

## VIKING 08

From the 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov till the 14<sup>th</sup> Nov, 10 permanent and 8 non-permanent SHIRBRIG members joined the VIKING 08 exercise in Enköping in Sweden. At the same time all branches in Hövelte barracks were manned and linked to the exercise.



Exercise Viking 08 was the 5th in a series of Viking exercises, organized by Sweden. It was a computer-assisted exercise and conducted at Component Command and Brigade levels in the Spirit of Partnership for Peace. This year also cooperation and coordination between military units and civilian organisations and agencies were exercised. In Viking 2008, SHIRBRIG played the role of United Nations Security Assistance Force (UNSAF),

The participation in the exercise was part of the SHIRBRIG Annual Training Plan and concluded this years training cycle of permanent and non permanent SHIRBRIG staff.



*SHIRBRIG non permanent members: Maj Moreno (Spain) and Major Codreanu (Romania)*

During the first two days all training audience arrived in the Enköping training area, where a comprehensive admin-, transport- and lodging plan was executed. The immense span of the exercise became visible this way. This was only the Enköping area, the overview below shows all the locations where the other participants were working during the exercise.

Austria	Seetaler Alpe	Multinational Brigade HQ	170 participants
Finland	Tuusula	Multinational Brigade HQ	90 participants
Ireland	Curragh	Multinational Brigade HQ	150 participants
Latvia	Dobele	Multinational Brigade HQ	70 participants
Norway	Bergen	Naval Task Group HQ	100 participants
Switzerland	Lucerne	Multinational Brigade HQ	150 participants
Sweden	Kungsängen	EXCON	400 participants
Sweden	Enköping	UNMINS HQ, UNSAF, LCC, MCC, ACC, IOTF	500 participants

After the introduction activities, the staff went to their respective offices to start up and test the computers. On Wednesday a so called “rock drill” was held, in which the first real exercise day (Thursday) already was rehearsed one day in advance. This was to ensure that all means of communication would work perfect on the moment the actual exercise would start. Although this was a very good way to test the systems, it also created a “Groundhog Day” feeling on Thursday. On Thursday the SHIRBRIG staff was pleasantly surprised by a visit of the exercise director, Brigadier General Jan-Gunnar Isberg. This was an excellent moment for COMSHIRBRIG, Brigadier General Torben Lund, to get acquainted and exchange thoughts on the exercise.



*Exercise director, Brigadier General Jan-Gunnar Isberg visiting UNSAF*

During the following days all players became more comfortable in their roles they had to fulfil in this exercise. Some of the units consisted of large numbers of participants that only met for the first time at the beginning of this exercise. While this process was ongoing, reports on the situation in the mission area also had to be dealt with.

On Sunday afternoon, the exercise was stopped for a short visit to Stockholm. The SHIRBRIG party took this opportunity to visit the Vasa museum in Stockholm. The *Vasa* is the world's only surviving 17th-century ship, which is displayed in a purpose-built museum in Stockholm. Unfortunately the beautiful, heavily armed ship sunk on her maiden voyage. She did not even manage to leave the port.

In the weekend first actions were taken to start up visits and meetings between the different organisations in play. In these attempts all necessary actions were taken. Permission to cross border was asked for; transports with helicopters were requested and so on. In reality the playing parties were most of the time in the same building, in stead of 200 km or more apart.

During the exercise 26 major events and over 600 incidents were played and trained upon. Events such as elections, the transfer of authority between leaving and incoming forces and disarmament programs. Many of the incidents found their origin in ethnic, religious and cultural related violence, also to neighbouring countries. A lot of effort went to the humanitarian assistance, always an ongoing issue to be solved in UN missions. Sometimes these problems arise because of a security vacuum and violence in camps and sites, sometimes because of weather conditions. Other incidents involved riots following the breakdown of law and order and economic problems. This again led to problems in prisons. There were incidents involving criminality in general and smuggling. All in all a very challenging tableau of problems for the training audience to deal with. Thursday afternoon, the (play part) exercise ended.

During the closing ceremony on Friday morning, the program had very nice music in the interludes, performed by the The Royal Swedish Army Drum Corps. The band consists only of conscripts and was very entertaining. The musicians were also capable of performing in an attractive way without the use of instruments.



*No instruments?? We don't care.....*

Reviewing the 2 weeks of intense training in the Viking 08 exercise, SHIRBRIG looks back at a well planned, well executed exercise, where all participants learned a lot with and from each other. Again, due to the unique composition and ongoing training of the Planning element, SHIRBRIG proved to be very rapid, flexible and prepared.