

# CRO MIL

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SMART DEFENCE  
NEW MULTINATIONAL  
HELICOPTER CREWS COURSE  
FOR AFGHANISTAN

FIVE YEARS OF

ANNIVERSARY

# NATO

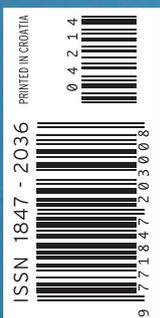
## MEMBERSHIP

INTERVIEW  
**GENERAL PHILIP M. BREEDLOVE**  
SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER EUROPE  
(SACEUR)

**CROATIA HAS MADE  
AN AMAZING PROGRESS  
WITHIN ONLY FIVE YEARS**

INTERNATIONAL  
EXERCISE "MIR 14/1"

## FINAL PREPARATIONS FOR ISAF



# FIVE YEARS OF CROATIA'S MEMBERSHIP IN NATO



## **"5<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA IN NATO"**

The Republic of Croatia is marking the fifth Anniversary of its membership in NATO, at which occasion the Multi-media Department released the 10-minute documentary on the achievements and the contribution of the Republic of Croatia and its Armed Forces to the North Atlantic Alliance from the accession to this day.



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Ante Kotromanović,  
Defence Minister of the  
Republic of Croatia

# DETERMINATION EVINCED CONTRIBUTION TO JOINT

ACCESSION TO NATO AND THE VICTORY IN THE HOMELAND WAR HAVE BEEN THE TWO MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS DETERMINING THE ROLE OF THE CROATIAN MILITARY AND THE ARMED FORCES. OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND THE ARMED FORCES HAVE CONTINUED TO ATTAIN THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF DEFENCE PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING AND EQUIPPING OF THE ARMED FORCES. CROATIA AND ITS ARMED FORCES ENJOY STRONG ACCEPTANCE BY ALL ALLIES, FOR THE COMMITMENT AND RESOLUTENESS DEMONSTRATED IN A SERIES OF OPERATIONS.

The Republic of Croatia and its Armed Forces are marking an important anniversary – the first five years of membership in NATO. Over the period the Croatian Armed Forces have been actively contributing to the collective security, primarily through deployment in international operations, and by investing major efforts to develop their capabilities to attain the top standards. The anniversary was the occasion to interview Croatian Defence Minister, Ante Kotromanović.

**The Republic of Croatia is committed to continue developing required capabilities working jointly with the NATO nations and its neighbour countries sharing the values of the values of the North Atlantic community**

**At the moment of accession to NATO, Croatian Armed Forces had already been actively contributing in the operations led by the Alliance. What exactly did the accession imply for the Croatian Armed Forces?** Accession to NATO and the victory in the Homeland War have been the two main achievements determining the role of the Croatian military and the Armed Forces. Over the past five years the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces have continued

Croatia is currently active in six projects within "Smart Defence". The project of establishment of a Multinational Aviation Training Centre and the complementary Air Advisory Team Pre-deployment Training Course administered by the Croatian, Czech and Hungarian teams are examples of productive co-operation with the partner nations in air training and development of helicopter capabilities

Interviewer: Željko STIPANOVIĆ, Photos by: Davor KIRIN

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to attain the highest standards of defence planning, development, training and equipping of the Armed Forces. Croatia and its Armed Forces enjoy firm acceptance from all Allies, for the commitment and resoluteness demonstrated in a series of operations. In my view, our membership in the leading world's organisation and the place among the makers of the decision regarding our vital interests is the best confirmation of our successfulness.

**Over the first five years of its membership in NATO Croatia has asserted itself as a reliable and credible member of NATO. What is the NATO's and single nations' view of the Croatian contribution in missions and training respectively?**

Through its engagement in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Libia Croatia has asserted itself as a credible contributor to the joint Euro-Atlantic security and has demonstrated its readiness to profit from the benefits of the collective security. Croatian soldiers are widely respected for their capabilities and the experience

**The European Union has a growing influence on the global security, and to protect its interests it has to dispose with the adequate tools. It also applies to Croatia as its recent member. In that regard Croatia has participated in the EU-led peace operations - the engagement in Chad and counter-piracy off the coast of Somalia, complemented by a significant contribution to the EU Battlegroups**

current priority in the situation characterised by uncertainty. In addition, we are expected to provide safe, credible and transparent conditions for the upcoming presidential elections in Afghanistan. As you know, the future of the Alliance's engagement in the post-2014 period depends on the agreements to be signed to define the status of the Alliance's forces in that period. We expect that the new Afghan authorities will accord to the agreements immediately following the elections. Croatia and the rest of Allies, continues with the force planning preparations for the Resolute Support mission, where our focus remains on mentoring and advising of the Afghanistan National Security Forces.

**To what extent the repeated defence budget cuts affect the Croatian Armed Forces' readiness and the Croatian contribution to development of NATO capabilities?**

Croatia is not an exception in this regard, as the majority of the Allies are also faced with the defence budget problem. In such situation we cannot fulfill everything we planned, but what is important here is to spend the allocated resources wisely. Our priorities are efficiency, sustainability and operationality of the defence sector. NATO and its defence planning system enables us to make cost-effective plans. Furthermore, as full NATO member Croatia is entitled to use the its multi-functional tools, all of which ensures joint reaching of most efficient solutions.

I want to make my point very clearly – in spite of the difficult financial situation, Croatia has pursued its credible contribution to the joint Alliance security and its capabilities, towards the constant objective which consists in ready and well-trained Armed Forces, capable of fulfilling all entrusted missions. →

# THROUGH SECURITY

from the Homeland War, but they have also displayed sociability with the local population. In addition, we included our partners from the region into the NATO-led operations, primarily ISAF – through joint engagement, preparation and training we directly contribute to Euro-Atlantic integration of the region and trust building and sustainable regional co-operation.

**Some of the countries of the region have been included in preparations for ISAF for several years already. Croatia has also confirmed its potential mentoring the Afghanistan National Security Forces. What mission will the Croatian Armed Forces have in Afghanistan following the period of transition to the ANSF?**

NATO is faced with a demanding period of successful ISAF completion by the end of 2014, which is our



**Since the beginning of Your office as Minister the members of the Croatian Armed Forces have participated in a growing number of ever more demanding exercises.**

The Croatian soldiers' readiness is a guarantee for successful fulfilment of vital missions and tasks, which is why we invest major efforts into training and practice of the Croatian Armed Forces. Our extensive participation in the international operations has earned us valuable experience, which has to be maintained. In preparation for the Wales Summit, we are working, along with other NATO nations, on the Connected Forces Initiative confirmation and implementation. The Connected Forces Initiative has been designed to maintain and enhance the present level of interoperability and practice of the Croatian Armed Forces attained in ISAF. It enables small countries, such as Croatia, practice with the best within most demanding joint military exercises exceeding their national budgets. Our intention has been to continuously upgrade the performance level of the Croatian Armed Forces in the exercises at the national and international scale. The year 2014 will therefore see the most multinational and national military exercises, which speaks of Croatian ambitions the best.



In preparation for the Wales Summit, we are working, along with other NATO nations on the Connected Forces Initiative confirmation and implementation. The Connected Forces Initiative has been designed to maintain and enhance the present level of interoperability and practice of the Croatian Armed Forces attained in ISAF

**“Smart Defence” - the initiative promoted by the NATO’s Secretary General - has found solid ground at the 93<sup>rd</sup> Air Base at Zemunik, with a series of training activities with several NATO nations. Do the Armed Forces possess the capabilities to apply the initiative in other domains and services?**

Croatia is currently active in six projects within “Smart Defence”. The project of establishment of a Multinational Aviation Training Centre and the complementary Air Advisory Team Pre-deployment Training Course administered by the Croatian, Czech and Hungarian teams are examples of productive co-operation with the partner nations in air training and development of helicopter capabilities. Another successful example of Croatia’s involvement in “Smart Defence” is our regional approach to air defence within the Balkan Regional Approach on Air Defence (BRAAD), which includes Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia, with Croatia as the Leading Nation, and which was designed to provide support to development of the air defence capability of the countries in the region and assist them make their Euro-Atlantic aspirations more visible.



**Croatia, along with the rest of Allies, continues with the force planning preparations for the Resolute Support mission, where our focus remains on mentoring and advising of the ANSF**

**In the period of our first five years in NATO, the Republic of Croatia fulfilled its second main foreign policy target - the membership in the European Union. What can be said of Croatia’s contribution to the European defence policy in the full member status?**

The major part of the defence reforms administered was associated with our EU accession efforts. Joining the European Security and Defence Policy was the final step towards the EU members family. The European Union has a growing influence on the global security, and to protect its interests it has to dispose with the adequate tools. It also applies to Croatia as its recent member. In that regard Croatia has participated in the EU-led peace operations – the engagement in Chad and countering piracy off the coast of Somalia, complemented by a significant contribution to the EU Battlegroups. Along with these most visible examples of commitment, Croatia is an active members contributing to the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy and the European defence capabilities; it is also involved in development of EU Maritime Strategy, promotion of relations and co-operation between the EU and NATO. In my view, Croatia is fulfilling its tasks in the domain too.

Croatian contribution to the Alliance consists primarily in the experience and the expertise from the Homeland War and engagement in the efforts towards stability and sustainable development of Southeast Europe. Membership in NATO has upgraded safety in the Republic of Croatia through joint planning and military capabilities across the spectrum and joint training and practicing, sharing of knowledge and participation in peace support operations. The processes have enhanced the CAF human potential as their vital resource...



General Drago Lovrić,  
Chief of the General Staff of the  
Croatian Armed Forces

# ESTEEM BY NATO EARNED THROUGH PSO ENGAGEMENT AND HOMELAND WAR EXPERIENCE

The first five years of membership in NATO and Croatia's contribution to the Alliance by participating in the peace support operations and other initiatives aimed at upgrading the military capabilities and possibilities for joint operation, as well as the parallel engagement within the European Union contributing to the ESDP were the topics discussed with the Chief of the General Staff of the Croatian Armed Forces, General Drago Lovrić.



**Membership in NATO has opened the door to joint training and exercises as the most valuable form of capability building and readiness evaluation. The Croatian Armed Forces members have acquired new knowledge, skills and tactics and have been given the access to the state-of-the art communications equipment, weapons and logistic assets**

**General, in Your capacity as Chief of the General Staff of the Croatian Armed Forces, how do You review the five years of Croatia's membership in NATO – what has been the benefit and what has Croatia contributed to the Alliance in return?**

The Croatian Armed Forces really had begun preparing for the membership following the peaceful re-integration of the Danubian Basin; they had undergone structural changes and abandoned the reserve component. Upon joining the Partnership for Peace in 2000 and the Membership Action Plan in 2002 respectively, the CAF worked intensely on fulfilling the requirements for NATO membership.

The period was characterised by a major transformation of the Croatian Armed Forces and their participation in international peace operations, which thoroughly prepared them for full membership in the Alliance. Having joined it in 2009, the Croatian Armed Forces began another process – that of the integration into NATO military structure which was achieved within a very short term and formally closed in October 2012.

## INTERVIEW

### **How has NATO membership reflected on the Croatian Armed Forces in terms of size, capabilities and activities?**

Membership in NATO has strongly reflected on the Croatian Armed Forces size, capabilities and activities. During the pre-accession period our Armed Forces underwent radical size and structure changes, from a large, territorially-based military to a smaller and deployable one, enabling timely establishment of task force required to carry out the tasks assigned to the Armed Forces, and Alliance's military engagement in defence of the Republic of Croatia.

Another essential effect is professionalism of the members of the Croatian Armed Forces today. I would point out here the new capabilities developed through joint training and exercises for special operations and in air support to ground forces.

Regarding the Armed Forces activities in NATO framework, I need to remind that that we recently marked the 11th anniversary of our joining ISAF. We have been serving in NATO with two helicopters with the crews and service personnel; both operations have shaped our Armed Forces, their capabilities and the learning process. The lessons learned enable us make new moves concerning the structure, training, equipping and capabilities.

### **Croatia has maintained very good co-operation with the neighbouring countries, particularly NATO aspirants. Can Croatia be claimed to have a very important role as a pillar of stability in the region, known as highly complex?**

Presently the strategic priority of the foreign and security policy of the Republic of Croatia is placed on stability and sustainable development of our neighbours and assistance with their Euro-Atlantic aspirations. Croatia and the countries of the region have been intensely working to fulfill the priorities, through various forms of co-operation - education and training events, exercises and participation in peace support operations as the most visible forms of the wide spectrum of co-operation.

