

Mountain Course Officer Cadet Vytautė Kupčiūnaitė (Lithuania)

Between 1st and 11th September, foreign cadets from Lithuania, Spain and Finland together with French cadets from the 2nd Battalion of Saint Cyr Military Academy went to the French Alps. There they attended in The Military Mountain Climbing Badge (Brevet d'Alpinisme Militaire, BAM), which is one of the two basic military mountain courses of the French army.

For me (I am a cadet from Lithuania) it was an incredible experience, it was my first time in the mountains. It was a totally different region from what we are used to in Lithuania, because we don't have mountains at home. As you can guess, it was really difficult and exciting. Every day in BAM started the same way with an incredible and breath-taking view



through the window. After waking up, we would always prepare our equipment for the day and without waiting, we would go into the mountains. The different lessons with the best instructors from French Mountain Troops were hiking, climbing and crossing via ferratas. They were really interesting and useful. Each time we trained in different places and one night almost at the end of the course we spent the night in the mountains and early in the morning we started hiking and at 9 o'clock in the morning we reached the highest point of the whole course: 3300m! The view was magnificent, the snow, the clouds... It marked our minds and hearts forever. We

finished The Military Mountain Climbing course with an exam, which consisted of

doing a 1100m. hike and doing it on time! It was a great challenge for everyone, but in the end all participants passed and received The Military Mountain Climbing Badge! For us, future officers, it was a great advantage to participate in this course.

Another experience that we had the opportunity to get to know better with the French cadets and



all the French culture. When you are a foreign cadet and you can't speak French, it's really difficult to be part of the team, but I think we managed to be part of it in a way. It was a great challenge for all of us, for the foreign and French cadets.

One of the Spanish cadets said that if you ever thought about this course, you would know: "First of all, this course is about technique and reinforcement more than



tactics. Secondly, it's a very good decision to have several tests at the end. In that case, we could check the level we have reached. Thirdly, we really enjoyed the change of environment, we are used to working in other types of landscapes like forests or "deserts", so it was a very interesting experience".

All the foreign cadets were very happy to have passed this course and very grateful to the instructors and the cadets who helped them!