Northern composure

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Living with Russia on their nation's eastern border has meant the Finnish Defence Forces are more adjusted than most other militaries in the region in how to adopt an appropriate posture, Peter Felstead reports

As Europe's NATO nations have been forced to adjust their defence posture in response to Moscow's increasing propensity for belligerence in recent years, non-aligned Finland is perhaps more used to dealing with its Russian neighbour, with whom it shares a 1,340 km border.

Having fought two wars against the Soviet Union during the Second World War, Finland's military posture is inevitably geared towards defending against attack from the east.

Being an EU member but retaining its military non-aligned status, Finland has since 1994 been part of NATO's Partnership for Peace programme and has always been active in international peacekeeping efforts, often alongside NATO forces.

Meanwhile, as NATO's newer members in Eastern Europe - and the Baltic region in particular - have grown increasingly nervous with regard to Moscow's intentions of late, Finland has found itself working more and more in parallel with the alliance. On 9 November 2016, on the occasion of Sauli Niinistö making the first ever visit by a Finnish president to NATO headquarters in Brussels, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg cited Finland as "one of NATO's closest partners" and added that Finland and the alliance "have been able to develop a very close partnership on a range of different issues, including planning for civil emergencies, and security in the Baltic Sea region". He continued, seemingly with Russia in mind: "We are now expanding our co-operation when it comes to information exchanges on hybrid warfare, co-ordinating exercises, and developing joint situational awareness."

Theoretically it might seem that a country as small as Finland, with a population just under 5.5 million, would struggle to develop an effective defensive strategy to counter Russia's military might. In the 1940s, however, the Soviet Union was made to pay dearly for the Finnish territory it advanced into and Finland's current military posture is very much about ensuring that would remain the case today.

It is very much down to its experiences in the Second World War that Finland's military model today is one of the few worldwide where conscription actually works, for it is accepted by all Finns that society as a whole is responsible for the nation's defence. As Lieutenant General Seppo Toivonen, commander of the Finnish Army, explained to Jane's during a visit to the Finnish Defence Forces (FDF) at the end of last year: "In the 1960s, as with countries like Sweden, we created the total defence model, where all parts of society are responsible to prepare themselves for crisis, and we have kept that model and improved it.

The FDF reorganised

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In keeping with improving that defence model but also in response to a tightening economic environment, from the beginning of 2015 the FDF reorganised.

"What has changed is that previously we had a large number of brigades. Now there are still brigades, of course - a mechanised brigade, motorised brigade, [and] three infantry brigades - but the main issue has been reorganising the regional forces, mainly to territorial battalions and battlegroups," said Lt Gen Toivonen.

Although the army had previously always had a structure where there were always regional headquarters, in the 2015 reforms the army's regional commands were disbanded, with the regional offices now falling under the brigades. The brigades have thus inherited the various tasks conducted by the regional commands in addition to being responsible for conscript and reservist training. "So, quite a lot of responsibility for the brigade commander," the general noted, adding: "Although of course he's also responsible for that area during a time of crisis. I like this system because it's effective.

"There are six [brigade-level units] who have these tasks: the Jaeger Brigade, Kainuu Brigade, Pori Brigade, Armoured Brigade, Karelia Brigade, and in the capital area there's the Guard Jaeger Regiment," the general explained. "And then there are two additional units: the Army Academy, which does the leadership training; and the Utti Jaeger Regiment, which covers helicopter and special forces operations."

Finland ordered 20 NH90 TTHs in 2001, but because of delays to the programme a large number of these were delivered in a pre-production configuration. These aircraft are now being retrofitted to full operational capability standard, with redeliveries running until 2018. (Airbus Helicopters)

Army operations

The key task for the army, in line with the FDF's overall roles, is land defence, although the army also supports other national authorities on around 500 tasks every year. At any given time the army in peacetime consists of around 14,000 conscripts and 3,500 fully professional personnel. During wartime, however, the army’s strength following mobilisation would increase to around 160,000 personnel once the reserves are called up.
According to the FDF's mandate, a maximum of 2,000 Finnish peacekeepers can be deployed internationally at any one time, although such missions typically involve up to 500 personnel. These are currently all volunteers comprising professionals and reservists, with the latter - many of whom have considerable operational experience - making up about two-thirds of Finnish troops serving abroad.

