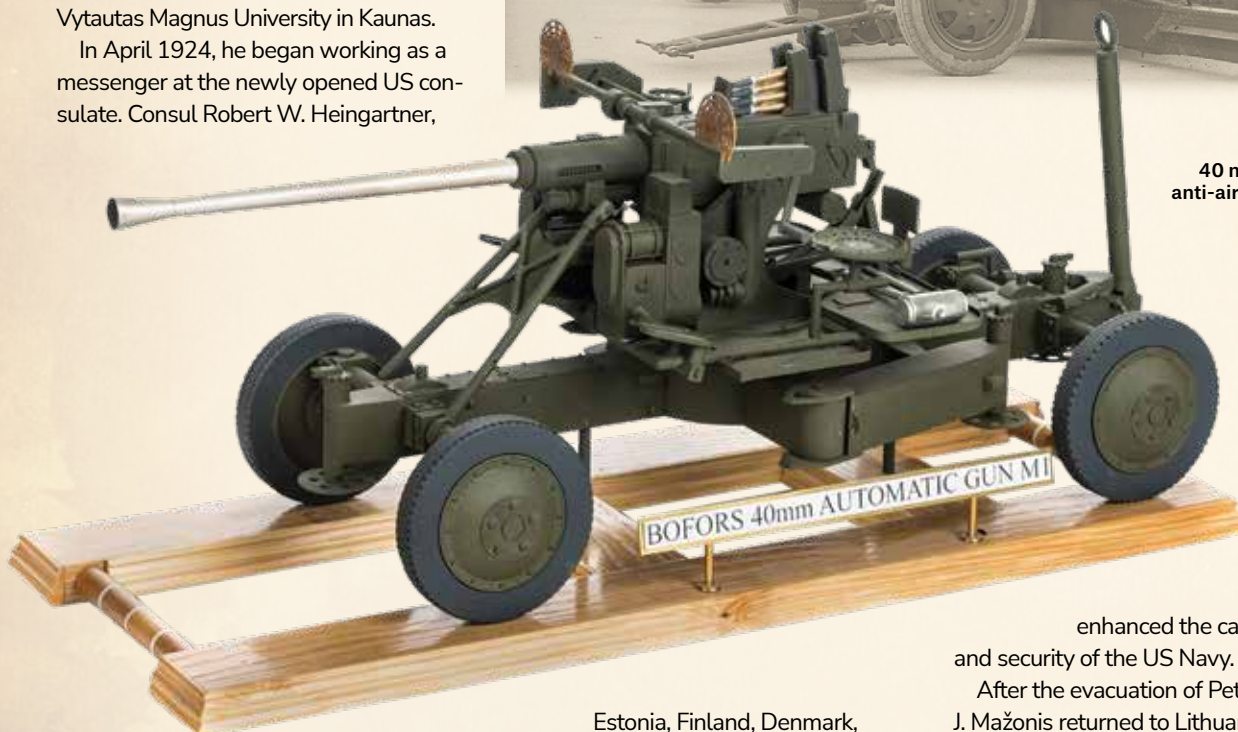
Mažonis (of Lithuanian origin), the advisor on Baltic affairs." Western sources refer to him as John Francis Mazionis.

His actual name was Jonas Mažonis. He was born in London in 1907 to a family of Lithuanian immigrants. In 1920, he returned to Lithuania with his parents. It seems that his sister Ona Mažonaitė, knowing English, worked for some time as a clerk in the Intelligence Section of the General Staff of the Lithuanian Armed Forces. Jonas graduated from Dr. J. Tumėnas' private school in Kaunas with intensive foreign language training. After that, he studied at the Faculty of Economics of Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas.

In April 1924, he began working as a messenger at the newly opened US consulate. Consul Robert W. Heingartner,



40 mm Bofors anti-aircraft gun.



who worked in Lithuania from 1926 to 1927, remembered J. Mažonis in his diary as a servant who had to perform a wide variety of tasks: look after the consul's dog, pick up and send diplomatic mail, working nights and Sundays. J. Mažonis was not afraid of any work and gradually earned respect and higher positions, eventually being promoted to clerk.

After the Soviet occupation in 1940, J. Mažonis became an important member of the legation. He was tasked with organizing the evacuation of 102 US citizens from Lithuania to the port of Petsamo in Finland. In addition to the arrivals from Lithuania, more than 700 US citizens and their families from Latvia,

Estonia, Finland, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, and Germany were gathered in Petsamo. Along with them, some refugees and part of the US diplomatic corps also had to be evacuated by the ship sent to Petsamo. According to B. Gufler, during the evacuation, J. Mažonis showed himself to be a cool-headed, courageous and resourceful man, despite his age.

Only a few State Department employees and evacuation organizers knew about the ship's secret cargo. Hidden in the ship's hold was a Swedish-made 40 mm Bofors anti-aircraft gun. Once delivered to the US, the country's military industry replicated the weapon and began mass production. By 1942, it had been installed on US military ships. These anti-aircraft guns greatly

enhanced the capabilities and security of the US Navy.

After the evacuation of Petsamo, J. Mažonis returned to Lithuania. He had Lithuanian and British citizenship, although he worked at the US Legation in Lithuania. According to Finnish historian Jonathan H. L'Hommedieu, J. Mažonis fled to Sweden with the help of American diplomats when the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania and shut down foreign legations in the country. According to American Mallory Needleman, at the end of August 1940, the US ambassador to Moscow, Charles E. Bohlen, arrived in Kaunas to close the embassy. J. Mažonis left with him. The Japanese consulate in Kaunas may have aided his departure. The list of Jews saved by Sugihara's family states that on August 2, 1940, a transit visa was issued to J. Mažonis, a British citizen. It is known that people with such transit visas

initially traveled to Moscow and, after a certain period of time, to the Far East.

