

# CROMIL

CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

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## INTERVIEW

**ANTE KOTROMANOVIĆ,**

Defence Minister of the Republic of Croatia

## CHANGE OF MINDSET FOR BETTER EFFICIENCY

CROATIAN ARMED FORCES  
COMPLETED INTEGRATION  
INTO NATO

# ISAF 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF PARTICIPATION OF THE CROATIAN ARMED FORCES IN THE OPERATION

SMART DEFENCE SHARED

# HELICOPTER TEAM TRAINING

RESOURCES AND CAPACITIES



# PROJECTS **that WE ARE PROUD of...**

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## **MONOGRAPH „MILITARY POLICE CORPS - BUILDING AND KEEPING THE PEACE“**

Members of the Croatian Military Police Corps have made a huge contribution to the defence of the country in the Homeland War as well as to the subsequent growth of the modern Croatian armed force that has been actively contributing to the world peace.

Moreover, the first Croatian unit in general to be deployed to a peace mission was a MP unit (Platoon). The Corps has also left a lasting trace in the establishment of the Afghan police and the Army.

The Monograph "Military Police Corps -Building and Keeping the Peace", published by the Croatian Military Publications Department represents a cross-cut of the Corps' operation in-country and in international operations, richly illustrated and covering all segments of MP mission.



## **THE DOCUMENTARY - A DECADE OF CROATIA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ISAF OPERATION**

At the occasion of marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of participation of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia in ISAF, the Multi-Media Department of the Ministry of Defence released a 20-min filmed cross-cut of Croatia's presence in Afghanistan, spanning the period from the Military Police Platoon deployment in 2003 up to this moment, with a total of 20 Contingents on different missions, operating side by side with the Allied forces, contributing to the success of ISAF and providing valuable assistance with establishment and organisation of the Afghan national security force.



ODJEL MULTIMEDIJALNIH SADRŽAJA

**CRISTIAN ARMED FORCES COMPLETED INTEGRATION INTO NATO**

The armed forces of the Republic of Croatia have successfully completed the integration into NATO, marking a significant milestone in the country's military development. The process involved the integration of the Croatian Armed Forces into the NATO command structure, ensuring full interoperability and readiness for joint operations.

**THE PATH TO FULL INTEGRATION**

The integration process began with the signing of the Integration Arrangements Memorandum (IAM) in 2002, which outlined the roadmap for the Croatian Armed Forces to meet NATO standards. This was followed by the implementation of the NATO Training Mission (NTM) and the NATO Readiness Assurance Process (RAP), which provided the necessary framework for the integration.

The process involved the integration of the Croatian Armed Forces into the NATO command structure, ensuring full interoperability and readiness for joint operations. The process involved the integration of the Croatian Armed Forces into the NATO command structure, ensuring full interoperability and readiness for joint operations.

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**10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF PARTICIPATION OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA IN THE ISAF OPERATION**

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**ISAF OPERATION**

The 10th anniversary of the participation of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia in the ISAF operation is a testament to the country's commitment to international peacekeeping and security. The 10th anniversary of the participation of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia in the ISAF operation is a testament to the country's commitment to international peacekeeping and security.

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**SHARED HELICOPTER TEAM TRAINING RESOURCES AND CAPACITIES**

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**“ZENJUNIK” BARRACKS**

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**AIR ADVISORY TEAM MENTORING THE AFGHANISTAN AIR FORCE**

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**AIR ADVISORY TEAM**

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WOMEN IN THE HOMELAND WAR



**Ante Kotromanović,**

Defence Minister of the Republic of Croatia

The resolute moves made over the last year in the office by the Defence Minister Ante Kotromanović are yielding visible results. A clear notion of the things to do and the desired model of the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces in general have been set out in the proposed amendments to the Defence Act and the Armed Forces Act. These mostly refer to highly transparent procedures of public procurement whereby the Minister managed to start the processes of equipping and modernisation, economical use of the budget, and systematic planning, despite financial constraints at the state level. We wanted to discuss them with the Minister.

**Minister, you have been in the office a bit over a year now. What in your view would be the biggest achievements in that period, and what needs further improvement?**

- ➔ Among the achievements to mention is reduced administrative apparatus, as a result of re-structuring which in our view is satisfactory but still leaves room for improvement. The integration of the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff is to be completed by 2015, which will be much closer to the vision of a more functional and modern Ministry of Defence. Completion of the Strategic Defence Review is another reason to be satisfied, as are the two new Bills – the Defence Bill and the Armed Forces Bill, which have passed the first reading by the Croatian Parliament.

I would certainly like to state that we have done a good job with regulation of the public procurement in a correct and transparent way. Public procurement, however, is a domain which needs ever greater public transparency.

On the minus side is the inertia of the system and of the administration. I sometimes have an impression that there is opposition to the new way of thinking, and to the necessity of change of certain procedures towards faster and more effective way of doing business. The inertia prevents us from effectuating the necessary changes.



# CHANGE C BETTER E

**The Defence Bill and the Armed Forces Bill have been forwarded to the Croatian Parliament. What novelties do the two Bills contain compared to the present legislation?**


- ➔ The new Bills are far better and more complete with respect to the existing ones. We first had to completely harmonise the proposals with the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia in order to become compatible with the NATO and the European Union's regulations, which was the primary objective of the amendments. The Armed Forces Bill contains a series of new solutions which serve as a basis for the regulation of working hours, salaries, staff catering and other issues that we have been faced with. The



I would like to take this opportunity to convey my most sincere regards to all members of the Armed Forces and employees of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia who have worked hard and are committed to their duties. They sometimes work in difficult conditions in order to attain better capability and contribute to the respect the Armed Forces enjoy in the society. They deserve special appreciation.

Interview by: Željko Stipanović, photos: Davor Kirin

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Some procedures need changing in the interest of better efficiency, as they halt us in the reforms we want to undergo. We are determined to plan systematically and economically, to increase transparency of public procurement, change the budget structure, focus on equipping and modernisation. A series of new solutions has already been incorporated in the new defence legislation

modernization and maintenance. Our objective is to alter the budget structure to the 50:30:20 ratio according to the NATO model (with 50% allocated for salaries, 30% for maintenance and 20% for modernisation), but the initiative is going to take some time. We have an excess of employees, compared to other countries, even the ones twice or three times the size of Croatia. This issue needs to be resolved, and the remaining portion of the funds would then be channelled into modernisation and maintenance.

