

# CRO MIL

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INTERVIEW

**COLONEL GENERAL  
SLAVKO BARIĆ**

DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE  
CROATIAN ARMED FORCES  
GENERAL STAFF FOR  
PLANNING AND RESOURCES

23<sup>RD</sup> NATO SUMMIT IN STRASBOURG AND KEHL

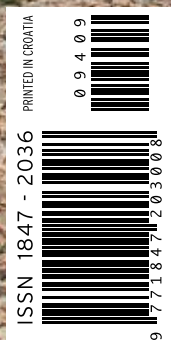
**CROATIA**  
**NATO'S NEWEST  
MEMBER**

INTERNATIONAL SPECIAL UNITS EXERCISE

**JACKAL STONE 09**

14<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE BIGGEST VICTORY  
IN THE HOMELAND WAR

**THE STORM  
OF ALL STORMS**





# FUTURE SOLDIER

## HEAD-UP DISPLAY (LOOK THROUGH)

The Head-up (or look through) display is very important part of the Future soldier. It means that the Soldier does not need to stare in to SDT's computer display instead to do his task. The display could be mounted on to a helmet and used when necessarily only. Certain audio signals have been used for basic communication with the Soldier to have the Soldier's activities maximum time concentrated on the battlefield.

## PERSONAL ROLE RADIO

The development of the system has led to use of the PRR (Personal Role Radio). This is a module that enables networking with other members of the unit with data and voice (voice over IP - VoIP) capabilities, with spectrum for high speed data transfer enabling real-time video features. For budget saving purposes, SDT-T and SDT-P computers could have wireless capabilities: in this case PRRs functions will be done by SDTs software and radios.



## SOLDIER'S COMPUTER and PRR

Typically, the Future soldiers has been equipped with a version of the SDT (Soldier Data Terminal). The SDT is available in a two formats:

- Commander's Planning System (SDT-P)
- Tactical terminal (SDT-T)

Both the SDT-P and the SDT-T utilise a mature and highly intuitive human-computer interface (HCI). The SDT-T differs from the standard SDT in that it is physically smaller and much lighter, with a display reduced to reflect the area of interest (AOI) applicable to a tactical operation.

## MOUSE-LIKE INTERFACE

To have much more soldier-friendly man-machine interface, mouse-like interface has been installed.

## OTHER PRODUCTS/PROJECTS DEVELOPED BY SDT SUSTAV:

### ARTILLERY FIRE CONTROL SYSTEM

### Bm21 "GRAD" 122mm MRLS MODERNIZATION

### MORTAR FIRE CONTROL COMPUTER/SYSTEM

### BATTLEFIELD MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

FOR MBTs AND AFVs (INCLUDING DISMOUNTED SOLDIERS)

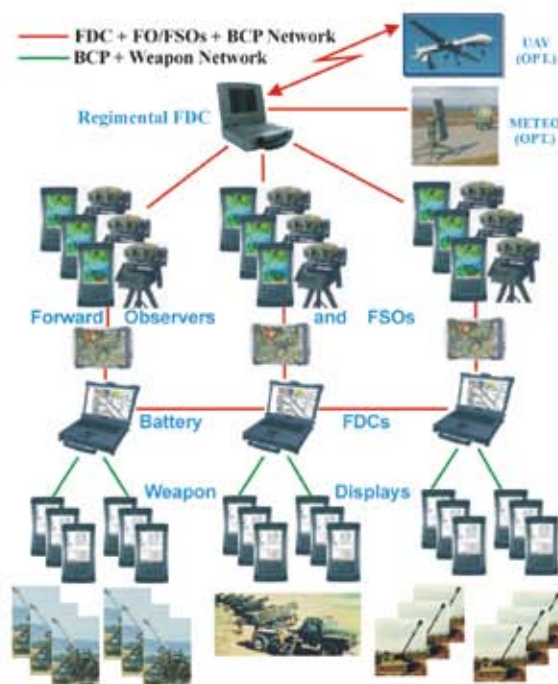
### SPECIAL MILITARY SOFTWARE FOR:

#### GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

According to MIL-STD-2525 / NATO STANAG 1241 Interoperability

#### AD HOCK MASH NETWORKING

Including WiFi, tactical VHF/UHF, PRRs, Soldier's Radio



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COLONEL GENERAL SLAVKO BARIĆ,  
DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE CROATIAN  
ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF  
FOR PLANNING AND RESOURCES

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**It is considered to take up to ten years for an entire defence system to be transformed, adapted and to enter the value system of the Alliance. The efforts that the Republic of Croatia has made through transformation, equipping and modernisation of the CAF have certainly shown results and I believe that the process will be speedy. Through various contacts and the exercises and missions that we accomplish, we have created personnel that will assist in this acceleration**



## WE WILL CONTINUE TO DEVELOP OUR **SPECIFIC QUALITIES** AND TO INCORPORATE THEM INTO NATO STANDARDS

We all know that Croatia is now a full member of NATO. The lengthy process of joining the Alliance was recently successfully completed. However, the hard work for the Ministry of Defence and for the Armed Forces of Croatia continues. Like all other members who join the Alliance, Croatia has to go through an integration process. Considering that the process primarily concerns the CAF, its completion depends on our military experts. The main role among our officers who work on the planning of the integration, in which NATO experts will also partake, is held by Deputy Chief of Staff of the Croatian Armed Forces for Planning and Resources Colonel General Slavko Barić



**I expect the greatest effort to come from NCOs and officers who have completed certain specialised courses and schools here and abroad in the last ten years—there are many of them so there is no fear of failure to fill vacancies, as well as from those who participated in international peace-keeping missions. Also important is the contribution from our young generation of officers who are now first class captains or majors. They will have to carry the exceptionally heavy burden of the transformation, the one that must occur in the preparation system of the Armed Forces, in training, in the acceptance of new technologies... I believe that it is those very officers that will give their biggest contribution over the next four or five years**

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#### **What does the process of integration entail?**

In most cases, what's implied is primarily the integration of the Defence Ministry and the CAF into the overall decision-making process and the new common-value system that we share with NATO members. The integration entails coordinating work in all functional areas: defence planning, operations, security, training, education, personnel and intelligence skills, logistics, command systems, communication, budget, finances, public relations, supplying and with various other segments. Membership is highly meaningful and complex, so the matter of integration needs must be separated into sub-segments.

#### **So, unlike the joining process, the integration process concerns mainly the Ministry and the Army?**

It can be said that the largest part falls upon the defence system of the country, and the process I have just mentioned will be con-

ducted by the Defence Ministry and the CAF. However, in order to achieve this, we need a normative-legal solution. It is implicit that many other ministries will also participate.

#### **Will the CAF preserve its specific quality despite integration?**

By all means! According to the Croatian Constitution, the CAF is first and foremost responsible for the defence of its own territory. We will continue to develop our specific qualities and to integrate them into NATO standards.

#### **How will the long-term plan which is to be created for the needs of integration be shaped? Will it be a strategic document or something else?**

We will not create a separate plan; instead we will introduce a specific adjustment dynamic through the current planning and through assigned documents. For example, logisticians or personnel managers or any other sub-system must respect NATO standards in their plans. It would be very difficult to create a separate adjustment plan; that would imply creating an extremely large document that still would not be able to contain everything that is specific to particular spheres. The good thing is that this very year we will have to work on the interchange and completion of our strategic plans, of Strategic Defence Review and National Development Strategy and other documents. In them, with a little help from experts from NATO's Command for Transformation, we will simply "draft" a realistic description of the manner and length of our adaptation into NATO's system.

#### **How long should the process last?**

The process is still in course for countries that entered NATO in 2004. It is considered to take up to ten years for the entire defence system to be transformed, adapted and to apply the Alliance's values system.

#### **However, as the confirmed "most prepared country to enter NATO", will we be able to shorten these processes?**

The efforts that the Republic of Croatia has made through transformation, equipping and modernisation of the CAF have certainly shown results and I believe that the process will be speedy and that those ten years won't be necessary. That is my assessment. Through various contacts and the exercises and mis-

sions that we accomplish, we have created personnel that will assist in this acceleration.

**You mentioned personnel. Who do you expect to give the greatest contribution to integration?**

Frankly speaking, I expect the greatest effort to come from NCOs and officers who have completed certain specialised courses and schools here and abroad in the last ten years—there are many of them so there is no fear of failure to fill vacancies, as well as from those who participated in international peacekeeping missions. Also important is the contribution from our young generation of officers who are now first class captains or majors. They will have to carry the exceptionally heavy burden of the transformation, the one that must occur in the preparation system of the Armed Forces, in training, in the acceptance of new technologies... I believe that it is those very officers that will give their biggest contribution over the next four or five years. We were preparing them, we monitor them and soon they will occupy the most important places in units—commands and headquarters—where the transformation must happen.

**So, the transformation doesn't only take place "from the top"?**

The General Staff will have to provide frameworks and opportunities, and the transformation will occur within the organisation, so that officers accept the standards and implement them in their work methods. This isn't something that you can simply command and have it work, rather it is a manner of thought, of work, of military life and of functioning in all activities.

**How important is NATO's expert and financial assistance to integration?**

What's most important is for us to adopt standards and manners of thought, but the help of NATO's experts is remedial, orienting. Financial resources will certainly be needed, but they will not be given in the classic sense of the word. For example, if we find a common interest with countries in a project related to integration, we expect NATO to invest a portion of the funds in its development. Very soon we will try to carry out some of these projects.

**Are the national fiscal resources allocated for defence in accordance with integration into NATO?**

We embarked on the project of equipping and modernization based on the National Development

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**We tried and succeeded in not affecting the main projects and they will run their normal course. Here I have in mind the AMV project, information and communication systems, patrol boats, new uniforms, rifles, Nuclear Biological and Chemical Defence system...**



opment Strategy and when we planned that, the situation in regards to funds from the state budget was certainly more favourable. In accordance with the first budget revision and reduction, they were reduced. However, we tried and succeeded in not affecting the main projects and they will run their normal course. Here I have in mind the AMV project, information and communication systems, patrol boats, new uniforms, rifles, Nuclear Biological and Chemical Defence systems...

**Can you explicitly tell us what are the specific qualities of the CAF which can most contribute to the Alliance?**

First and foremost, Croatia is a small country which is developing a small army according to its capacities, therefore its contributions are limited, so there is still no need to anticipate a considerable participation and a significant contribution and effort. What we have is experience from the Homeland War and the skills from our system, all three branches. Specifically, good examples are our MLOT and OMLT teams that instruct members of the Afghan army. That is where we see ourselves in NATO's future, not in large units equipped with aeroplanes, tanks and cannons but rather in teams that are well-trained, that have the capacity to transmit knowledge and experience to soldiers, units and headquarters. Of course, we will continue to contribute to "clean" units as well.

**Soon an important military exercise, "Jackal Stone", will take place in Croatia. Can you explain its significance?**

The exercise isn't only important to the CAF and to the Croatian Ministry of Defence. It demands that the entire governmental system be included. In terms of numbers it won't be large, but it will take place over all of Croatia and demand changes in many standardised processes and regulations, from the protection of nature and more. Everything must be known, how to carry out acquisitions, the organising of stays and meals, how to use the shooting ranges... Of course, what distinguishes it from the military point of view is the exercise of special units and as such it is a matter of the development of the abilities of our specialists. In short, we will see how we do in the military-tactical part but also in support and organisation. All in all we must react like a country that is a member of NATO. ■



## 23<sup>RD</sup> NATO SUMMIT IN STRASBOURG AND KEHL



# CROATIA NATO'S NEWEST MEMBER

At the NATO summit and before the whole world, the most prominent world leaders congratulated a country which, after a nearly twenty-year-long and exceptionally demanding journey, has at last secured a position which historically and naturally belongs to it

The newest members of NATO were welcomed by a ceremonial presentation of a copy of the Washington Agreement on full membership in the North-Atlantic association to presidents and premiers of Croatia and Albania Stjepan Mesić, Barnir Topi, Ivo Sanader and Sali Berisha on the 4th of April at the 23rd NATO Summit. However, one of the most important Croatian external-political goals, which was set immediately after the country's independence, was officially met two days before the beginning of the summit on the 1st of April in Washington when Croatian Ambassador to



the United States Kolinda Grabar Kitarović passed the national instrument of ratification of the North Atlantic Treaty in the State Department.