In Moscow, J. Mažonis worked in the Passport and Citizenship Department of the US Consulate. After the annexation of Lithuania, J. Mažonis' sisters, as British citizens, emigrated to Australia, but the Soviet regime did not allow his parents to leave the country. His son wanted to visit his elderly and sick parents who had remained in Kaunas. After several notes from the US Consul E. Allan Lightner Jr. to the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, J. Mažonis was allowed to travel to Lithuania in March 1941. American diplomats were also interested in the visit of their subordinate to the occupied country, as the State Department did not have accurate information about the situation in Soviet Lithuania. As written by J. Mažonis' biographer, Mallory Needleman, a historian at the Marine Corps University in the US, the trip to visit his parents was also an excellent cover for carrying out an intelligence-gathering mission. Although J. Mažonis was closely watched and followed by the NKGB in Lithuania, he still managed to complete his task. Upon his return to Moscow, he prepared a report entitled 'Lithuania in March 1941' on March 22. This report was immediately sent to the office of the secretary of state. Walter C. Thurston, Minister Counselor at the Embassy in Moscow, later informed J. Mažonis that the information presented in the report had been "appreciated highly" in Washington, because until then neither the State Department nor any other government agency had previously acquired operational information or carried out a similar information-gathering operation in Lithuania.

Historian Alfred Erich Senn assessed J. Mažonis' report as "a unique document about Lithuania at the end of the first winter of the Soviet regime." According to Modris Eksteins, a Toronto-based historian of Latvian origin, it was "an exceptionally insightful report." In essence, it was an intelligence report on the economic, military, and political situation in the Lithuanian SSR. In the words of A. E. Senn, those American diplomats who read J. Mažonis' report "must have been well prepared for the series of shocking events that were to follow": the

deportations of June 1941, Germany's war against the USSR, the persecution of Lithuanian Jews, the June Uprising, and the formation of the Provisional Government of Lithuania.

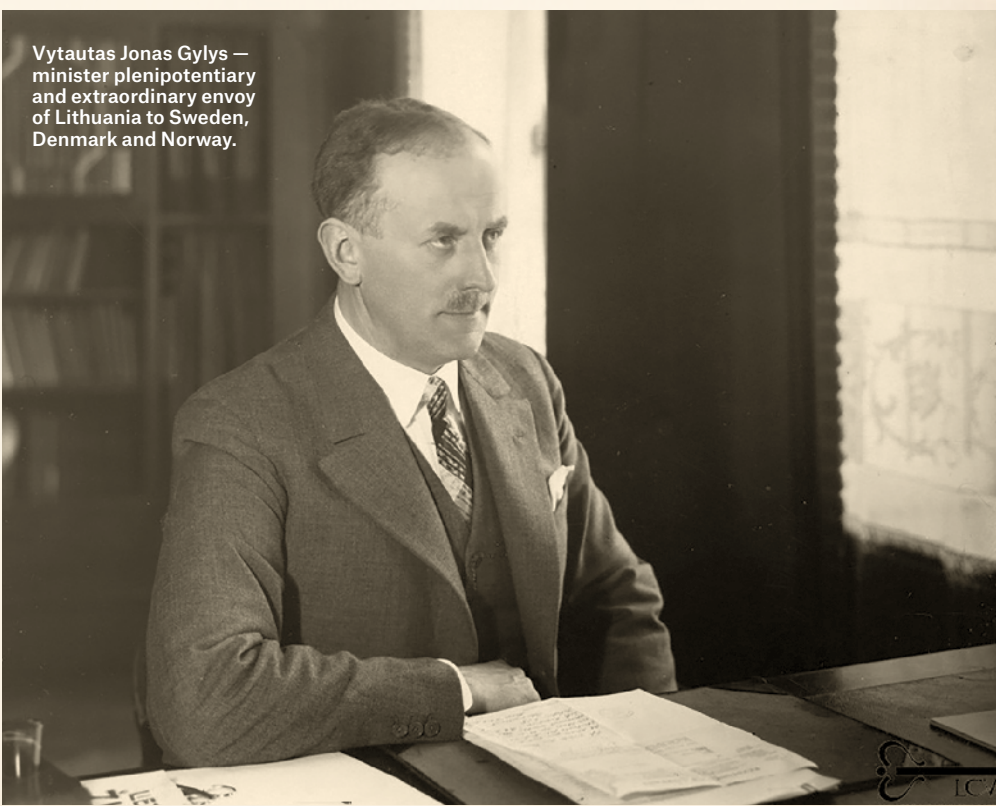
In early summer 1941, J. Mažonis finished his work in Moscow. On June 19, he and two other embassy staff members left for vacation in Stockholm. When the German-Soviet war broke out on June 22, J. Mažonis remained in the Swedish capital and continued his service at the US Legation. In Stockholm, he maintained contact with Lithuanians living in the city and throughout Sweden. According to V. Žilinskas, J. Mažonis was particularly helpful in translating *VLIK* and *LLKS* documents from Lithuanian into English after they were brought to Stockholm from occupied Lithuania.

Lithuanian resistance ties with Americans in Stockholm

In December 1945, based on information from its First Directorate (foreign intelligence), the Soviet NKGB prepared a report for the Kremlin entitled 'On

Baltic Emigration in Sweden'. According to information from the NKGB residency in Stockholm, during the war the Americans were particularly interested in the activities of Baltic emigrants in Sweden, using expatriates to investigate the situations in their homelands. "A special attaché, personal representative of US President F. Roosevelt, was accredited to the US Mission (Legation) in Stockholm to deal with Baltic issues. Until 1943, this position was held by an American intelligence officer Konyer [Хоньер], who was then replaced by Tikander", the document states. Most likely, Soviet spies did not know Hopper's exact surname and referred to him as Konyer. Western sources indicate that Ty Wilho Tikander was head of the OSS station in Stockholm in August-September 1944, and was replaced by Taylor Cole in October. It seems that Soviet intelligence greatly exaggerated B. Hopper's status and relationship to the US president and narrowed the scope of the OSS Stockholm station chief's activities, as it was not limited to the Baltic countries.