The Finnish Army's largest current international mission contingent is with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), where around 300 troops are typically deployed. The next largest is Operation 'Inherent Resolve' in Iraq, with 100 troops deployed, and Finland also has around 30 troops with Operation 'Resolute Support' in Afghanistan among its other international commitments.

Speaking on the Finnish Army's media day on 22 February, Lt Gen Toivonen noted that in 2016 the army trained nearly 20,000 conscripts, put more than 20,000 reservists through refresher training and voluntary exercises, assisted other Finnish authorities on around 450 occasions, and deployed 1,150 soldiers on international operations.

Talking further about the FDF reforms, Lt Gen Toivonen noted how the need to save money led to a significant rationalisation of the FDF's logistic elements right across the board.

"When you have to make quite difficult choices, especially when there was a 10% budget cut in 2014/15, then you have to look at the support side, and that meant that we reshuffled everything related to the logistic [units] because previously, for example, we had in the army our own logistic element, which was quite large, and so did the air force and navy. Now we have a joint logistic command; we took all the pieces, reshuffled them while taking 20% off, and it's functioning. Now it's under the defence command."

With this more efficient structure now in place, Lt Gen Toivonen said that "now the security situation has changed, and we are getting extra money from the budget, we can guarantee that it's going in the right direction … to materiel, to operational activities".

The general also highlighted the FDF's close ties with the country's defence industry. "In the Finnish model, already during the last 20 years we have in a way had this ‘third sector’ supporting us and there are strong strategic partnerships between [Finnish defence companies] and the defence forces," he said, "and they are responsible for providing those services also during a time of crisis. Nammo, Patria, Millog, Insta, for example, are those strategic partners who play an important role also during times of crisis."

This close military-commercial relationship is perhaps something Finland is exporting to its Scandinavian neighbours. "Last week we visited Norway, this week Sweden, and there seems to be some interest at looking at these types of structure," said Lt Gen Toivonen. "Every defence force, of course, is different, but our experience is a good one because those enterprises also have other markets, not only the military."

Responses to Russia

In the wake of Russia's annexation of Crimea and interventions in eastern Ukraine defence collaboration between the five Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden has certainly intensified in recent years under the common Nordic Defence Co-operation (NORDEFCO) umbrella, with Finland holding the chairmanship of the organisation in 2017.
Non-NATO countries Finland and Sweden signed their own separate defence co-operation memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the United States in 2016.

Asked if the Finnish Army had adjusted its stance at the national level in response to Russia’s increased international belligerence, Lt Gen Toivonen replied that the army had “done quite a lot of work in recent years with readiness” - a key aspect of operations for a conscript/reservist-based force. This, he explained, has involved more exercises, more training, and a sharpening of the first elements of the country’s mobilisation process.

The general also added that legislation regarding how the army operates and is employed is being reviewed at the political level in Finland, particularly with regard to how the army’s doctrine deals with “situations that are lower than [the threshold of] traditional warfare”, suggesting the FDF was at least making contingencies in relation to Russia’s penchant for hybrid warfare.

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**Army procurement**

Although Finland produces a number of its own weapon systems - from the 7.62 RK 62 and 7.62 RK 95 TP local variants of the Soviet AK-47/AKM assault rifle to the Patria 155 mm K 83-97 and K98 towed howitzers - in the past it has relied substantially on a number of older Soviet-designed artillery systems, some of which have already been retired. In terms of self-propelled howitzers (SPHs), for example, Finland's Soviet-built 152 mm 2S5 Giatsint-S systems have already been taken out of service, leaving around 72 Soviet 122 mm 2S1 Gvozdika systems.

A Finnish MLRS unit opens fire during manoeuvres in the FDF's Rovajärvi exercise area in November 2016. Finland's MLRSs are among the most sophisticated such systems deployed worldwide. (IHS Markit/Peter Felstead)
For the FDF, however, heavy gun and rocket artillery systems are vital to the national defence strategy, since they allow an invading enemy force to be degraded by indirect fire before they actually make direct contact with the defending Finnish forces. Retaining the army's heavy artillery capabilities has, therefore, been a key modernisation requirement. Yet while the cost of acquiring such systems could easily be an expensive process, the Finnish Ministry of Defence has displayed a very pragmatic approach to meeting its requirements within a relatively modest budget with a strategy that involves keeping a keen eye out for relevant equipment that becomes surplus to other armies' requirements.

