

## Lithuanian medals on King Mindaugas' Day

Written by AG

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**On 25 June 2009, a small Lithuanian community of Headquarters Multinational Corps Northeast (HQ MNC NE) invited multinational staff to the Allied Officers' Club to celebrate a special day for all Lithuanians – King Mindaugas' Day.**

*"King Mindaugas was the first and only King of Lithuania", explained Major Aleksandras Petrulis to all the gathered. "He united smaller Lithuanian tribes and is considered to be the founder of the Lithuanian state and the first ruler of united Lithuania"*

. It is also said he established international recognition of Lithuania and prevented the Tatars from reaching the Baltic Sea. To commemorate Mindaugas' coronation on 6 July 1253, that day has become the Statehood Day in Lithuania, celebrated since 1991.

Paying a tribute to such an important figure in the Lithuanian history turned out to be an excellent occasion to recognize people positively contributing to the development of contemporary Lithuania and the Lithuanian Armed Forces. On behalf of Lithuanian Chief of Defence Lieutenant General Valdas Tutkus, Major Petrulis awarded Polish Colonel Jerzy Fela, German Lieutenant Colonel Andreas Abel and Danish Major Mogens Ryttergaard with the Lithuanian Armed Forces Medal of Merit. In the justification, all officers' contribution to fostering multinational cooperation was emphasized as well as their personal input to the integration of Lithuanian officers into the NATO structure and assistance they offered to them. Colonel Fela

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expressed gratitude for the award – *"It was a nice surprise to all of us"*, he said. *"We will wear this medal with great honour"*, he added.

Additionally, Lithuanian Major Arturas Radvilas received the Certificate of Appreciation from the Lithuanian Chief of Defence, whereas Captain Egidijus Timinskas – the Certificate of Appreciation from the Lithuanian Minister of Defence.

There was also one more person who received something from the Lithuanian hands – Lieutenant Colonel Siegmar Plonka. But this time it was not a personal award but a gift for the Allied Officers' Club, President of which is Lieutenant Colonel Plonka. On behalf of the Lithuanian Armed Forces, a painting presenting a historical battle was handed over to decorate the Club.

As soon as the awarding ceremony was over, all guests started to chat in a nice atmosphere tasting some traditional Lithuanian drinks and watching a small exhibition prepared by Major Petrulis.

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