The U.S. Adriatic Charter is of special importance for the Croatian Armed Forces, as it is a power engine of peace, security and stability in the region, supporting the individual countries' in their efforts towards adoption of NATO standards and integration into the Alliance, primarily through the possibility of joint deployment in ISAF, EU Battlegroups and the UN missions. The Republic of Croatia as member of both NATO and the U.S.-Adriatic Charter has offered the countries of the region the assistance with a specific project within the A-5 Initiative - the Balkans Regional Approach on Air Defence (BRAAD), which was accepted as a NATO's Smart Defence project. Furthermore, the our Armed Forces have been cooperating with A-5 members in support to the Connected Forces Initiative in pre-deployment training with the aim of developing capabilities and achieving interoperability. Upon the proposal from NATO, Southeast Europe has seen the Balkan Regional Approach on Air Defence (BRAAD) Initiative, bringing together Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and Macedonia. The goal of the Initiative is to develop air defence capability of the countries in the region, enhance radar coverage and radar imagery exchange, upgrade the interoperability of the countries participating in the Initiative and significantly reduce the expenses implied by the capability building.



**The Croatian Armed Forces have so far participated in three NATO-led operations (namely KFOR, ISAF and UNIFIED PROTECTOR), deploying nearly 5000 soldiers, among whom 169 female officers and NCOs, which has been recognised by the Allies and NATO Commands. We have been assigned a general post in the ISAF Headquarters, to which the first female officer is to be seconded in the coming days**

Along with the South-East Europe, Croatia also co-operates with the Central European countries, through the Multinational Air Training Centre (MATC), the Central European Chiefs of Defence Conference (CEDC), Defence Co-operation Initiative (DECI) and the Multinational Land Forces (MLF).

The Multinational Air Training Centre was established at the proposal by Croatia and the Czech Republic to enhance multinational co-operation in air training. The Czech Armed Forces have administered the training with simulators, while the Croatian Armed Forces have provided the space and other necessary conditions for flight practice at the Zemunik Air Base. Slovakia, Hungary, Latvia have declared their interest in participating in the project so far, and the United States have pledged to provide the expert guidance. The respective Memorandum of Understanding, drafted at the moment, is due to be signed in the course of 2014. The pre-deployment training for the Air Advisory Teams is conceived as a segment of the future training programme within the Multinational Training Centre, but is operating independently at the moment (five training cycles have been conducted so far).

### **Croatia has been assigned positions in the new NATO Command Structure. How many officers have been seconded to NATO positions?**

The Republic of Croatia manned 16 posts (15 officer and 4 NCO posts) of 19 assigned to it in 2013. The selection procedure for two vacant positions is under way, and one general officer in Joint Force Headquarters in Naples is scheduled for appointment in 2015 (alternating with the Republic of Slovenia on a 3-year basis). The year 2013 saw visible progress in integration of the Croatian



Military Police platoon) to a NATO-led operation. Furthermore, we have been engaged in a series of training events, exercises and other forms of military co-operation with partner and Allied nations alike. In all these activities Croatian soldiers demonstrated exemplary professionalism, commitment, inventiveness and adaptability and earned high esteem from the partners and Allies in confirmation of the excellence of the Croatian Armed Forces' members.

**Croatia is proudly marking its fifth anniversary of membership in NATO as member of the European Union. What does the Croatian Armed Forces contribution to the European Security and Defence Policy consist in?**

As member of the European Union, the Republic of Croatia and its Armed Forces have been actively contributing to the European Security and Defence Policy, continuing the efforts undertaken while still candidate country. To remind you – Croatia deployed a team of its Special Operations Battalion, and presently it has been engaged in the ATALANTA operation led by the European Union. Furthermore, Croatia has provided personnel for two EU Battlegroups, the first one in the Sweden-led Nordic Battle Group in 2011, with 30 members and two multi-purpose Mi-171 Sh, assigned with tactical airlift and MEDEVAC for the NBG 11, operating jointly with their colleagues from Estonia, Finland, Ireland and Norway. Croatian participation was continued in 2012, in the EU Battlegroup with Germany as Lead Nation, along with Austria, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Macedonia. The Croatian component was composed of 250 members with an infantry company with AMV Patrias, a horizontal construction engineering platoon, National Support Element, staff personnel and small expert teams (e.g. PSYOPS, CIMIC, Military Police). Concerning the institutional presence in the ESDP, Croatia participates in the Council of Ministers, while I in my capacity as Chief of the General Staff attend the EU Military Committee. The Croatian Armed Forces will second some of their officers to the EU Military Staff. In addition, Croatia has also been present in the EU-led Peace Support Mission off the Somali Coast, known as ATALANTA.

Armed Forces into the NATO Force Structure (NFS), which was among the priorities of the Armed Forces plans for the past year. Croatia joined the Multinational Corps Northeast in Poland in 2010 with one officer assigned to the Corps Command. The agreement stipulates seconding one CAF officer to the Command Structure, which was fulfilled in September 2013.

Through the Multinational Military Police Battalion (MNMPBAT) the Croatian Military Police Platoon joined the Multinational Corps Northeast Force Structure. The NBC Platoon is planned for integration into MNC NE attached to the Slovenian NBC Battalion, which is presently in the affiliation phase. The Platoon having obtained confirmation through Capability Target, the initiative is nearing the fulfilment.

In the course of 2014 one officer is to be seconded to the Multinational Joint Command in Ulm, Germany, which has been recognised as one of the priority projects within Smart Defence.

**Partner countries often commend Croatian soldiers' experience from the Homeland War, placing the young Croatian military among the top European countries? How would do You comment that?**

Croatian Armed Forces, established in war conditions, defended their country and liberated the occupied parts, which had been their most important mission. Within a short time period they underwent transformation exemplary at the global scale. We can claim that in a decade only from the end of the Homeland War the Croatian Armed Forces attained the level required for NATO membership. In 1999 Croatia sent off its officers to UN-led peace operations, and four years later it deployed its first unit (a



THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA HAS SINCE ITS ACCESSION TO NATO PROVED ITSELF AS A CREDIBLE AND RELIABLE ALLY. CROATIA HAS ASSUMED AT ONCE THE RESPONSABILITY, THE RISK AND THE BENEFIT OF THE COLLECTIVE SECURITY, AND SHARED THE FUNDAMENTAL VIEW THAT STABILITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY DEPENDS ON JOINT EFFORTS, AND THAT ITS SECURITY AND THE SECURITY OF THE ALLIES ARE THE "COMMUNICATING VESSELS", WHICH ALSO APPLIES TO ITS STABILITY AND THE STABILITY OF ITS NEIGHBOURS...

# 5 YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP

The endeavour and the determination evinced by the Republic of Croatia towards assuming its portion of responsibility and contributing to collective security have been recognised and rewarded by approving full NATO membership to the country, among the powerful and developed democracies and their Armed Forces, sharing their values and objectives. NATO membership was one of the two foreign policy priorities outlined upon the very establishment of Croatia as independent country.

## THREE-YEAR INTEGRATION PROCESS

The invitation to begin accession talks with NATO was extended to Croatia on the Bucharest Summit in 2008, which was followed by the deposition of the accession document with the U.S. State Department as depositary of the North Atlantic Treaty (also referred to as the Washington Treaty) in April 2009 by the then Croatian Ambassador to the United States, Kolinda Grabar Kitarović, thus concluding the accession procedure. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer formally confirmed it the following day at the Strasbourg-Kehl Summit marking the Alliance's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary: "I warmly congratulate you on this historic achievement. In becoming NATO members,

Croatia shares the benefits and responsibilities of collective security".

It was a completion of one process, but a more challenging and responsible process ensued. Croatia had been preparing for years to join NATO as full member, and although assessed as one of the readiest new members, the integration and the efforts towards interoperability with the Allied Forces commenced upon the accession itself.

The integration process entailed harmonisation of procedures and activities across the functional and operating areas, security and intelligence, training and education, logistics, command and control and others, and at a broader scale, adoption of doctrinary principles and procedures to optimise interoperability.

The integration process was facilitated by the NATO's Allied Command for Transformation (ACT), through a series of integration conferences and activities aimed at increasing of operational capabilities of the Croatian Armed Forces. The activities were focussed on certification, affirmation and subsequently the affiliation of the declared forces. The first certification of the Croatian Armed Forces declared for NATO-led operation was completed during the Exercise "UDAR 10", under the monitoring of NATO evaluators. The



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number of certified Croatian evaluators and the level of implemented obligations gradually grew. Certification and evaluation of declared forces continued with the Exercises "UDAR 11" and "UDAR 12" until late October 2012, when the completion of all evaluations and the overall integration process was declared at the final conference issuing the Declaration on Completion of NATO Integration, signed by the Deputy Commander, General Mieczyslaw Bienek on behalf of the Allied Command of Transformation and by the Chief of the General Staff of the Croatian Armed Forces, General Drago Lovrić respectively. The readiness attained at the moment of formal accession enabled the Croatian Armed Forces achieve full integration within a short time span of three years.

## PARTICIPATION IN JOINT PROGRAMMES, PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

With the integration process completed, the priority in the co-operation with NATO has been given on active participation in its various bodies, processes and peace-support operations. Croatia joined the programmes. Projects and initiatives initiated to develop the overall capabilities of the Alliance, such as Smart Defence, the Connected Forces Initiative and a number of others in all domains of operation. Croatia is currently participating the Multinational Aviation Training Centre and the Regional Air Defence Approach, and is considering to participate in more projects, where joint efforts could be organised to build the needed capabilities. The initiatives with the partners from the region oriented on participation in the operations, training and education, to name some.

Croatia is currently participating the Multinational Aviation Training Centre and the Regional Air Defence Approach, and is considering to participate in more projects



The participation in a series of peace and stabilisation missions have become a Croatian brand. Croatia has been present in ISAF, as the most numerous and demanding mission, since 2003 when it deployed a 50-member Military Police Platoon to Kabul



One of such projects, and a priority, is the Croato-Czech Joint Pre-deployment Course for mentors of Afghanistan Air Force. By conducting the projects Croatian Armed Forces gain valuable international experience and increase their interoperability, which speaks of the abilities of their officers.

### PSO MISSIONS - A BRAND OF CROATIA

International peace operations, in which Croatia had taken part well before the accession, are some of the most visible expression of the spirit of the Alliance and tangible contribution to its interests and objectives. The participation in a series of peace and stabilisation missions have become a Croatian brand. Croatia has been present in ISAF, as the most numerous and demanding mission, since 2003 when it deployed 50 member Military Police Platoon to Kabul. Since then the size increased and the structure of the Croatian forces changed, taking on more and more demanding tasks. In addition to the significant forces engaged on training and advising of the Afghan National Security Forces, Croatia has

**Croatia had been preparing for years to join NATO as full member, and although assessed as one of the readiest new members, the true integration and the efforts towards interoperability with the Allied Forces commenced upon the accession itself. Readiness attained at the moment of formal accession enabled the Croatian Armed Forces achieve full integration within a short time span of three years**

been the Lead Nation of the Military Police School. The Military Police School, where Croatia assembled the Allied and partner countries of the region was particularly well accepted and often presented as the model to be followed in the operations of the kind.

The HRVCONs have been rotated regularly on the 6-month basis, so that the 23<sup>rd</sup> one is presently serving in the Regional Command Capital in Kabul and the Regional Command North in Mazar-e-Sharif. As the Croatian Contingent will downsize proportionately with ISAF, Croatian soldiers will be oriented on the training and mentoring mission. Another Croatian contribution – the HRVCON to KFOR in Kosovo – has also been highly valued. Croatia entered the Operation in July 2009 and has now its 15<sup>th</sup> Contingent deployed with two helicopters assigned with transportation of KFOR forces. Although relatively modest in size, the contribution by Croatia to KFOR is valuable for its familiarity with the regional characteristics, and for the professionalism and responsibility of its soldiers deployed. Furthermore, Croatia has been highly active with

With the integration process completed, the priority in the co-operation with NATO has been given to active participation in its various bodies, processes and peace-support operations. Croatia joined the programmes. Projects and initiatives initiated to develop the overall capabilities of the Alliance, such as Smart Defence, the Connected Forces Initiative and a number of others in all domains of operation



The contribution of Croatia to stabilisation and security of Kosovo has also been highly valued. Although relatively modest in size, the contribution by Croatia to KFOR is valuable for its familiarity with the regional characteristics, and for the professionalism and responsibility of its soldiers deployed



the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of the neighbouring countries, promoting the importance of the integration for the region's stability; in which regard Croatia continues to actively participate in the U.S. Adriatic Charter providing support and assistance to its members. As a result, members of the Army of Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania are deployed to Afghanistan attached to the Croatian Contingents.