A key example of this came in 2004 when, rather than procuring new systems off the shelf, the FDF bought the Royal Netherlands Army's entire fleet of 22 227 mm M270 Multiple Launch Rockets Systems (MLRSs) second hand, along with pods of Phase I unguided rockets, to attain a system with longer range than the FDF's older 122 mm RM-70 (Rak H 89) multiple rocket launchers. Germany then provided Finland with Phase II MLRS rockets containing anti-tank mines as well as training rockets.

Subsequently, in May 2011, original M270 manufacturer Lockheed Martin was awarded a USD45.3 million contract to upgrade the Finnish MLRSs to the M270D1 standard, allowing them to fire 70 km range Guided MLRS rounds as well as Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) rounds, which provide a precision effect out to 165 km. The company provided kits to enable Finland's M270 launchers to be upgraded in country under a technical assistance agreement with Millog. With the exception of the US High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS)-variant MLRS system, the Finnish MLRS units are among the most sophisticated such weapons in use worldwide.

![Finnish troops on a live-ammo exercise in the FDF's expansive Rovajärvi exercise area in November 2016. (IHS Markit/Peter Felstead)](image-url)
Then, in mid-2012, it was stated that Finland had made a formal request to the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency for the acquisition of 70 ATACMS Block 1A unitary missiles at a total value of USD132 million, including associated parts, equipment, logistics and training. Finland is procuring 40 MLRS missile pods for its M270s. Of these 15 will be armed with the M31A1 Unitary Missile (90 missiles in total) and 25 with the M30A1 Alternative Warhead Missile (150 in total). It is not known whether these missiles have been delivered yet.

News of another cost-effective Finnish artillery acquisition came on 17 February when the Finnish MoD confirmed it would buy 48 former South Korean Army K9 Thunder 155 mm self-propelled howitzers for EUR146 million (USD155 million): a deal that includes training, spares, and maintenance, as well as including options for the procurement of additional K9s. Deliveries of the K9s are due to begin this year and be completed by 2024, with Finnish conscripts due to begin training on the K9s in 2019.

A Hanwa Techwin K9 Thunder 155 mm self-propelled howitzer undergoing trials in Finland in November 2016. The FDF is buying 48 former South Korean Army K9s at a cost of EUR146 million, the country's MoD confirmed on 17 February. (IHS Markit/Peter Felstead) 1693005

Speaking to Jane's on 20 February, an FDF source said the K9 was already compatible with all the FDF's existing 155 mm ammunition types, including its conventional LU111 high-explosive ammunition and its Nexter/BAE Systems Bonus Mk II top attack projectiles. Finland is also currently in discussions with Nammo to buy new extended-range 155 mm high-explosive rounds, according to the same source.

The K9s will replace Finland's Soviet-designed 2S1 SPHs, which date from the early 1970s and, as Colonel Pasi Pasivirta, the army's inspector of artillery, described them to Jane's, are "practically a towed gun in a tank" because they lack a sophisticated fire-control system and so "you have to do all the same preparation when you fire it as you would do with a towed gun". This
severely limits the 2S1’s ability to relocate to different firing positions - the 'shoot-and-scoot' tactics required to evade enemy counter-battery fire - and means the K9s, which can fire 360° and have a range of 40 km, will introduce a step change in capability over the old 1970s technology they will replace.

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Regarding the Finnish Army's shrewd second-hand buys, Lt Gen Toivonen explained that "even before the crisis in Crimea and eastern Ukraine, we were buying surplus materiel", noting that the latest such acquisition involves 100 second-hand Leopard 2A6 MBTs, also from the Netherlands. The delivery of these started in 2015 and is expected to conclude in 2019, the acquisition having been deemed a more cost-effective upgrading of the Finnish Army's MBT fleet than paying for the modernisation of its originally 124-strong force of Leopard 2A4s, which were originally built in the 1980s and acquired as surplus from the German Army in 2003 and 2004, when they replaced Finland's Russian-built T-72M1s.

Overall, Lt Gen Toivonen believes the used systems bought by the Finnish Army "have been a cost-effective way to create quite good capabilities. Some of the [second-hand systems purchased] need modernisation, but, for instance, the Leopard 2A6 is in very good condition and all we are thinking of is looking at is the next generation of ammunition, which we'd have done anyhow."

