

## Norwegian Armed Forces - Forsvaret

Norwegian military has been established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was one of the founding members of NATO. The country that has population of around five million also has one of the highest military expenditures per capita among European NATO members. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the Norwegian military has seen probably the biggest transformation so far, from a traditional defensive role the military has been transformed into a mobile force ready to participate in various international missions. The Commander-in-Chief is the Norwegian King while the political control of the Forsvaret is divided between the Government and the Parliament.

High North<sup>1</sup> is one of the key points of the Norway's military strategy. The term was always present in Norway's defense policy but since 2014, and evermore deteriorating relations with Russia, the High North was brought into a sharper focus. This region has great economic as well as geopolitical importance for Oslo's foreign policy, consequently military and defense policies have been shaped around it. After the end of the Cold War the region saw some decline in its importance both in domestic and global politics. However at the beginning of the new millennium various researches showed massive reserves of energy resources, it is estimated that the region is the third most energy-rich part of the country. Recent legal disputes with Russia over the High North made the region a vocal point for the Norwegian defense policy. Cooperation and deterrence are main strategies employed by the government in order to assess the problems in the High North. Deterrence strategy implies stronger NATO presence in the region, cooperation with the US, building and upgrading Norwegian military's capabilities and further developing political cooperation between Nordic states. However, Oslo is trying to be very careful not to provoke an arms race or further complicate relations with Russia. We should also keep in mind that in Norway's public discourse Russia isn't described as a main threat, likewise the government will try to pursue a more peaceful or "cooperative" approach. On the other hand cooperation implies improving relations with Russia and cross-border collaboration especially in the military and energy/petroleum sectors. The second approach can be much more lucrative for Oslo since the main objective is to stabilize the region and not provoke Russia. Nevertheless as much as Norway is trying to bridge the gap between the West and Russia conflicts in Ukraine, behavior of some Baltic states and overall NATO activities in the region are very aggravating. The article will further focus on structure, equipment and capabilities of the Norwegian Armed Forces.

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<sup>1</sup> High north is a Norwegian term for the Arctic. It describes a region where the highest temperatures over the year remain below 10°C. The Norwegian High North encompasses areas such are Norwegian territorial sea, Nordland, Troms, Finnmark, 200-miles economic zone in Barents Sea and North Sea. Svalbard Archipelago and Jan Mayen Island.

Norwegian Armed Forces have 25,800 active and 45,940 reserve personnel deployed across Army, Navy, Air Force, Central Support and Home Guard.

The Army represents the core of the Norwegian Armed Forces, it is also the oldest and largest of all other service branches. The army has 9,350 personnel from which 4,850 are conscripts. Conscripts are a very important part of the Army and are required to go through a mandatory one year training program. The Army also has a very credible system of soldier education which bolsters the overall capabilities of the Norwegian military. The main element of the Norwegian Army is the Nord Brigade which is composed out of two mechanized maneuver battalions, one light infantry battalion, combat and service support units. Border Guard, Kings Guard as well as Norwegian Army Special Operation Command (NORASOC) are also at the disposal of the Army. The key responsibility of the Army is to ensure security and stability of the country as well as to promote peace in the international conflict areas. Main tasks of the Army include: defense against any kind of invasion, border control, combating any incursion in any part of the country, participating in NATO and UN missions while also supporting the civil community.

The Norwegian Army has 4,500 active personnel and 4,850 conscripts.

#### **Deployment of the Army:**

- Høybuktmoen - Border Guard
- Skjold - Engineer and Light Armored Battalion
- Bardufoss - Army Staff, Brigade North Staff, MP Company, Signal and Logistics Battalion
- Satermoen - Mechanized, Artillery, Medical and Military Intelligence Battalion
- Sessvollmoen - Norwegian Defense and Logistics Training Center
- Linderud - Army Staff and Military Academy
- Huseby - The King's Guard
- Rena - Support Staff South, Mechanized Battalion, CSS<sup>2</sup>/HRF<sup>3</sup>, ENG<sup>4</sup>/HRF, MED<sup>5</sup>/HRF, MP<sup>6</sup>/HRF, Parts of Army Weapons School, Army Officer Candidate School
- Terningmoen - Army Staff, Parts of Army Weapons School, Armed Forces Winter Warfare School, The King's Guard Training School

#### **FORCES BY ROLE**

##### *Manoeuvre*

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<sup>2</sup> Combat Service Support

<sup>3</sup> High Readiness Force

<sup>4</sup> Engineer

<sup>5</sup> Medical

<sup>6</sup> Military Police

- 1 Border Guard Battalion
- 1 Mechanized Infantry Brigade
- 1 Light Infantry Battalion