The report states that a special group of Baltic émigrés operated at the US Legation in Stockholm, gathering information about the Baltic States for



Vytautas Jonas Gylys — minister plenipotentiary and extraordinary envoy of Lithuania to Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

the US government. The group consisted of five Baltic émigrés. It was headed by V. Krelcberg, former secretary of the Latvian Legation in Sweden.

The Kremlin was also informed that a radio station for listening to Baltic broadcasts had been set up at the legation in Stockholm.

We do not know exactly when the US legation in Stockholm established contact with representatives of the Lithuanian resistance in Sweden. Kazys Škirpa's memoirs indicate that in August 1941, he was approached in Berlin by B. Gufleris, the former US chargé d'affaires in Kaunas, who was residing in the Reich capital and inquiring about the situation in German-occupied Lithuania. On August 9, 1941, E. Turauskas wrote from Bern to Vytautas Jonas Gylis, the Lithuanian envoy to Sweden, saying, "Your reports interest the Americans: names, surnames, chronology." This letter shows that Lithuanian diplomats living in Switzerland were already providing the Americans with information known to them, but their colleagues in Sweden had no direct contacts with Lithuanian diplomats in Stockholm. It should be noted that the reports mentioned in E. Turauskas' letter were obtained by listening to

Kaunas and Vilnius radio stations, which could be picked up in Stockholm.

It appears that substantive cooperation between Lithuanians and Americans in Stockholm began in late 1941. On January 8, 1942, the legation in Stockholm sent the secretary of state a collection of information entitled 'Lietuvių spaudos biuletėnis' ('Lithuanian Press Bulletin'), which had been prepared by the Lithuanian legation in Bern on December 30, 1941. The bulletin was translated into English by Vytautas Jonas Gylis. He also translated the February and March issues of the 'Lithuanian Press Bulletin' that the US Legation had received from Bern, before forwarding it to Washington. In the accompanying documents, signed by the legation's senior officials, V. J. Gylis was described as "the Lithuanian source in Stockholm".

Lithuanian Envoy V. J. Gylis was not only a translator, but also an intermediary between the Lithuanian resistance and American diplomats. He also prepared comments on information received from Lithuania and wrote reports himself. The Americans consulted with V. J. Gylis about the reliability of their sources of information. In addition, as the representative of the Lithuanian State, V. J. Gylis

forwarded Lithuanian underground organizations' statements meant for Western governments to the legations of the US, Great Britain, and other countries.

Vladas Žilinskas, former secretary of the Lithuanian Legation in Stockholm, performed mainly organizational and technical functions, although he occasionally wrote reports himself. V. Žilinskas was first mentioned in US Legation dispatches in November 1942 as the recipient of the first large shipment of documents from Lithuania. Later, his name was associated with A. Valiukėnas. In the summer of 1943, after the LLKS and VLIK succeeded in establishing direct contact with Sweden, V. Žilinskas' cooperation with the Americans intensified. It was further stimulated by the flow of refugees from the Baltic countries to Scandinavia. In the summer and autumn of 1944, V. Žilinskas, together with other Lithuanians in Stockholm, maintained contact with the new arrivals and passed on the information obtained from them to the Americans.

During the war, Ada Balutytė-Rozenblatienė, daughter of Lithuanian Ambassador to Great Britain K. Balutis, lived in the Swedish capital with her husband Viktoras, her parents-in-law, and her mother. Rozenblatai arrived in Stockholm in September 1940. According to V. Žilinskas, "born in the US, A. Balutytė-Rozenblatienė got a job at the legation of her country of birth." He did not specify what she did at the American embassy, but noted her active support for local Lithuanians and the Lithuanian resistance movement. V. Žilinskas wrote: "Very quickly, the home of V. and A. Rozenblatai became the social center of the Lithuanian community in Stockholm, [...] a place for various political consultations. A. Balutytė would sit countless nights at her typewriter, compiling reports and messages from scattered manuscripts, which were sent to the West and to Lithuania. With her irreplaceable talent, ability to keep secrets, and knowledge of languages, A. Balutytė willingly and loyally assisted the Lithuanian resistance in Stockholm, often working tirelessly throughout the night." From this description of her activities, it can be concluded that A. Balutytė-Rozenblatienė was involved in obtaining, evaluating, and

V. J. Gylis' telegram of August 1, 1940 to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the LSSR, expressing public protest against the elections to the People's Seimas.



preparing secret information and presenting it in the form of certain intelligence products to people interested in such information.

In the fall of 1942, the US Embassy in Stockholm began monitoring foreign radio stations. The technical equipment was American, but the monitoring was carried out by the Balts themselves. In December 1945, a report by the USSR NKGB entitled 'On Baltic Emigration in Sweden' stated that "*with the consent of the centre of Lithuanians from the US, Žilinskas began working for US intelligence, where he headed the section monitoring Baltic radio stations.*" The NKGB distorted Vladas Žilinskas' surname, did not name the "*centre of Lithuanians from the US*", nor indicate how the Soviet spies knew about V. Žilinskas' work for American intelligence. In his memoirs published in the magazine 'Metai' ('Years') in 2003, V. Žilinskas did not mention any connections with American intelligence. According to him, the former Lithuanian envoy to Sweden, Vytautas Jonas Gylys, "*had [...] a well-paid job for the US embassy — to monitor foreign radio stations and report on their broadcasts.*"

In general, Lithuanians were pioneers in the field of radio monitoring. At the very beginning of the German-Soviet war, on July 3, 1941, E. Turauskas sent a telegram to V. J. Gylys asking him to monitor Lithuanian radio programmes: "*If you can hear Kaunas, Vilnius, telegraph the most important things and send a summary of the past period later.*" On August 9, E. Turauskas wrote to V. J. Gylys: "*When listening to radio news from Kaunas, please make a note of even seemingly insignificant details: chronicles, banal statements, etc. [...] If, for example, you hear an article from the papers being read or summarized, it would be very important for us to receive as comprehensive a summary of that article as possible.*" A month later, on September 5, E. Turauskas urged "*to continue monitoring the radio until we inform you that it is no longer necessary.*"

As indicated in dispatches from the US Legation to the secretary of state, regular monthly reviews of radio broadcasts were prepared based on information obtained by listening to Lithuanian radio, or the material was used as a source for

other informational reports. On December 3, 1942, a dispatch entitled 'Review of Lithuanian Radio Broadcasts in November 1942' was sent to Washington. This appears to have been the first report by the US Legation based on monitoring of radio broadcasts in occupied Lithuania.