The Finnish Army’s Soviet-era D-30 towed 122 mm field guns fall into the category of ‘old but still useful’. Because of their novel three trail legs the D-30s can fire in any direction and thus cover a large area. They are also a relatively easy for conscripts to train on and the Finnish Army still has plenty of ammunition to fire from them. (IHS Markit/Peter Felstead)
Meanwhile, the Finnish Army still continues to make use of weapon systems that Lt Gen Toivonen refers to as "old but still useful materiel", including its old Soviet-era D-30 towed 122 mm field guns. As Col Pasivirta explained to Jane's, because of its novel three trail legs the D-30 "can fire 360° and thus covers a large area, we have plenty of them and it's light and easy to use, and we have plenty of ammunition from East Germany". Col Pasivirta additionally noted that the army's older field guns - which include 130 mm M-46s and 155 mm M-83s as well as the D-30s - are still ideal for use by regional troops as long as they are widely dispersed in their battery positions to reduce the effect of any counter-battery fire.

The army has also decided that retaining and upgrading its 110 Soviet-designed BMP-2 tracked infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs) - a fleet similar in size to the army's more modern fleet of 102 BAE Systems CV9030 IFVs - is a worthwhile venture, given the increased cross-country mobility that tracked AFVs offer (the army also has around 500 Patria-built armoured personnel carriers of various types, including 62 very capable Armoured Modular Vehicles [AMVs], but all of these are wheeled).

"For us [upgrading the BMP-2s] makes sense because there is still a long lifecycle left in them," said Lt Gen Toivonen, "but of course you need modernisation to keep the effectiveness on the battlefield."

Looking to other weapon systems, Lt Gen Toivonen noted: "We've recognised the artillery and anti-tank weapon systems that will be obsolete, either related to their ammunition or because they are not effective enough on the modern battlefield. In some of the systems the manufacturer
doesn't guarantee anymore the use of those weapons. We're trying to find how the money allocated to us will bring us new capabilities that will last into the 2030s.”

The Finnish Army's older infantry anti-tank systems - the APILAS and M72A5 - are being replaced over the medium term (i.e. by 2025) by the Saab Next-Generation Light Anti-tank Weapon (NLAW) and the Nammo M72 Enhanced Capacity (EC) LAW respectively, while the army's obsolescent 95 S 58-61 recoilless rifles remain in limited use. Jane's was told in November that these weapons are not being discarded yet, since there is still plenty of relatively modern ammunition for them, but that they are somewhat cumbersome and no longer considered appropriate for front-line service.

Meanwhile, US TOW-2 and Israeli Spike missile systems continue to provide the Finnish Army with an effective mid-range (2.5-4 km) anti-tank capability.

The Finnish Army currently operates 18 Patria Hägglunds AMOS self-propelled twin mortar systems. The AMOS system provides a true 'shoot and scoot' capability and affords MRSI target engagement. (IHS Markit/Christopher F Foss)

Regarding more modern artillery systems the Finnish Army currently operates 18 Patria Hägglunds AMOS self-propelled advanced mortar systems that entered service from 2013. Comprising twin 120 mm mortars mounted on a Patria AMV chassis, the AMOS system provides a true 'shoot and scoot' capability, affords the mortar crew protection from small arms fire and shell fragments and affords a multiple-round simultaneous impact (MRSI) target engagement capability that allows up to 10 mortar rounds to hit a target at the same time. Lt Gen Toivonen made it clear that he would like to procure more AMOS systems, but admitted that the cost of this is currently prohibitive unless the army can order more in conjunction with an export order that would bring down the unit cost. "AMOS is expensive," he noted, "but it provides an amazing capability."
The Finnish Air Force

For the Finnish Air Force (FAF) the primary mission is defence of the national airspace. Unsurprisingly for such a technically focused service arm, the FAF has the highest proportion of professional service personnel within the FDF, employing 2,030 full-time military personnel and civilians along with approximately 1,300 conscripts during peacetime (the strength of the air force’s wartime reserve is classified).

In response to written questions from Jane’s, the FAF noted that in recent years the amount of military flight activity in the international airspace over the Baltic Sea region has stabilised to a
higher level than that witnessed before 2014, although the amount of aircraft operating without a flight plan, not communicating their intentions to the air traffic control or not using a transponder to identify their identity and location has decreased.

The FAF reported that in 2016 Finnish airspace was violated by a foreign military aircraft four times: twice by a Russian aircraft (two Su-27-series fighters) over the Gulf of Finland in October; once by a Danish Merlin helicopter participating in the multinational 'Baltops' exercise over the Gulf of Finland in June; and once by a Swedish Air Force Gulfstream IV passenger jet in the vicinity of Bogskär, south of the Åland Islands, in November.