Over the past five years of its membership in NATO Croatia has proved itself as credible and reliable Ally, taking the responsibility and the risk as well as the benefit of the collective security and sharing the fundamental view that stability of the international community depends on joint efforts and that the security of individual members and the security of the entire Alliance are the communicating vessels", which also applies to the stability of the neighbouring countries and the stability in Croatia.





General Philip M. Breedlove,  
Supreme Allied Commander Europe  
(SACEUR)

# CROATIA HAS MADE AN AMAZING PR

WITHIN FIVE YEARS ONLY CROATIA HAS MADE AN AMAZING PROGRESS. IT REFERS TO THE WAY IT ADOPTED NATO STANDARDS, TACTICS, TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES. TODAY CROATIA TEACHES OTHER NATIONS HOW TO ADOPT THEM, AND CO-OPERATES IN AFGHANISTAN VERY SUCCESSFULLY WITH OTHER NATO MEMBERS. **IT REALLY MAKES ME HAPPY...**

Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, Philip M. Breedlove was on an official visit to the Republic of Croatia, meeting senior officials of the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces. The fifth anniversary of Croatia's membership in NATO was a proper timing to make an interview to learn about the challenges before the Alliance, the topics of interest and the development of the Croatian Armed Forces.

**General, You assumed the duty of SACEUR a year ago now. What in Your view are the main challenges faced by NATO and its member nations today?**

Thank You for the opportunity that allows me to talk about four things that are very important. Firstly, as an Alliance, we have to get our transition in Afghanistan correct – we are transitioning from a combat mission into a “train, advise, assist” mission. It is a transition from a very large mission several years ago now to a much smaller one; our focus is now going to be on enabling training of the Afghan forces so that they can this for themselves in the future. That transition is hard - making a mission change in a middle of a combat situation - is not easy, so that is the first concern.

**Within the new Resolute Support Mission Croatia is going to be involved in training, special forces, training the police, logistic support; these will all be agreed in detail when will have the mission set, but Croatia will be involved and we really look forward to it**

The second thing that we are working on as an Alliance is - what is NATO after Afghanistan? We used the terms “from deployed to ready”. We were a deployed force, largely in Afghanistan, to some degree Kosovo, the Mediterranean and the sea off the eastern African continent. Now we have considerably reduced the forces in Afghanistan – we are much more in-garrison force, trying to be ready for what happens next; and that transition is not easy either; so from deployed to be ready, and be ready for what? We have been focused for so many years on counter-insurgency (COIN); and now we have to be ready for the full gamut of operations, including the high-end Article V fighting operations. Deploy to ready is the second thing.

The third thing is in the news right now. We have to find the way to reach out and build partnerships with those nations in Europe that are not a part of the Alliance or are not a part of our Partners. We have to figure out how to co-exist, and do more than co-exist – how to prosper together: that is the third concern. Finally, I also have asked NATO to focus on leadership across the next few years. We are focusing on the leadership of our non-commissioned officers and soon will begin to focus on young officers. Croatia, by the way, is a magnificent example

In KFOR – superb performance – as I said before – when I go to Kosovo, I fly on Croatian helicopters. There is more to it, but the important is that men and women who fly the helicopters are highly professional, very dependable and doing a magnificent job. So I see your flag when I jump on, every time I go there

Author: Petra KOSTANJŠAK, Photos by: Tomislav BRANDT

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of a nation that has embraced NCO leadership - their schools, their training, coming to western schools, many in America and other nations, giving the experience of other examples, giving Croatia's own signature has been very successful, and we have just talked about that over the past few days.

**The Republic of Croatia marking its fifth anniversary of being a NATO member, what is Your view on the level of integration and engagement of the Croatian Armed Forces in the Alliance?**

I will sound too enthusiastic here, but I it because I really am – in only five year Croatia has made an amazing progress - the way your country has adopted NATO standards, tactics, techniques and procedures. It is now teaching other nations about NATO tactics techniques and procedures; on the ground, in Afghanistan, it is combating along with other NATO nations, without caveat, exactly the standard, I couldn't be more happy about the progress of Croatia's military.

**What is Your evaluation of the Croatian contribution to ISAF and KFOR?**

As I said, Croatia's participation in ISAF, has really been excellent.



combat mission and transition into the that one ("train, advise, assist"). Croatia is going to be involved in training, special forces, training the police, logistic support; these will all be agreed in detail when we will have the mission set, but Croatia will be involved and we really look forward to it.

**General, we would like to hear Your view on the NATO-EU co-operation from the angle of security and safety, especially here in Europe.**

I must make my first example as not in the Old Continent. The best example of the co-operation where NATO and the European Union co-operate is the Operation Ocean Shield, or Operation Atalanta, where forces from the EU and forces from NATO have come together to combat a problem in piracy off the coast of Somalia. Why is this a great example? Because NATO brings great military depth, military command and control, military experience and so on, but what NATO does not have is that whole-of-government approach that the EU does have, which allows the EU to connect to law enforcement, to Departments of State and the Interior so that the whole problem can be addressed. So, NATO brings the structure, the military capability, the at-sea discipline presence and EU connects us to law enforcement, ministries ashore so

# PROGRESS WITHIN ONLY FIVE YEARS

I should also commend the commitment by the Croatian Government, right to the very top, has pledged to be a part of Resolute Support, bringing ringed police training, logistic support and special operations which is a very important contribution. We are very happy to see it. In KFOR – superb performance – as I said before – when I go to Kosovo, I fly on Croatian helicopters. There is more to it, but the important is that men and women who fly the helicopters are highly professional, very dependable and doing a magnificent job. So I see your flag when I jump on, every time I go there.

**Speaking of the missions, one of the maing challenges is the completion of ISAF and launching of the Resolute Support. What main duties and activities will it entail, and how do You see Croatia's role in that operation?**

ISAF was primarily a combat operation, but in the last year and to this point we have been changing ISAF into the new Resolute Support mission, which is the "train, advise, assist" mission. Afghan forces lead almost every single mission in Afghanistan, and as we go into the Resolute Support we will definitely complete our



We have been talking about Croatia to be an anchor - a solid and calming influence, an example how a responsible country can become a part of a great Alliance and bring stability. I expect that to expand. I see Croatia's role absolutely essential in this area.

that both at-sea problem and ashore problem can be solved and a whole future range of issues. I think this is the model for the future. The EU brings great depth in capability, the whole-of-government approach whereas NATO is clearly a military capability with experience, depth and presence.

**Regarding the situation in the Balkans, do You see Croatian membership in NATO contribute to the stability and co-operation in the region; also, we would like to ask when do You see the rest of the countries in the region as NATO members?**

Absolutely! We have been talking about Croatia to be an anchor - a solid and calming influence, an example how a responsible country can become a part of a great Alliance and bring stability. I expect that to expand. I see Croatia's role absolutely essential in this area. As to when other nations will come aboard, several of them have plans that they are approaching, and are taking actions to meet the requirements set by NATO and I think how they will in the next years progress will be a part of future conversations But what is very clear is that Croatia will continue to lead them the way.

THE INTERNATIONAL FIELD EXERCISE TITLED MIR 14/1 WAS HELD AT THE GAŠINCI TRAINING RANGE AS AN EVENT EVALUATING THE READINESS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE 23<sup>RD</sup> HRVCON, TO BE DEPLOYED TO THE ISAF THEATRE OF OPERATIONS IN MARCH 2014

## INTERNATIONAL EXERCISE "MIR 14/1"

# FINAL PREPARA



Shortly after the shots rang out in the cold morning in the base housing the Croatian Contingent, every member took his defence position. A few well-mastered and precise shots soon neutralised the attacker – here is a sequence from the international field military exercise titled "MIR 14/1" that took place at the "Gašinci" Training Range from 31 January to 7 February 2014, and evaluating the readiness of the members of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Contingent to be deployed to ISAF.

Private Saša Ravlić is about to see his first deployment to ISAF, and the hard training has prepared him well for the upcoming tasks. "We have been training for thirteen weeks now. I believe that Afghanistan will bring new experience for me and my colleagues. The most important thing is the support from his family, which is standing by him and without which it would be hard to endure".



Author: Dražen Jonjić, Photos by: Josip Kopi, Mario Dropuljić and Dražen Jakabfi

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# ATIONS FOR ISAF

The 23<sup>rd</sup> HRVCON also has a unit of the Army of Montenegro attached to it. We talked with SSgt 1st Class Petko Vračar, commanding the squad of the 9<sup>th</sup> Contingent of the Army of Montenegro to ISAF, who told us: "We undertook preparation with the instructors in Montenegro, and come here for finish; the Exercise is well co-ordinated to the tiniest detail, and I am convinced that both our Croatian colleagues and us are ready to take on our tasks in ISAF". The sergeant took the opportunity to praise the support by the Croatian instructors, who wholeheartedly passed their expertise on their Montenegrin counterparts.

During the Exercise the components of the new Croatian Contingent performed various situations simulating those expected in the operation itself. The quality of the training has continuously been improved by engaging the members of the Armed

**"The Evaluation of the components of the 23<sup>rd</sup> HRVCON-a is conducted through the CREVAL (Combat Readiness Evaluation) procedure at the Armed Forces level. The evaluators work independently, and the results are communicated to the components only shortly before the end of the Exercise"**

Forces previously serving in ISAF, who share their experiences with the trainees and familiarise them with the prospective environment, to pursue the praised engagement and maintain highly positive image of the Croatian soldiers built by each successive HRVCON.

The Exercise is a capability-evaluating event for the 23<sup>rd</sup> HRVCON to be deployed in March 2014. The evaluation is a complex duty, screening the elements indispensable for successful conduct of the mission in the area of operations, and is carried out by the evaluation teams of the Croatian Armed Forces, joined by the Inspection Department of the Army of Montenegro.

## **COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION**

"Evaluation of the components of the 23<sup>rd</sup> HRVCON is conducted through the CREVAL (Combat Readiness →



# INTERNATIONAL EXERCISE "MIR 14/1" INTER

Evaluation) procedure at the Armed Forces level. The evaluators work independently, and the results are communicated to the components only shortly before the end of the Exercise", said the Exercise Director, Lt. Col. Mile Valentić, also the Chief of the Staff of the Guards Mechanised Brigade, which has manned the major part of the Contingent. "The candidate members were nominated in April 2013, followed by the initial training for basic military tasks and the 12-week pre-deployment training respectively. The Exercise MIR 14/1" is the final part, entailing the evaluation of the overall acquired knowledge and skills. Alongside the Croatian troops are two squads of the Army of Montenegro, who completed their integration process. Although none of the evaluators, including me, is familiar with the grades yet, knowing the instructors and the majority of the Contingent's members, I am confident that they are going to be positive", stated the Exercise Director. The Exercise goes on, sequencing as many ISAF experiences as possible. We meet a female gunner



Commander of the 23<sup>rd</sup> HRVCON ISAF, Col. Mijo Validžić

at the AMV's turret - Private Melisa Mikličanin, preparing for her first term in ISAF too. "The preparations have been thorough and everything goes on better than we expected. The experience of the colleagues previously serving in ISAF is precious, and it is up to us to acquire and apply it where necessary. We owe our gratitude to them and our commanders for having taught us what we need to know". In reply to our question on how she has been accepted as a woman by the colleagues, she said "I am just one of them; a gunner, who happens to be a woman. That's all". Corporal Anđelko Mičuda has been designated to lead the group of the first platoon. He praises the preparation cycle too. Their predecessors presented them the operation and conditions in the camp in North Afghanistan to a detail: I believe that we are going to represent our Armed Forces and our country as we are expected to". At the section of the "Gašinci" Range set up to simulate the camp in ISAF we met the staff personnel and



The Exercise is a capability-evaluating event for the 23<sup>rd</sup> HRVCON to be deployed in March 2014. The evaluation is a complex duty, screening the elements indispensable for successful conduct of the mission in the area of operations, and is carried out by the evaluation teams of the Croatian Armed Forces, joined by the Inspection Department of the Army of Montenegro

# NATIONAL EXERCISE "MIR 14/1" INTERNATIONAL

the Command Group, immersed in preparations and determined to leave nothing to chance, undisturbed even by the bitter cold reigning at "Gašinci". Among them is the Commander of the 23<sup>rd</sup> HRVCON ISAF, Col. Mijo Validžić. He is doing the tour of the components and familiarising with the members of the Contingent under his command in Afghanistan. "The Exercise is running as planned", stated Col. Validžić. We are heading for the final phase and anticipating the final analysis and evaluation, which I believe will be positive. I have to point out that we have excellent co-operation with the members of the Army of Montenegro. Our Contingent is to relay the work done by the preceding ones. We expect that the departure, the term itself and the return will run successfully", said Col. Validžić. Our interlocutors demonstrated high motivation and determination to apply the acquired skills in the best possible way. We are confident that they will invest every effort to meet our and their own expectations.