As early as December 1942, the Americans concluded that the Germans were tightening radio censorship, changing the content of broadcasts, and that the informational value of Lithuanian radio broadcasts was clearly declining, as propaganda increasingly replaced information about real living conditions. Despite the declining level of information, radio broadcast monitoring continued because, in the opinion of the US Legation, monitoring the radio in occupied Lithuania was important for observing and analysing the direction and trends of German propaganda. Monitoring of German and Lithuanian language broadcasts on occupied Lithuanian radio stations (Kaunas and Vilnius) continued until the summer of 1944. Analysts not only regularly submitted reviews of Lithuanian radio programs but also compared them with previous ones. This made it possible to notice and assess changes in the propaganda carried out by German-controlled radio stations in Eastern and Central Europe and contributed to improving the organisation of the American information war against the Nazi regime.

Monitoring broadcasts on radio stations in occupied Lithuania was only an additional and auxiliary means of gathering information about Lithuania. After the Lithuanian underground and the Lithuanian diplomatic service established channels for receiving and transmitting information from the occupied country to foreign countries, by the autumn of 1942 it became possible to send not only individual documents, but entire shipments. For example, in October 1942, about fifty different documents, publications, and informational and analytical reports were sent to the US Legation in Stockholm. All this material was copied and sent to Washington. In their turn, analysts at the Stockholm legation prepared informational and analytical reports based on the material received from Lithuania. Between November 1942 and February 1943 alone, five reports were

sent to the State Department on the economy and finances of occupied Lithuania, German colonization policy, and passive Lithuanian resistance.

In July 1943, VLIK and LLKS representative A. Vokietaitis, in addition to documents, brought underground press publications to Stockholm. Without delay, the Americans made microfilms, which were sent to Washington by diplomatic mail as the "*first shipment of secret Lithuanian newspapers.*" In February 1944, A. Vokietaitis brought informational material from Lithuania to Sweden via Latvia, Estonia, and Finland. According to V. Žilinskas, it consisted of "*a large pile of the latest resistance documents: underground newspapers, reports [...].*" According to A. Vokietaitis, between 1943 and 1944, copies of 82 issues of the secret Lithuanian resistance publications 'Laisvės kovotojas' ('Freedom Fighter'), 'Apžvalga' ('Review'), 'Laisvas žodis' ('Free Word'), 'Kovojantis lietuvis' ('Fighting Lithuanian'), and 'Frontas' ('Front') were sent from Stockholm to Washington. Later, all of these were transferred to the US Library of Congress. After the war, the missing issues of the newspapers were added to the collection, and one of the most important libraries in the US now houses a collection of Lithuanian underground press publications.

It should be noted that in the spring of 1942, the Lithuanian resistance and the US Legation in Stockholm managed to organize their work so well that by the beginning of summer, the Americans were already able to provide Washington with monthly reports entitled 'Conditions in Lithuania'. The first report was prepared on June 8 and was titled 'Conditions in Lithuania in May 1942'. In addition to these monthly reports, reports on specific topics were sent to the secretary of state. Most the Stockholm legation's dispatches on the situation in Lithuania were in fact originals or summaries, translated into English, of reports or documents received from Lithuania. Each dispatch consisted of an accompanying document and the text of the report with comments from the legation. The dispatches were signed by Envoy H. V. Johnson, or the Chargé d'affaires W. Green.

"[...] remarkable source material", "in-



Algirdas Vokietaitis, representative of the Lithuanian underground in Sweden.

formation regarding its authenticity is of extraordinary interest", "the knowledge is undoubtedly from primary sources", "the freshest information available", "the documents presented contain a number of interesting statements and assessments" — from December 1942 onwards, such comments and references abound in the accompanying documents of the dispatches from the US Legation in Stockholm to Washington. The Americans not only evaluated the information but also sought to find out who the authors of the original reports on Lithuania were, as well as the recipients and providers of authentic information from Lithuania. When asked, V. J. Gyls either did not know or concealed the sources and authors of the information from Lithuania. At first, he said that the information had been obtained from Bern or Berlin. Later, it was stated that the documents and reports had reached Stockholm via a Lithuanian residing in Berlin who was well informed about the situation in the occupied country. Only on November 29, 1943, was it written in the cover letter accompanying the dispatch that the documents had been sent to the former secretary of the Lithuanian Legation, V. Žilinskas, were sent by a "Mr. Antanas Valiukenas residing in Berlin, about

whom no information is available, but who is probably operating in Berlin as a distributor of information received from Lithuania." Judging from T. Remeikis' collection of documents, it appears that A. Valiukėnas, while communicating with his companions in Sweden, used the pseudonym Jurgis Uosis and managed to remain virtually unknown to the Americans until the reoccupation of Lithuania.