# OF MINDSET FOR EFFICIENCY

Defence Bill envisages a bigger role for the Croatian Parliament and a stricter control of the Ministry of Defence. The Bill has incorporated a series of reasonable proposals from the Parliamentary Defence Committee.

**What is the budget structure for the Ministry of Defence for the year 2013 like and how much space does it leave for modernization of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia? Can you list some of the modernisation projects to be launched in the current year?**

- The current budget structure is not entirely satisfactory, as over 67% is allocated for salaries and the remainder for equipping,

**An important reason for satisfaction is that we have done a good job with regulation of the public procurement in a correct and transparent way. Public procurement, however, is a domain which needs ever greater public transparency**

Speaking of modernisation of the Armed Forces, in the course of 2013 the Ministry of Defence has to conclude the projects of procurement of the Armoured Modular Vehicle, (the "Patria"), the new assault rifles, combat uniforms and the equipment for Special Forces, as well as the overhaul and maintenance projects. A tender for coastal patrol boat, which is a project of high importance for the development of the Croatian Coast Guard, is also to be published. Furthermore, funds have been allocated for the overhaul of helicopters and fighter aircraft and for the highly important project of industrial dis-

On the one hand we have magnificent experience from the Homeland War, and on the other a valuable modern experience from peace operations. We are going to remain committed in the post-2014 period with a reduced contingent that has already been downsized, and our focus is going to be placed on training and mentoring the members of the Afghan Security Force

## INTERVIEW



posal of explosive ordnance, as we have the capacity for the disposal of only 800 tons annually out of 18 000 tons of decommissioned ordnance left. We also envisage initiating procurement of the autonomous submarine vehicle and construction of a modern ammunition depot at Doljani.

**Minister, it is well known that you have insisted on transparency of public procurement since the very beginning of your office. How acceptable is the actual degree of transparency in the management of the Ministry of Defence?**

➔ As far as transparency is concerned, the current level is relatively acceptable and we have to continue working on it. Some things have already been changed, among which the obligation to have the Procurement Plan drafted by 15 October, which should also be the date for closing the procurement process for the current year in order to end the practice of opening the process in December and having the invoices due the following year. The proposed procurement method is far more transparent and gives planning due importance. It also precludes the possibility of assigning the same persons with drafting the specifications for procurement and awarding the contracts, as this is a classic example of conflict of interests. In 2013 we have also downgraded the classification of certain files related to the procurement procedure. In figures, it means a reduction from 870 mil kuna to 154 mil kuna. It is really a fact worth mentioning, but in the course of 2014 we shall move forth and further reduce the number of the classified procedures, as the aforementioned sum of 154 mil kuna includes the procedures initiated in past years that cannot be suspended.

I would like to point out that this year we presented the Procurement Plan to the members of the Parliament's National Council for Monitoring the Implementation of the Parliament's Anti-Corruption Strategy and to the Defence Committee for the first time, along with general plans and projects and the strategy for their implementation. We also took the opportunity to openly advert the Committee and the Council to the problems we are faced with but also inform them about our ideas how to solve these problems. The message we are conveying by doing so is that we are open for any suggestions and proposals in the interest of optimizing the processes in the Ministry of Defence.



**You have insisted on economical use of the State budget. Can you inform us what precise moves you have undertaken in that regard?**

- There have been several instances of substantial procurements whose non-systematical and uneconomical planning cost the Ministry of Defence tens of millions kuna, which could have been invested into modernisation and equipment. Unfortunately, I cannot disclose more information at this point, as the subjects are being processed by the State Attorney of the Republic of Croatia.

**Is it true that only the members of the Armed Forces prepared for peace missions and operations are completely equipped?**

- The members of the Armed Forces that are deployed or undergoing pre-deployment training may be the best equipped ones, but this is how it should be. A soldier performing his routine tasks at home does not need a piece of equipment that is necessary to someone in desert conditions. The members of the Armed Forces are being equipped according to our possibilities, but the process may take some time. For instance, we intend to equip the soldiers with the new assault rifle. It will certainly take time until all soldiers get the rifle, and in the meantime some may feel degraded. I would like to emphasize that our objective is to have all soldiers equipped with the basics, and for that purpose we have allocated some 40 mil kuna this year.

**Croatia is marking the 10th anniversary of its participation in the ISAF peace operation. What is your evaluation of the past decade, and will the members of the Croatian Armed Forces continue to participate in post-2014 mission in Afghanistan?**

- I must say that the ten years we have spent in ISAF have definitely had a positive echo. Croatia has gained invaluable experience through the deployment to ISAF. Croatian Armed Forces have been preparing, training, and developing the equipment - the uniform and the weapons in particular - in accordance with the tasks we were assigned with. Without the experience in Afghanistan we would not be able to gain as much. One of the benefits of the participation is co-operation with partners from at least 50 countries and getting acquainted with their practice. On the one hand we have magnificent experience from the Homeland War, and on the other a valuable modern experience from

**By the year 2015 we intend to complete the integration of the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff, when we expect to be far more operational and modern.**

**On the minus side is the inertia of the system and of the administration. I sometimes have an impression that there is opposition to the new way of thinking, and to the necessity of change of certain procedures towards faster and more effective way of doing business. The inertia prevents us from effectuating the necessary changes**

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**You've emphasized training of the Armed Forces as one of the most important aspects of your commitment. Do you approve of the dynamics of the training process or you find it necessary to upgrade the standards?**

- I am glad that all my co-workers are aware of the importance and the value of training. Still, there is room for improvement. It is a constitutional provision that members of the Armed Forces have to be prepared and capable of defending their country at all times. In the past, we have been focused mostly on peace missions, and as they are coming to a close, it is time to enhance training at home. In 2013 we are going to conduct two major exercises. One in May, which includes NATO aircraft guided from the ground by Croatian soldiers, and a similar one in September. We know our needs and priorities and have very experienced people and competent commanders who will ensure excellent performance.