## **EQUIPEMENT OF THE NORWEGIAN ARMY**

**MBT** 52 *Leopard 2A4*

**RECCE** TPz-1 *Fuchs* NBC

**AIFV** 104 CV9030N

**APC** 410

**APC (T)** 315 M113

**APC (W)** 75 XA-186 *Sisu*/XA-200 *Sisu*

**PPV** 20 *Dingo II*

**ARTY** 204 **SP 150mm** 18 M108A3GN **MOR** 186 **SP 81mm** 36: 24M106A1; 12 M125A2

**AT** **MANPATS** *Javelin* RCL **84mm** *Carl Gustav*

**RADAR LAND** 12 ARTHUR

**AEV** 22 *Alvis*

**ARV** 9: 3 M88A1; M578; 6 *Leopard 1*

**VLB** 35: 26 *Leguan*; 9 *Leopard 1*

**MW** 9 910 MCV-2

The Royal Norwegian Navy consists out of the Navy, Coast Guard and Coastal Artillery, however all forces are subordinate to the Commanders of the Armed Forces South Norway and North Norway (COMSONOR and COMNON). Due to the very long coast line the Navy has allot of responsibilities and obligations ensuring sovereignty and protecting maritime borders of the country. During the Cold War the Navy was especially important for maintaining and protecting the borders and areas of the Baltic and Barents Sea. The Coast Guard is charged with fishery protection, environmental protection, search and rescue missions as well as providing assistance to civil communities. The Coastal Artillery is stationed near fjords and fjords

entrances in order to block any kind of seaborne invasion. The main task of this force is to block the fjords which lead to strategic towns or harbors.

The Norwegian Navy has 2,450 active personnel and 2,050 conscripts.

### **Naval Deployment:**

- Sortland - Coast Guard Command
- Trondenes - Coastal Rangers Command
- Ramsund - Ramsund Naval Base
- Bergen - Haakonsværn Naval Base, Navy Staff, Norwegian Fleet Command, Naval Academy, Naval Training Establishment, Navy Officer Candidate School
- Madla - Basic Training Establishment

### **FORCES BY ROLE**

#### *Manoeuvre*

1 Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance company

1 Explosive Ordnance Disposal platoon

### **EQUIPEMENT OF THE NORWEGIAN NAVY AND COAST GUARD**

**SUBMARINES** 6 *Ula* with 8 single **533mm** TT with A3 *Seal* DM2 HWT

**DESTROYERS** 5 *Fridtjof Nansen* with 2 quad launcher with NSM AShM, 1 8-cell Mk41 VLS with ESSM SAM, 2 twin **324mm** ASTT with Sting Ray LWT, 1 **76mm** gun

**PATROL AND COASTAL COMBATANTS** 6 *Skjold* with 8 single launcher with NSM AShM, 1 twin *Simbad* launcher with *Mistral* SAM, **76mm** gun **PSO** 8 : 3 *Barentshav*; 1 *Svalbard* with 1 **57mm** gun, 1 helicopter landing platform; 1 *Harstad*; 3 *Nodkapp* with 1 **57mm** gun, 1 helicopter landing platform **PCO** 7: 1 *Aelsund*; 5 *Nornen*; 1 *Reine*

**MINE WARFARE/COUNTERMEASURES** 6: 3 *Alta* with 1 twin *Simbad* launcher with *Mistral* SAM; 3 *Oksoy* with 1 twin *Simbad* launcher with *Mistral* SAM

**LANDING CRAFT** 16 S90N

**LOGISTICS AND SUPPORT** 20 **AGI** 1 *Marjata* with 1 helicopter landing platform

**AGDS** 1 *Tyr* **AGS** 6: 1 HU *Sverdrup II*; 4 *Oljevern*; 1 *Geoffjord* **ATS** 1 *Valkyrien* **AXL** 5: 2 *Hessa*; 2 *Kvarnen*; 1 *Reine* **YAC** 1 *Norge* **YDT** 5

The Royal Norwegian Air Force has been founded at the end of the Second World War in 1944. Since then the Air Force has been active in various international missions, most recent include support mission in Kabul Afghanistan and transportation and support mission in Sierra Leone when the Ebola epidemic struck the country. Primary missions of the Luftforsvaret are the permanent surveillance of the Norwegian airspace (especially the northern regions), sea surveillance and search and rescue missions. Most domestic missions, especially sea surveillance, is conducted in cooperation with the Coast Guard. The recent decision to acquire new F-35 jets and modernize other equipment and capabilities have pushed the Luftforsvaret towards realignment of their forces.

Air Force has 2,800 active personnel and 1,150 conscripts.