The documents, reports, reviews, and notes provided by the Lithuanian underground not only more or less satisfied the American intelligence needs but also revealed the attitudes and intentions of the Lithuanian nation and society towards the brown and red occupiers. For example, a dispatch dated May 18, 1943, contained a memorandum from four Lithuanian general councillors to the German general commissioner in Kaunas. After presenting arguments regarding the status of the Lithuanian state in the XX century, US Legation in Stockholm wrote in a dispatch to Washington: "[...] there are no reasons to consider Lithuania part of the Soviet Union. [...] Germany did not acquire any sovereign rights through the fact that it occupied [...]."

Between 1941 and 1945 all key documents of the Lithuanian resistance movement reached the US government

via Sweden: statements and declarations adopted by the Provisional Government of Lithuania, VLK, political parties, and anti-Nazi and anti-Soviet resistance organizations (LLKS, Lithuanian Front). The active and uncompromising position of the Lithuanian underground, the émigré community, and the Lithuanian diplomatic service, as well as their cooperation with the institutions of democratic Western countries, undoubtedly laid the foundations for post-war relations.

It should be noted that when providing information from the occupied country, Lithuanians did not omit the most painful and darkest events and pages of recent history, such as the Holocaust. Already in his first report (August 8, 1941), prepared immediately after returning from a trip to Lithuania, A. Valiukėnas described the establishment of Jewish ghettos. In early December 1942, Ignas Jurkūnas-Šeinius, based on a letter received a month earlier from a Lithuanian living in Berlin, informed H. Carlson, that the Germans were delaying the publication of the data from the census organized in May because it would reveal that there were no Jews left in Vilnius. In October of the same year, V. J. Gyls handed over a bundle of documents, memoranda, and certificates to the US Legation in Stockholm. Among them was a report by A. Valiukėnas entitled 'The Situation in Lithuania in December 1941–March 1942'. Section 3.1, 'Extermination of Jews' provides summary information about the victims of the Holocaust in Lithuania. On December 19, 1942, the US Legation in Stockholm sent a report prepared by the SRS to Washington entitled 'How the Germans Are Colonizing Lithuania' (dispatch No. 1244). In an accompanying letter, Ambassador H. Johnson informed Secretary of State C. Hull that, among other important and authentic documents, the Lithuanians had handed over a memorandum from the LAF dated 1942 (other dispatches say mid-1942) stating that the Germans' goal was to destroy the Jews, persecute Lithuanian intellectuals, and colonize Lithuania. The fifth section of dispatch No. 1244, 'The Extermination of the Jews', is an abridged translation of section 3.1 of A. Valiukėnas' second report.



The main gate of the Vilnius ghetto.

Dispatch No. 1244 ('How the Germans are colonizing Lithuania') was also received by the British. It provided information about the Holocaust. Until then, British knowledge about the Nazi persecution and murder of Jews in the former USSR was sporadic. The British Foreign Office (FO) only learned of the true fate of Lithuanian Jews after receiving dispatch No. 1244 from the US Legation in Stockholm and the 1942 LAF memorandum.

The actions and achievements of the Polish anti-Nazi underground in revealing the truth about the Holocaust in Eastern Europe are widely known throughout the world. In 1942, Jan Karski (real name Jan Romuald Kozielewski, pseudonym *Witold* [Vytautas]), persuaded by Jewish underground leaders, secretly entered the Warsaw ghetto and, with their help, prepared a report. In November, as a courier for the Polish underground, he was flown to London via Gibraltar (with the help of British intelligence services), where he handed over a report on the situation of Jews in German-occupied territory to the Polish government in exile. The document was translated into English and passed on to the Americans and

British. J. Karski personally met with A. Eden, and in the summer of 1943, he was received by US President F. Roosevelt and had separate talks with C. Hull and W. Donovan. In December 1943, another Polish underground courier, Jan Nowak-Jezioranski, arrived in the West and reported that the Nazis had liquidated the Warsaw ghetto and that over three million Jews had been killed in the country. The missions of J. Karski and J. Nowak-Jezioranski show that not only the Poles, but also the Lithuanians informed the Atlantic Charter countries at around the same time. Considering that A. Valiukėnas' reports from Berlin were sent in German and via the Swedes, it can be assumed that at least the Swedish intelligence services and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were also aware of the Holocaust in Lithuania.

It seems that the fate of information provided by Poles and Lithuanians about the Holocaust in their countries was similar. A few years ago, when the British and Polish governments released some World War II intelligence documents, it became clear that American and British politicians were not convinced by the material provided by the Polish underground about the persecution of

Jews. The British intelligence coordinator, Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, counsellor to the Services Liaison Department of the Foreign Office William Cavendish-Bentinck believed that reports of Nazi atrocities were exaggerated because the Poles and Jews wanted to draw the British into an even greater confrontation with the Nazis in Poland. Therefore, in the opinion of the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee, the information provided was not sufficiently reliable and it was decided not to pass it on to Prime Minister W. Churchill. English historian Benjamin Wheatley found that by early 1943, the British had detailed information about the fate of Jews in Lithuania, but in reports to the British government by British analysts "*the subject of the murder of Jews in the Baltic states remained silent.*" In B. Wheatley's opinion, the analysts did not act on their own initiative — they were asked to do so.

On the same occasion, it should be recalled that at the end of 1944, the British FO decided to conceal information about the tragedy in the village of Pirčiupiai. On December 2, 1944, the Lithuanian Legation in London submitted a detailed report on the massacre of the inhabitants

of the village in the Dzūkija region shortly before the end of the German occupation. The Lithuanians provided the names and ages of those killed, but the FO decided to ignore them because "the English could not change the events in any way" and, most importantly, "by mistake, or perhaps rightly so, we would seriously offend our ally" (the USSR — author's note).

British 'white intelligence' and Lithuania

During World War II, the Atlantic Charter countries (Great Britain and the US) created professional structures for analysing open sources of information, also known as 'white intelligence'. According to Frank Hinsley's research, during World War II, three-fifths of all British economic intelligence data on Germany and its occupied European countries was obtained from open sources (newspapers and other similar sources).