**The Republic of Croatia is to enter the European Union. Is the Union membership going to place new demands in contribution to the European Security and Defence Policy?**

- We are probably going to be presented with certain requests for increased participation in EU-led missions. At home, we will have an increased demand related to border protection, primarily the maritime border, where the Coast Guard and the Air Force are going to have a prominent role. However, I do not expect a more significant increase in the European Security Policy apart from the participation in EU-led missions.

In the course of 2013 we have to complete the project of procurement of Armoured Modular Vehicles (the "Patria"), of new assault rifles, combat uniforms and the equipment for Special Forces. In addition, the pending projects include overhauls, maintenance and tender for the patrol boat, which is of great importance for the development of the Coast Guard. Also, funds have been allocated in 2013 for the overhaul of helicopters and fighter aircraft



Evaluation of the units of the Croatian Armed Forces declared for NATO concluded the integration process for Croatia, formalised by signing of the Declaration on Completion of the Integration Process confirming full interoperability of the CAF with other NATO countries and through integration into the Alliance

THE CROATIAN ARMED FORCES

Edited by: Vesna Pintarić, photo CMPD

# CROATIAN ARMED FORCES COMPLETED INTEGRATION



The Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia had initiated their integration well before the accession itself, in order to attain full interoperability with the Allied Forces upon becoming a full NATO member. The process ran within the Planning and Review Process (PARP) and the Membership Action Programme (MAP) process respectively. The NATO Allied Command for Transformation had one of the key roles managing the integration at the strategic level.

During the process the representatives of the ACT held as many as four Integration Conferences and a series of training workshops and activities, with the focus on increasing of operational capabilities of the Croatian Armed Forces, aimed at timely and full integration.

## THE PATH TO FULL INTEGRATION

The first Integration Conference was held in March 2009, pointing to the need for a CAF Integration Plan in several fields. The second Conference ensued in October 2009, and was focused on the transformation processes within for Croatia as NATO member, and produced a matrix containing the initial requirements for a pluriannual Integration and Implementation Plan.

October 2010 saw the 3<sup>rd</sup> NATO Integration Conference, discussing the topics relevant for attaining of NATO operational capabilities. The area of personnel management and equipping was given most attention. More initiative and surveying of integration processes by the Croatian Ministry of Defence was suggested and the Integration Programme drafted jointly with the ACT. The Programme was co-ordinated and surveyed by the Planning Directorate of the General Staff of the Croatian Armed Forces on a monthly basis through video-teleconferencing with the ACT staff.

The functional conference titled "Acquisition Conference" was held in March 2011.

The period 2009-2010 saw the conduct of some 30 activities, leading to completion of the majority of







NATO Allied Command for Transformation, the strategic leader of the integration has had a key role in the integration process

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# RATION INTO NATO

strategic areas from the "Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia Integration Plan", leaving only the area of Individual Education and Training.

Regular co-ordination and exercise of activities ran with the Joint Force Command (JFC) in Naples. Certification, confirmation and affiliation of the declared forces remained the essence of the co-operation. The activities were focused on integration of declared units into the NATO Pool of Forces. The Army units (motorised infantry company, NBC Decontamination Platoon, the De-mining engineer Platoon and the Horizontal Engineering Unit) were certified first, during the Exercise "UDAR 10", by the certified national CREVAL Team supervised by the NATO Force Command Team from Madrid.

**The ACT staff held four Integration Conferences and a series of workshops and related activities, whose focus was on enhancement of operations capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia with the aim to integrate fully into NATO within the shortest term**

C-IED T3 Capabilities, with two C-IED training cycles carried out, and two training areas for the C-IED training constructed (at the "Eugen Kvaternik" Army Training Range near Slunj and the Cerovac Training Area near Karlovac).

In time, the number of the personnel trained under the NATO standards grew and so did the quality of implementation of the commitments within the Force Goals. In 2011 the focus of activity planning and conduct was placed on the Croatian Armed Forces operational capabilities enhancement, aimed at fast and complete integration into NATO.

The majority of the activities of the Integration Working Programme for the year 2011 were conducted at the operational and tactical level. The activities with ➔







## THE CROATIAN ARMED FORCES



➔ JFC Naples were focused on fulfilling the certification and confirmation requests, preceding the affiliation of the declared forces. The units certificated in 2011 were the Special Operations Battalion's Platoon, the MOVCON Team and the Cargo Transfer Units, the Engineer De-mining Company, the Horizontal Construction Platoon, the Military Police Platoon. Likewise, the Motorised Infantry Company, the NBC De-contamination Platoon, the Engineer De-Mining Platoon and the Engineer Platoon for Horizontal Construction achieved confirmation. Among the last moves towards the completion of integration was the Exercise "Udar", held in October

**The "Udar" Exercise, held in October 2012 was among the definitive moves towards the completion of the integration process. The focus of the Exercise was on evaluation of readiness of the Armed Forces units declared for NATO-led operations**

2012, designed to evaluate readiness of the Armed Forces units declared for NATO-led operations. The Exercise was co-organised by the Croatian Army Command and the Army's Motorised Guard Brigade, and the units were evaluated in compliance with the commitments assumed within the Force Goals and NATO's Integration Work Programme for the year 2012.

By the late October all evaluations were completed, and the signature of the Declaration of Completion of the Integration Process on 25 October 2012 concluded it officially.