However, it is very likely that the summit held on both sides of the Rhine in Strasbourg, France and Kehl, Germany will enter our annals. Croatian representatives participated as equals during the summit, sitting at the same table as those who make decisions that could make this world better, more peaceful and safer. Croatian membership experienced a worldwide promotion of sorts at the summit: before the whole world, the most promi-



➔ nent world leaders congratulated a country which, after a nearly twenty-year-long and exceptionally demanding journey, has at last secured a position which historically and naturally belongs to it.

The official part of the summit lasted two days, beginning on the 3rd of April in Baden Baden, on a work night for the presidents and governments of 28 countries. Apropos, we congratulate our friends from Albania with whom we share "access" numbers 27 and 28. On the very first day, current US president Barack Obama addressed new members, saying that the membership of two countries contributes to the strengthening of European defence and security.

### **You've Earned a Place at the Main Table**

It is the American president's statements on the topic of the new members that drew the most attention. It is simply good to hear such things from a man who in a short period of time gained great popularity throughout the whole world, including Croatia, and represents new hope in world politics and for NATO. Obama was in the centre of the events involving Croatia the second day as well. Namely, he, as president of the country which is the depositor of

**"We are proud and excited to have you as allies, you have earned a place at our common table" said Obama. However, he did not forget to mention what our path was like leading up to that moment: "I congratulate you on the progress you have made in the difficult reforms that have brought you to this point"**

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the Washington Treaty, gave a copy of the treaty to the presidents of Albania and Croatia at the beginning of the North Atlantic Council Meeting. This act meant that they were symbolically welcomed into NATO. "We are proud and excited to have you as allies, you have earned a place at our common table" said Obama. However, he did not forget to mention what our path was like leading up to that moment: "I congratulate you on the progress you have made in the difficult reforms that have brought you to this point", and to point out that the two countries have contributed much to the Alliance up to now, "including 140 Albanian and 296 Croatian soldiers in Afghanistan". Obama continued to speak along the same lines as our then-partners in NATO, who took every opportunity to emphasize the immeasurable role of the members of the Croatian Armed Forces in joining the Alliance.

NATO's Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer soon joined in on the congratulations. "You have worked on reforms for a long time, you are welcome to our ranks, you have deserved it", said the head of the Alliance, who will soon be succeeded by the Danish Premier Andres Fogh Rasmussen. The ceremony ended with all the participants of the meeting applauding, congratulating and welcoming their new allies.





After a meeting of the Council, Croatian president Mesić and premier Sanader addressed the media. Mesić stated that Croatia's admission into NATO was achieved in a very successful way that earned the praise of all summit participants. He restated that Croatia as a loyal member must participate in the collective defence and in all other operations to the extent of the possible.

Premier Sanader once again highlighted that the benefits of membership in NATO greatly outweigh the costs, that "membership in NATO will annually cost several million Euros, which is much less than if we were to equip our army ourselves". With allusions to the past and to the Homeland War, the Premier said that without Croatian soldiers this goal would never have been achieved because "the world respects those who know how to solve their own problems, who know how to defend and who know how to contribute to world peace".

### **NATO's Flag in Front of the Croatian Ministry of Defence Building**

The fact that we are welcome to the Alliance has outshone everything else in Croatia; however, the summit was not only important for Croatia and Albania. It is delightful, though rather symbolical,

■ ■ ■

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that that the latest expansion coincided with the 60th anniversary of the founding of the most influential military organisation in the world. Also, we congratulate France, which after more than thirty years has returned to the organization it founded. The Declaration from the meeting, which we will present in the next issue of Croatian Soldier, has brought a number of new conclusions. Still, as time passes, we will mainly remember Strasbourg and Kehl as the end of one journey and beginning of a new one. We hope that it will be successful, but most of all, peaceful...

Croatia's admission into full NATO membership was marked on the 7th of April with the raising of the NATO flag on the mast in front of the Ministry of Defence. This solemn act was attended by Croatian president and Supreme Commander of the Croatian Armed Forces Stjepan Mesić, by the president of Croatian Parliament Luka Bebić, by Prime Minister Dr. Ivo Sanader, by Defence Minister Branko Vukelić, by Chief of General Staff of the Croatian Armed Forces General Josip Lucić and by many other senior civilians and military guests. As well as in front of the Ministry of Defence, the NATO flag was raised on Petar Krešimir Square and at all Croatian Armed Forces headquarters in the Republic of Croatia. ■





#### ➔ THE EIGHTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

For the birthday, members of all branches and ranks of the Croatian Armed Forces were in eighteen formal echelons. Along with members of the Croatian armed Forces, for the first time voluntary conscripts, who together with cadets carried war flags and the flag of the Ministry of Defence, of the Armed Forces Headquarters, of the Command Units and units of the Croatian Armed Forces, were also in the echelons

THE CROATIAN ARMED FORCES

by Marija Alvir, photos by Tomislav Brandt and Davor Kirin

18<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CROATIAN ARMED FORCES AND CROATIAN ARMY DAY

# THE CELEBRATION OF MATURITY WITHIN NATO

DAN ORUŽANIH SNAGA REPUBLIKE HR  
DAN HRVATSKE KOPNENE VOJSK

The 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Croatian Armed Forces and of the Croatian Army was marked by a number of celebratory events, the main celebration being held in Karlovac on the 28th of May. It was also the first celebration of Croatian Armed Forces and Army Day since Croatia's admittance into NATO





## ➔ NATO MEMBERS

Armed Forces representatives from countries that are NATO members carried the flags of the USA, Poland, Hungary, France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom and were formed into ranks alongside Croats for the first time

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In commemoration of the first alignment of the National Guard Assembly on May 28th, 1991, on the same day this year members of the Armed Forces in a formal echelon welcomed the most distinguished guests, lead by presidents of the country, parliament and government, who gathered on that occasion at the stadium in the Korona Sport Centre in Karlovac.

"In a person's life, we call this maturity. With it comes the assumption of responsibilities but also the obtaining of rights with which we show maturity and capability. At the same time it is the end of a developmental process. This is how it is with our Armed Forces as well," said president of the Republic of Croatia and Supreme Commander of the Croatian Armed Forces Stjepan Mesić, adding "This reform process was not an easy one, but we have succeeded, primarily thanks to all previous and current members of the Armed Forces". Concluding that The Republic of Croatia's admittance into NATO confirms our success, he noted that reform processes are not completed yet and that membership is primarily to be understood as the beginning rather than the end of the process. Recalling the creation of the Croatian state and of the Armed Forces, Speaker of the Parliament Luka Bebić particularly emphasised the merits of Croatian war veterans and of the first Croatian president Dr. Franjo Tuđman. Concluding that after the glorious victories in war, our Armed Forces had chosen the right path –transformation and professionalization—which lead under NATO's aegis, he said that our Armed Forces are the pride of our country and that much is expected of them in the future.

Premier Ivo Sanader also congratulated members of the defence system on their day. He once again highlighted how Croatia has grown from being the recipient of aid during the war into an active factor in the assurance and preservation of peace throughout the world, concluding that "our Armed Forces had and still have a key role in such an international recognition. Croatian war veterans, like Croatian policemen and diplomats today, contribute to fulfilling Croatia's strategic goals, serving in sixteen peace-

keeping missions under the leadership of the UN, NATO and of the EU". He congratulated all members of the Croatian Armed Forces in missions throughout the world, but he expressed particular gratitude to all Croatian war veterans and especially to the deceased and wounded without whose sacrifice, as he said, there would be no free Croatia, nor would the Armed Forces have experienced its maturity as a winning army which, through its worthiness during the Homeland War, became a part of the most powerful military-defence security alliance in the world. "Entry into NATO is, after the victory in the Homeland War, truly the crowning event of all the achievements we have reached in the past few years," he said to Croatian soldiers as well as to all Croatian citizens, adding that we will indeed enter the European Union as well.

Defence Minister Branko Vukelić and Chief of General Staff of the Croatian Armed Forces General Josip Lucić also welcomed the assemblies at the address, and General Colonel Mladen Kruljac, Commander of the army and head of staff for the celebration of Croatian Armed Forces and Croatian Army Day, reported to the Head Commander of the Croatian Armed Forces. For the eighteenth birthday, members of all branches and ranks of the Croatian Armed Forces were in eighteen formal echelons. Along with members of the Croatian Armed Forces, for the first time voluntary conscripts, who together with cadets carried war flags and the flag of the Ministry of Defence, of the Armed Forces Headquarters, of the Command Units and units of the Croatian Armed Forces, were also in the echelons. Armed Forces representatives from countries that are NATO members carried the flags of the USA, Poland, Hungary, France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom and were formed into ranks alongside Croats for the first time.

During the central celebrations, an impressive air show by the Croatian Air Force and Air Defence was held, as well as situational exercises by the Special Operations Battalion and Military Police and parachuting jumps which were also carried out by the SOP, but special attention was attracted by the Armed Forces' newest members. Namely, the new armoured personnel carrier Patria, which is produced by the Croatian company "Đuro Đaković" was publicly revealed for the first time as was a new assault rifle and new uniforms which are all domestic products. ■

#### ➔ THE GOAL OF THE EXERCISE

The goal of the exercise was to promote the cooperation of participating countries in the war against terrorism and to strengthen regional security and stability, as well



as to practice hostage situation procedures, to train liaison officers and to generally raise the level of planning ability and the implementation of such activities

MILITARY EXERCISE

by Leida Parlov, photos by Tomislav Brandt, Davor Kirin

## INTERNATIONAL SPECIAL UNITS EXERCISE

# JACKAL STONE 09



**The exercise proved the importance of coordinated work between both military and civilian Special Forces and why special units, even if they are small, are an important and key segment of the armed forces of every country. Along with the host country Croatia, members of special units from Albania, Hungary, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Sweden, the Ukraine and the Unites States participated in the exercise**





## → THE MINISTER BRANKO VUKELIĆ

“Only top professionals such as yourselves can carry out what are probably the most demanding tasks which can be entrusted to a soldier”

CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE



The Jackal Stone Exercise is the biggest training event since the Republic of Croatia's entry into NATO and is also this year's biggest special units exercise in Europe. Along with the host country Croatia, members of special units from Albania, Hungary, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Sweden, the Ukraine and the United States participated in the exercise. Altogether there were nearly 1500 participants. The goal of the exercise was to promote the cooperation of participating countries in the war against terrorism and to strengthen regional security and stability, as well as to practice hostage situation procedures, to train liaison officers and to generally raise the level of planning ability and the implementation of such activities.

On DV Day which took place in the "Josip Jović" barracks in Udbina on the 15th of September, a small number of the various techniques which are mastered by the highly trained members of special unit forces in hostage crisis situations

The hosts and organisers of the Jackal Stone exercise were the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia and the U.S. Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR). The Special Operations Battalion was the technical coordinator. Along with members of the Special Operations Battalion, members of all branches of the CAF and members of the MUP's Special Police participated in the Jackal Stone exercise which will take place until the 26th of September in many different locations across Croatia

were showcased. In attendance were Defence Minister Branko Vukelić, Chief of General Staff of the CAF General Josip Lucić as well as other senior civilian and military officials from the MoD and CAF, the Belgian Defence Minister Pieter de Crem, Commander of the US Special Operations Command in Europe Major General Frank Kisner, as well representatives from countries participating in the exercise

### Coordinated work of the special forces

Their task was by no means an easy one. Especially if one takes into consideration that these kinds of operations usually are conducted in the dark and in poor weather conditions. It all began when a terrorist organisation kidnapped two international diplomats. In exchange for their lives, the kidnappers demanded that all of their members be freed from prison and 100 million EUROS. First, reconnaissance teams for special operations who descended in parachutes on the place where the

**The Jackal Stone Exercise is the biggest training event since the Republic of Croatia's entry into NATO and is also this year's biggest special units exercise in Europe** →

→ terrorists where located sprung into action. Reconnaissance and surveillance of the area was performed successfully. No one had noticed them, and they gathered important information for further action. Their leader was among the terrorists, but the hostages were not. The action continued. The offensive team descended on the target by helicopter using the fast rope method. Before the terrorists could reorient themselves, their leader was captured. However, they did not give in. Not only was it confirmed that the hostages were not at that location, but it was also discovered that a bus full of civilians had been seized. They threatened to liquidate the hostages if the operation was not aborted. The information was forwarded to



higher command and the “green light” to proceed was awaited.

At headquarters they immediately began to plan the interception of the terrorists for which they hired a special assault force. One part was from the Special Operations Battalion and the other was comprised of members the MUP’s Special Police Unit. Having been given information that brought about the location of the bus and the van with the diplomats, the interception plan proceeded. The military forces freed the diplomats who were brought to a safe location by an MC 130 “Combat Shadow” aircraft. The special police forces intercepted the bus and freed the civilians. The operation was successfully carried out thanks





to international and inter-ministerial cooperation. It was safe and synchronised to the smallest detail. The exercise proved the importance of coordinated work between both military and civilian special forces and why special units, even if they are small, are an important and key segment of the armed forces of every country.