The British Embassy in Sweden and intelligence agencies operating in the country played a significant role. During the interwar period, British intelligence in the Baltic Sea region was carried out by the so-called SIS Baltic Section, which had SIS stations in Helsinki, Tallinn, and Riga. The latter SIS unit was responsible for organizing intelligence activities in Latvia and Lithuania. The SIS station in Tallinn specialized in military intelligence, while the one in Riga focused on political and economic intelligence. In the summer of 1940, on the eve of the annexation by the USSR, the SIS branches in Estonia and Latvia were closed, and some of their officers were transferred to Helsinki. In August 1941, after London broke off diplomatic relations with Finland, the British Embassy (including the SIS station in Helsinki) was evacuated to Stockholm.

In September 1940, on the initiative of British Foreign Secretary Anthony Robert Eden, the Stockholm Press Reading Bureau (SPRB) was established at the British Embassy in Sweden. During the war years, similar British institutions operated in Bern, Lisbon, and Istanbul, but the most important and largest of them was in the Swedish capital. Cecil Cutberth

Parrott, a diplomat and graduate of Cambridge University, was appointed head of the Stockholm office.

In October 1941, in a memorandum to the FO leadership, C. Parrott justified the importance of monitoring and analyzing open sources of information for intelligence purposes. He acknowledged the existing skepticism about the intelligence value of open sources. Opponents argued that the press in Germany and its occupied countries was of no value because it was subject to extremely strict censorship. C. Parrott agreed that "discoveries of great importance are rare" when reading the press, but emphasized that constant and systematic monitoring of periodicals, especially when they are "read professionally and evaluated scientifically, often reveals a clear and detailed picture of conditions in the occupied territories." Summarizing their experience of working with open sources, analysts at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA) concluded that during the war years, German newspapers were quite open and informative because the Nazis never seriously considered the possibility that the press published in Ostland (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia) could be of interest to the British, and therefore did not strictly censor the content of its publications.

During the war, the SPRB monitored 270 daily newspapers and other periodicals published in Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Poland, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (as the territory of Czechoslovakia occupied by the Third Reich was called from 1939), the Netherlands, Belgium, Slovakia, Finland, and the Baltic States.

The SPRB had to establish channels and methods for receiving and forwarding press releases from Germany and its occupied territories to Sweden. For example, in mid-September 1941, the FO PID contacted the Ministry of Information (Mol) to inquire whether the SPRB had already managed to obtain the German-language newspaper 'Ostland', published in Kaunas. In early November, Mol representative Geoffrey Kirk informed FO PID Secretary General Walter Adams that information had been received from Stockholm that C. Parrot was making efforts to obtain

the 'Ostland' newspaper, but that the head of the SPRB asked for patience, as he knew from experience that it was difficult to obtain local press in the early days of the German occupation, but that the regime would later soften, restrictions would be eased, and there would be fewer obstacles. It is known that the British occasionally received copies of the 'Kauener Zeitung' newspaper, clippings from Lithuanian periodicals, and had access to individual issues of underground publications by the LLKS. The SPRB also received the 'Revaler Zeitung' published in Tallinn. However, the main source of information about the situation in the Baltic countries was the most important Nazi administration organ, the regional newspaper 'Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland', published in Riga. At first, it could be freely purchased in Stockholm, as the Nazis allowed this newspaper to be exported to countries friendly (neutral) to Germany. In February 1943, after the defeat at Stalingrad, the distribution of 'Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland' outside the Reich was banned. However, the SPRB was not left without German press from the occupied Baltic countries. 'Deutsche Zeitung im Ostland' and other publications were obtained through the US Legation in Finland, which operated in Helsinki until the autumn of 1944, and whose employees obtained the Baltic press through Tallinn. The SPRB established a special channel and route for receiving press from Finland, using a special courier. It should be noted that the SPRB also collected other material of interest to it, such as documents, testimonies, and the like.

The SPRB performed initial information gathering functions. The material collected by the SPRB reached the United Kingdom in two ways: by plane or by radio. A special civilian aircraft was assigned to communicate with England, which, for security reasons, usually flew at night. During the war, 1 200 such flights were made. This shows that they took place almost every day and ensured the rapid and uninterrupted provision of primary intelligence information. In urgent or special cases, the SPRB used radio telegrams to report important information or significant documents that had been obtained.

The information gathered by the SPRB and other British press reading bureaus was examined and evaluated by analysts from the Foreign Research and Press Service (FRPS). The FRPS was established in 1939 when the FO and English intellectuals realized that, in the event of war, British state institutions would not have sufficient capacity to carry out the necessary intelligence and information (propaganda) activities.

The initiators of the FRPS were Rex Leeper, head of the FO News Department, and Arnold Toynbee, director of the RIAA and researcher of civilizational history. During World War I, both worked in political intelligence (FO PID). R. Leeper was also involved in human intelligence (HUMINT) activities. In May 1920, as an employee of the FO PID, he traveled to Warsaw with SIS agent Paul Dukes to assess the political situation and the possibilities for organizing a spy network in the region. This was because SIS chief Mansfield Cumming had decided to carry out an ambitious operation to create an anti-*Bolshevik* intelligence service made up of agents recruited in Europe. The aim was to include former officers of the Tsarist Russian army and intelligence services, as well as some collaborators from the intelligence and security services of Eastern and Central Europe. This international spy organization was created by Viktor Orlov (a Tsarist Russian intelligence officer who had fled *Bolshevik* Russia and was a former chief criminal investigator), P. Dukes, Malcolm McLaren, and Sidney Reilly. They traveled throughout Eastern and Central Europe and the neighboring countries of *Bolshevik* Russia, looking for potential agents and making agreements with them on intelligence activities. Soon, about 50 people were recruited into this international anti-*Bolshevik* intelligence organization, including 5 in Warsaw, 11 in Riga, 4 in Tallinn, 3 in Helsinki, and 2 in Kaunas. At the end of July 1921, the SIS leadership in Warsaw ordered McLaren to end the operation, but he and Orlov continued to maintain contact with some of the recruited agents through the SIS stations in the Baltic States for several more years (K. Jeffery, MKI6..., pp. 175, 177, 181, 182).