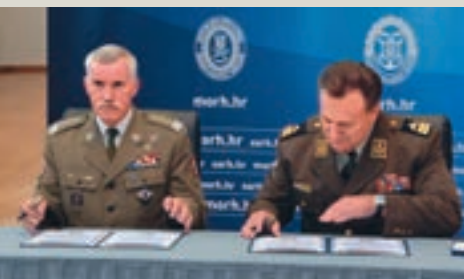


## THE INTEGRATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA WAS WELL-COORDINATED AND COMPLETED WITHIN A SHORT TIME PERIOD

In his statement following the signature ceremony, Lt. Gen. Lovrić emphasized that the integration process was highly complex and demanding, as it implied harmonisation of operation across the functional areas (personnel management, security and intelligence capabilities, operations, training, education, logistics, defence planning, command systems, communications, procurement and a number of other segments). It is also important to note that while working to

adopt NATO Standards we also took in consideration the specific features of the Croatian Armed Forces, which are to be developed in future too" stated Lt. Gen. Lovrić. General Bieniek praised the efforts invested by the Croatian Armed Forces into their integration, which proved them as a reliable NATO member contributing to all levels of the activities by the Alliance. "Croatia has shown that it is a reliable partner and actively contributing member at all levels; I am proud to say that Croatia's integration process was well-coordinated and completed within a very short period of only three years," said General Bieniek. He also added that Croatia has demonstrated resoluteness implementing the reform of the defence sector. "The Republic of Croatia is an active member of the Alliance, participating in NATO bodies, seconding personnel to NATO Staffs and, most importantly, supports NATO missions and operations. It also did a great job facilitating the co-operation of NATO and the countries in its neighbourhood, and thus contributed to enhanced regional security", emphasized Gen. Bieniek.

**The Declaration on Completion of Integration into NATO structures was signed by the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia, Lt. Gen. Drago Lovrić and the Deputy Supreme Commander for Transformation (DSACT), Gen. Mieczysław Bieniek**





"You assumed full responsibility and valorized the advice you received at all levels – the political, the military, the tactical and the operations levels. The key to the success has however been the human factor and the expertise of the members of the AF, who have been highly committed to their duty and determined to fulfill it

By: Domagoj VLAHOVIĆ, photo by Tomislav BRANDT

INTERVIEW

Gen. Mieczyslaw Bieniek,

Deputy Supreme Commander  
for Transformation (Dsact)



# HUMAN FACTOR

## KEY TO INTEGRATION OF CROATIAN ARMED FORCES INTO NATO

The interview with the SACT was conducted immediately upon signing of the Declaration on Completion of Integration of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia into NATO representing the Alliance. In reply to our appreciation for his address at the occasion Gen. Bieniek said: "These are facts". As a Polish officer, Gen. Bieniek holds the most senior post by a recent NATO member, and participated in the missions and operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the Golan Heights.

### **What has been the decisive factor of the quick integration of the Croatian Armed Forces into NATO?**

It should be reminded here that co-operation NATO-Croatia did not commence when Croatia became the full member, but dates back to Croatia's joining the Partnership for Peace. Croatia assumed full responsibility, took the advice provided at all levels, be it political, military, tactical or the operations. However, what I see as crucial is the human factor and the skills of the Armed Forces members, who have been highly committed to their duties and



determined to fulfill them. In addition, there was no fluctuation, and in the course of the process there were the same persons implementing the tasks.

### **How in Your view can Croatian experience gained in the integration process assist the neighbouring countries in their paths to membership and integration?**

The processes are very complex, as they entail the a new way of thinking. Croatia demonstrate excellent and quick understanding of the global changes, particularly with regard to security matters, and it is

The new strategic concept has assigned NATO with response to cyber threats, and we are attaching ever greater attention to the matter. Each NATO's command structure has integrated the NATO Computer Incident Response Capability, to deter potential attacks on our command and control network or critical infrastructure

## INTERVIEW

my belief that Croatia can serve as example to Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, to whom you can help launch transformation, undertake radical changes in organisation and defence planning, and devise the ways to modernise their armed forces in the current economic situation.

### **They have displayed the intention?**

It is true; there have been meetings organised with the partner nations, as well as bilateral exchange of information, joint exercises projects, training, operations activities and joint units.

### **How is NATO adapting to the present and future challenges, and what is the role of the Allied Command for Transformation in that regard?**

You will probably know that at the Lisbon summit 2 years ago the New Strategic Concept and the Level of Ambition (LOA) were adopted. It needs to be supported with concrete actions, co-ordinated by means of NATO's Defence Planning Process and a number of other initiatives. NATO Agencies and commands underwent reform too, as did the Department for New Security Challenges within the NATO Hq. Briefly, the ACT is a part of the military expert group defining future challenges, providing support to operations, managing the Smart Defence concept and defining training and exercises aspects.

### **We can say that the "Smart Defence" Concept constitutes the new NATO's most visible project?**

The project has to yield smarter money management. The "golden examples" to quote are the control of the Baltic States' air space, the joint missile shield, the C4ISR projects (the concept embracing command, control, communications, information technology, research, surveillance and reconnaissance). Allied capabilities have to be pooled, utilised and shared, our world needs to be made more predictable and we have to co-operate with the organisations such as the EU, the OESS and the UN.

### **What can You say about the Connected Forces Initiative (CFI), which refers to joint management of the capacities within the Smart Defence and other joint projects?**

The Shared Capability Initiative rests on three pillars – education, training and better use of technology, which in synergy create interoperability that we intend to develop in order to be able to work and operate jointly.



### **What can be Croatia's contribution to the projects of the Initiative?**

The Republic of Croatia is already engaged in the Initiative, by organising helicopter crew and the related personnel training, and your ambitions with other initiatives are also known. There are a number of ways to participate. What you have to do is specialise and designate priorities and feasible projects.

### **Can You tell us something on the matter of cyber defence, a matter with which You are well acquainted?**

Response to cyber threats is a new NATO mission, according to its new strategic concept, and we are attaching more and more attention to it. Each NATO's command structure has incorporated the NATO Computer Incident Response Capability, to deter potential attacks on our command and control network or critical infrastructure. We have so far registered a series of hackings but they were all futile, except that one inflicted on the national infrastructure in Estonia five years ago. NATO is undertaking a series of activities related to cyber defence, implementing legal and operations measures alike. It is our responsibility as Allied Command for Transformation to train cyber defence specialists, as good cyber operators constitute the first line of defence.