Command Chief Master Sergeant  
**RICHARD T. SMALL,**  
 Command Senior Enlisted Leader of  
 Allied Command Europe

# CROATIA HAS DEVELOPED A PROFESSIONAL



Croatian NCOs have served, very successfully in key NATO-led operations – ISAF, KFOR, and on the staffs within the NATO Command Structure. One of the key indicators how Croatia not only is developing its own NCOs and also reaching out through the regional arrangements to teach key enablers; a “crown jewel” is the Croatian international Summer Camp, bringing NCO from the NATO Command Structure and neighbouring countries; Croatia has offered an example how a nation not only can educate its NCO in a very professional way, but also help develop those around it. It proves that Croatia has made a major progress and developed a professional NCO Corps...

The ACO Command Senior Enlisted Leader, Command Chief Master Sergeant Richard T. Small visited the Croatian Defence Academy “Petar Zrinski” in Zagreb in mid-March, where he met with Command sergeants of the Croatian Armed Forces, who familiarised him with their work and the organisation of NCO training in the Croatian Armed Forces. He gave an interview for our magazine, presenting the importance of NCO duties in modern-day environment and in the strategy for the future, and he gave his view of the situation regarding NCOs and their education in the Croatian Armed Forces.

#### **What importance the NCO has in the NATO and Partnership for Peace nations today?**

The saying that the NCO is the backbone of the Armed Forces is truer today than it was when the poet Rudyard Kipling wrote

The saying that the NCO is the backbone of the Armed Forces is truer today than it was when the poet Rudyard Kipling wrote it in the late 1890ies. In modern military operations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century NCO it is absolutely essential to be able to execute out the guidance throughout the units or formations

it in the late 1890ies. In modern military operations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century NCOs are expected to apply the guidance throughout the units or formations. In today's environment NCOs take an increasingly greater levels of responsibility requiring higher levels of training, education, deeper levels of experience to be effective in modern military operations, and that is something both SACEUR and Alliance are focussed on. Inside the NATO Alliance we have been working now for 10 years already to develop a perspective of NCO value, initially through recreation of NCO development courses, followed by the development of NATO NCO vision and strategy signed by both SACEUR and SACT to establish a common perspective on the necessity of the NCO. We were first working on it to identify the capability gaps and for the past five years have been engaged to the ways to fill them.

In modern military operations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century NCOs are expected to apply the guidance throughout the units or formations. In today's environment NCOs take an increasingly greater levels of responsibility requiring higher levels of training, education, deeper levels of experience to be effective in modern military operations, and that is something both SACEUR and Alliance are focussed on

Author: Petra KOSTANJŠAK, Photo by: Tomislav BRANDT

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**Which are the gaps identified and worked on intensely over the past year?**

If you look at the original strategy, the current strategy as it was published it identified three capability gaps that we call strategic imperatives. The first was to define the common guidelines for what NCOs are, what they should do, what is their level of responsibility associated to the respective rank and post within a larger structure, from the most junior NCO at the squad level to the most senior NCO at command level, alongside the Commander. The other imperative pertained to developing education and training programme, providing the NCOs with timely and adequate education to make them successful in the tasks assigned by their nations or the Alliance.

The third and the final capability gap or imperative was to develop the structure of command sergeant major, close to the commander, offering advice on the development of the capability of the NCOs and advocate on the matters of NCO missions, training, education and development. It is about the guidelines for the essence and the role of the NCOs, and empowering the command sergeants major to assist the commanders deal with these strategic imperative and deal with these capability gaps.

**How important do You rate the recently delivered material containing the recommendations for the NCO Professional Military Education Reference Curriculum?**



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**Can You describe us the very structure of the NCO Professional Military Education Reference Curriculum?**

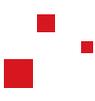
The Curriculum was conceived around the four progressive levels of responsibility, the first one being the squad leaders to the fourth and the strategic level, the command sergeants major. We believe it will be helpful guidance to the countries willing to conduct reforms regarding NCO Corps. It will not be relevant to each country in its entirety, but what I realised during my visit to the Croatian Defence Academy is that the education of your NCOs as a strong and professional Corps contains a number of elements from the Curriculum. The fact that the major part of the suggestions from the Curriculum is represented in your respective NCO education curricula is a recommendation for the administration of the Curriculum's programme.

**How do You rate the grade of development of the NCO Corps in the Croatian Armed Forces?**

I would say that your level of development speaks for itself; your NCOs serving with great success in key NATO operation in ISAF; in KFOR, and on the staffs within the NATO Command Structure. One of the key indicators how Croatia not only is developing its own NCOs and also reaching out through the regional arrangements to teach key enablers; a "crown jewel" is the Croatian international Summer Camp, bringing NCO from the NATO Command Structure and neighbouring countries to

# NCO CORPS AND PASSES ITS EXPERTISE ON TO OTHERS

It is a very important material, that was discussed also here in Croatia. Why is it so? Let me illustrate - if you ask any military audience on what is an officer, you would get a very similar response regardless of the composition of the audience: the officer is a leader, a decision maker, an authority figure, a commander. The answer to the question on what a NCO is would be much less common, and not generally understood and recognised. The vision as we described, the strategic imperatives and resolving the gaps depend on development, advocating and articulate the opinion on the educational pathway of professional NCO and by extension the entire NCO Corps. At the heart of that is the reference curriculum. 30 senior academics, structural system developers and key practitioners, senior NCOs, came together representing over a dozen nations to find that common educational pathway, to develop that common educational framework that would identify those key areas that we should educate our NCOs on to make them more interoperable and to have a more common grounding. The Supreme Command for Transformation approved the publication, for outreach to the partners and key Contact Nations, which serve as the framework or grounding for creating a professional NCO Corps, whether a junior sergeant or senior major.



come, spend time, learn about Croatia, spend some time on professional education; Croatia has offered an example how a nation not only can educate its NCO in a very professional way, but also help develop those around it. It proves that Croatia has made a major progress and developed a professional NCO Corps.

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**Can You tell us about Your co-operation with the NCOs of the Croatian Armed Forces?**

Croatia is a key NATO Ally, which is evident in the great NCOs co-operation as well, through outreach to the NCOs of other Allies and Partners, inviting them to attend Croatian NCO training institutions; furthermore, Croatia is always represented in the international forum, and a real advocate for NCOs. Croatia's Senior Sergeant Major is always present at the forum I lead with the EUCOM and the Allied Command for Transformation, participating, engaging, learning and, more importantly, sharing what he knows. So I am delighted – we have great relationships and the NATO Command structure and the Croatian senior enlisted leader. Couldn't ask for better.



## 93<sup>rd</sup> CROATIAN AIR FORCE AND AIR DEFENCE BASE ZEMUNIK

# OMANI

The training of pilots of the Royal Air Force of Oman commenced at the Zemunik Air Base on 10 March and is to last until late December 2014. The objective of the Training is to prepare Omani pilots for further stages of training on other types of airplanes...

The training of 16 cadets and two flight instructors of Royal Air Force of Oman commenced at the 93rd Air Base at the Zemunik Barracks on 10 March 2013. They will actively participate in all training phases. The trainees have completed their basic training on the PAC SUPER MUSHSHAK airplane (comparable to the Croatian pilots practice with the ZLIN-242-L training aircraft), while the curriculum taken in Zemunik, to end by late December 2014, will comprise the basic and aerobatic flying, instrumental and visual navigation flying respectively, basic night-time flying, night-time navigation flying and flying in 2-airplane groups.

The pilots will be trained on the PC-9M (Pilatus) airplane, with 150 flying hours per trainee, under the

**The training programme will comprise the basic and aerobatic flying, including basic and aerobatic flying, instrumental and visual navigation flying respectively, basic night-time flying and night-time navigation flying and flying in 2-airplane groups**

supervision of the flight instructors of the Airplane Squadron of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Base.

The training will be complemented by the wintertime survival training and the parachute theory course, delivered by the Special Operations Battalion of the Croatian Armed Forces.

The objective of the Training is to prepare Omani pilots for further stages of training on other types of aircraft. Upon the completion they will receive certificates and the individual recommendations by Croatian pilots for the further stages of training (depending on the potential displayed for combat pilot, helicopter pilot or transport airplane pilot respectively).

The Omani pilots have been provided the lodging

The pilots will be trained on the PC-9M (Pilatus) aircraft, with 150 flying hours per trainee, under the supervision of the flight instructors of the Airplane Squadron of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Base. The training will be complemented by the wintertime survival camp and the parachuting theory course, to be delivered by the Special Operations Battalion of the Croatian Armed Forces

Author: Leida PARLOV, Photo: Tomislav BRANDT, Archive CMPD

CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE



# PILOTS TO TRAIN AT ZEMUNIK

at the Zemunik Barracks, and the general conditions (boarding, prayer facilities) comply with their respective religious customs.

The whole arrangement, from the initial suggestions for co-operation presented during the official visit by the delegation of the Royal Air Force of Oman to the Croatian Air Force and Air Defence to the formal Agreement signing on 5 March 2013, took only a month to be completed.

The Agreement was signed by Head of the Training Department of the Omani Armed Forces, Col. Salim Mohamed Salim Almiqbal on behalf of the Oman Sultanate Armed Forces and by the Croatian Air Force and Air Defence Commander, Brig. Gen. Dražen Ščuri on behalf of the Croatian Ministry

**The objective of the Training is to prepare Omani pilots for further stages of training on other types of aircraft. Upon the completion they will receive certificates and the individual recommendations by Croatian pilots for further training**

of Defence respectively. "This is a very important agreement for the Croatian Air Force too, assigning us with training of a major group of pilots in the English language for the first time", said Brig. Gen. Ščuri on the occasion.

The training of Omani pilots is the first commercial training arrangement delivered by the 93<sup>rd</sup> Base. The Sultanate of Oman will cover all the training expenses under market conditions. The local community will also benefit from the arrangement, which has brought nearly 20 guests to the Zadar area and the Republic of Croatia, said the Base Commander, Lt. Col. Karol Lučan, who also underlined that the arrangement was a proof of the Croatian Air Force's potential for delivering training programmes.

**Lt. Col. Karol Lučan,**

Commander of the 93 Croatian Air Force and Air Defence Base and of the "Zemunik" Barracks

The number of pilots trained is important for the international image of the Base and is our reference. This arrangement, which I am certain will be a success, will constitute an important achievement in that regard. We have developed the pilot training capability for the neighbouring and other countries.

**How did the pilot training project with the Sultanate of Oman start?**

The delegation from the Sultanate of Oman, who visited the Adriatic Sea Defense and Airspace Exhibition and Conference held in Split last year saw the performance of the Croatian aerobatic group "Wings of Storm" and expressed their wish to see their pilots do the same. The initial concrete talks ensued with the visit by the delegation of the Royal Air Force of Oman to the 93<sup>rd</sup> Croatian Air Force and Air Defence Base and the Training Centre "Rudolf Perešin" at the "Zemunik" Barracks; and only a month later all formalities were completed and the Technical Agreement signed, creating the conditions for the flight training. Therefore, all steps have been carried out within a short time span, to the satisfaction of both sides. We have received 16 pilots and two flight instructors from the Royal Air Force of Oman.

**Has the Omani side placed any special requests?**

They stressed the timeframe of the training and the programme's adjustability to their pilots' needs. Following the theory part to be conducted at the Pilot School "Rudolf Perešin", the Omani pilots will take the flight training delivered by the pilots and flight instructors of the Airplane Squadron, some of whom are members of the "Wings of Storm" Aerobatic Group. This is our first international training and we have a serious task ahead of us, but in view of the abilities of our flight instructors and air technicians, we are certain of its success.

**What in Your view are the main benefits of co-operating with the Sultanate of Oman?**

The training for the Omani pilots will certainly be a significant impetus in the development of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Air Base. The number of pilots trained is important for the international image of the Base and is our reference. This arrangement, which I am certain will be a success, constitutes an important achievement in that regard. We have developed the pilot training capability for the neighbouring and other countries.