R. Leeper and A. Toynbee proposed

the creation of a Foreign Information and Intelligence Department with RIIA as its foundation. It was to be composed of RIIA analysts, professors from other universities in the country, and foreign policy experts. The British government, through the FO, was to provide the necessary financial support, formulate specific tasks, and provide available current foreign information. However, the department was to operate as a non-governmental organisation. Under the agreement between the RIIA and the FO in August 1939, the department was given a more prosaic name (FRPS), thus concealing its intelligence role and responsibilities. The FRPS was tasked with providing regular reviews of the foreign press and preparing reports and memoranda on specific foreign policy issues. The FRPS operated at Balliol College, Oxford University. On April 1, 1943, the FRPS was merged with the FO PID to form the Foreign Office Research Department (FORD). The British government and FO leadership decided to absorb the FRPS into the state structure because "*it had become inconceivable that such an important intelligence organisation could remain outside the direct control of the FO.*"

The FRPS (as well as the FORD) was made up of departments organised on a geographical and thematic basis. In August 1941, the FRPS had 17 departments with 144 experts. Since Great Britain did not recognise the Soviet occupation of the Baltic states, the FRPS Baltic States Section (FRPS BSS) operated as a separate unit. It was established in the autumn of 1940 and was subordinate to the FRPS Northern Department (its area of activity included the Scandinavian countries, the USSR and the Baltic States). When Germany started the war against the USSR, the FO Northern Department and the FO Baltic States Section were tasked with monitoring the civil administration of Ostland.

The FRPS published bulletins. For example, on September 11, 1941, the FRPS Series C Review of the Foreign Press was titled 'The USSR, the Baltic States and the Far East'. The bulletin contained information about the Baltic States, and one copy of the document was sent to the FO's Baltic States Department. During the war, several studies and evaluations of the activities

of the FRPS and FORD were carried out, followed by certain organisational and structural changes. In all cases, the BSS remained an independent and autonomous unit. This was due not only to the FO's view of the status of the Baltic States, but also to the highly professional work of this division.

In the autumn of 1941, when the FRPS became responsible for providing intelligence on the situation in the Baltic States, its leaders and employees sought to gather information not only from the German press in Ostland or other territories occupied by the Reich. The fact that the FRPS was already receiving information about Lithuania from its diplomats in early 1942 is evidenced by the FRPS informational report 'The Situation in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia' dated in February. It was based on information received from the Lithuanian legation in the United States. Most likely, British analysts used material from the informational bulletin 'Current News on the Lithuanian Situation' published in Washington. From April 1943, the FORD BSS received thematic reviews prepared by the Lithuanian Legation in Washington. However, it was soon recognised that they were of limited value.

According to available information, until the second half of 1943, the British had no direct contact with the Lithuanian resistance movement, such as that established by the Americans through the US Legation in Stockholm. Therefore, British analysts had very limited access to authentic and fresh information from Lithuania. Research by British historians shows that FRPS/FORD employees obtained some documents and overviews of the situation in Lithuania through intermediaries: a) some dispatches from the US Legation in Stockholm were sent to London; b) the British ambassador to Poland, Frank Savery, received certain original documents from Lithuania from an expert at the Foreign Ministry of the Polish government-in-exile in London under the pseudonym *Westfal*, but it seems that they were selected in a biased manner in order to portray Lithuanians as German collaborators; c) Polish scouts and informants operating in occupied Lithuania did not have direct sources in the Lithuanian local government administration, but they

were only able (or preferred) to present public documents which, understandably, were pro-German in nature and content. In addition, Lithuanian documents submitted by representatives of the Polish government in London were often very late, so their real intelligence and factual value was limited; d) there were no people among FRPS/FORD employees who could work with authentic documents from Lithuania. In 1943, FORD informed F. Savery that it did not have a single person who spoke Lithuanian, so documents from Lithuania could only be accepted if translated into English. In exceptional cases, assistance was requested from a person working at the BBC radio station who knew Lithuanian.

The FRPS/FORD BSS was headed by Elizabeth Pares. She came from a renowned dynasty of academics in the XIX and XX centuries, with several generations of historians at Cambridge University. Her father, Bernard Pares, had been interested in Russian history since 1906. In 1916, with the knowledge of the British government, he established the International News Agency (English-Russian Bureau) based on the model of the Secret War Propaganda Bureau to promote British interests in Tsarist Russia. During the Russian Civil War, B. Pares was an advisor to Admiral Alexander Kolchak. After the White Army was defeated by the Red Army, he returned to England and headed the School of Slavic and East European Studies from 1919 to 1939. Despite *Bolshevik* rule and Stalinism, E. Pares remained a Russophile. Following in the footsteps of her grandfather, father and brother, E. Pares chose a career in academia. In the 1930s, on her father's recommendation, she began working at the RIIA. E. Pares' field of interest was Eastern Europe from the Baltic to the Adriatic Sea (Albania). In 1938, she wrote the RIIA handbook 'The Baltic States. A Survey of the Political and Economic Structure and the Foreign Relations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania'. With this work, E. Pares proved herself to be a professional researcher, so her appointment as head of the FRPS BSS was a natural and logical decision.