### **Contribution to strengthening regional security and cooperation**

Addressing the participants of the exercise, Deputy Chief of General Staff of the CAF and director of the Jackal Stone exercise Zdenko Simić said that the exercise that was held showed how



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**On the topic of the importance of joint-training of special operations units, commander of the exercises Major General Frank Kisner said: "The skills that you demonstrated to us today are the very skills that, if need be, you will use in an actual, real situation on the battlefield. We gathered here to train together and all this in order to ensure a safe and stable future"**

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much effort was put into the coordination of all the important details within the multinational forces that are the foundation of this successfully conducted exercise. According to him, this exercise in itself is an introduction to all the activities that will be conducted in various locations in Croatia at sea, on land and in the air within the Jackal Stone exercise. Chief of General Staff of the CAF General Lucić said that through the displayed exercise it is evident that the Armed Forces of Croatia, especially the special units, undertook all the necessary reforms and are capable of working with our allies and partners.

On the topic of the importance of joint-training of special operations units, commander of the exercises Major General Frank Kisner said: "The skills that you demonstrated to us today are the very skills that, if need be, you will use in an actual, real situation on the battlefield. We gathered here to train together and all this in order to ensure a safe and stable future".

Croatian Minister of Defence Branko Vukelić greeted all participants in the exercise on behalf of the Ministry of Defence, stressing how this impressive exercise demonstrated why the special units of our countries are of a special value and should be carefully nurtured. "The Jackal Stone 09 exercise will contribute to the coordination of special units activities of allied and partner countries, to achieve unity in the implementation of tasks and for cooperation in countering terrorism" said Minister Vukelić, adding that this exercise contributes to the strengthening of regional security and cooperation. "Only top professionals such as yourselves can carry out what are probably the most demanding tasks which can be entrusted to a soldier" said the Minister, emphasising that he believes that the continuation of this year's biggest special units exercise in Europe will contribute to the development of the abilities which separate them from the rest. Expressing satisfaction with the demonstration of the exercise, Minister Vukelić said that this exercise confirmed the professionalism and competence of the members of special units and police in the execution of the most demanding tasks. ■



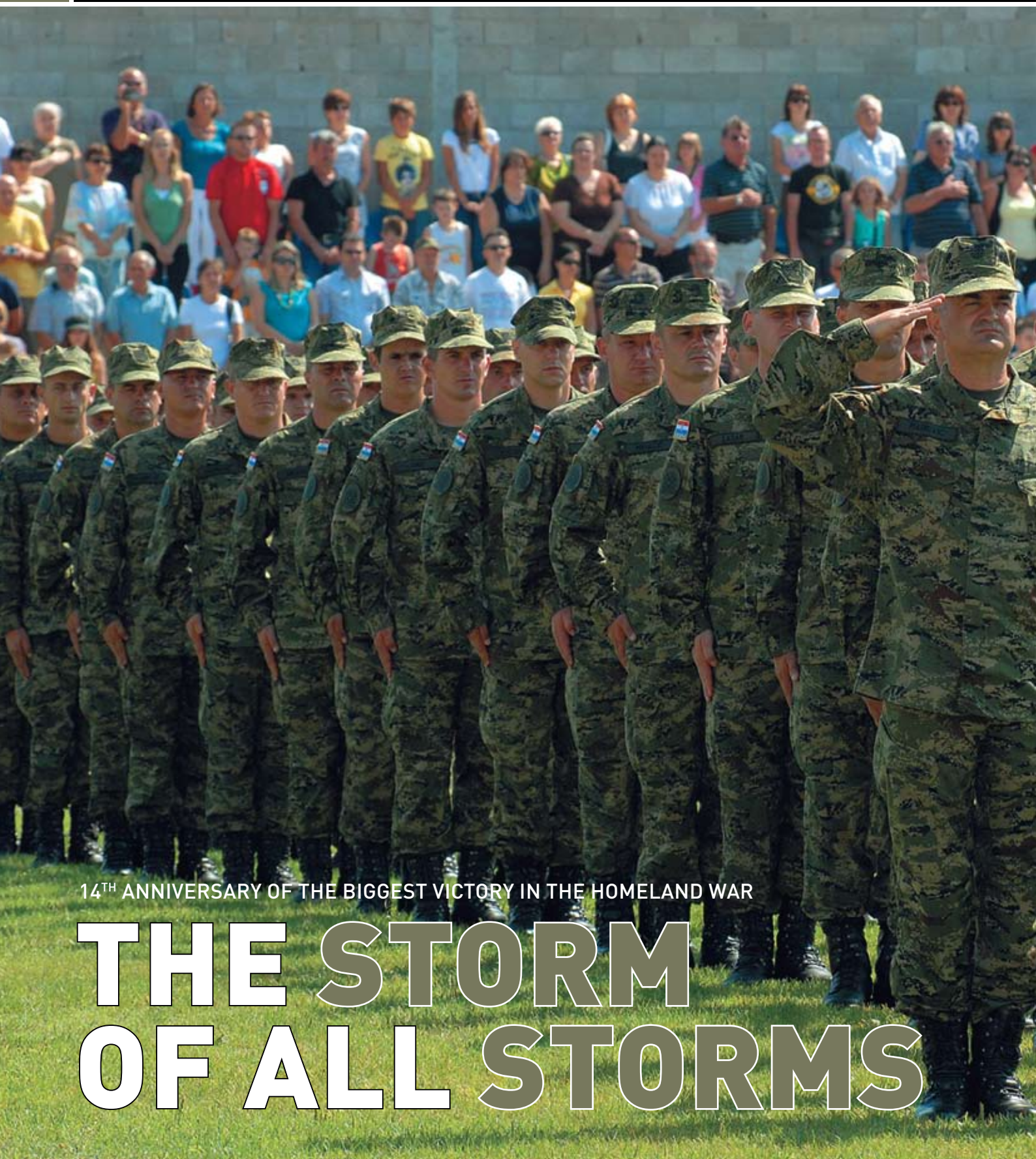
→ **EVERY YEAR**

As is the case every year, in Knin this year all of the civil and military heads as well as many soldiers and citizens gathered to celebrate and to once again remember what was happening fourteen years ago



ANNIVERSARY

by Vesna Pintarić, photos by Tomislav Brandt



14<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIGGEST VICTORY IN THE HOMELAND WAR

# THE STORM OF ALL STORMS

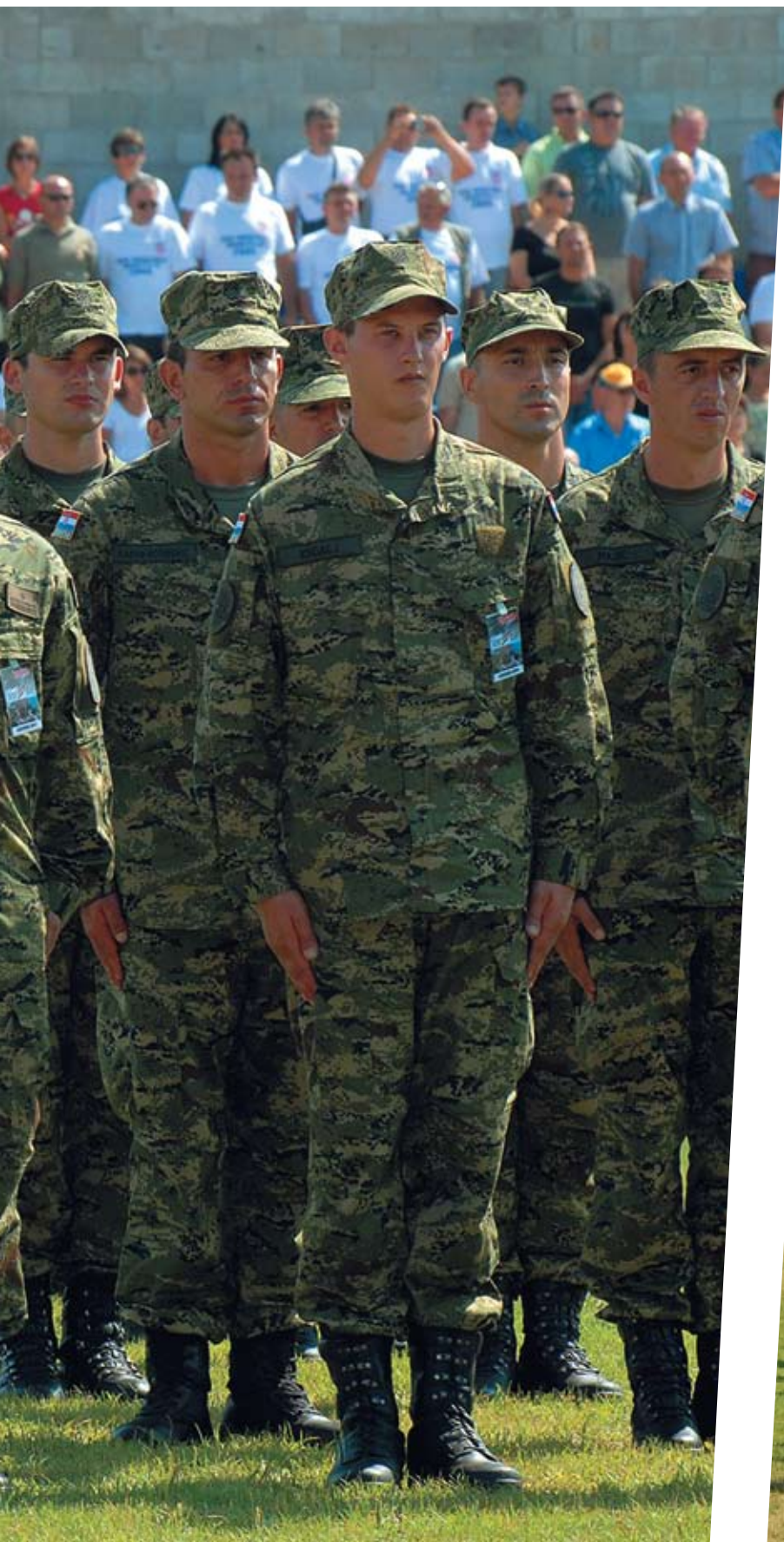




#### ➔ MEMBER OF NATO

This year's commemoration was celebrated in a new atmosphere, that of Croatia as a full-fledged member of NATO

CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE



Croatia celebrates Victory and National Thanksgiving Day, Croatian Veteran's Day and the 14th anniversary of the military police operation Oluja (Storm) every year on the 5th of August as a day to remember the greatest and most glorious victory in the Homeland War, a victory that enabled the end of the war and the beginning of the creation of modern and sovereign Croatia. As is the case every year, in Knin this year all of the civil and military heads as well as many soldiers and citizens gathered to celebrate and to once again remember what was happening fourteen years ago. But unlike previous years, this year's commemoration was celebrated in a new atmosphere, that of Croatia as a full-fledged member of NATO.

After the raising of the Croatian flag at the Knin fortress and the CRA's ceremonial procession through the streets of Zvonimir's city to the sound ➔





## → OPERATION STORM

This is our day, the day of a free, independent and democratic Croatia, a day when we celebrate the sacrifices made by our soldiers who sacrificed their futures for our present

### ANNIVERSARY



- of church bells which symbolically represent the entry of members of the Croatian Armed Forces into Knin during Operation Storm, the highest ranking civil and military officials gathered at the Dinara stadium.

Premier Jadranka Kosor took the opportunity to salute Croatian soldiers, recalling the 174 deceased and 1430 injured soldiers who participated in Operation Storm and to whom we are greatly indebted. She claimed that Operation Storm represents a turning point in our lives and that the young generations must be aware of the importance of this liberation movement as well as of the true value of the Homeland War.