A Finnish F/A-18 Hornet flying out of Norway's Bodo Main Air Station during the 'Arctic Challenge' exercise in 2015. The Finnish Hornet fleet has recently undergone an extensive mid-life upgrade and now has an air-to-ground capability in addition to its primary air defence role. (Norwegian MoD)

The primary instruments for defending Finland's airspace are currently the FAF's 55 Boeing F/A-18C Hornet fighters (the air force also has seven F/A-18Ds that are mostly used for training).

If an airborne target is detected within or approaching Finnish airspace and cannot be identified by flight plan correlation from civilian air traffic control data or other available information, the FAF's Air Operations Center (AOC) can scramble a pair of Hornets being kept on quick-reaction alert to intercept and identify the aircraft in question. As the FAF then put it to Jane's, the identifying pilot then "determines the nationality and tail number of the target and prevents it from infringing Finnish airspace if necessary". Finnish Hornets can be armed with AIM-120C-7 Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAMS) and/or shorter-range AIM-9X Sidewinder AAMs in addition to their internal cannons, while the pilots also have cameras to document any airspace violations, which are investigated by the Finnish Border Guard and their details published by the Finnish MoD.
Given Finland's border with Russia, there's no escaping the fact that all of the country's territory and airspace falls within the range of Russia's long-range surface-to-air and surface-to-surface weaponry. Asked what efforts the air force had made to mitigate against this, the FAF replied: "The Finnish Air Force has operated in an environment with the possible threat posed by anti-access/area denial [A2/AD] assets, both on ground and in the air, for decades. The measures to mitigate the threat include, but are not limited to, the dispersal of aircraft and other assets to highway road bases and the employment of mobile tactics for the forces supporting the flight operations, including the air surveillance radars. Also, various other platform-specific tactics and countermeasures are employed. Mitigation of the A2/AD threat is an essential part of the training of air force personnel and reservists."

Looking to the future, the FAF launched a programme in October 2015 to replace its Hornet fleet from 2025 onwards. This effort, known as the HX fighter programme, is currently in the request for information (RFI) phase, with the air force noting that it received "thorough answers to its RFI from tenderers in November 2016". The candidates for the requirement are the Boeing F/A-18E/F Super Hornet, Dassault Rafale, Eurofighter Typhoon, Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II and Saab Gripen E/F. Regarding the parameters for making a selection from these candidates, the air force said it "is developing the operational concept and scrutinising the requirements for the procurement; therefore it is too early to state which qualities will be emphasised".

Meanwhile, the FAF's Hornet fleet has recently undergone an extensive two-phase mid-life upgrade (MLU) programme. The first phase was aimed at maintaining and improving the Hornets' air-to-air capability and was completed between 2006 and 2010. The most notable enhancement, however, came with the implementation of the second phase between 2012 and 2016, when the aircraft were given an air-to-ground mission capability and the FAF made associated purchases of short-, medium-, and long-range bombs and stand-off missiles. As of February 2017 the FAF has integrated the Joint Stand-Off Weapon (JSOW) medium-range glide bomb and the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) smart bomb onto its F/A-18s and is currently in the process of integrating the Joint Air-to-Surface Stand-off Missile (JASSM). For this an FAF test flight contingent comprising two F/A-18Cs has been based at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake in California since April 2016. The JASSM integration work will be completed by the fall of 2017.

Asked if this new capability might herald any potential international deployments for Finland's Hornets, the air force replied: "After the air-to-ground weapon integration is completed, the primary mission of the FAF will remain as it is now. Air-to-ground weapons will strengthen the national defence posture and bring the air force new capabilities to support joint warfare of the air force, the army and the navy."

That said, the FAF does, in fact, have an expeditionary air unit, the Finnish Rapid Deployment Force Fighter Squadron (FRDF FSQN), which it stood up in 2009. Comprising approximately 200 troops and four F/A-18s, this unit "is to be used in the air-to-air role pending a national decision taken by the government of Finland", according to the air force, which noted that it has not been deployed outside of Finland so far, but has been committed to the NATO Response Force (NRF) Initial Follow-On Forces Group (IFFG) for the year 2018. The FDF added that, despite the Hornets' new air-to-ground capabilities, the FRDF FSQN "will retain its air-to-air mission".