**Along with the training of the Omani pilots, the 93<sup>rd</sup> Base continuously delivers a number of training events.**

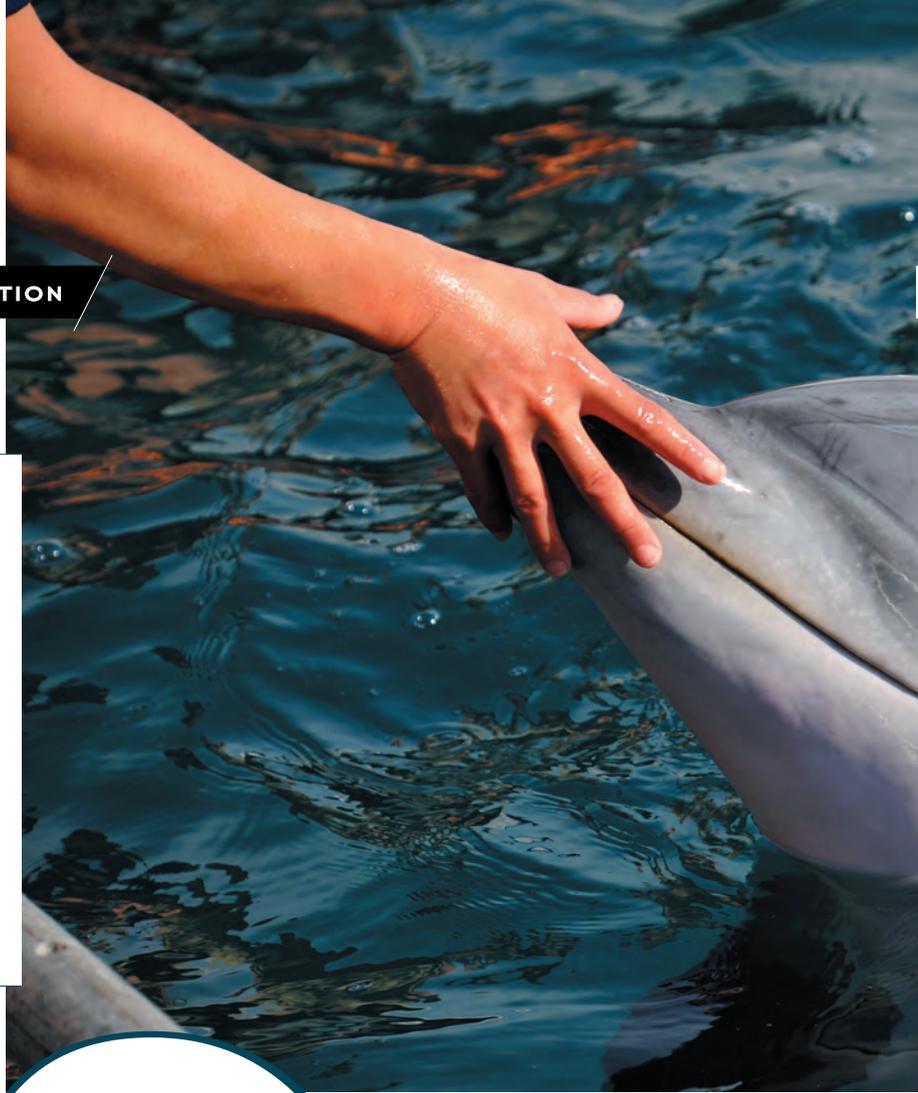
It is true. The "Zemunik" Barracks is known to be the busiest barracks of the Croatian Armed Forces, providing highly convenient geographical and climate conditions for training throughout the year. Along with the training of Croatian pilots, we deliver training programmes with the members of the other services of the Armed Forces and the Croatian Mountain Rescue Service, but also with the Air Force personnel of other countries. An example is the pre-deployment joint training of the Croatia, the Czech and the Hungarian Air Advisory Teams for ISAF.

**There is a increasing talk of the establishment of the Multinational Air Training Centre. How far has the project evolved?**

The project has been recognised by NATO as a commendable initiative to be co-delivered by the Air Forces of Croatia, the Czech Republic and Hungary, and has also received support from the United States of America, who intend to invest some 750 000 USD to renovate the infrastructure of the Zemunik Barracks in the course of 2014. The funds will be invested to refurbish the working space for pilots and to build another lodging unit. We definitely need to increase our lodging capacities, in view of the multiplying activities. Receiving the status of a Centre of Excellence opens wider opportunities for projects.



## INTERNATIONAL MILITARY CO-OPERATION



The Exercise "Dolphin" is a segment of a pluriannual programme of support by the USA provided to Croatia with the purpose of increasing its capability of cleanup of potentially hazardous undersea areas, with the ultimate goal to establish an efficient and sustainable undersea system in Croatia. The most interesting parts of the presentation on the Exercise were those addressing the US Navy's Marine Mammals Program, demonstrating the unique abilities of dolphins to detect the explosive devices remaining on the seabed

# EXERCISE *Dolphin*

The international exercise titled "Dolphin 2013", held in the Split and Dubrovnik aquatoria in September and October 2013, with the participants from Croatian Navy and the divers of the Ministry of the Interior, the divers of the U.S. Navy and the Marine Corps, of Slovenia and Montenegro with the aid of six specially trained dolphins of the Military Mammal Program designed by the U.S. Navy searched the aquatorium around Dubrovnik.

The participants practiced countermine procedures performed by countermine divers, the "Korčula" minehunter of the Croatian Navy and countermine sonars. The exercise, which made part of the pluriannual programme developed by the USA to assist Croatia upgrade the capabilities of clearing the areas containing potentially hazardous remains from the recent war, in order to establish an efficient and sustainable underwater clean-up system.

The preparatory part of the Exercise, conducted at

**It is interesting to note that the life expectancy of good dolphins, the species that the dolphins employed in Exercise belong to, in their natural habitat is 22-23 years, whereas those "hired" by the Marine Mammal Program live twice as long on average, says Chris Harris**

the "Lora" Navy Port in Split, was focussed on the HUEDS (humanitarian demining detection system) used within the US EUCOM humanitarian demining programme, in advanced divers training and target anti-...explosive devices.

Alongside the MMP civilian personnel were military representatives from the EODMU Mobile team, based in the MMP Headquarters in San Diego, CA, USA, and the members of the US Navy's Underwater Construction Team. The Exercise presentation was held at Veliki Zaton, near Dubrovnik. Tim Gerhardson, representing the US Embassy to the Republic of Croatia as Exercise Co-organiser alongside the Croatian Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces, stated the Exercise primarily had a humanitarian character and that it contributed to the development of the participating armed forces.

The most important part of the presentation was related to the US Navy's Marine Mammals Program,



Author: Domagoj VLAHOVIĆ, Photos by: Tomislav BRANDT



**Lt (N) of the Croatian Navy Ivo Musulin took part in a similar exercise conducted in Montenegro in autumn 2012:**

"This is primarily a training event, which at the same time offers a comprehensive experience as it covers all segments of countermine operations and we have the opportunity to use all our capacities. The dolphins are highly welcome "assistants", particularly in shallow or rock-covered underwater areas and opaque waters which are difficult to search. Furthermore, the waters being their natural habitat, they are 100% reliable!"



# hin

IN THE  
DUBROVNIK  
AQUATORIUM

which trains and provides care of dolphins used for the Exercise and all other related activities. Chris Harris, a representative of the MMP explained an array of programme-related details and the unique detecting capabilities of the dolphins, emphasising that the dolphins were by no means engaged in any potentially hazardous activities, either for humans or them and that the Program was implemented taking most serious consideration of the animals and the environment. The mobile units of the MMP-a, stationed in the bay of Zaton Veliki near Dubrovnik disposed with a veterinarian unit, an operations planning room and sea cages for the dolphins which were transported to Croatia aboard the C-17 Globemaster transportation aircraft. During the short exhibition staged during the presentation, the dolphins and their coaches demonstrated their obedience and loyalty. Seeing them on the job was even more impressive.

## UNDERWATER SEARCH

**The order of the search of the underwater follows the so-called "MMM (Machin -Mammal-Man) standard**

- the underwater is scanned by means of a Side-Scan Sonar and a magnetometre
- using their natural biological sonar, the dolphins locate the objects of search s
- the team accompanying the dolphins leaves the area, followed by the divers, who identify the suspect object.
- all collected data are entered and processed by using a US-made software for analysis and planning of future actions.
- finally, a list of all identified objects and their locations was handed to the Croatian Government.



# EMILYO

Being a military officer in modern-day security environment entails extensive international activity from the early days of the career, requiring that young officers be sensibilised to operating, training and commanding in an international environment. That was the rationale behind the European Exchange of Military Young Officers Initiative (EMILYO). The "Cadet" programme, inaugurated in the Croatian Armed Forces in 2003, enabled Croatia to join the many European exchange and training programmes designed for cadets and young officers. Presently, Croatian cadets are given the opportunity to participate in the training programmes in Austria and Germany, and in 2014 the Italian Military Academy will open its door to them...



PHOTO: ESDU

At their meeting of 10 November 2008, during the period of French presidency of the European Union, 27 EU Defence Ministers unanimously supported the idea of exchange of military young officers, inspired by the ERASMUS (European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) programme. The military ERASMUS soon adopted the title "European Military Young Officers" (EMILYO). From September 2009 to September 2013 EMILYO enabled the exchange of some 630 cadets and young officers and significantly enhanced the Europeanisation of military higher education.

## THE BACKGROUND INTENT OF EMILYO

In the modern-day security environment imposes upon young officers an intensive international activity and understanding of the complexity of operations and of international response options. They are expected to be familiar with the operation styles and standards characteristic of other nations and partners from the first days of their service. The general military training trends are growing more complex with the increased demand for a recognisable European military identity and greater



Author: Vlasta ZEKULIĆ, Photo credits: Cadet Battalion



PHOTO: Tomislav Vučak

# EXCHANGE OF MILITARY YOUNG OFFICERS AMONG THE MILITARY ACADEMIES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

visibility of the European response to international crises. EMILYO was tailored in compliance with the European Security Strategy - ESS) as the model of implementation of the European Common Security and Defence Policy - CSDP), and for promotion of the European security and defence during the initial military education and training of the future national military élite.

**Future officers have to be familiarised with the concept of interoperability, in the following aspects:**

- interoperability of their respective militaries within the European security concept and operating,
- interoperability between the Allied services and branches, as complex crises and missions call for complex responses,
- interoperability with civilian crisis management support instruments, in compliance with the modern unified crisis management.

In order to fulfil the objectives and prepare the young officers to meet them during their first duties, they have to experience the operating, training and

command duties in an international environment in compliance with the European principles and standards during the training itself. For that purpose military academies of a number of European countries designed, accredited and administered common military training modules.



PHOTO: Tomislav Vučak

**HANS BERNHARD WEISSERTHOM,**  
COMMANDER OF THE EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE COLLEGE-ESDC)



The European Security and Defence College (ESDC) was established in 2005, with the purpose of providing the member countries, EU institutions and agencies with the educated personnel trained within the CSDP framework. We have since then educated a total of 6000 diplomats, policemen, civilian administrators and military personnel, among whom also 500 students from the partner countries and international organisations, particularly those co-operating with the EU in crisis management. Some 74 national educational institutions (diplomatic and police academies, national military academies, civilian training institutes, defence study centres and non-governmental organisations) are organised in a network administering the courses on Common Security and Defence Policy and the related topics, under the guidance of the College.

The College co-ordinates intensive consultations and efforts in joint planning of courses certified to best reflect the EU policies and concepts and endorsed by the EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy (presently Catherine Ashton). All ESDC's training activities underpin the implementation of the EU's unified security management approach. The College's network and courses bring together civilian and military training authorities (diplomats, police officers, legal and military experts, civilian administrators) co-operating at the national and European level, sharing their expertise, the standards achieved and lessons learned, towards deeper mutual understanding and more efficient joint operation along the common political and operational objectives.



## EMILYO PROGRAMMES

EMILYO is nominally subordinated to the European Security and Defence College – ESDC and the Implementation Group for EMILYO. The two institutions have endeavoured to Europeanise military higher education and to place the emphasis on the common security and defence culture, along the two main guidelines:

1. Obligatory education and training of young officers on all aspects of Common Defence and Security Policy.

2. Recommended posting of young officers in multi-national environment during different initial training phases.

The initiative is based on two main guiding ideas – firstly, young officers increasingly find themselves in multinational environments in the early phases of their career, as evident in peace and humanitarian missions and operations, particularly in the West European militaries. Secondly, young officers will be far more efficient operating in multinational environment if they previously experienced co-working and training with their foreign colleagues. At the same time, they are given the opportunity for deeper mutual familiarisation (including the important differences between the respective countries) and for successful interaction and application of the acquired skills working in foreign languages.

These guidelines have over the past five years served as basis of four types of implementation of EMILYO:

**1. Common and internationally accredited, one-week academic modules: The following modules designed to offer crucial contents for young European officers:**

- a) Common module on CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy) - Common Security and Defence Policy orientation module, familiarising the students with the concept, the mechanisms and the challenges associated with the CSDP and designed to Europeanise the initial officer training. It was first administered at the Military Academy of Portugal in 2009, and has now been adopted in eight more countries for students from the rest of the European Union.
- b) Common Module Media Training – developed by the Belgian Royal Military Academy - a week-long accredited common module sensibilising the students to deal with the media in the theatre of operations.
- c) Common Module on Crisis Management and Peace Support Operations – Designed and administered by the Theresian Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt in February each year; the most demanding common module, administered in four one-week sub-modules as follows:  
 Sub-module A: Basic crisis management and international military operations  
 Sub-module B – Peace support operation map exercise  
 Sub-module C – Peace support operations-related tactical table top exercise  
 Sub-module D – PSO Platoon Commander Course - essential in preparation of young officers for participation in international military operations.



