



The Baltic Defence College,
The Estonian War Museum – General Laidoner Museum,
The Estonian Military Academy,
The Latvian War Museum,
Vytautas the Great War Museum,
are pleased to announce a call for papers and panel proposals for:

ANNUAL BALTIC MILITARY HISTORY CONFERENCE 2024: Professional Military Education in the Baltic Region, 1919–2024

From 31 October to 1 November at the University of Tartu Library Conference Centre

Professional military education in the Baltic countries is around 200 years old. It was established during the Russian Empire already. There was a department of military science at the University of Tartu at the beginning of the 19th century and a military school was founded in Vilnius in 1864. The characteristics of professional military education underwent great changes before the Great War, between 1919 and 1940, and during and after the Cold War.

Officer training and military education in the independent Baltic countries began during their wars of independence in 1919. It was initially designed to satisfy wartime needs. In the 1920s, military education had to be reorganized for peacetime conditions. The vision for professional military education was multifaceted, from educating cadets to developing strategic thinking and planning. Higher military officers constantly placed a great emphasis and high expectations on military education, and these small states could not afford "idleness". In addition, the expectations on professional military education were driven by constant change. There were many reasons for this dynamic: primarily, these were peacetime changes, but they were affected by the turmoil caused by the great depression and the threat of World War II. Defence planning and doctrinal changes had a significant influence as well.

During the Second World War most higher and senior officers of the armies of the Baltic states were imprisoned by the Soviet state security agencies after the occupation of the Baltic states. They were either sentenced to death or to long years of imprisonment in the GULAG. On the other hand, there were a lot of officers, mostly junior grade, who fought in the Red Army, the

German Army, or the Finnish Army. Their educational background affected their performance on the battlefield.

After the restoration of independence of the Baltic states in the beginning of the 1990s, the re-establishment of the institutions of military education was initially formulated in their individual national contexts. For example, there were strong influences from the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, and Sweden) and other states. Professional military education gradually recovered, and one of its results was the Baltic Defence College, which recently celebrated its 25th anniversary.

Presentations on professional military education and ideas on changes and innovations in it are welcome, especially on the following themes:

- Comparative case studies on professional military education.
- How has military education adapted to different threats in the past and at present?
- Is leadership possible without professional military education?
- Training and education methodologies.
- Case studies in successful military educational developments.
- Contemporary changes in development of military education on a global scale.
- The role of education in the comprehensive approach and military operations.
- Military education and societal change – from elite military academies to the *Junker* schools and wartime officer courses.
- The role of higher military education in officers' career.
- Military education and the creation and re-establishment of national officer corps in the 1920s and the 1990s.
- Military education in the Baltic countries and accession to NATO.

The working language of the conference is English. Those interested in presenting at the conference are kindly invited to send an abstract of up to 2000 characters and a one-page CV on 30 August 2024 at the latest to conference@esm.ee. The length of the presentation is 20 minutes, which will be followed by a discussion session. Articles derived from the presentations will be published in the Estonian Yearbook of Military History.