Finland and fellow non-aligned nation Sweden also have several forms of bilateral manoeuvres in the context of their FISE co-operation scheme, under which the FAF and Swedish Air Force have
participated in each other's major air exercises since 2016. This year Sweden will send its aircraft to the FAF's 'Ruska 2017' air exercise in October and Finland will take part in Sweden's 'Aurora 17' exercise in September.

Since 2015 the FAF has also conducted training events with partner countries' air force assets deployed to northern Europe, including US Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) aircraft deployed to the Baltic states and NATO aircraft participating in the alliance's Baltic Air Policing mission.

Regarding other matters in relation to the air force, a number of adjustments are currently being made to the FAF inventory. On 10 October 2016 it was announced that Finland was to purchase 28 Grob G115E aircraft second-hand from UK company Babcock International to replace the FAF's Valmet L-70 Vinka aircraft as its primary/preliminary trainer. In 2016 one Grob was delivered with the remaining 27 due to follow this year. The aircraft will undergo an avionics upgrade before entering service.

Meanwhile, the FAF operates an advanced jet trainer fleet consisting of various marks of BAE Systems Hawk - Mk 51s, Mk 51As, and Mk 66s - with several additional Mk 51s in long-term storage. The FAF was, in fact, the first export customer for the Hawk when it placed an order for 50 Hawk Mk 51s in 1977, later ordering an additional batch of seven Mk 51As in 1993. The Mk 66s, meanwhile, were procured with low hours from Switzerland from 2011.

The FAF operates an advanced jet trainer fleet consisting of various marks of BAE Systems Hawk and was, in fact, the first export customer for the type when it placed an order for 50 Hawk Mk 51s in 1977. (IHS Markit/Patrick Allen)
and 3,200 conscripts (with 18,000 reservists). The Finnish fleet is focused mainly on littoral warfare and currently consists largely of eight fast attack craft (FACs) and 15 mine warfare vessels.

The fast attack craft Nantali: one of four Raumi-class vessels in Finnish Navy service. (Freddy Philips)

However, in September last year the Finnish MoD authorised the initiation of the Squadron 2020 programme, which aims to procure four multi-purpose offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) for an estimated EUR1.2 billion to replace the navy's four Rauma-class FACs and two Hämeenmaa-class minelayers, which are due to be retired by the mid-2020s. These OPVs will clearly extend the Finnish Navy's capabilities further offshore and will feature systems and weapons for anti-surface, anti-air, and underwater warfare.

Asked about the progress with this programme, the navy told Jane's: "Currently the interested contractors are being evaluated. The ones to make it to the short list, presumably three, will be participating in negotiation rounds and the winner will be awarded the contract by the end of 2018. Rauma Marine Construction is tied to the programme with a signed intention to produce the ships at its yard located in Rauma, Finland."

Regarding other enhancements to the Finnish Navy's inventory, a mid-life upgrade of the force's Hamina-class missile-armed FACs under the Squadron 2000 programme is now at the stage of "defining the scope of delivery with Patria, the chosen contractor", according to the navy, which added that Patria will control the system provider network, including a Finnish shipyard to carry out the vessel upgrade. Alongside this the navy's SSM2020 programme continues to seek an anti-ship missile to fulfil the requirements of both the Squadron 2000 and Squadron 2020 programmes.

Meanwhile, a third Katanpää-class mine countermeasures vessel (MCMV), Vahterpää, was delivered to the Finnish Navy in Italy last November and arrived in the following month, while the delivery of 12 Jehu-class assault craft will be completed by July 2017, with navy units already training on the vessels delivered so far.
The Hamina-class fast attack craft - missile (FAC-M) Pori. A mid-life upgrade of the Finnish Navy's four Hamina-class FAC-Ms under the Squadron 2000 programme is currently being defined. (Freddy Philips)

The navy also told Jane's that a programme for improving the firepower of coastal forces is underway, with a request for proposals having been issued.

While the Finnish Navy is largely focused on defending the country's territorial waters, it does, however, engage internationally with NATO and EU forces.

Last year, for example, part of NATO's 'Baltops' exercise, an annual maritime exercise held in the Baltic Sea region under the command of Naval Striking and Support Force NATO (STRIKFORNATO), took place in Finnish waters. Finland has participated in the exercise since 1993 and in 2016 took part with the minelayer FNS Uusimaa and a 160-strong coastal jaeger company from the Nyland Brigade.

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