PHOTO: Vlasta Zekulčić

## THE CROATIAN ARMED FORCES IN EMILYO

The "Cadet" programme, initiated in 2003, opened the door for Croatia to the exchanges and training programmes intended for cadets and young officers throughout Europe. The activities gained the momentum in 2008, with the Austrian Theresian Military Academy formally starting the co-operation by inviting the Croatian cadets to attend the Austrian Officers' Ball, where they opened the dance to the sounds of Johann Strauss's Jellacic March. The March also symbolically announced Croatia's and its Armed Forces' entry into the European military education system, as the Croatian cadets have since that moment attended the C and D training modules of the Austrian Military Academy. Furthermore, Austria chose the Croatian Armed Forces for the practical training of its officer candidates (undergoing the ITJ programme), whereby two candidates annually spend six weeks commanding and co-working with the Croatian Army's units, supervised by a Croatian mentor.

In addition to the co-operation with Austria, Croatian cadets also take part in the German Officers School in Dresden, which organises weekly modules familiarising the students with the German Army, equipment and the training system.

The Croatian Armed Forces also joined the Central European Forum of Military Academies (CEFMA), through which cadets participated in the annual Conference of Young Military Scientists, presenting research and papers in various military-related domains. In 2013 it was held in Budapest, and the next conference will be held in Slovakia in May 2014. The Conference incorporates the International Military Academic Forum and its Scientific Committee, whose members review the delivered and presented papers. In 2014 the first group of Croatian cadets has been planned to take the one-week EU CSDP module in the Italian Military Academy in Turin, to qualify for the next CSDP Olympiad hosted by Cyprus.

**d) Common Module on Law of Armed Conflict** – a common module on law of armed conflicts, a highly important topic, offering the notions indispensable in all peace missions and operations. Designed by the French Military Academy.

**e) Common Module on Maritime Leadership** – a common module on commanding under extreme conditions, intended for future officers of EU Navies – designed by the French Naval Academy.

**f) Common Module on Maritime Navigation** – a module familiarising the students with the specialised Navy decision-making procedures – also designed by the French Naval Academy.

All the modules require taking an ADL course prior to the practical training at the host Academy. The module is worth 2-5 ECTS points.

Although military academies of the European Union offer a number of other training modules (e.g the Czech Academy offers six 1-week modules on the operations, logistic and other aspects of decision making process in peace missions) the six enumerated have been accredited and entirely recognised by all EU academies.

### 2. Three- and six-month academic modules

Each academy develops a number of semestral programmes open for international students too – Austria has a winter-semester "Bachelor Program Military Leadership", Spain offers embarking of foreign cadets on its training vessels for the period of up to 6 months to practice naval command and control procedures;

Polish Army Academy welcomes foreign students to the security and international relations programme, and the French Army Academy in Rennes to the three-month "International Political Science Semester", worth 30 ECTS points.

Some of the nations have also developed national exchange programmes – such as the Austrian International Training for Job, obliging all Austrian cadets to take the six-week practical training in a foreign country as platoon commanders.

**3. The option to complete the entire military education cycle** in a single country exists in Austria, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and France, but is less common, in the interest of harmonisation with the civilian education standards and the military training.

### 4. Exchange of cadets and young officers during military training

The exchanges normally take place during the summer and winter camps, military training or internship programmes and are highly intensive, comprising over 100 activities annually. Over 36 types of military education and training, in the duration of one week to six months, are offered by 10 military academies across Europe at present. The receiving country usually bears all expenses of the education, board and lodging and the sending country covers the travelling costs and per diems. Thus, over the past five-year period, the programme has seen as many as 630 cadets and young officers exchanged among the European academies, and the number is growing steadily.

Although primarily oriented on cadets and young officers, the EMILYO has exerted significant influence on the military education institutions too. They invested efforts to develop the accredited training programmes and to administer curricula and standards in foreign languages (mostly English and French). Furthermore, they received foreign students, through whose experiences, view and attitudes they evaluated their programmes.

Training events of the members Croatian Armed Forces for preparing or further practicing in PSYOPS have been given high importance, including the training of the Tactical PSYOPS Teams, conducted at the Army's Training Range at Gašinci, which we visited on the spot...



# TRAINING OF TACTICAL PSYOPS

By establishing the PSYOPS Support Element (PSE) the Croatian Armed Forces have fulfilled one of the Force Goals and Capabilities required by NATO. Hence the importance of the PSYOPS training and practicing events for the members of the Croatian Armed Forces. One of them was held at the Croatian Army's Training Range "Gašinci" near Osijek in October 2013. Tactical PSYOPS teams are the mobile components of the PSYOPS Support Element, which can be added to all units of the Croatian Armed Forces, and their size and form are defined by the planned operation.

## THREE LEVELS OF PSYOPS TRAINING

The training for PSYOPS is conducted at the three main levels: basic, advanced and expert training. Tactical PSYOPS teams, PSYOPS support element teams and all segments of the support elements follow separate training and practice programmes. The training is highly complex, requiring a broad spectrum of superbly acquired basic and advanced military skills from each candidate, complemented

**The training is highly complex, requiring a broad spectrum of superbly mastered basic and advanced military skills from each candidate, complemented with substantial theoretical knowledge and practical skills in PSYOPS, and further specialisation is welcome**

with substantial theoretical knowledge and practical skills in PSYOPS, and further specialisation is welcome.

PSYOPS is mostly a field-based specialty, where the teams arrive at the theatre of operations prior to the main component. The training and practicing programme is taken by members of various branches and services who are both capable and motivated to consolidate their skills and abilities and to acquire new ones. The training of the tactical PSYOPS teams as the mobile component of the PSYOPS has drawn considerable attention. The tactical teams rely on the support and the expertise from the larger PSYOPS units.

NATO, and by extension the Croatian Armed Forces, value the development of the PSYOPS, in view of the demonstrated importance of psychological operations as non-lethal and non-kinetic military capability, for the modern-day operations.





Author: Domagoj VLAHOVIĆ, Photo courtesy of Operations Directorate of the General Staff of the CAF

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# TEAMS

## FIELD TRAINING IN REALISTIC SETTINGS

The field training has to be conducted in the conditions as realistic as possible, comprising weather conditions, harsh terrain, role players, fighting the enemy force, the PSYOPS technology and a detailed scenario of each military operation where PSYOPS plays a prominent part.

"We have enjoyed considerable support from the Croatian Army, and particularly its Guard Mechanised Brigade and the Training and Doctrine Command", says Lt. Col. Svjetlana Doričić of the Operations Directorate of the General Staff of the Croatian Armed Forces, who is also in charge of PSYOPS training and practicing. The training is essential, as the tactical teams are planned to take the training and conduct tasks together, and the better trained and co-ordinated, the more successful the outcome. Tactical PSYOPS teams are by no means self-standing units, but an integral part of the support element, which in their turn compose the Armed Forces' psychological operations. NATO PSYOPS Doctrine requires from the member coun-

**PSYOPS is mostly a field-based specialty, which arrives at the theatre before the main component. The training and practicing programme is attended by representatives of various branches and services prepared to acquire new skills and upgrade the existing ones**



tries to form PSYOPS Support elements at the the corps down to brigade levels, although their very composition and tasks will depend on the mission, operational requirement, and the nation in question, which in the Croatian Armed Forces corresponds to company; thus, the support element may be attached to smaller-size units should the operation require so. Furthermore, the PSYOPS capability has to be able to provide support in assets and personnel to special forces, all Army, Air Force and Navy elements in any kind of operation. A PSYOPS element may also be employed to convey information in crisis situations in support to civilian structures (e.g. in the event of major disasters or threats of various sorts). NATO nations have over the past period used varying terms related to psychological operations, as a function of the growing demands of today's operations: they were referred to as the Military Information Support Operations (MISO), Operative Information (OI), Operative Communication (OC), Communication Operations (CO) or Influence Operations (IO) respectively. However, the term "Psychological Operations (PSYOPS)" is still in use.

The training for the drivers of the Patria Armoured Motor Vehicle, conducted in the Barracks "Pukovnik Predrag Matanović" in Petrinja, has been reinforced with a training simulator, enabling driver trainees to practice operating the vehicle at various types of terrain and under various weather conditions, and the instructors to monitor their reactions in extraordinary situations, e.g. faults or danger

CROATIAN ARMED FORCES

# AMV "PATRIA" TRA



The drivers practicing the operating of the "Patria" AMV 8x8 have been offered the opportunity to test driving at various types of terrain and under various conditions without really leaving the barracks. This in turn gives their instructors the possibility to monitor the trainees' reactions in the event of fire or the fault on the vehicle without having to really expose them. All of that has been enabled by a new driving simulator, seeming a large box from the outside, the kind of those found in fun parks, but its interior realistically depicts that of the Patrias.

The training for the Croatian Army's Guards Motorised Brigade drivers and vehicles commanders is normally organised throughout the year. We visited the third group of the trainees on the new simulator. As we were told by 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Goran Mihalnac, Course Administrator, six drivers have during the three days practiced driving under various conditions – road and off-road driving, driving in reduced visibility conditions, fog, heavy rain, snow

**NRF and the EU BATTLEGROUP**  
The "Tigrovi" Battalion is still drawing the attention as it is preparing to join the NATO Response Forces (NRF), and so is the "Gromovi" Battalion, preparing for the EU Battlegroup, where the stand-by period runs from the 1 January 2016

and night-time driving. The trainees take the first two weeks (one week of theory classes on the general characteristics and the parts of the vehicle, the auxiliary systems, the hydraulic, electrical and operating systems, followed by an exam), and the third week of practicing at the driving range in Požega", explained 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Mihalnac, member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mechanised Battalion, known as "Gromovi".

## **SIMULATOR – COMBINING THEORY AND PRACTICE**

The simulator has found its place between the theory and the practice. In the words of Lt. Mihalnac, its importance lies in the fact that it simulates the cockpit and instructs the trainees to detect faults. The instructors set different assignments through the simulator, ranging from brake and hydraulic system faults to fire occurrence in the engine unit. The simulator is equipped with a number of switches - each with its own function - and the trainees are expected to activate them prop-



Author: Petra KOSTANJŠAK, Photos by: Tomislav BRANDT

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# TRAINING SIMULATOR



erly and timely and undertake all other steps as necessary. For instance, if the vehicle turns from the paved road to a turnpike road, the driver has to activate the central blocade of the differential gear, and through the computer linked with the simulator the instructor can verify whether the driver performed the required "SOP".

PFC Anto Dunder, driving and maintenance instructor, a member of the "Gromovi" Battalion explained that the simulator is generally very useful for drivers' preparation and that it has facilitated the instructors' job. "During the three or four days with the simulator the trainees are assigned with detecting various faults and situations, and their performance is assessed by means of a computer. To give you an example – during the simulated drive the instructor presses the key "fire in engine unit", which is displayed on the simulator, calling for a quick response from the trainees. The total passing rate is minimally 80% of situations successfully resolved".



## CYBERWAR SIMULATOR

The cyberwar simulators are used by the Finnish and the Polish Armed Forces. It is a simulator for amphibious vehicles, but can move across various terrains. The simulator map depicts the surroundings of Verona and enables practicing of the procedures to be applied against any kind of fault, with the computer checking all traffic regulations and signalling possible errors committed by the driver. The width of the simulator is 1.5 m, the length 2.5 m and the height 2.3 m, and the optimal operating temperature is between 20° and 25°C. It was designed to simulate a wide array of conditions – road and off-road driving, and loading onto a low load trailer. According to the instructor Dunder, the most common errors occurring in simulated driving include hitting the objects, drifting and failed adjustment to the conditions defined by the instructor.

## "SLALOMING" BETWEEN THE CONES

The slalom drive is the first hands-on exercise prior to the training in Požega. The so-called "Slalom drive" requires the drivers to pass through the door 3.5 m wide, which is a considerably demanding assignment bearing in mind that the armoured vehicle (including the rear-view mirrors) is 3.45 m wide, leaving the driver only a few centimetres of space for manoeuvring the vehicle; the rest includes driving between the cones distant 10 m from each other, while the vehicle itself is 8 m long. The assignments place demand on the drivers' "vehicle awareness", the visibility and the skilled adjustment of the rear-view mirrors.



