

## Address by President Edgars Rinkēvičs at the National Defence Service oath-taking ceremony of the 25th Combat Support Battalion, 2nd Vidzeme Brigade of the National Guard in Alūksne

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Esteemed Commander of the Armed Forces!

Officers!

Soldiers!

Distinguished guests!

In a few moments, you will swear allegiance to the country of Latvia, you will pledge to protect it and to follow the lawful orders of your commanders. You are making this commitment after completing basic training course of just under two months. You have learned essential skills. You know how to defend yourselves, but ahead of you lies further service, where you will deepen your military knowledge even more. At this moment, I want to express my gratitude to each of you for voluntarily joining the National Defence Service.

Recently, I had the opportunity to speak with some of you about your motivation, your readiness to defend our country, and your willingness to learn new skills. I can see that you will be excellent citizens of our country and dedicated soldiers of our armed forces. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to the parents, family members, loved ones, and friends – those who have encouraged you, those who support you in this service, and those who will continue to motivate and stand by you.

Today, I had the chance to familiarise myself with the Infantry School, the battalion, to meet with the officers and instructors. I am confident that your sons and daughter are in safe hands. They are being trained and cared for with the utmost dedication. Therefore, my sincere thanks go to the officers and instructors for their hard work, their commitment, and everything they do!

Although we are currently living in an uncertain and turbulent time, I firmly believe that only well-prepared and well-trained

citizens of Latvia will be able to safeguard peace and protect our country. The more of us who are ready, the smaller the chance that anything bad will happen.

I wish you a rest of your service full of valuable experiences, opportunities to learn and grow, and, in time, a return to civilian life as highly trained and capable citizens and soldiers of our nation.



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