The "golden examples" to quote are the control of the Baltic states' air space, the joint missile shield, the C4ISR projects (the concept embracing command, control, communications, information technology, research, surveillance and reconnaissance). Allied capabilities have to be pooled, utilised and shared, our world needs to be made more predictable and we have to co-operate with the organisations such as the European Union, the Organisation on European Security and Stability and the United Nations

### **General, You have taken part in military operations throughout the world. What moments of Your military career would you single out as the most demanding?**

I would say it was the command responsibility in the combat zone, exercised at the head of the Multinational Division in Iraq, during the uprising of Muqtad al-Sadr. I commanded the troops from 23 nations, and my most important duty was to protect them without harming the local population.







The decade 2003-2013 has seen deployment of as many as 20 Croatian Contingents with nearly 4000 members of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia. Presently over 25% of the Contingents is assigned with mentoring, and that portion is increasing with each new contingent

## ANNIVERSARY



Acting as a responsible member of the international community, the Republic of Croatia has been contributing for 15 years to building of peace and stability worldwide, and has contributed force to ISAF for 10 years. A recipient of international assistance in the recent past, Croatia has grown into a respectable partner with an active role in the NATO-led Operation in Afghanistan, with as many as 20 contingents and nearly 4000 members of the Armed Forces deployed.

It was the participation in the NATO-led operations and direct operation in international environments that facilitated building of capabilities of the Armed Forces and practicing for joint operations with the Allied Forces. Realising the potential of her Armed Forces in that regard, Croatia, at the time a member of the Partnership for Peace Programme, undertook actively the comprehensive preparations crowned

**Since May 2011 Republic of Croatia has been assigned as Lead Nation of project of the Afghan Military Police School, the one of some ten service and specialist training institutions in Afghanistan founded within the NATO-s Training Mission to provide direct support to the Afghan security force**

with deployment of the first Contingent to the ISAF Operation in February 2003 as the first mission ever in which Croatia provided an entire military unit. The Contingent comprised 50 soldiers, of which 44 members of the Military Police Corps and six staff officers assigned to the ISAF Command and the Kabul Multinational Brigade respectively. The Military Police Task Force has been deployed to the Regional Command Capital in Kabul to perform military policing tasks such as patrolling, controls, investigations and escorting of VIPs during official visits. Initially, the MP Task Force made part of the Multinational MP Company of the Kabul Multinational Brigade and following the operation restructuring of 2006 their tasks have become more numerous and complex.

# 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY FORCES OF THE ISAF

Along with the military policemen and the growing number of staff officers and NCOs in the ISAF Command, the year 2005 saw the first deployment of a combined medical team of the US Adriatic Charter. Croatian contribution in the following year attained additional dimension with the involvement in the Provincial Reconstruction Teams tasked with assistance to the Afghan Government to expand its authority and create a safe environment. The Croatian staff of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams conducted monitoring and security tasks as the task force was composed of the infantry and security elements (INF TF, HRV GUARD).

The Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia soon deployed a Mobile Liaison Observation Team (the MLOT), a highly mobile operation part of the military component of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in charge of patrolling of the settlements in their area of responsibility and co-operating closely with the local population.

Croatian flag strips worn on their uniforms have become a trademark and a guarantee of Croatia's commitment to peace and a sign of the helping hand. The trends in NATO gradually placed the emphasis on the training activities and mentoring of the Afghan National Army and police respectively. The

Pre-deployment training also includes familiarisation with the religious and cultural traditions of Afghanistan, which is co-organised with the Islamic Community in Croatia. The comprehensive approach taken in the pre-deployment training and the respect for the receiving country's diversities and cultural characteristics have earned Croatian participants high regard and acceptance by the Afghan population

Edited by: Vesna Pintarić, photo CMPD

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# RY OF PARTICIPATION OF THE ARMED REPUBLIC OF CROATIA IN THE OPERATION

spectrum of the tasks of the Croatian troops expanded and changed. In addition to the mentioned ones, Croatian soldiers took part in training and mentoring of the Afghan soldier in different functional areas, by operating in the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams to assist the Afghan Army to adopt the doctrine of the use of its forces to become capable of performing the duties autonomously.

Along with the existing infantry OMLT, Croatia also deployed the Garrison OMLT, and since 2010 a multinational operational mentoring team for combat support (the CS OMLT), manned by the Croatian and the American Minnesota Guard members jointly. They followed joint training in Croatia, and the team was commanded by a Croatian officer, as another proof of Croatian capability and commendation of their contribution in Afghanistan.

## OVER 25% OF HRVCON ASSIGNED WITH MENTORING

The commitments also worth emphasizing are the Croatian Armed Forces' participation in the Kabul Training Centre, the ANA School of Logistics, the Air Advisory Team and the Engineering, the Artillery and the Military Police School Respectively.

Since May 2011 Republic of Croatia has been as-

**Pre-deployment training also includes familiarisation with the religious and cultural traditions of Afghanistan, which is co-organised with the Islamic Community in Croatia. The comprehensive approach taken in the pre-deployment training and the respect for the receiving country's diversities and cultural characteristics have earned Croatian participants high regard and acceptance by the Afghan population**

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signed as Lead Nation of the project of the Afghan Military Police School, the one of some 10 service and specialist training institutions in Afghanistan founded within the NATO-s Training Mission to provide direct support to the Afghan security forces training.

Over 25% members of the Croatian Contingent have been assigned to mentor posts, which are among the most respected duties within ISAF, and the percent is growing with each new Contingent.

In 2014 the ISAF Operation is to enter its final phase. By the end of the year the responsibility for security is to be transferred from the international to the Afghan national forces and the international forces are to prepare to re-deploy. It is our belief is that the Croatian Armed Forces members also have a merit in the succes of ISAF.





The early morning hours of 22 January 1993 saw the beginning of one of the most successful operations launched by the Croatian Armed Forces that had pivotal effect for the Homeland War. Titled the **“Maslenica”** Operation, it was planned under the code name **“Pirate”** and prepared in secrecy. It engaged all the three services of the Croatian Armed Forces and within 72 hours liberated 92 km<sup>2</sup> of the occupied territory of the Republic of Croatia and fulfilled all main goals.