We also learned from PFC Dunder that the safety measures in the simulator are identical to those installed in the vehicles, and thus it cannot move without all the prescribed procedures executed (e.g. door closed, belt fastened). The image from the vehicle is conveyed to the computer operated by the instructor, who is in his turn supervised by the vehicle commander. The instructors and the trainees communicate through the earphones with the microphone, the instructor monitoring the simulated drive from different angles and positions. In doing so he relies on the computer and the steering wheel, and registers in the computer system through a fingerprint, which ensures the control over the simulator.

"The trainees prefer this part, which familiarises them with the vehicle, but as driving the simulator



**1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Goran Mihaljinac,**  
Course Administrator

is still far from driving an actual vehicle, it has been rescheduled after the actual driving, based on our suggestion", said instructor Dunder. The simulator has only been in use for a few months, and we are still weighing the right phase of the training to employ them. The instructors favour the first week of theory classes, followed by the "slalom drive" and the road and off-road driving (the second and the third week respectively), with the simulators in the final phase, assessing the drivers' operating performance. "Trainees", says 1st Lt. Mihaljinac, "shouldn't work on the simulator too early as it reduces their attention, but towards the end of the training, when they have become thoroughly familiarised with the vehicle and its various functions and gained the necessary operating self-confidence, which is easily checked through the computer".





# NEW MULTINATIONAL HELICOPTER CREWS COURSE FOR AFGHANISTAN



The Course conducted jointly by the Croatian, Czech and Hungarian Air Advisory Teams preparing to train the Afghanistan Air Force has been a success. In addition to the planned six cycles, there will be two additional ones. The Course closely precedes the deployment to Afghanistan...

The Course conducted jointly by the Croatian, Czech and Hungarian Air Advisory Teams preparing to train the Afghanistan Air Force has been a success. In addition to the planned six cycles, there will be two additional ones - said Captain Dalibor Ivelja, the administrator of the 6<sup>th</sup> Air Advisory Pre-deployment Training Course. The Course is an activity within the Smart Defence Initiative, along the NATO guidelines encouraging and supporting joint training, logistics, maintenance and partner Armed Forces development projects curbing the expenses. The Course closely precedes the deployment to Afghanistan. The first part of the training is conducted on the Mi-171 flight simulator installed in Ostrava, the Czech Republic, followed by the theory and practical flying part in Croatia, at the 93<sup>rd</sup> Air Force and Air Defence Base.

**“The imperative at the moment is to train a sufficient number of flight instructors, evaluators and technicians and consolidate the maintenance system in the Afghanistan Air Force, to enable them take over the helicopter training”**

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To quote Cpt. Ivelja, pilot of the Transport Helicopter Squadron of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Base, the Course is a specific activity familiarising air advisors with the environment to be found in the theatre of operations, the procedures and techniques employed, the differences between the helicopters operated and instructing them, both individually and as group, to take self-protection and security measures. The Course is designed to simulate the anticipated tasks once the the team reaches Afghanistan, as well as the contact procedures, the instructing situations and the tactical conditions to be found in the theatre of operations. Among other segments, it comprises mountain flying – over the nearby Velebit mountain, at the altitudes of 1700 to 1800 m, which is not the same altitude found in Afghanistan, where flying at 4000 m is customary, says Cpt Ivelja.

The AAT PTC project was co-designed in 2012 by the Croatian and the Czech teams, with the advisory support from the U.S. Special Operations Forces - European Command (SOCEUR) and the financial support from the Multinational Helicopter Initiative (MHI), a multinational body supporting the financing helicopter deployment-related activities, including the establishment of autonomous Afghanistan Air Force helicopter assets

## SMART DEFENCE



Technically, the helicopters can fly at the altitude but the flight procedures need to be adjusted accordingly. The training has to enable the Afghan crews master the evaluating procedures and tactical flight procedures". Also, the principle of multinationality is applied at all posts and throughout the training. Cpt Ivelja, who returned from his second term in Afghanistan in July 2013, explains that the imperative at the moment is to train a sufficient number of flight instructors, evaluators and technicians and consolidate the maintenance system in the Afghanistan Air Force, to enable them take over the helicopter training. Helicopter firing against ground targets is an integral part of the training conducted in Croatia. The aim is to upgrade the co-ordination of the helicopter crews for joint operation of pilots, technicians and waist gunners for advisory and mentoring tasks in Afghanistan. Waist gunners also took part in the

**Helicopter firing against ground targets is an integral part of the training conducted in Croatia. The aim is to upgrade the co-ordination of the helicopter crews for joint operation of pilots, technicians and waist gunners for advisory and mentoring tasks in Afghanistan**

Course (in the Sixth Cycle), as equal members of the helicopter crews, and the training entails communication between the individual gunners in the helicopter and with the rest of the members. The firing is conducted at the "Crvena zemlja" Range near Knin, Croatia. "Each Course is a new event", says Activity Coordinator, Major Boris Panić of the A-3 Department of the Croatian Air Force and Air Defence Command, "as the syllabus is continuously updated according to the situation in the theatre of operations in Afghanistan". To exemplify, the Sixth Course has incorporated the regulations and documents recently adopted in the Afghan National Army." Our interlocutors add that flight safety in Afghanistan has significantly increased since the deployment of the first air advisory teams who had completed the Course. "All the three participating countries have considerably harmonised and upgraded the training



All the three participating countries have considerably harmonised and upgraded the training modalities of the Afghanistan Air Force, and it has been recognised by NATO, facilitating the allocation of the funds for additional courses. The Course will of course be adjusted to fit the needs and the situation in Afghanistan", said Cpt. Ivelja



modalities of the Afghanistan Air Force, and it has been recognised by NATO, which favoured allocation of the funds for additional courses. The Course will of course be adjusted to fit the needs and the situation in Afghanistan", said Cpt. Ivelja. The AAT PTC project was co-designed in 2012 by the Croatian and the Czech teams, with the advisory support from the U.S. Special Operations Forces European Command (SOCEUR) and the financial support from the Multinational Helicopter Initiative (MHI), a multinational body supporting the financing helicopter deployment-related activities, including the establishment of autonomous Afghanistan Air Force helicopter assets. The members of the Croatian Armed Forces, and especially Lt. Col. Michael Križanec as the administrator of the previous five cycles, have had an important role from the project proposal to the completion of each phase.



THE HELICOPTER SQUADRONS OF THE CROATIAN AIR FORCE AND AIR DEFENCE HAVE DEVELOPED A NEW CAPABILITY – NIGHT FLYING WITH THE NIGHT VISION GOGGLES (NVG) - A SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS FOR THE OVERALL CAPABILITY OF THE SERVICE, PARTICULARLY AGAINST VARIOUS ASYMMETRICAL THREATS...



### CADET PILOT TRAINING

The Helicopter Squadron of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Air Base has made a significant progress with the night flying training with NVG – they are to administer the training with the cadet pilots. “We had right considered incorporating the basic NVG flight training into the existing cadet pilots curriculum since the inauguration of the training. They will have acquired the necessary skills and continue with the pilot practice upon their assignment to the Transport Squadron or the Multi-purpose Helicopter Squadron”. The intent was to assess the pilots’ managing of the monochromatic environment. Although they have gained solid experience with the NVG during their basic training at the Transport Helicopters Squadron, the cadet pilot training will be the next important challenge.

# NIGHT FLYING A NEW CAPABILITY OF

The Croatian Air Force and Air Defence helicopter squadrons some years ago developed a new capability – night flying using the Night Vision Goggles. The first few training cycles were conducted jointly with the instructors from the U.S. Air Force, but within a short time, thanks to the demonstrated ability and skillfulness, Croatian pilots obtained certification enabling them to instruct Croatian and other countries’ helicopter pilots and crews.

The training was administered to qualify all pilots and crews of the Croatian Air Force and Air Defence helicopters for night flying using the equipment (Night Vision Goggles-NVG) donated by the U.S. military. The training is regularly attended by air technicians as well.

Night Vision Goggles enables the crews flying under minimal night lighting conditions (Moonless night; distant feeble source of light or reflection of the

**All pilots of the Helicopter Squadron have been qualified to administer training with NVG devices, which is conducted on the MI-171 Sh and the Bell-206B helicopters**



outdoor illumination) perceive all details (e. g. power transmission lines wires, trees and other barriers, the landing surface etc. necessary to perform safe flights). The NVG equipment also enables the conduct of search-and-rescue operations by night, as well as safer landing on unprepared grounds and heliports lacking the infrastructure needed for night take-off.

Nearly 80% of Croatian pilots have received training with NVG so far, developing a new significant capability to the Croatian Air Force and Air Defence. So confirmed Major Krešimir Ražov, Commander of the Helicopter Squadron of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Air Base, which is in charge of training of helicopter pilots, who are subsequently assigned to the Transport Helicopter Squadron or the Multi-Purpose Helicopter Squadron, depending on their skills and units’ needs. All the pilots of the Squadron have been qualified



Author: Leida PARLOV, Photos by Tomislav BRANDT

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# FLYING WITH NVG THE CROATIAN PILOTS

to administer training with NVG devices, which is conducted on the MI-171 Sh and the Bell-206B helicopters.

The basic training comprises basic flying, take-off, landing, off airport landing and adjustment to the new flying system and conditions. The advanced training comprises 20 hours of tactical group flying, landing on elevated grounds and ridges or highly restricted and unilluminated strips; mountain flying, sweeping tactical flights, sweeping flight at larger distances and other complex flight procedures. The training concept and the proper exercise of the flight procedures depend on the pilot's experience and practice to maintain the acquired grade of trainedness at the operational and tactical level. Night flying with NVG demands continuity – the practice needs to be reiterated either at the 1h-per-45-days, or 9-flights-per-6-months basis. The annual stand-



ard for the pilots designated for sorties with the NVG should be minimally 50 flying hours. Presently, the unit with the most flying hours is the Helicopter Squadron of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Air Base.

Flying with NVG places bigger demands on the pilots by restricting the field of sight. "Flying in a monochromatic environment challenges the perception of distance and depth and create ten more illusions to be recognised on time and act accordingly. In view of the specificities, flying with NVG necessitates optimal coordination, communication of the crew and prediction of the the possible course of events. The pilot training for night flying with NVG is a significant progress in the overall capability of the Croatian Air Force and Air Defence, particularly against asymmetrical threats of any kind, enabling the pilots to perform any assigned mission at any location and in any moment.

## CROATIAN MILITARY INDUSTRY



# “ŠEŠIR”

THE HEADGEAR BY “ŠEŠIR” THAT WAS WORN BY CROATIAN SOLDIERS AND POLICEMEN AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THEIR COMBAT UNIFORMS EVERYWHERE THROUGHOUT THE HOMETLAND WAR BECAME A PART OF THEIR VICTORIOUS IMAGE AND HAS REMAINED SO TO THIS DAY

In mid-January 2014 the Croatian Defence Minister Ante Kotromanović signed contracts with the representatives of 14 manufacturers from Croatia to procure military equipment for the use by the Croatian Armed Forces, among whom was, somewhat inconspicuous, also the headgear manufacturer known as “Šešir”. Their modesty, however, is about the constancy - “Šešir”’s branded headgear has been worn proudly by the Croatian Armed Forces since their establishment ceremony held at the “Zagreb” Football Club’s stadium in Zagreb in May 1991 to this very day.



The trust is not a result of inertia, but of traditional quality, said the executive Danijel Kovač during an interview at the firm’s headquarters in Ilica, in the very heart of Zagreb. Their products (hats, caps, helmets covers) recall the craftsmanship emerged as early as in 1866, providing an indispensable part of the outfit of the time, regardless of the social class. Zagreb as the capital of Croatia nurtured the Central European craftsmanship tradition, and its centre abounded in small shops and factories. With the arrival of the mass production the crafts receded in or took the form of small firms.

“Šešir” was transformed into a firm too, and in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century faced the biggest challenges of its long history, as hats were no longer an “obligatory” part of the everyday civilian outfit. Fortunately, it was not the case with uniforms, be it police, firemen’s, railway’s, postmen’s or pilots’. “Šešir”’s management realised that and re-oriented the business toward manufacturing of uniform headgear and other parts, yet retained the craftsmanship profile of the firm.