"Thanks to Operation Storm as well as to other war victories and to democratic development, we can proudly say that the Republic of Croatia is a unique example of a country that very quickly went from being a recipient of international aid to becoming an important player in international relations" said Croatian president Stjepan Mesić. "This is our day, the day of a free, independent and democratic Croatia, a day when we celebrate the sacrifices made by our soldiers who sacrificed their futures for our present" said President Mesić. He highlighted how today the CRA are apolitical, professional and tailored to NATO standards. ■



## How the Storm began and ended

After a four-year-long occupation of nearly one third of the Croatian territory, of life as refugee or in perpetual fear of enemy retaliation, of the constant threat of shelling, of many unsuccessful negotiations and initiatives, the Republic of Croatia was left with no other choice but to free that which had always rightfully belonged to her using armed forces. The Croatian army became a power that could complete that task without anyone's help. At dawn on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August came time for the Storm! After the initial actions of the Croatian Air Force and the destruction of enemy communication systems and the artillery preparation that were in accordance with military goals, the Croatian forces launched the operation simultaneously in 30 directions on a 700 kilometre-long front-line. Guard Brigades, supported by the Ministry of the Interior's special police and the Croatian Guard's Corps as well as home and reserve units executed the impact force on the main points.

It was, in the tactical and strategic sense, the military operation which will train many military analysts thanks to its originality and success.

The main points of attack were Dinara and Velebit towards Knin. In Operation Summer 95 the conditions were created for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Guard Brigades to set off from the top of Dinara towards Knin. On the other side of Velebit over Saint Rok, MUP's Special Unit domineeringly infiltrated towards Knin. The 1<sup>st</sup> Croatian Guard Corps entered deep into enemy territory with helicopters.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Guard Brigade advanced further up north of the Kapela area over Slunj and Rakovica on one side and Korenica and Plitvice on the other in order to merge with Bosnia and Herzegovina's 5<sup>th</sup> Corps. Occupying Ljubovo and neutralizing enemy air bases in Udbina was the 9<sup>th</sup> Guard Brigade's task.

The Banija area was surrounded in a few directions. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Guard Brigade was the driving force in the direction of Petrinje, where the enemy showed fierce resistance, as well as towards Glina.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> units of the Guard's Brigade at that time were ready to head towards Eastern Croatia in case of an eventual enemy move.

During the first day of the operation, units of the Croatian army penetrated five to fifteen kilometres, and enemy strongholds were surrounded or semi surrounded. On the second day of the operation eighty percent of the planned combat tasks had already been accomplished.

Most of the occupied Croatian cities were once again free, Kostajnica, Petrinja, Glina, Slunj, Gračac, Obrovac, Drniš celebrated... The royal Croatian city of Knin, that represented the symbol of the enemy rebellion, also celebrated.

With the liberation of Knin, the centre of the enemy rebellion in Croatia, came the most important strategic-political and military objective of not only Operation Storm but of the Homeland War. Only a few days later, on the northern part of the enemy lines, the 21<sup>st</sup> Kordun Corps was forced to sign surrender.

In only 84 hours of the military-police operation Oluja, in which almost 200 thousand Croatian soldiers participated and where over 10 000 square kilometres of occupied territory was freed, the Croatian army achieved all of its objectives, and no one but us believed that could be achieved!

City squares were too small for all those who wanted to greet the winners. Pride, enthusiasm, solidarity, smiles and tears of joy were never greater, deeper and more sincere than in those days. After the days following them nothing would ever be the same...





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## → TRAINING

Voluntary military service training lasts 8 weeks. The basic and specialised training are held in barracks in Požega, small town in the East of Croatia. It is conducted under the new



educational plan and program, and instructors that are involved in it have gained their valuable experience through the Homeland War as well as through work with conscripts while mandatory military service was in effect

VOLUNTARY MILITARY SERVICE

by Leida Parlov, photos by Davor Kirin

## A NEW WAY TO STAFF THE CROATIAN ARMED FORCES

# VOLUNTARY MILITARY SERVICE

The response to the competition for the first generation of voluntary conscripts was very good and, it can be said, has surprised even the greatest optimists. There were five times more applications from candidates than there were positions available...





## → THE THIRD GENERATION

Over the course of the specialised training a great emphasis is put on practical activities, and so the training mostly takes place on the Gašinci artillery range. So far two generations of voluntary conscripts have successfully completed their training, and the third generation should start its training in September

CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE



Voluntary military service is the new way to provide the Croatian Armed Forces with personnel. It is one of the most important projects in the Armed Forces which began last year after the decision was brought to freeze mandatory military service. In voluntary military service, which can be served by both men and women, conscripts acquire the basic military knowledge and skills needed to partake in the defence of the Republic of Croatia, and get themselves prepared and trained to carry out assignments within the units of the Croatian Armed Forces. In addition to that, voluntary military service also is a condition for admittance into active military service for all those who after the successful completion of their training wish to become professional soldiers. Namely, upon the successful completion of the training program and in accordance with the achieved results, conscripts are provided with the opportunity to sign a contract for permanent employment in the Armed Forces.

The response to the competition for the first generation of voluntary conscripts was very good, and, it can be said, that it has surprised even the greatest optimists. There were even five times more applications from candidates than there were positions available. This was in great part due to the good preparation and the high-quality advertising of the military calling among the younger segment of the population, on which, amongst other things, the Public Relations and Information Office of the Ministry of Defence had intensively worked.

Voluntary military service training lasts 8 weeks. The basic and specialised training are held in barracks in Požega, small town in the East of Croatia. It is conducted under the new educational plan and program, and instructors that are involved in it have gained their valuable experience through the Homeland War as well as through work with conscripts while mandatory military service was in effect.

All accommodation and training facilities in Požega which are used by voluntary conscripts have been renovated and equipped according to standards which are meant to make young people's stay in the barracks seem exceptionally comfortable. Over the course of the specialised training a great emphasis is put on practical activities, and so the training mostly takes place on the Gašinci artillery range. The basic military tasks which the conscripts master in Požega are a prerequisite for the continuation of the specialised training over the course of which they are trained to successfully lead battle in various tactical conditions, combining shooting and movement, orientation on land, defence, successful execution of attacks, quick reaction to threats, observation and reporting, providing first aid... During the training conscripts go through preparatory and combat shooting and the final activity is a week-long camping trip in which the skill of each soldier is evaluated. Although it is indeed a demanding training, the motivation and determination of conscripts to successfully complete it and to remain in the Croatian army is extremely strong. (For example, of the 250 first generation voluntary conscripts, 208 of them, 25 being young women, signed the contract for permanent employment in the Armed Forces.

This says a great deal about the maturity of the young generation that recognised its military calling as being something good, something positive. It proves that it was not the spirit of adventure that brought them to the army but rather the desire to remain in the Croatian Armed Forces and to build their careers as soldiers, non-commissioned officers, officers. So far two generations of voluntary conscripts have successfully completed their training, and the third generation should start its training in September. ■





#### ➔ AMERICAN TEAM

Along with the two officers and eight NCOs on the American team, there was also a mechanic specialising in artillery who observed the entire servicing, maintenance and parts replacement procedures for a howitzer

MILITARY EXERCISE

by Leida Parlov, photos by Davor Kirin

# CROATIAN ARTILLERYMEN TRAIN AMERICAN SOLDIERS

**Eleven members of the 82nd American Airborne Division attended the "Eugen Kvaternik" Military Artillery Range Howitzer Manipulation D 30 Course. Artillery and missile regiment officers and NCOs conducted the training, and the knowledge acquired in this course will serve the American soldiers in the mentoring of Afghan troupes in the ISAF mission**

The collaboration between the American and Croatian armed forces has been very fruitful, rich and comprehensive. Besides joint cooperation in international military exercises, good cooperation in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan is achieved through various training activities. One of them recently took place in Croatia on the Eugen Kvaternik Artillery Range in Slunj where eleven members of the 82<sup>nd</sup> American Airborne Division attended the 122mm calibre Howitzer D 30 manipulation Course. Artillery and missile regiment officers and NCOs conducted the training, and the knowledge acquired in this course will serve the American soldiers in the mentoring of Afghan troupes in the ISAF mission. The American and Croatian armies came to this collaboration because there was a need for 122 mm calibre howitzer D 30 specialists in manipulation for the mentoring of the ANA (the Afghani National Army), and Croatian soldiers have a great knowledge and a rich experience in manipulation as well as all the equipment necessary for conducting trainings. The training lasted two weeks. The American soldiers trained in all actions that are related to the usage and maintenance of 122mm calibre howitzer D 30s. Along with the nine instructors from artillery missile regiments who participated in the training, the Motorised Guard Brigade also helped with the weaponry training. One of the instructors who conducted the training was Platoon Sergeant Darko Hopp who had also trained members of the Croatian-American OMLT-CS during their joint training for participation in the ISAF mission, which was also conducted in Croatia. Platoon Sergeant Hopp explained that American soldiers were trained in different roles within artillery servicing of the howitzer D 20 on all types of locations, in the overall structure of





## ➔ INSTRUCTORS

The two-week-long training was conducted by nine instructors from the Artillery Missile Regiment, and the American soldiers trained in all actions that are related to the usage and maintenance of 122mm calibre howitzer D 30s



CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

service, in the management and manipulation of artillery fire and live firing. He said that we had offered them all the knowledge and experience we have about working with these weapons in all possible conditions, which seems to have particularly impressed the Americans. Along with the two officers and eight NCOs on the American team, there was also a mechanic specialising in artillery who observed the entire servicing, maintenance and parts replacement procedures for a howitzer.

The final of the course was marked by military artillery shooting, which was successfully conducted to mutual satisfaction. "I am extremely satisfied with the professionalism that all participants in this course have shown," said the leader of the course Captain Davor Stefanović, and Colonel Miodrag Hokman, Chief of Staff of the Artillery Missile Regiment for Training and Doctrine, who also followed the final part of the course, expressed his satisfaction with the success of the course as well. "This

**The military artillery shooting with which the training ended was also monitored by Colonel Charles E. Davis, Chief of the US Office of Defence Cooperation. "Croatia has the necessary material elements and highly trained artillerymen," he said. He also praised the expertise and professionalism of our artillerymen, and he assessed the collaboration between the American**

training and collaboration between the American and Croatian armies proves that the Croatian Army is qualified, along with other NATO members, to run a top-level training. Members of the American army were surprised by the skill of our officers and NCOs who conducted this activity” said Colonel Hokman. The military artillery shooting with which the training ended was also monitored by Colonel Charles E. Davis, Chief of the US Office of Defence Cooperation. “Croatia has the necessary material elements and highly trained artillerymen, he said. He also praised the expertise and professionalism of our artillerymen, and he assessed the collaboration between the American and Croatian parties as being excellent. Members of the Croatian army up to now have proved themselves to be good students many times and now have also shown that they can be good teachers, and this particular well-organised and well-executed activity among many others surely has furthermore opened doors to what has already been a good American-Croatian military collaboration. ■



We were interested in what those who have been here for a longer period of time thought of the "Cadet" project, in how satisfied they were with its implementation and in what they believe should eventually be changed and be bettered for the benefit of cadets. In sum, all expressed their satisfaction with the project and are proud that they have "accepted the challenge" and intend to remain faithful to their military calling

# SATISFIED WITH THEIR CHOICE AND READY FOR CHALLENGES



## CADETS SPEAKING OUT ON THE "CADETS" PROJECT



### → CADETS ON THE PROJECT

We tried to find out how this civil-military education project, which has been in place in Croatia since 2003, is carried out and to what extent the cadets themselves are satisfied with it by talking to some of them

"Choose an occupation worthy of a young and responsible adult! Become a prestigious employee of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia! Give your contribution to the development of the modern armed forces which recognises the value of high-quality and highly-educated young professionals! Choose the winners!" states the promotional message in which the Croatian Ministry of Defence calls on Croatian high school students to get involved in the "Cadet" project. They are addressing those who, as is mentioned, want academic training, secure employment, personal development and challenges, and are offering free training, the acquisition of a rich experience in various areas as well as the fulfilling career of an officer.

We tried to find out how this civil-military education project, which has been in place in Croatia since 2003, is carried out and to what extent the cadets themselves are satisfied with it by talking to some of them.