## ANNIVERSARY



## 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE “MASLENICA” OPERATION

# THE “MASLENICA” THE TURNING POINT OF

The reasons to launch the first, the largest and in many ways unique operation of the Homeland War included the occupation of hinterlands of the towns of Šibenik and Zadar, the coastal area under the range of the enemy's artillery, the sole road to the rest of the Croatian territory cut-off and unacceptability of the proposed peace initiatives.

In the first hours of 22 January 1993 the Croatian forces undertook to return the occupied territory under the control of the Croatian government. The planning code for the Operation was “Pirate”, and it was conducted in utter secrecy. Within the 72-hour time span the three jointly operating services of the Croatian Armed Forces managed to liberate 92 km<sup>2</sup> of the occupied Croatian territory and fulfilled all the major goals of the Operation. One of the specific features of the Operation was engagement of Guard Brigades, which had a key role in its outcome, either during its course or afterwards in maintaining the combat positions. Some of the Brigades were new, and some were transferred from distant positions and introduced into combat by motion.

They combated in the harsh snow-covered terrain of the Velebit Mountain jointly with the Special force of the Ministry of the Interior, which took the dominant posts and communications. Alongside there were reserve units of the Croatian Army and the regiments of the Home Guard.

### THE “MASLENICA” OPERATION WAS A TURNING POINT IN THE DEFENCE OF CROATIA UP TO THAT MOMENT



Croatian Army and police launched assault action from several directions and liberated a number of places on the very first day (Rovanjska, Maslenica, Novsko ždrilo, Podgradina, Islam Latinski, Islam Grčki and Kašić in the Zadar hinterland), followed by regain of the Zemunik Airport in the following days. The control attained of the wider Velika and Mala Bobija area, Tulove Grede and Mali Alan in the Velebit Mountain had a strategic advantage, enabling the control of the towns of Obrovac, Gračac and Benkovac.

By the moment of the Operation was completed,



By: Vesna Pintarić, Photo archive of the Croatian Military Publications Department

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# OPERATION F THE HOMELAND WAR

the entire UN-designated “pink zone” in the Zadar hinterland as well as the strategically vital zone around the strait of Novsko ždrilo were liberated. Although the main objectives of the Operation were fulfilled within a short time span, the advance of Croatian forces was on 25 January 1993 thwarted in the outskirts of the towns of Obrovac and Benkovac, at the request of the international community. The enemy forces used the advantage to launch a counter-attack, which prolonged the fighting. The Croatian forces, reinforced by the units brought in by helicopters from the continental part of the country (Slavonia) managed however to maintain the attained lines. It was the first helicopter descent undertaken by the Croatian military until then.

Defeated both in tactical and operations regard despite the superiority in force, the enemy in the final phase of the operation turned to a desperate act and threatened on 27 January to destroy the Peruća Dam and did so. However, the 30 tons of explosives were not enough to destroy the Dam and

**The use of the Guard Brigades was at the same time a singularity and the main asset of the Operation. Each of them contributed to its success, either in its course or maintaining the combat positions. Some of the Brigades were new, and some were transferred from distant spots and introduced into combat in motion**

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it was only damaged. A major disaster that would have come about was avoided, and the Croatian force checked the advancement of the enemy and soon put the entire area under its control.

Unfortunately, the operations conducted in the wider hinterland of Zadar until late March took the lives of 127 brave soldiers, and 158 were left wounded. The readiness and ability demonstrated by the Guard Brigades and the special police in combat was a firm guarantee of the success of the Operation. It was in the “Maslenica” Operation that the aggressor experienced the first of a series of defeats.

The north and the south of Croatia were connected again by means of a pontoon bridge laid over the strait in the vicinity of the collapsed Bridge of Maslenica, which made possible traffic circulation until the new one was constructed. It meant even more in the sense that it restored hope and dignity of the Croatian people, and on top of it all, it was the nucleus of the future military force capable of conferring liberty to the entire country.





## 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF PEACEFUL RE-INTEGRATION OF THE CROATIAN DANUBIAN REGION

# PEACEFULLY ACHIEVED

The course of events in the battlefields of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the positions of major powers and the entirely clear and intelligible message of determination of the Croatian authorities and of the Croatian Armed Forces' readiness to liberate the Croatian territory in its entirety eventually led the previously strongly reluctant Serbian side into negotiations on the Croatian Danubian Region, whose re-integration into the constitutional and legal order of the Republic of Croatia was defined by the Erdut Agreement, signed on 12 November 1995, whereby the UN Security Council established the Transition Administration, known as the UNTAES. The process of peaceful re-integration was initiated on 15 January 1996 and terminated on 15 January 1998. The fact that the re-integration was achieved peacefully, without casualties and suffering, makes it a meritorious victory

The toll of the armed Serbian aggression on the Republic of Croatia by the spring of 1995 was horrifying – an entire quarter of the territory, formerly inhabited by some 500 000 people, thousand people killed and missing, hundreds of thousands expelled from their homes and the damage totalling billions of U.S. dollars. This was accompanied by unfavourable international conditions and the interests of the major powers, all of which did not allow quick, effective and just solution of the matter of the occupied Croatian areas.

In such conditions, motivated primarily by the inefficiency of international peace forces, the Republic of Croatia decided to gradually liberate its territory by military operations (the "Lightning" and "Storm" Operation were launched in May and in August 1995 respectively, liberating over 15 000 km<sup>2</sup> of the territory of western Slavonia, Banovina, Kordun, Lika and the hinterland in northern Dalmatia). Prudent

**The address by the  
Croatian President  
Franjo Tudman,  
in Vukovar,  
on 8 June 1997**





Ceremonial session in Borovo Naselje, marking the termination of the UNTAES mandate

By: Lada Puljizević, photo CMPD

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# ACHIEVED VICTORY



The process of peaceful integration of the Croatian Danubian Region commenced on 15 January 1996, with the United Nations adopting the Resolution 1037 and establishing the UN Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia – UNTAES, and was concluded two years later, 15 January 1998, with the re-integration of the previously occupied territory of eastern Slavonia, Baranja and western Sirmium under the constitutional and legal order of the Republic of Croatia. The UNTAES was managed by the transitional governor, the U.S. General (ret.) Jacques Paul Klein, succeeded on 1 August 1997 by William Walker.



planning, efficiency and rapid execution of the campaigns demonstrated the actual motivation, assertiveness and strength of the Croatian military and proved the insustainability of the project of Greater Serbia in Croatia.