#### **Norwegian Air Force Deployment:**

- Sørreisa - Air Defense Control and Air Reporting School
- Andøya Air Station - 333 squadron
- Bardufoss Air Station - 334 squadron, 337 squadron, 339 squadron and Air Force Pilot School
- Evenes - Forward Base of Operation
- Ørland Air Station - 338 squadron, 331 squadron, 332 squadron, Air Defense, Base set, Norwegian Electronic Warfare Center
- Reitan - Air Force Operations Center, Air Force Staff, Air Force Training Inspectorate, Air Operations Inspectorate
- Trondheim - Air Force Academy
- Gardermoen Air Station - 335 squadron, 717 squadron
- Haakonsvern - Detachment NH-90
- Madla - Basic Training Establishment
- Rygge - Detachment Bell 412
- Kjevik - Air Force Education Center

#### **FORCES BY ROLE**

**Fighter/Ground Attack:** 3 squadrons with F-16AM/BM *Fighting Falcon*

**Maritime Patrol:** 1 squadron with P-3C *Orion*; P-3N *Orion*

**Electronic Warfare:** 1 squadron with *Falcon 20C*

**Search and Rescue:** 1 squadron with *Sea King Mk43B*

**Transport:** 1 squadron with C-130J-30 *Hercules*

**Training:** 1 squadron with MFI-15 SAAB *Safari*

**Transport Helicopter:** 2 squadrons with Bell 412SP *Twin Huey*; 1 squadron with *Lynx* Mk86; 1 squadron with NH-90

**Air Defense:** 1 battery with NASAMS II

## **EQUIPEMENT OF THE NORWEGIAN AIR FORCE**

**AIRCRAFT** 63 combat capable

**FTR 57:** 47 F-16AM *Fighting Falcon*; 10 F-16BM *Fighting Falcon*

**ASW 6:** 4 P-3C *Orion*; 2 P-3N *Orion*

**EW 3** *Falcon 20C*

**TRG 16** MFI-15 *Safari*

## **HELICOPTERS**

**ASW 8:** 5 *Lynx* Mk86; 3 NH90 NFH

**SAR 12** *Sea King* MK43B

**MRH 18:** 6 Bell 412HP; 12 Bell 412SP

**AD SAM TOWED** NASAMS II

**MSL AAM IR** AIM-9L *Sidewinder*; **IIR** IRIS-T; **ARH** AIM-120B AMRAAM

The Home Guard represents to core of territorial defense in times of peace and armed conflicts. Land Home Guard, Naval Home Guard and Air Force Home Guard with their unique specializations compose three main branches of the Norwegian Home Guard. Personnel of the Home Guard is required to complete a six months basic training and are also required to partake in yearly training exercises in order to maintain their readiness and capabilities. Furthermore Heimevernet is divided into rapid-reaction forces, reinforcement forces and follow-up forces. These forces are battalion-sized and are organized similarly to the light infantry units. The Home Guard is highly decentralized and it is present in all Norwegian communities across the country. Heimevernet maintains regular contact with the civilian population sharing knowledge and trust. Main objective of the Home Guard is the protection of the overall communal functions which includes: protecting defense installations, local infrastructure, surveillance and patrols as well as providing overall support for the civil community.

Home Guard has 550 active and 45,000 reserve personnel deployed across Land Home Guard 41,150 with reserves, Naval Home Guard 1,900 with reserves and Air Home Guard 1,450 with reserves.

**Deployment of the Home Guard:**

Porsangmoen - District Staff No. 17, Home Guard Officer, Candidate School

Trondenes - Naval Home Guard Unit

Bjerkvik - District Staff No. 16

Værnes - District Staff No. 12

Drevjamoen - District Staff No. 14

Setnesmoen - District Staff No. 11

Bergarhus - District Staff No. 09

Vatneleiren - District Staff No. 08

Dombås - Home Guard, Education and Competence Center

Haakonvern - NHG Education and Competence Center

Terningmoen - Home Guard Staff, District Staff No. 05

Heistadmoen - District Staff No. 03

Lutvann - District Staff No. 02

Rygge - District Staff No. 01

***Aberrations:***

MBT - Main Battle Tank      RECCE - Reconnaissance      AIFV-Armored Infantry Fighting Vehicle

APC - Armored Personnel Carrier      PPV - Protected Patrol Vehicle

ARTY - Artillery      SP - Self Propelled      AEV - Armored Engineer Vehicle

ARV - Armored Recovery Vehicle      VLB - Vehicle Launched Brigade

MW - Mine Warfare      PSO - Offshore Patrol vessel      AGS - Survey Ship

AXL - Training Craft      YAC - Royal Yacht      YDT - Diving Tender  
FTR - Fighter      ASW - Antisubmarine Warfare  
EW - Electronic Warfare      TRG - Training      SAR - Search and Rescue  
MRH - Multi-Role Helicopter      AD - Air Defense  
MSL - Missile      SAM - Surface to Air Missile AAM - Air to Air Missile  
IR - Infrared

***Sources used for this article:***

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