**“We are capable of delivering series of thousands of items within shortest term to any customer in Europe”,**  
stated the CEO of “Šešir”



Author: Domagoj VLAHOVIĆ, Photos by: Davor KIRIN

**The 24-year long co-operation with the Ministry of Defence and the Croatian Armed Forces features as a major reference for the firm’s next challenge - the entry into the EU market**



# A FIRM WITH UNFADING TRADITION

## PROSPECTIVE CHALLENGES

Two new challenges ensued with the privatisation of the socially-owned firm following the establishment of the Republic of Croatia. It was resolved successfully, though, with the Kovač family managing it as majority owners. The orders from a number of newly established Croatian state and public institutions needing procuring new uniforms and insignia in the early 1990ies were a welcome impulse. “Šešir” was recognised as a reliable partner with respectable references, which met the challenge successfully – the “Šešir”’s craftsmen designed and manufactured pretty, recognisable and good-quality headgear and various types of insignia. Among the customers were the Croatian Armed Forces – ever since the inaugural ceremony at the stadium in Kranjčevićeva the Croatian soldiers have worn – at all times and everywhere - the caps and hats made by “Šešir” as an indispensable part of their uniforms and of their image of victorious combatants. “Šešir”’s experts worked jointly with the Croatian Ministry of Defence

**“Šešir”’s experts worked jointly with the Croatian Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces to find optimal solutions and to keep up with the trends and technologies**

and the Armed Forces to find optimal solutions and to keep up with the trends and technologies. It has remained so to this very day. “Šešir” follows the world market and adjusts to new demands and needs of the modernised Armed Forces. The 100% Croatia-made garments and headgear follows the Croatian soldiers on their missions worldwide. The 24-year long co-operation with the Ministry of Defence has been excellent, as proved by the aforementioned contract. In the words of Mr. Kovač “It has been our earliest agreed contract this year, which helps us plan the fulfillment of our contractual obligations”. The co-operation features as a major reference for the firm’s next challenge – the entry into the EU market. It has even been the prerequisite for exporting, as we learn at every international fair visited. Our exporting chances have much increased since Croatia’s entry into the European Union. We are capable of delivering series of thousands of items within shortest term, to any customer in Europe”, stated the CEO of “Šešir”.



CAPTAIN DALIBOR IVELJA SERVED TWO TERMS IN ISAF WITHIN THE AIR ADVISORY TEAMS DEPLOYED TO KABUL AND MAZAR-E-SHARIF, AS OFFICER IN CHARGE OF TRAINING, FLIGHT INSTRUCTOR, TRAINER PILOT. HE ALSO AUTHORED AND STANDARDISED THE TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR DIFFERENT TRAINING LEVELS...

## FLYING MISSIONS IN AFGHANISTAN AND TRAINING AFGHANISTAN AIR FORCE'S PILOTS WERE A

Captain Dalibor Ivelja is a pilot and a flight instructor of the Transport Helicopter Squadron of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Croatian Air Force and Air Defence Base. He has served in the Croatian Air Force since 2000, and throughout the time helicopters have been his primary domain. Novelties in pilot training, standardisation of mountain flying, day- and night-time S&R missions, close co-working with the Croatian Institute of Emergency Medicine to upgrade the helicopter emergency recovery system. His many assignments include membership of the Split Unit of the Croatian Mountain Rescue Service, with the civilian pilot licence, deployment to Afghanistan (in two terms) in air advisory teams as officer in charge of training, trainer pilot, author of standardised training programmes for different levels and Jury member of the Military Court. He is presently busy in the Air Advisory Team Pre-deployment Course with the Croatian-Hungarian-Czech air advisory teams which he rates as one of the most efficient pre-deployment programmes, judging from his own experience as member of an AAT deployed to Afghanistan.

**In his first term in ISAF Captain Ivelja worked extensively to standardise the training programmes for Afghanistan Air Force members, devise new plans and implement them**

### **TWO TERMS IN ISAF**

Captain Ivelja has only the words to praise to say about Afghanistan and the people he worked with there. During the first term he worked extensively to standardise the programmes designed for training of the Afghanistan Air Force. During the first term he was focussed on standardisation of training programmes for the Afghanistan Air Force, where he also designed some new ones, and on their practical implementation. "The way the Afghan pilots operate may be not the one we are used to or intend to implement, but one has to admit that their pilots are excellent and have rich experience, and it should be respected", says Cpt Ivelja. "There are two categories of pilots in Afghanistan – the older and top pilots, from whom I learned a lot myself, about flying and about life. In the second and less numerous category are young pilots, fresh from the training, and they are the future of the Afghanistan Air Force. They bring altogether new standards of training, flying and the overall service. Luckily, I have had the opportunity to work with both categories".

Author: Leida PARLOV  
Photos by: Tomislav BRANDT;  
courtesy of 93<sup>rd</sup> Air Base of the  
Air Force and Air Defence



## CAPTAIN IVELJA MENTORED THE FIRST AFGHANISTAN AIR FORCE PILOT

Captain Ivelja is most satisfied for having completely trained the first Afghan pilot, Captain Gul Rachman, in Mazar-e-Sharif, to become flight instructor, in his first term in the Air Advisory Team. "He was very easy to work with – young, professional, honest and excellent pilot – a model pilot. He showed great willingness to work". Working together they became friends – there was no "lecturing attitude" by an experienced pilot from Croatia. While serving his term in Afghanistan Captain Ivelja never lied or distorted his view of the trainees' pilot skills. "The people there appreciate frankness, and what matters is the way you communicate it to them. You have to establish good communication with the candidate, talk to him, have tea together, talk about his personal problems maybe, his family situation. You have to show your understanding, but you also have to consider that we are speaking about the people who live in a difficult situation and who have had to adapt to different political and economic hardships for the past 30 years. To be able to live there one has to have a meaning and provide living for his family. During your mission there, you can either get distant from the local people or establish relations with them - I chose the second option, and it makes me glad.

# PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGE

Captain left for the second term only four months upon returning from the first one, because, as he says, he felt an obligation to dedicate a year to the job. It is a kind of job you either love or not, there is no third option. Working, and especially flying in Afghanistan has been a most interesting and challenging mission "It was a completely new environment in the geographical sense and a challenge; the flying and training side was attractive and dynamic".

### SEVEN YEARS OF SEARCH-AND-RESCUE CALLOUTS

However, he cares to bring in new and interesting things to his daily professional routine. As an example of the novelties he has introduced in different training segments, he has had a major role in the adoption of autorotation to the ground as standard exercise in the Squadron training. He performed the procedure 1500 times himself. Although Cpt Ivelja is enthusiastic about all types of flying, he places search-and-rescue missions on top. It is hardly surprising therefore that he introduced standards in S&R flying too. As member

**Serving, and especially flying in Afghanistan, was an interesting professional challenge. Captain Ivelja explains it: "It was a completely new environment in the geographical sense, and a challenge; the flying and training side was attractive and dynamic"**



of the Split Unit of the Croatian Mountain Rescue Service for seven years already, he was on familiar ground.

### What was the motive for joining the Mountain Rescue Service?

"Not a straightforward reason. For me it is most important to know that we do a positive thing, something that is at once very gratifying but also takes a lot from you".

He does not remember calls out, only some details associated with the interventions. He exercises several duties in the Service: sits on the Helicopter Rescue Strategy Board, and is a rescuer candidate, active also in the ICAR (International Congress of Alpine Rescuers) and has contributed a lot to the co-operation between the Croatian Mountain Rescue Service and the Swiss Air Zermatt, who perform the world's technically most demanding rescue operations and whose Alpine Rescue Training Centre issued him the licence recognised in the EU countries.

His activity in emergency helicopter recovery medi- ➔



## CROATIAN AIR FORCE AND AIR DEFENCE

### MAJOR TIM DODSON, U.S. MILITARY

“Captain Dalibor Ivelja is one of the finest officers and pilots I’ve had the pleasure of working with. His professionalism and dedication is second to none and was quite evident during his time as training officer for Det 3, 438 AEAS. His work with Capt Gul Rahman, Afghanistan Air Force Mi-17 pilot, was phenomenal. Dalibor worked tirelessly to upgrade Capt Rahman to instructor pilot. The first organically trained instructor pilot in the Afghanistan Air Force’s Mazar-e-Sharif detachment’s history. The entire 8<sup>th</sup> Croatian Aviation Advisor Team (CAAT) performed flawlessly during their tour. Led by Major Zoran Maranović and Major Boris Panić, the 8 CAAT did great work each day and help to also upgrade 2 additional instructor pilots and 1 instructor flight engineer. I would be proud to work with this crew anytime, anywhere!”



cal flights included the co-work with the Croatian Institute of Emergency Medicine on upgrade and standardisation of HEMS Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) in the Republic of Croatia. The situations requiring calmness, concentration and thinking are his specialty. Of course, some of them are hard to resolve, but he comments on as follows: “There will always be insurmountable situations, and if that happens one has to project the limits and either try to avoid the problem or find the courage to deal with it. There is always the second chance. Your experience enables you to see the obstacles differently, because you know that there are other options to deal with them. Younger colleagues sometimes find themselves uneasy about them, but in time they realize how much the experience counts. After years spent in piloting I now see how much I still have to learn and further develop my skills.”

### PASSING THE KNOWLEDGE ON TO YOUNG COLLEAGUES

Cpt Ivelja is very fond of his flight instructor job and passing of his knowledge on to young colleagues, particularly when he recognises in them the enthusiasm for learning and working.

Although active in civilian aviation and holder of Airline Transport Pilot Licence and a recent licenced examiner, Captain Ivelja does not see himself as airplane pilot. “Flying by helicopter is the absolute freedom, enabling you to move everywhere, depending on the technical limitations and requiring constant adjustment to the aircraft. Flying the



helicopter keeps you constantly off the ground and therefore it is the freest form of flying. It requires intuition, the feeling for the situation and adjustment. Everyday is different. It is a challenge. The pilot, the crew and the helicopter have to be ahead of the situation and be finely tuned to the aircraft, respect its properties and feel it as a living thing. To combine all that is a challenge, and once you overcome it, it becomes a pleasure.

For Captain Ivelja in-group communication is very important - “I tend to create relaxed atmosphere in the cockpit, because relaxed communication is the key to openness and better spatial orientation. It is a duty of any captain and crew member to keep the atmosphere at the optimal operation level”.

With the approaching of the tourist season, the Squadron’s agenda features increased practice flights, training and preparations for the firefighting season. Captain Ivelja is soon to mentor another future helicopter captain. In addition, he plans to devise the training material on tactical mission planning to facilitate the planning for the pilots and technicians undergoing the preparations for Air Advisory Teams in ISAF.

### Where does he find the enthusiasm and optimism?

“You don’t need an enticement in this job – either you’re in there or not.

Pessimism is superfluous here. Some things cannot be changed. You always have to pick up what is best from a situation and not lose time and energy on useless things. I love my job and I find no sense without flying”, Captain Ivelja told us before jumping aboard the helicopter.

# Our pride editions



## ◀ "BATTLE FOR VUKOVAR" - A DOCUMENTARY

The Multi-media Department released a short documentary titled "The Battle for Vukovar" to mark the 22<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the appalling sufferings of Croatian defenders and civilians of Vukovar. The documentary is a cross-cut of the war events in the town - the three-month heroic defence of the surrounded town and the suffering of Croatian defenders, the wounded and civilians in the wake of the occupation and total destruction of the town.



## "FIVE MINUTES TO REMEMBER - A SET OF FIVE DOCUMENTARIES

A set of five documentaries recalling major important events and military operations of the Homeland War were collected on a DVD titled "Five Minutes to Remember". The DVD contains the films on "Easter in Blood- Plitvice 1991", the "Battle for Vukovar"; The Military and Police Operations "Maslenica", "Lightning" and "Storm".



## ◀ "22 YEARS OF THE CROATIAN AIR FORCE AND AIR DEFENCE" - A DOCUMENTARY

On the occasion of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of the Croatian Air Force and Air Defence the Multi-media Department released a 20-min documentary on the establishment and development of the Service, its role in the Homeland War and the post-war missions and achievements.

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ODJEL HRVATSKIH VOJNIKOVIH GLASILA  
I IZDAVAŠTVA

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Željko Stipanović ([zeljko.stipanovic@morh.hr](mailto:zeljko.stipanovic@morh.hr))

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**Journalists:**  
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Domagoj Vlahović ([domagoj.vlahovic@yahoo.com](mailto:domagoj.vlahovic@yahoo.com))  
Lada Puljizević ([ladapuljizevic@yahoo.com](mailto:ladapuljizevic@yahoo.com))

**Photographers:**  
Tomislav Brandt, Davor Kirin, Josip Kopi

**Translation and proofreading:**  
Dubravka Marić

**Layout:** Predrag Belušić

**Marketing and finance:**  
Igor Vitanović ([igor.vitanovic@morh.hr](mailto:igor.vitanovic@morh.hr))

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**Title of the Editorship:**  
Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia  
P.P. 252, 10002 Zagreb, Republic of Croatia

<http://www.hrvatski.vojnik.hr>  
e-mail: [hrvojniki@morh.hr](mailto:hrvojniki@morh.hr)

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