## PEACEFUL RE-INTEGRATION OF THE CROATIAN DANUBIAN REGION

Following the successful completion and fulfillment of the objectives of the military operations "Lightning" and "Storm" Operations by the Armed Forces and the police, only the easternmost part of Croatia – the Croatian Danubian Region - remained under the Serbian occupation. Its importance in the geopolitical and geo-strategic regard, the economic and human resources made it constant target of Serbian aggression and the site of violent conflicts, and the region suffered extreme damage ➔



## ANNIVERSARY



➔ and casualties (over 6000 dead and missing, some 100 000 displaced and the war damage in Vukovar only was estimated at over 9.5 billion kuna. The process was made possible by the course of situation in the battlefields in Croatia and Bosnia, the attitude of the international community as well as by the clear message on determination of the Croatian political leadership and readiness of the Croatian army to liberate every part of Croatian territory. The thereto reluctant Serbian side accepted to enter into agreement on the Croatian Danubian Region, whose reintegration into the constitutional and legal system of the Republic of Croatia was formalised by the Erdut Agreement, signed on 12 November 1995, whereby the UN Security Council established the Transitional Administration (UNTAES).

The process commenced on 15 January 1996 and ended on 15 January 1998, re-integrating the Croatian Danube Region into the territorial, monetary, customs and any other legal continuity of the sovereign and integral Republic of Croatia.

At a ceremony marking the departure of the UN peacekeeping force held in the Klisa Airport near

# CHRONOLOGY

## OF IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS WITHIN THE PEACEFUL INTEGRATION PROCESS

<b>15 January 1996</b>	UN Security Council adopted the Resolution 1037 establishing the UN Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia – UNTAES, thereby initiating the Peaceful Re-integration of the Croatian Danubian Region
<b>27 June 1996</b>	Agreement on Completion of Demilitarisation of the Croatian Danubian Region signed in the barracks in Vukovar; all military installation in the region were placed under the supervision of the UN
<b>1 July 1996</b>	Temporary police force established, later to be integrated into the Croatian Ministry of the Interior
<b>September/October 1996</b>	Exhumated bodies of some 200 victims at the locality known as Ovčara, near Vukovar (Croatian defenders and civilians brought from the Vukovar hospital and executed following the occupation of the town)
<b>1 November 1996</b>	For the first time following the occupation, thousands of displaced Croatians visit graveyards in places under the Transition Administration, at the occasion of the All Saints Day
<b>3 December 1996</b>	The President of the Republic, Franjo Tuđman, visits the Croatian Danubian Region, for the first time following the occupation
<b>13 April 1997</b>	Local elections for district and municipalities councils held, along with the elections for the Osijek-Baranja County Assembly and the Vukovar County Assembly respectively: the Croatian Democratic Union (the HDZ) won the elections in 15 districts and in the town of Ilok, whereas the Independent Democratic Serb Party (the SDSS) had the majority in 10 districts and in the town of Beli Manastir. The two parties had an agreement on division of power in Vukovar, and Vladimir Štengl was elected mayor. The free, open and fair elections were a historical moment, opening a new phase of re-integration of the Croatian Danubian Region



**15 January 1998** - The process of peaceful integration of Croatian Danubian Region terminated, whereby the Croatian territory was re-integrated into the constitutional and legal order of the Republic of Croatia, following the years of war aggression and occupation. The date is considered by many of the witnesses as the date of the actual end of the war and of the Croatian victory

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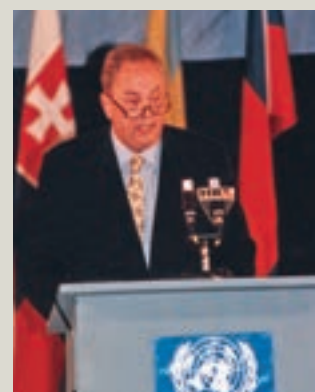


Osijek, the Croatian President Franjo Tuđman judged the UNTAES the most successful mission in the history UN, and the Transitional Administrator, General Jacques Paul Klein, was presented with recognition for his contribution to its success. Although peaceful reintegration of the Croatian Danubian Region did not solve all the problems left by the war and destruction in the area, and despite its duration with respect to the spectacular military campaigns, it regained the easternmost portion of the Croatian territory, brought the large number of refugees and displaced persons to their homes and resulted in restored and normalised relations. The re-integration was achieved peacefully, causing no casualties and suffering, and remains a great and memorable victory in the history of Croatia.

## THE ERDUT AGREEMENT

"Basic Agreement on the Region of the Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srijem", also known as the Zagreb and Erdut Agreement, was the first step towards peaceful reintegration of the occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia, signed by the Croatian (Hrvoje Šarinić) and Serbian (Foreign Minister, Milan Milanović) Government negotiators in Zagreb and Erdut respectively on 12 November 1995. The Agreement was prepared and mediated by the then ambassador of the United States of America to the Republic of Croatia, Peter Galbraith and the vice-president of the International Conference on Ex-Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg. Concluded in 14 provisions, the Agreement delineated the areas for co-operation of the two parties during the transition period in order to complete the process of peaceful integration in its entirety and comprised de-militarisation of the area, return of the refugees and displaced persons, establishment and training of temporary police force and re-establishment of normal functioning of all public services, building the confidence between the ethnic communities, respect of internationally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms, return or compensation for the illegally seized property; the transition period was determined in the duration of 12 months with the possibility of extension for another period of the same duration at most.