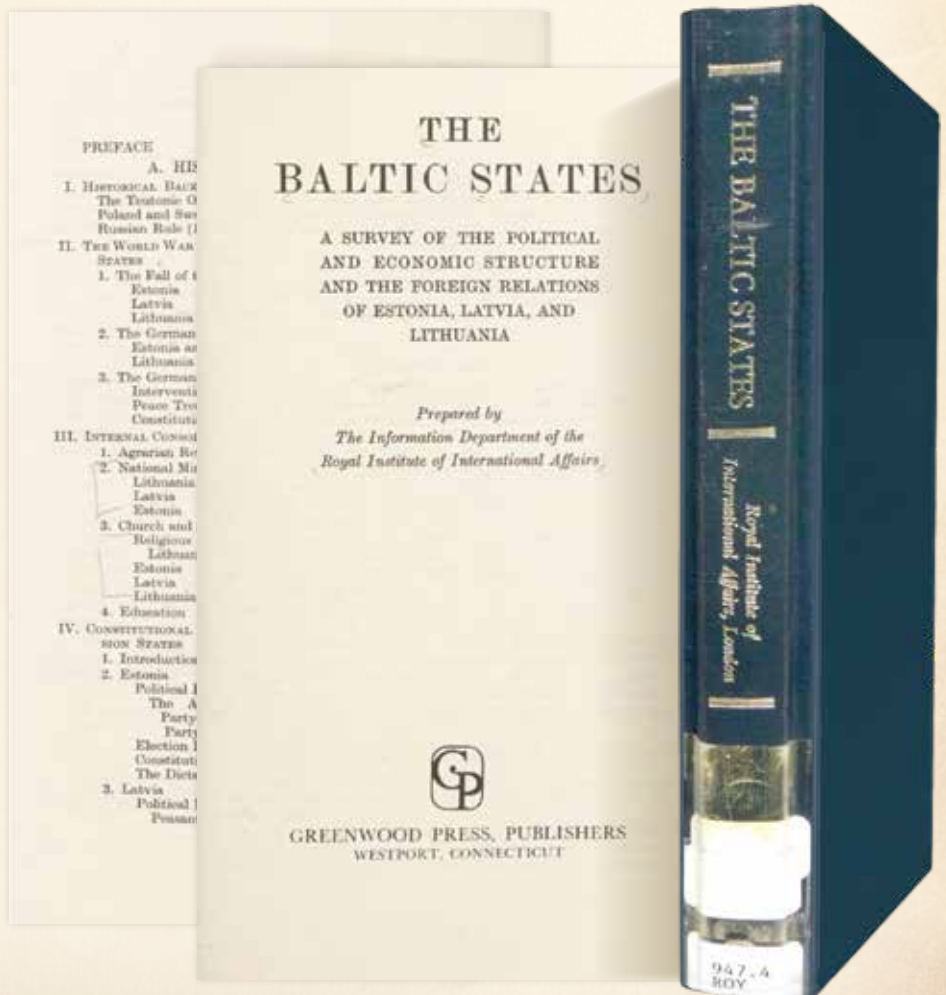
It should be noted that Elizabeth's views on the threat posed by the USSR

to the Baltic States were diametrically opposed to those of her father and remained so throughout her life. As a researcher, E. Pares prepared informational and analytical reports on Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, known as the 'Ostland supplements to the Review of the Foreign Press'. As an analyst, she also prepared certain memos and wrote thematic analytical notes. Under E. Pares' leadership, the FRPS BSS became a highly respected institution. According to B. Wheatley, when the British government needed information about the German occupation in the East, it had nowhere else to turn but the FRPS BSS.

Since FRPS/FORD BSS analysts received authentic information from Lithuania indirectly and in the form of ready-made intelligence products (informational or analytical reports), the material provided was used as a source and basis for broader, regional investigations conducted by the British. For example, in mid-June 1943, FORD BSS

prepared a report entitled 'Colonisation of the German East'. Data and material from Lithuania formed a solid basis for British analysts' overview reports on the banking system, Nazi financial policy and the administration of the German justice system in the occupied Eastern territories. According to B. Wheatley, if the FRPS BSS had not been able to provide OSINT intelligence products, the British state "would have been blind and completely unaware of what was happening in the Baltic states." According to the historian, the FRPS/FORD BSS reports, based on authentic documents from the occupied Baltic States, made it possible to at least partially understand how the Nazi regime operated in other republics of the then USSR (Ukraine, Belarus) and in Eastern Europe in general.

On June 13, 1944, FORD analysts described Lithuanians as "perhaps the most obstinate race in Europe". This was how highly they regarded the Lithuanian resistance. ■





Drawing by Ramūnas Vaitkus

Leadership

The Battle of Zboriv was a battle fought between the armies of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ukrainian Cossacks on 15–16 August 1649 near Zboriv. The armies of Bohdan Khmelnytsky and Crimean Khan Islam I Giray (about 60 000 men) attacked the army of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (about 30 000 men) led by King John II Casimir Vasa, while they were crossing the Strypa River, from the front and the rear, and forced it to stop in a fortified camp. On 15–16 August, the Cossacks and Tatars invaded the camp. After negotiations with the Grand Chancellor of Poland, Jerzy Ossoliński, Islam I Giray, who was not interested in a complete victory for the Cossacks and had been promised a large sum of money, withdrew from the battle. Under pressure from the Khan, B. Khmelnytsky signed the Treaty of Zboriv on 18 August.

...The night was quiet. To everyone's dismay, *ad falsum rumorem* (false rumours) spread that His Majesty the King had left the camp. Two rittmasters, Sir Teodoras Belžeckis and Sir Gidzinskis, fled that night, while others prepared to do the same. One Lithuanian incited 1 000 people, claiming that His Majesty the King had fled the camp. Therefore, His Majesty the King had to walk around the camp with a torch persuading people: "Do not abandon me, as I am not abandoning you." The guards and the rest of the troops were also visited by him later that evening...

Source: Letter from King's Secretary Vaitiekus Miaskovskis to an unknown person about the battle near Zboriv. From: *Lietuvos didžiosios kunigaikštystės kasdienis gyvenimas: Lietuvos istorijos skaitinių chrestomatija*. Compiled and edited by Dr. A. Baliulis, E. Meilius. Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 2001, p. 194.