### A secure job and a challenging calling

We spoke with four cadets nearing the end of their studies. Besides the fact that for the past three years they had shared a living space in the Croatian military college "Petar Zrinski" where cadets from Zagreb are accommodated, Anto Srdarević, Mario Mihić and Tomislav Lončarić also studied together. All three are undergraduates in the Faculty of Traffic Engineering and have the same major—road traffic— and are but a step away from obtaining their diplomas. The only female cadet that we spoke to, Ana Marija Jarak, is in her third year at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture, in the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, and all four cadets are members of the 4th Company of the Cadet Battalion, where students are 3rd and 4th year cadets. We were interested in what those who have been here for a longer period time thought of the "Cadet" project, in how satisfied they were with its implementation and in what they believe should eventually be changed and be bettered for the benefit of cadets. In sum, all expressed their satisfaction with the project and are proud that they have "accepted the challenge" and intend to remain faithful to their military calling. →

**Anto Srdarević:**  
**"We are young and  
need quite a bit  
of flexibility and  
perhaps a little extra  
understanding"**







**Ana Marija Jarak:**  
**"We have good commanders and we are all tight-knit, we get along well and we are a good community"**

→ "I am extremely satisfied with everything, I got a lot more than I expected," said Anto, explaining that he had accidentally heard about the project and then further informed himself via the Internet and through conversation with acquaintances employed by the army. He admits that his greatest motivation was job security and good perspective, but he was also fascinated by the interesting nature of the military calling, adding that the scholarships that are received are more than welcome. He noted that discipline wasn't too strict, but that it is important to respect the authority of the high-ranking commanders. "We are young and need quite a bit of flexibility and perhaps a little extra understanding," is the only suggestion he had for the betterment of the project. Still, he believes that in spite of certain limitations, cadets in comparison to other students have a great advantage, both because of the conditions during their studies and because of the fact that a secured job awaits them after graduation. He confirms that he was also motivated by the military calling itself and that he desires to remain in the organisation as long as that is possible.

Mario found out about the "Cadet" project through school through the Ministry of Defence's advertising campaign. He admits that at first he was not interested in the lecture, but under the impetus of his then-form-mistress, he decided to nevertheless listen to what the lecture was about and has not regretted his decision. On the contrary, he was drawn to what he heard and decided to "accept the challenge" himself, which surprised his family and friends. "Honestly, I wasn't expecting too much so I couldn't have got too disappointed," but I can now say that I am extremely satisfied," he said, adding that on top of the monthly scholarship, they have free accommodation in single-bed rooms and free meals. He doesn't mind the daily morning exercise, but he would like to be free every weekend so that he could visit home more often. That's why it is all the same to him where he will be assigned after he graduates, so long as he is as close as possible to his hometown. Ante, grinning, adds that it is not easy when their girlfriends are far away from them.

We asked Ana Marija whether it was easy when girls were among them. She said that she was already accustomed to that kind of

surroundings and that everything is great, to which Mario jokingly added that it was easy for her as she had a boyfriend there. She attended a technical school in which boys were in the majority and believes that she was always different from most girls. She was prevented from reaching her high school dream of becoming a pilot due to the results of her medical tests, but she managed to "get into" the "Cadet" project, which has made her very happy. Like Mario, she also didn't expect much, and points out that it is not any more difficult for girls than it is for boys, even in the camps where they master basic military skills. "It's important to organise your time and responsibilities well, then you are able to do it all," she said, mentioning that at the same faculty there are three more girls from their unit, and that the fact that they are cadets doesn't separate them from other students. "We have good commanders and we are all tight-knit, we get along well and we are a good community," she concluded, adding that she would like to remain in the army even after her contract is up and that she is ready for the challenges of her calling.

**Tomislav Lončarević believes that cadets have the best studying conditions, but admits that managing all his responsibilities is demanding at times**



Tomislav's story doesn't differ much from his colleague's. Like Mario, he found out about the project through an advertising campaign in highschool and that was when he decided to sign up. He also didn't have any great expectations and so was very pleasantly surprised by "how well everything is organised". His parents were also surprised by his decision, but they fully support him. Furthermore, Tomislav is convinced that his choice helped them out as well. "I've lifted a burden off them because they don't have to pay for my accommodation and my food, and I even have a scholarship," he summed up, adding that he has two sisters who are also studying. He believes that cadets have the best studying conditions, but admits that managing all his responsibilities is demanding at times. Still, he believes that not everyone is satisfied:

"Those people are the ones who gave up right at the start, but those of us who stayed on knew what was waiting for us and are satisfied with our choice". Emphasising once again that other students can envy him and his excellent conditions here, he concluded that none of the cadets should be dissatisfied, considering that not many people are able to "get in". The others we spoke to agreed with him, and Mario added that some of those who quit the "Cadet" project wanted to come back, saying "they might have only then realised what they had passed up". ■



**Mario Mihić: "Honestly, I wasn't expecting too much so I couldn't have got too disappointed, but I can now say that I am extremely satisfied"**



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#### ➔ TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PATRIA

The vehicle is 8 m long, 2,80 m wide and 2,60 meters high. Draft width is 2,4 m and it can overcome water obstacles up to 1,5 m deep and trenches 2 m wide if the rocks are hard, as well as 70 cm high obstacles. Its maximum speed is 100 km/h, and with a full tank of gas it can cross 800 km. In addition to the three permanent Patria crew members, there is room for 7 more soldiers

CROATIAN MILITARY INDUSTRY

by Leida Parlov, photos by Tomislav Brandt

THE MODERNIZATION OF THE CROATIAN ARMED FORCES

# PATRIA IN THE ARMY

One of the most important modernisation projects of the Croatian Armed Forces already in progress is their being equipped with armoured modular vehicles from the Finnish company Patria. "Đuro Đaković-Specialised Vehicles Holding d.d." has already begun the production of these armoured modular vehicles...





## ➔ PRODUCTION HAS ALREDY BEGUN

Production of these armoured modular vehicles has already begun at "Đuro Đaković-Specialised Vehicles d.d.", and 15 of them are expected to be produced in Croatia this year



CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

One of the most important modernisation projects of the Croatian Armed Forces already in progress, is their being equipped with armoured modular vehicles—an 8x8 wheeled vehicle from the Finnish company Patria. The procurement contract, we would like to remind you, was a consortium between Đuro Đaković and the Finnish company Patria Vehicles Oy.

Production of these armoured modular vehicles has already begun at "Đuro Đaković-Specialised Vehicles d.d.", and 15 of them are expected to be produced in Croatia this year. The 6 vehicles produced in Finland are already in Croatia. This armoured modular vehicle meets NATO's standards and will be able to be used in all Armed Forces activities. The executives at "Đuro Đaković" made

**Production of these armoured modular vehicles has already begun at "Đuro Đaković-Specialised Vehicles Holding d.d.", and it is planned for 15 of them to be produced in Croatia this year. The 6 vehicles produced in Finland are already in Croatia.**

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a point that Patria intends to incorporate up to 50 per cent of the components produced in Croatia, so that this modern armoured modular vehicle will have the right to print Made in Croatia on its wheels.

All activities that are related to technology transfer, to the preparation of complete production and to the launching of the project went according to plan and a framework agreement on the integration of remote arming stations and other weaponry systems and specialised equipment related to armoured modular vehicles that was struck between the Ministry of Defence and Đuro Đaković and that represents a potential framework for upcoming concrete agreements on the procurement of Patrias. This is an important project for the ➔





## ➔ TESTED IN THE MOST EXTREME CONDITIONS

The Patria driving and maintenance instructing team from the Guards Motorised Brigade, that will be equipped with new vehicles, had training at the barracks in Požega, at the Glavica shooting range where vehicles could be tested in all, even the most extreme, conditions. Experts from Finland and from Đuro Đaković d.d. conducted the training



## CROATIAN MILITARY INDUSTRY

➔ Armed Forces, for Đuro Đaković d.d., for the development of the military industry in general and for the Croatian economy as a whole. Minister of Defence Branko Vukelić pointed out that the technology transfer, which is already taking place and that will unfold with the AMV project, is of particular importance. Thanks to "Đuro Đaković Holding d.d." along with its partner Patria, many opportunities to be competitive on an international market will be presented. This was also confirmed by the President of Đuro Đaković Zdravko Stipetić, who is convinced that cooperation and engagement in this project will lead the Đuro Đaković group to come out stronger and more powerful.

As those vehicles were new to the Croatian Armed Forces, along with that new production technology which had to be mastered, it was just as important to train members of the CAF in proper Patria handling and maintenance. This activity began as soon as the first Patrias arrived in Croatia. The Patria driving and maintenance instructing team from the Guards Motorised Brigade, that will be equipped with new vehicles, had training at the barracks in Požega, at the Glavica shooting range where vehicles could be tested in all, even the most extreme, conditions. Experts from Finland and from Đuro Đaković d.d. conducted the training, and over the course of the training the instructing team became familiar with even the smallest parts of this modern armoured vehicle which weighs 22 tons without equipment. "We drove it through mud, rain, snow, slippery and macadam terrains, off-road, narrow streets, forests and overcame various obstacles", said Lieutenant Krešimir Kršnić, an electrical engineer and head of the instructing team, and added that the vehicle proved itself to be good and exceedingly stable under all terrain and weather conditions.



**The Patria is also equipped with an advanced fire-extinguishing system that can in one tenth of a second extinguish any type of fire caused by explosives as well as flammable material fires**

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Although it is heavy and with weaponry can carry a maximum of 26 tons, the vehicle can be operated with ease. It is stable and has an excellent handling system, automatic transmission, and makes ABS driving on streets seem much safer. That is how our instructors characterised the Patria.

They also mentioned that the vehicle isn't complicated, even in terms of maintenance. The vehicle itself is as the cutting edge of electronics, the whole system is modular, the armoured protection is multi-layered, not to mention that the "heart" of the Patria is its diesel engine with direct fuel injection and equipped with turbochargers and an intercooler.

"We put together and took apart the armour, took out the engine... to be completely familiar with even the smallest details" said the trainees, some of which were also at the training in Finland. They successfully completed the course, got certified to be maintenance and driving instructors and are qualified to train the whole Patria crew—commanders, gunners and drivers.

The Patria is also equipped with an advanced fire-extinguishing system that can in one tenth of a second extinguish any type of fire caused by explosives as well as flammable material fires, it also has a NBK system which filters all the air that comes in through the vehicle, which under most circumstances is hermetically sealed. Those, of course, are just a few of the many advantages of this armoured modular vehicle that will be able to be used in all of our Armed Forces' activities, and thanks to excellent training there is no doubt that members of the armed forces whose units will include Patria, will best as they can take advantage of all the advantages and opportunities that new technology has to offer. ■







**The VHS assault rifle has passed through heavy testing and has absolutely met all of the CAF's and NATO's criteria. The quality of the VHS rifle, as the experts say, is unquestionable, and it is clear that Croatia's admittance into NATO has opened Croatia's doors to foreign markets even wider**

by Domagoj Vlahović, photos by Tomislav Brandt

# CROATIAN VHS ASSAULT RIFLE

Should you ever come visit Karlovac and head towards the social seat the company HS Produkt, you won't be dazzled by any luxuries. It is a factory of course, so something of the sort isn't expected. However, it is no different in the areas where the administration stay and work, areas that are located within the manufacturing plant. It seems that everything is maximally functional and that there aren't any seemingly useless details. Who knows, maybe the work philosophy of HS Produkt, which has brought it to its present global success, reflects that very simplicity and exclusive focus on work. This was the only possible path for a company which has grown from practically nothing in an area of Croatia that after the war was considered to be one of the most devastated. The company, which had progressed in a market that is thought to be reserved only for big

**Those test trials demand that the gun be subjected to the most extreme possible weather and operational conditions (high and low temperatures, water, sand, mechanical impacts, frequent firing) and then must not only be safe for those who fire it but also reliable and accurate**

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"players", is supported by a long tradition, the wealth of its countries and a large market.

The story of the success of Croatia's HS 2000 pistols has been told many times, and its success continues to grow. That success could be a good enough reason to rest on one's laurels, go on with the production and collection of profits. However, they quite obviously would not let this happen in HS Produkt. Now they are presenting a new project, whose importance goes far beyond regular production...

## **From experimenting to the first test trials**

Plans for the development of Croatian assault rifles were set in motion along with the founding of the company and the development of pistols somewhere



in the early nineties. The first manufactured version resembled the famous the bull-pup model of the AK-47 with a 7.62 calibre. The design had quite a few flaws, but it served its purpose. Something was learned and new experiences were gained. In the mid-nineties there was experimentation with a similar product, but with the so-called postponed locking mechanism. This solution wasn't satisfactory either. There were discussions with renowned foreign manufacturers; there was talk of licensed gun production in the HS Produkt facilities, there was even the development of a prototype that was characteristically similar to the famous M-16. In the end, about six years ago, the development of what we now call the VHS assault rifle had begun. Prototypes were manufactured and intense testing began.

Of course, for the project to take strong root, the help of the Croatian army was necessary, with the clear intention of the CAF one day becoming customers and users of the new weapons. Getting equipped with a new assault rifle was one of the priorities for the modernisation of the CAF, whose official rifle up to now has been the AK-47. Entry into NATO implied the usage of a 5.56 mm calibre weapons, which automatically eliminated all so-called "Eastern" types and helped give HS products direction. In any case, the support of the Croatian Ministry of Defence and of the CAF

is evident in several developmental segments and has brought

**The HS Produkt "assault rifle" project had confirmed unquestionable expertise, knowledge, professionalism, consistency and market dynamism and has once again set an example for the Croatian business world**

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ght forth many benefits. Even though its funding didn't play a great part in the VHS's growth, the state's support provided a shot of security to HS Produkt, and the experience and knowledge of the CAF and of the specialists who participated in the project was exceedingly important.

An important document for the development of the VHS was the cooperation agreement between the Croatian Ministry of Defence and HS Produkt signed on April 17<sup>th</sup> 2007. Soon after, in accordance to the agreement, intensive testing began. Everything was officially presented on December 24<sup>th</sup> of the same year on the Jamadol shooting range in Karlovac: before the public's eye, a test series of 40 guns produced in two versions, one with short and one with long pipes, was brought out. The presence of Defence Minister Branko Vukelić and of Chief of General Staff of the Croatian Armed Forces Josip Lucić illustrated the importance of the project. The Minister gave great importance to the VHS, calling it a strategic project that will contribute to positioning the CAF within NATO and also emphasising its economic importance as it will contribute to the creation of jobs and confirm the potential of Croatian companies and innovators. All are optimistic and confident that the gun will prove itself to be high-quality and that it will pass the rigorous testing that are set by the North Atlantic Alliance standards.

### **Testing in the most extreme conditions**

Those test trials demand that the gun be subjected to the most extreme possible weather and operational conditions (high and low temperatures, water, sand, mechanical impacts, frequent firing) and then must not only be safe for those who fire it but also reliable and accurate. But it was already previously known that a rifle must also be practical and "fit" to the soldier. Nobody could certainly have tested this better than the members of





the CAF who gave their personal opinions and suggestions, some of which were adopted. In any case, the VHS assault rifle has passed through heavy testing and has absolutely met all of the CAF's and NATO's criteria. During a Croatian Ministry of Defence media press conference that was held on May 12<sup>th</sup>, the results of the tests were made public and three days later two contracts were signed in Karlovac. Minister Vukelić and HS Produkt director Željko Pavlin signed the agreement on the procurement of VHS assault rifles for the purpose of equipping the CAF and a contract which related to the first phase of the equipping. In accordance to the contract, the CAF will receive 1000 rifle sets. Along with the rifle, the set includes seven ammunition chambers, a belt, a cleaning set and an instruction manual. The "public premier" of the rifle took place on Croatian Armed Forces Day on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May, which also was held in Karlovac, when it was carried by some of the CAF units.

The framework agreement carries more weight, it has created the preconditions for all of CAF to be equipped with twenty thousand Croatian rifles over the next four years, though HS Produkt and the Ministry of Defence will have to continue to work on its development. The entire CAF equipped with Croatian rifles? This scenario would have left many in utter disbelief but a few years ago, but at HS Produkt, they never had adopted that attitude. "Of course we are big enough to produce the VHS! Tell me, which private European rifle manufacturer has more employees than we do? Who is bigger than us?". This is how HS Produkt director Željko Pavlin responds to questions that imply doubt in his company. This kind of self-confidence isn't unfounded, especially considering the worldwide success of the HS 2000 pistol and statements about the new Croatian assault rifle that claim that it is "the best rifle in the world in its class". In his interview with us, Pavlin eased tensions by saying that though according to their research the rifle is "worldclass", it would be



**In accordance to the contract, the CAF will receive 1000 rifle sets. Along with the rifle, the set includes seven ammunition chambers, a belt, a cleaning set and an instruction manual**

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impossible to claim such a product as being the best in the world.

The VHS rifle is a new product, but its future is heading towards the further equipping of Croatian soldiers. The logical goal is- export! HS Produkt is already well-established in the world arms market and has a reputation for being a reliable and renowned manufacturer and partner. The quality of the VHS rifle, as the experts say, is unquestionable, and it is clear that Croatia's admittance into NATO has opened Croatia's doors to foreign markets even wider.

The HS Produkt "assault rifle" project has confirmed its unquestionable expertise, knowledge, professionalism, consistency and market dynamism and has once again set an example for the Croatian business world. The Ministry of Defence has confirmed that the long ago expressed wish for CAF to be primarily equipped with high-quality Croatian products was not a Utopian fantasy or a tall tale. Their team created a rifle which is believed to soon become a world-renowned product of the dedicated Croatian industry... ■



#### TEHNICAL DATA

- 5.56 X45 NATO CALIBRE
- THE MODERN BULL-PUP CONSTRUCTION REDUCES THE TOTAL LENGTH OF THE WEAPON WHILE RETAINING THE LENGTH OF THE PIPES
- MADE OF HIGH QUALITY STEEL AND RESISTANT POLYMERS
- CAN BE EQUIPPED WITH VARIOUS ACCESSORIES SUCH AS GRENADE LAUNCHERS, FOLDING LEGS, OPTICAL SIGHT OR TORCHES
- BOTH THE STANDARD VHS-D RIFLE WITH A 500MM BARREL AND THE SHORT VHS-K RIFLE WITH A 410 MM BARREL ARE PRODUCED
- STANDARD WEIGHT, WITHOUT THE AMMUNITION CHAMBER IS 3,5 KG FOR THE STANDARD RIFLE AND 3,4 KG FOR THE SHORTER VERSION
- THE WEIGHT OF AN EMPTY AMMUNITION CHAMBER FOR 30 BULLETS IS 116 GRAMS
- THE AMMUNITION CHAMBER IS MADE OF TRANSPARENT POLYMERS AND WORKS ON THE PRINCIPLE OF BORROWING GAS AND GUNFIRE AT A SPEED OF 750 BULLETS PER MINUTE




## "KRILA OLUJE" ACRO GROUP

A photograph showing three aerobatic planes, likely MiG-21s, flying in formation over a deep blue sea. The planes are white with red and blue stripes and Croatian flags. They are flying near a dark, rocky coastline. The sky is clear and blue.

Almost no significant event takes place without Krila Oluje (wings of the storm), who with their eye-catching acrobatic flying leave no one unmoved. They have become well-known both at home and throughout the world. They climbed to the top of the World's elite acrobatic flying very quickly and have stood side by side with world-renown acro groups, some of which that have traditions which are fifty years old, as compared to their own which is but four years old...

AMONG THE TOP  
IN THE WORLD'S ELITE  
**ACROBATIC  
FLYING**





During the performance of the program, the pilots work to the limits of the airplanes and of the human organism, in extremely low altitudes. Because of this only the best pilots are chosen to be a part of the acro group. Those are most often the best pilots in their generation with a minimum of 600 flight hours, who over the course of their education and training need to show excellent results

Five years ago the "Krila Oluje" acro group performed for the first time. That was in 2004 in Zadar during the opening ceremonies of the European Sailing Championships. The first official performance was a year later in Knin for the commemoration of Victory Day and National Thanksgiving Day and the 10th Anniversary of Operation "Oluja". Since then almost no significant event takes place without Krila Oluje (wings of the storm), who with their eye-catching acrobatic flying leave no one unmoved. They have become well-known both at home and throughout the world. They climbed to the top of the World's elite acrobatic flying very quickly and have stood side by side with world-renown acro groups, some of which that have traditions which are fifty years old, as compared to their own which is but four years old. Their success is all the greater when one takes into consideration the fact that acro groups throughout the world are established as professional squadrons, whereas for our pilots flying in an acro group is an additional task. Of the approximately fifty performances that they had over these four seasons,

**Some of the elements that they perform are originally theirs, unique and recognizable and no other acro group has them in its program. One such element is the bell. One of the elements which only they and the Brazilian acro group perform, a triple mirror, was named the Dia**

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over twenty of them were on international aeromeetings. Among other places, they have performed in Germany, Slovenia, Hungary, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Romania and Austria, and have received invitations to perform out of the Old Continent. "We already have invitations from several continents for this season. There are so many of them that it is truly impossible to accept them all. Along with European countries we have also been invited to Qatar, to the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Libya..." says Captain Damir Barišić, who has been the leader or the number one of "Krila Oluje". Currently, lovers of the eye-catching, complex, demanding and dangerous flying that leaves one breathless include Major Nenad Hasnek, Captains Siniša Hucika, Matija Vrduka and Edvard Krišto and Lieutenant Božen Tadić. We would like to remind you that Colonel Miroslav Franjić and Captains Saša Joković and Diana Doboš were also part of the "Krila Oluje" group.

In only the last three aeromeetings outside of Croatia over the past month, over a half of a million spectators saw their show in person. If we add







→ television broadcasts and the Internet to that... we wouldn't be exaggerating if we said that in the world today everyone who is even remotely interested in aviation knows about the Croatian acro group. Could there be a better promotion of not only our armed forces but also of Croatia as a country made up of capable, expert and professional people? And all this was achieved in only the four years since they have been officially performing. How? Unquestionably thanks to their expertise, professionalism and dedication to their work and above all to their love of flying and their great enthusiasm. The families of our acrobatic flyers whose commitment to their work knows no boundaries had to get used to all of this. Flying, flying, flying... and then comes the rest. There is enough proof of all this. For example, the current number one Captain Barišić said his fateful matrimonial "yes" in Zadar at ten in the morning, and at sixteen o'clock that same day he flew in the show in Zagreb at the Lučko aeromeeting. It was his second performance in the role of leader. The wedding banquet took place the following day, he said. The number two, left wingman Lieutenant Tadić became a father during a performance at an aeromeeting in Belgium, and slot Lieutenant Vrduka recalls his first unofficial performance well because his son was born then. Those are just a few examples of how private and business life get enmeshed for these lovers of flying.

Technically speaking, their performance has achieved perfection. Therefore they aren't surprised by the praise and recognition they regularly receive, especially from the experts in the audience. "Our program is primarily based on very demanding technical elements. That's how we best present the skill of Croatian pilots" says Barišić. They fly Pilatus PC-9 ms. They started with four, but as of this year they have been performing with six airplanes.

Flying with more airplanes has allowed us to introduce new elements into our program, but the most important thing the sixth plane has brought is unity to the program. We strive to constantly be before an audience and for there to constantly be something that the public values" mentions Barišić. Elsewhere in the world, it is common practice to perform with five, six, up to ten airplanes, as do the Frecce Tricolori.

The performance, in which up to twenty elements are performed, lasts about twenty minutes,

**You can read more about "Krila Oluje" performances and about the pilot calling on their unofficial website [www.krilaoluje.com](http://www.krilaoluje.com)**

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which is optimal for the attention of the audience and for the concentration of the pilots. "During the performance of the program, the pilots work to the limits of the airplanes and of the human organism, in extremely low altitudes" Barišić told us. Because of this only the best pilots are chosen to be a part of the acro group. Those are, he explains, most often the best pilots in their generation with a minimum of 600 flight hours, who over the course of their education and training need to show excellent results. Some of the elements that they perform are originally theirs, unique and recognizable and no other acro group has them in its program. One such element is the bell. One of the elements which only they and the Brazilian acro group perform, a triple mirror, was named the Dia after then-member Captain Diana Doboš. They have also spruced up their appearance. Red overalls, Pilatuses in the colours of the Croatian flag and the inevitable checkers have become their trademark. Aware of the current situation in which priorities must be weighed, they have accomplished much on their own. However, they do not complain. "First you need to prove yourself and then expect support. I think that over these four years we have done good work and therefore we are getting more support" says Captain Barišić.

Besides performing in international performances that promote Croatia, our Armed Forces also promote our military pilot training system. Therefore it comes as no surprise that the armed forces representatives of some countries have expressed their desire to school their military pilots in Croatia.

The acro group exists to promote aviation, to attract young future pilots and to promote our own country as well as our military pilot training system. Many in aviation from other countries are often surprised when they see what we can do with these planes" says Barišić, adding that flying in an acro group only represents one quarter of the work they do annually.

"This is the best job in the world and I will do it as long as I am able to. I do it because I enjoy it" says Barišić who has been in the acro group from the beginning. He best remembers his first performance, then one everything depended on. "If we hadn't proved ourselves then nothing would have come out of the project". The recent performance in Austria which over 300 000 people attended was particularly impressive. That was, he says, an indescribable feeling.

When asked what their plans for the future were, the leader of "Krila Oluje" answered "to continue on. We know what we're doing. Never during any performance did we ever put anyone's safety at risk, and there will be even more demanding elements. Our goal is to be even better, even more precise and, to the extent of the possible, have as many performances as possible in which we will show what we know. I hope that we will motivate as many young people as possible to become military pilots with our flying" concluded Captain Barišić. ■



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B2



#### FEMALE OFFICER'S SHOE



#### OFFICER'S SHOE



#### MILITARY BOOT



#### BOROVO BOOT



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# PROTECTION



CORVETTE LIEUTENANT  
GRGO KERO, FIRST CROATIAN  
PARTICIPANT IN THE EU NAVAL  
PEACEKEEPING OPERATION  
"ATALANTA" IN SOMALIA

**This is a naval mission and participation in it is very important to us because our strategic goal is membership in the European Union. In the next period the rest of our officers and NCOs will embark on ships from the Kingdom of Belgium, Germany and Great Britain while one officer will be assigned to the operational headquarters operation in Northwood**



# A MONTH IN THE MISSION IN SOMALIA

Croatian Navy member Corvette Lieutenant Grgo Kero recently completed a stay on the French frigate *Anconit* which is participating in the European Union "EU NAVFOR Somalia - ATALANTA" peacekeeping mission. He is the first of our members to participate in this EU operation, and during his two-month-long navigation on the French ship in the Gulf of Aden he acquired experience as an operational combat officer. Corvettes lieutenant Kero has been a member of the Croatian Navy since 2005 and has gained much experience with various navigation assignments on the Mediterranean and Baltic Seas on many European navy ships. As a marine traffic engineer with a specialisation in the field of demining, he has participated in the making and prototype testing of the first Croatian mine-hunter *Korčula*, which has been under his command since July 1st of this year. He sees his participation in Operation ATALANTA as an exceptional experience for himself as well as for the Croatian Navy, which has proven that it has officers which are capable of accomplishing even the most demanding tasks



### Tell us briefly about the mission and tasks in operation ATALANTA.

Operation ATALANTA was launched in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions 1814, 1816 and 1838 in order to protect ships which are under the flag of the World Food Program and which sail in the area spreading from Adena to El Maana and merchant ships which sail during the implementation of operations, it also conducts surveillance of the coast of Somalia including territorial waters where we prevent the all-the-more frequent pirate attacks and armed robberies that occur in Somali waters. The operation is scheduled to last twelve months, until the 15th of December 2009 and Rear Admiral Peter Hudson was named commander. Currently deployed on the operation are forces from Great Britain, France, Greece, Spain, Germany and Sweden with a total of 14 ships and three naval aircrafts.

### How did CAF members come to participate in the operation?

After the UN vote in which the mission was established, we received an invitation to have five CAF members participate with the possibility of their partaking in the command of the operation or in the boarding of officers on ships which are participating in the operation. I am the first officer who was sent on the French frigate, and in the next period the rest of our officers and NCOs will board ships from the Kingdom of Belgium, Germany and Great Britain while one officer will be assigned to the operational headquarters operation in Northwood.

This is a naval mission and participation in it is very important to us because our strategic goal is membership in the European Union. In addition to this, for the first time in this opera-

**Operation ATALANTA was launched in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions 1814, 1816 and 1838 in order to protect ships which are under the flag of the World Food Program and which sail in the area spreading from Adena to El Maana and merchant ships which sail during the implementation of operations, as well as to conduct surveillance of the coast of Somalia including territorial waters where we prevent the all-the-more frequent pirate attacks and armed robberies that occur in Somali waters. The operation is scheduled to last twelve months, until the 15th of December 2009**

tion European naval forces are working in a collective multi-national headquarters which allows them to create standard operational procedures which are necessary for an effective response to specific crisis and conflict situations and thus develop skills for joint work. In addition to this being the first mission in which the Croatian Navy is participating with its members, this is also the first time that the Navy appears as an important factor in global security.

### What was your role and what were your tasks on the French frigate?

I spent almost a month on the French frigate as an operative combat officer. My work was monitored and supervised by a senior officer, but with time I carried out my tasks more independently. As for my acceptance on the boat, it was excellent. I had the luck of having an NCO of Croatian descent on board who helped me out a lot, Aleksandar Brečević. In terms of people this was a very positive experience.

### Has the situation around the waters of Somalia changed since the arrival of EU forces?

One has to bear in mind that this is a very important geo-strategic area, and European naval forces which want to prove themselves to be relevant powers are present there. Over 25 thousand ships pass through the Gulf of Aden every year.

So far, 32 boat-monitoring missions from the UN's WFP program have been successful; however, pirating is on the rise, but thanks to the presence of naval forces in this area most of the pirate attacks are unsuccessful. EU forces insure the recommended corridor and the passage through that way is safe and smooth. ■





## → TEAMWORK

Information flow and teamwork between Austrians and Croats went so smoothly that in a short period of time we even got to know each other on a personal level, so that many new friendships were formed



Text and photos by Slaven Ličina

## PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

MEMBERS OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> CROCON WITHIN THE AUSTRIAN BATTALION IN THE UNDOF MISSION ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

# ONE MISSION - ONE TEAM - ONE GOAL







## → EXERCISES

Austrian and Croatian soldiers in joint effort successfully resolved situations in imposed scenario exercises as a team and in a professional manner

CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

**Mutual respect can be seen through both the synergy of the many years of experience of the Austrian members of this mission and through the enthusiasm experienced by Croats for missions such as the one in Afghanistan. Judging some of our innovations to be high-quality - they were introduced as standard for the whole battalion, which for us is a great recognition as well as commitment to a continuous and even more successful collaboration towards achieving a common goal which, true to the spirit of the UNDOF slogan, is "One mission - one team - one goal!"**



Every assignment in the military life, even the simplest one, goes through many levels before its accomplishment, which requires trust in ones associates and team work from everyone involved. This fact especially comes into play during participation in international military operations, where it is not only challenging to be away from home, surrounded by foreign cultures and customs, but also to test one's personal capacity to integrate oneself into the military systems of the armed forces of other countries. A foreign language, a different approach to completing assignments, a mentality different from ours—these are things we had to take into consideration during our months of preparation for participation in the UNDOF mission as members of the Croatian unit and components of the Austrian battalion. Preparation made us confident that we will be up for the challenge of the mission and that we will justify the faith that was put in us, as we had practiced the typical military tasks, diligently working on the skills that are necessary for successful work in an international environment.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> CROCON has been participating in the UNDOF mission on the Golan Heights since the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2008 as a unit of the forces that ensures the implementation of the agreement between Syrian and Israel in the area of separation between the two countries. There are 95 members altogether. They are participating as a unit within the Austrian battalion with 76 members in eight positions with an area of responsibility spanning over approx. 60 square kilometres in the northern area of the separation, which represents one tenth of the intervention force (Force FQ)—8 members, battalion staff and UNDOF—5 officers, 3 NCOs, VP UNDOF—3 officers

Any possible inkling of doubt in our successful integration was irreversibly dissipated right from the very first days in the mission. We were as impressed by the Austrian's readiness for help and equal attitude towards our troupes as they were by our professionalism in executing orders. After the initial settling into the rhythm of work in UNDOF and an orientation on familiarising ourselves with the terrain and assignments within the sphere of our responsibilities, we began to receive increasingly complex assignments which demanded a higher level of cooperation with the Austrian units.

After the beginning of the Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip and the increase in tensions in the mission, the need for cooperation became an imperative. Coordination in the implementation of independent and joint implementations of sector patrols, daily contacts and briefings with the





→ authorities in command and other battalion units with the goal of coordinating ourselves during the executions of tasks—all this became a part of our daily lives. Information flow and teamwork between Austrians and Croats went so smoothly that in a short period of time we even got to know each other on a personal level, so that many new friendships were formed, creating an opening for an even better collaboration.

The greater assignments that we executed together—such as providing security for the “Family Shouting” event, where quick response forces from the battalion were included under our responsibility, and the “Apple Crossing” event where our forces oversaw part of the Austrian unit’s responsibilities and daily cooperation in the implementation of regular assignments in the battalion headquarters, patrol and supervisory points— all strengthened our mutual trust and feeling of belonging to the same team. The height of our successful collaboration was during the execution of the “Gopher Hole 2009” battalion exercises where Austrian and Croatian soldiers in joint effort successfully resolved situations in

**The height of our successful collaboration was during the execution of the “Gopher Hole 2009” battalion exercises where Austrian and Croatian soldiers in joint effort successfully resolved situations in imposed scenario exercises as a team and in a professional manner**

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imposed scenario exercises as a team and in a professional manner.

The same goes for the command of battalion situations, and this is best reflected by the fact that shortly after the arrival to the mission, in everyday communication expressions such as the 1<sup>st</sup> Austrian Unit, or even “our” Unit were used, thinking strictly about the 3<sup>rd</sup> Unit with Croatian members. However, after a few days everything melded and soon all units became “ours”, so that we have our 1<sup>st</sup> unit as well as our 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> units, etc. All these units are “our” battalions and we are its members. Mutual respect can be seen through both the synergy of the many years of experience of the Austrian members of this mission and through the enthusiasm experienced by Croats for missions such as the one in Afghanistan. Judging some of our innovations to be high-quality – they were introduced as standard for the whole battalion, which for us is a great recognition as well as commitment to a continuous and even more successful collaboration towards achieving a common goal which, true to the spirit of the UNDOF slogan, is “One mission – one team – one goal!” ■

## CROATIAN DELEGATION IN AFGHANISTAN

# A VISIT TO CROATIAN SOLDIERS ON THE WAREHOUSE AND MARMAL BASES

Defense Minister Branko Vukelić and Chief Inspector of Defense Lieutenant General Marijan Mareković lead the delegation who during June of this year visited members of the Croatian Armed Forces who are participating in the NATO mission ISAF in Afghanistan. The delegation visited the ISAF base Warehouse in Kabul, where members of the Croatian contingent are based, and acquainted themselves with the life and work conditions in the mission where Croatian members are deployed in three regional commands; in the northern and southern region, as well as in the capital Kabul. During their visit, the delegation also toured camp Marmal in Mazar-e-Sharif where most of the Croatian contingent is



**In the General Staff of the mission ISAF the delegation of the Croatian MoD met the Deputy Commander of ISAF Lieutenant General Jim Duttun**

based, in the northern part of the country. After visiting the areas where the Croatian soldiers live and work, a meeting was held with the purpose of being familiarised first hand with all aspects of the work of members of the CAF in this mission. It was concluded at the meeting that the conditions are far better than in previous years but that there is still room for improvement.



## THE FIRST CONTINGENT OF THE AIR FORCE'S DEPARTURE FOR MISSION KFOR

**Pilots, co-pilots, technicians, logisticians and signalmen will break the ice in NATO's first operation in the Balkans in which Croatian soldiers will take part in with their own air transport components, two Mi-171 Sh helicopters, and their basic task will be transporting people and cargo**

# A NEW CHALLENGE FOR THE AIR FORCE



→ The flight of three Mi-171 Sh helicopters has already been postponed many times as a result of the poor weather in Zagreb. These are special flights which nineteen members of the First Contingent of the CAF in the NATO-lead peacekeeping operation KFOR in Kosovo have been preparing months for. Pilots, co-pilots, technicians, logisticians and signalmen will break the ice in NATO's first operation in the Balkans in which Croatian soldiers will take part in with their own air transport components, two Mi-171 Sh helicopters, and their basic task will be transporting people and cargo. Of course, the people in question are bona fide soldiers and experts, who have had additional training in weaponry, military law and first aid for the mission.

Participation in the mission was a particularly important for the CAF's goals because air transport in any of the Alliance's operations is very sought out and valued. Of course, the bulk of the load falls on the Air Force and its people, primarily on the multipurpose helicopter squadron of the 91<sup>st</sup> Air Force base and Air Defence.

In accordance with this, members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Contingent were seen off by Air Force officers, by the head of the branch, Major General Vlado Bagarić and by the commander of the 91<sup>st</sup> base, brigadier Zdenko Sokić. Before the departure, which even that morning was uncertain and was delayed every hour, the General wished the whole team a safe three-month-long stay in the youngest European country. He does not doubt in their competence and in the professional performance of their tasks, and has absolute faith that they will justify the good reputation that the CAF and Air Force have in

**Participation in the mission was a particularly important for the CAF's goals because air transport in any of the Alliance's operations is very sought out and valued. Of course, the bulk of load falls in the Air Force and its people, primarily on the multipurpose helicopter squadron of the 91<sup>st</sup> Air Force base and Air Defence**

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NATO. The squadron, from the pilots to the technicians, has a very high quality structure. The same goes for the technology: squadron personnel has performed a true undertaking with the simultaneous restructuring and adjustment to the new Mi-171 Sh's, which "are among the best aircraft of this type in the world".

It is always most difficult for the "first". With them lies a particular responsibility, they are the ones whose influence will be scrutinized and who will particularly be remembered, their conclusions will open the doors for other contingents. This is probably the reason why Michael Križanec, the commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> contingent, is also the commander of multipurpose helicopters squadron. He is at the "Camp Bondsteel" base at Uroševac, about 40 kilometres south of Priština, with the KFOR sign on his sleeve, sent over fifteen days earlier as to prepare the terrain for his people.

In the end, the weather calmed down and the helicopters were able to take off in the morning. All three took off, even though only two will take part in the mission. The third will soon return to the homeland after it transports equipment to Camp Bondsteel, where Croats will be positioned.

Before the departure, Major Robert Agrež, the pilot who commanded the contingent on the day of the take-off, gave us a statement: "Our responsibility is the same as it is in Croatia. Assignments and procedures are the same as the ones we regularly do, only the map over which we will be flying is new, as is the interaction with members of other armies, though there won't be any problems there," believes Agrež. ■





## → THE PERMANENT EXHIBITION

In the Centre one can also see the permanent exhibition “The Battle of Vukovar—Memories of the Homeland War,” as well as a multimedia presentation which shows the conception of the Centre



## → THE OUTDOOR EXHIBITS

In the outdoor exhibits, in the open-air section, an area for things such as paintball and modern cinema/shooting-range as well the completion of the construction of the simulation of a battlefield is planned

### HOMELAND WAR MEMORIAL CENTRE IN VUKOVAR

by Marija Alvir, Photographs: from the archives of the multimedia section of the Homeland War Museum in Vukovar

**Vukovar's 204th Brigade barracks of the Croatian Army is slowly but surely becoming a place where the past and the future collide, a place where the young generation, as well as many other visitors, learn about our recent history, about the Homeland War but above all about the Battle of Vukovar**



# WHERE YOU CAN MEET THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

Vukovar's 204<sup>th</sup> Brigade barracks of the Croatian Army is slowly but surely becoming a place where the past and the future collide, a place where the young generation, as well as many other visitors, learn about our recent history, about the Homeland War but above all about the Battle of Vukovar. With that purpose in mind, The Homeland War Memorial Centre, which operates within the multimedia department of the Patriotic War of Vukovar Museum, was founded and in the two-and-a-half years that have passed since the initial activities related to the implementation of these ideas, the project has come to life and has completely fulfilled its purpose.

The long-term development plan of the Croatian Armed Forces intended for the role of the Vukovar barracks to be as such, and the initiative for the realization of the project had been set in motion in November of 2006, when Colonel-General Slavko

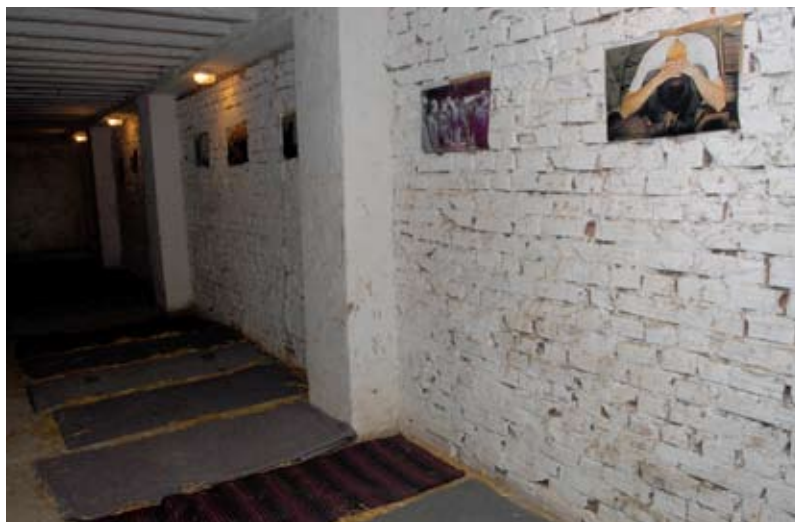
**The Croatian Ground Troupes had begun the construction of the simulation of a battlefield in the external display of the Centre, and to date the artillery and anti-aircraft positions are complete, as are the counter-armour positions with the corresponding weaponry on them**

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Barić at a meeting at the Ministry of Defence suggested that an informational, documentary and educational Homeland War centre be founded. The name in the meantime has changed, but the project plan has remained the same and the realization of the plan was quickly put in motion. And so in April of 2007 the Croatian Ground Troupes began the construction of the simulation of a battlefield in the external display of the Centre, and to date, the artillery and anti-aircraft positions are complete, as are the counter-armour positions with the corresponding weaponry on them. A pontoon bridge was built over the “river” and in the Artillery Alley a rocket artillery exhibit was set up, as were MiG-21s and BiSs and a HRM landing-assault ship, and the construction of an alley of all war brigades with a chronology of all events from the Homeland War in which their members took part in is in the







→ works. In the Centre one can also see the permanent exhibition “The Battle of Vukovar—Memories of the Homeland War,” as well as a multimedia presentation which shows the conception of the Centre, while high school seniors are introduced to the Ministry of Defence’s project “Cadet”.

At the formal graduation ceremony of military school students, which takes place on Statehood Day every year in Vukovar, on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2007 Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Croatian Armed Forces General Barić and architect Željko Kovačić presented the project to the highest government officials of Parliament and of the Government, and then followed through with the realisation of the project. According to the project plan, the Centre should provide a comprehensive picture of the Homeland War, with information on its most important events and an examination of the military-operational state throughout certain periods of the war. In addition, the purpose of the Centre is to connect the military with civilian society, principally through educational means and with other Croatian institutions which would study the material or show interest in the usage of that space. The Centre will be a public facility, with day and evening contents as well as large capacity accommodation facilities and restaurants.

**A pontoon bridge was built over the “river” and in the Artillery Alley an artillery-rocket exhibit was set up, as were MiG-21s and BiSs and a HRM landing-assault ship, and the construction of an alley of all war brigades with a chronology of all events from the Homeland War in which their members took part in is in the works**

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Brigadier Petar Čavar, head of the department within the Centre, confirmed that the Centre is extremely interesting to the public, saying that it receives around twelve-and-a-half thousand visitors annually, most of which are primary and secondary school students. Among the many visitors are cadets and military school students, as are members of the Croatian Armed Forces, as well as veteran’s associations and foreign military delegations, and a glance at the guestbook shows that many others have visited the Centre. Visitors from various foreign parts of the world had visited—students from South Africa and Paris, cadets from Vermont in the USA, cultural-artistic associations from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Vojvodina and many others. Brigadier Čavar emphasised the excellent collaboration which his department has with associations that emerged from the Homeland War, as with all relevant institutions in Vukovar, from the City Museum and Hospital to the administration and the county.

The project was given a location and building permit for gradual renovation and construction of the indoor exhibition of the museum, in which the road from the creation of the Croatian state to the peaceful reintegration of the Eastern part of Croatia will be shown, and the construction of a multifunctional building with appropriate facilities for individual and group studying of materials from the Homeland War is in the works. In the outdoor exhibits, in the open-air section, an area for things such as paintball and modern cinema/shooting-range as well the completion of the construction of the simulation of a battlefield is planned, so that all twelve hectares of the barracks would be put to use. Therefore we can expect the Homeland War memorial Centre in Vukovar to be visited even more frequently in the future, which in fact was the goal of the centre which was founded with the purpose of preserving and spreading the truth about the Homeland War. ■







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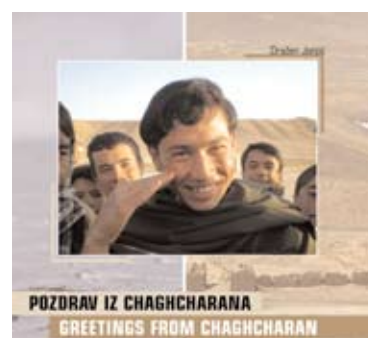
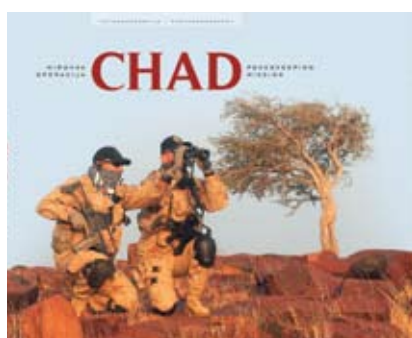
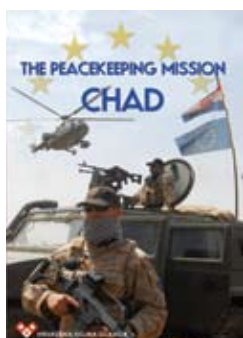
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of the Ministry of Defense.

## PROJECTS THAT WE ARE PROUD OF...

The Croatian Military Newspaper Department has been dealing with other forms of press and multimedia publications (books, photo diaries, films, audio and multi-media CDs) for quite some time. Every one of our projects is primarily intended for the promotion of our Armed Forces, and we believe the most interesting of them are those that are connected to peacekeeping missions and our soldiers that participate in them.



### The Film and Photo Diary "The Chad Peacekeeping Mission"

The Film and photo diary "The Chad Peacekeeping Mission", in which members of the Special Operations Battalion have been participating since 2008, is a project in which we aimed to permanently register the CAF's role in Chad. Cooperation between the HVG and HRT is what produced the video materials needed for the sixteen-minute-long film in which the situations that our soldiers deal with are successfully depicted, from the completion of their tasks to their communicating with the native population. The representative photographs that were included in the photo diary that illustrated the basic facts that need to be known about Chad, EUFOR and Croatian participation in the mission are accredited to HVG's official photographer.

### Greetings from Chaghcharan

Upon his return from the ISAF mission, Colonel Dražen Jonjić compiled his writings in a book in which he summarises his many-month-long stay in Afghanistan. The book is bilingual and is printed over 200 pages which also include beautiful photographs. The purpose of the book is manifold; besides it being a description of Afghanistan and of what our soldiers do there, it also includes much information that could be of use to those who will embark on the mission in the future...



# 100% CROATIAN INNOVATIVE PRODUCT - UNIFORM OF THE CROATIAN SOLDIER

OSRH

## HAT

Additional breathability with size microregulation and embroidered tag.  
Development and production:  
MORH and Šešir d.o.o. Zagreb

## DIGITALLY PRINTED CAMOUFLAGE PATTERN

Digitally printed pattern consisting of four components has a recognisable geographical presentation of Croatia and the watermark with the OSRH inscription.

Colours remain fast even after a substantial number of washes with reduced visibility under IC night vision devices.

The uniform does not reflect light and the pattern ensures good camouflage in all conditions.

Front side of the shirt: basis for rank and surname labels.

## FABRIC

The uniform is made of a special fabric with the compositions polyamide fibre/cotton ensuring highly technical properties and comfort for the wearer. The polyamide fibre with the registered name CORDURA® is the best solution with a proven high fibre strength. The fabric is made in the form of the specific top ribs embroidery and printed with high-quality colours.  
Producer: Cateks d.d.

## SHIRT

The shirt has a specific military standard zip fastener. From the outside the zip fastener is covered with a Velcro strip.

The lower part of the shirt presents no pockets in order to allow the use of a belt with equipment.

## TROUSERS

Regular fit medium waist trousers, comfortable and elegant with reinforced hems and seams. Specially developed and adapted women's fit. Two pockets on the upper front side. Reinforcements on the backside and the crotch area. Large lateral pockets on both legs with the possibility to increase their volume, with a zip fastener and a Velcro cover. Pockets for the insertion of knee-pads in the knee area. Strap ankle adjuster on the lower part.  
Development and production:  
MORH and Kroko International d.o.o., Zagreb.

## SHIRT

Modulated collar with the possibility to adjust the opening.

Sleeves: basis for the flag, formation or mission indication tag.

Square pockets on both sleeves, with zip fasteners and a pen pocket.

Armed forces indication tag

Air vets under armpits

Inclined pocket in the breast area with Velcro fastening

Pockets for the insertion of elbow and forearm pads

Velcro strap wrist adjuster

Shirt structure: with slightly slim waistline following the body contours, which is important for a more uniform rank-closing. Provides excellent mobility, breathable and comfortable.

The cut of the shirt is in accordance with the remaining parts of the uniform and equipment. The shirt presents no buttons, which may behave as bullets in case of a trauma transfer from the protection vest.

Development and production:  
MORH and Kroko International d.o.o. Zagreb

Backside of the shirt: with a large hem for more comfort and free mobility in every body position.



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