<b>19 May 1997</b>	Croatian kuna introduced as the official currency in the Croatian Danubian Region, marking the re-integration of the area into the Croatian monetary system
<b>8 June 1997</b>	Franjo Tuđman, the President of the Republic of Croatia, travels to Vukovar on board of the "Freedom Train"
<b>9 July 1997</b>	Official return of the refugees and persons commenced
<b>14 July 1997</b>	Border crossings established at the border on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – Croatian Danubian Region re-integrated into the customs system of the Republic of Croatia
<b>October 1997</b>	National Committee to Establish Trust, Quick Return and Normalisation of life in the war-hit areas of the Republic of Croatia established, tasked with enabling return and conciliation in the area under the UN Transition Administration, headed by Vesna Škare-Ožbolt
<b>19 December 1997</b>	The UN Security Council adopted the Resolution 1145 in support to termination of the UNTAES mandate within the determined framework
<b>15 January 1998</b>	Termination of the UNTAES and of the peaceful integration, the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia was restored into its constitutional and legal order



Hrvoje Šarinić signing the Erdut Agreement for the Croatian Government





## THE CROATIAN ARMY



The main objective of the “Hrvatski ponos” Exercise was to evaluate combat readiness of the 21<sup>st</sup> HRVCON, which commenced its preparation and pre-deployment training in September 2012. The Exercise is a display of what the members of the Contingent mastered, learned and brought to a very high level

### THE “HRVATSKI PONOS 13/1” EXERCISE

# MOTIVATED, FOR DEPLOYMENT

Morning routine in a base situated in the north of Afghanistan. Just a few vehicles at the main entrance. After a detailed control the gate opens. It is Afghanistan, after all. The members of the 21<sup>st</sup> HRVCON perform their tasks according to the previously set procedures and nothing is left to chance. All of a sudden explosions are heard. The ISAF personnel responds vigorously. Artillery support and Air Force are requested; the base is defended, and the attacker neutralised – this is a short summary of the evaluation day during the “Hrvatski ponos 13/1” Exercise at the Gašinci Training Range, held from 1 to 8 February 2013. .

The lead unit of the first Exercise in 2013 is the Armoured Mechanised Guard Brigade of the Croatian Army, whose Chief of Staff, Lt. Col. Denis Tretinjak, is also the Exercise Director. The Brigade members,



By: Dražen Jonjić, photo by: Josip Kapi



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led by their Commander, Col. Siniša Jurković, took care to ensure all segments necessary for successful conduct of the Exercise at the high level as usual. The main objective of the Exercise is evaluation of the Contingent's readiness. The members of the 21<sup>st</sup> HRVCON initiated their preparation in early September 2012.

The Exercise crowns the training cycle and displays the expertise and skill gained over the past months within preparation for participation in ISAF. The 21<sup>st</sup> HRVCON infantry company will incorporate a Platoon of the Army of Montenegro. Observation of the reactions of the soldiers in the simulated attack showed the Croatian and Montenegrin soldiers become a team, perfectly aware that the timely response and procedures implementation are a key to successful performance. "The members of the Contingent are exposed to situations far more complex than those found in the real setting", said Lt. Col. Slavko Stojanović, the Head of the Croatian Army Evaluation Team. When soldiers are "sensibilised" for the possibilities of the kind, they will deal more easily with the task assigned once they are deployed.

**Having been deployed to ISAF, most of the evaluators are capable of conveying the experience to the new Contingents members. The Evaluator Team monitors each procedure performed by the members of the 21<sup>st</sup> HRVCON in the framework of the situations, referred to as "the incidents"**



**LT. GEN. LOVRIĆ AND ADMIRAL SAMARDŽIĆ AT THE "HRVATSKI PONOS" EXERCISE**

The members of the Croatian Contingent at their pre-deployment training were visited on 5 February 2013 by the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia, Lt. Gen. Drago Lovrić and the Chief of the General Staff of the Army of Montenegro, VAdm Dragan Samardžić. The 21<sup>st</sup> HRVCON includes 22 members of the Army of Montenegro, attached to the Infantry Task Force, crowning the partnership between the Republic of Croatia and Republic of Montenegro, developed within the A-5 Initiative. The two Chiefs of Staff approved what was demonstrated at the Exercise.

# TRAINED AND READY MENT TO ISAF

The evaluators have themselves been deployed to ISAF and are thus able to convey the first-hand experience to the new Contingents members. The Evaluation Team monitors every move of the members of the Contingent in all situations, referred to as "incidents", without concessions. The trainees do not even ask for them, and it is evident that they are thoroughly prepared. It is the monitoring that the evaluators base their Combat Readiness Evaluation (CREVAL) on, and is obligatory for every member and component of the Contingent. All of the members, led by Col. Krešo Tuškan, the 21<sup>st</sup> Contingent Commander, have displayed high motivation level a few days prior to the duty handover with the jubilar 20<sup>th</sup> Contingent. They are to continue the successful presence of the Republic of Croatia and contribute further to the reputation of its Armed Forces by their professionalism, experience and reliability.

The 21<sup>st</sup> HRVCON and the subsequent ones will incorporate a Montenegro Platoon, joined to the Infantry Company

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At the Gašinci Training Range the Croatian evaluators have been joined by their Montenegrin counterparts, who came to gain practical skills with the evaluation procedures within their respective national responsibility. The two respective Armed Forces teams co-operated closely, which was further expanded by attaching the Montenegro's Infantry Task Force.

The Contingent members deal with the situations from the Exercise scenario, containing a number of procedures to master in all weather conditions. This is how the final examination at the Gašinci Range, the outdoor classroom, is conducted, prior to the deployment to ISAF.

The readiness demonstrated by the Croatian Contingent at the Exercise "Hrvatski ponos" instills pride indeed.



## SMART DEFENCE

The shrinking military budgets, as a result of the global economic and financial crisis, at the 2011 Munich International Conference NATO announced the "Smart Defence" concept for the Allied Forces. The Concept refers to Allied forces co-operation and shared training, logistics, maintenance and development, and its objective is to maintain or upgrade readiness of armed forces at minimal costs

### SMART DEFENCE

The 93<sup>rd</sup> Croatian Air Force and Air Defence Base in February 2013 hosted joint training of of the Croatian, Czech and Hungarian helicopter crews and aviation maintenance technicians, within their pre-deployment training and preparation for the duty of air mentoring teams in the ISAF Operation in Afghanistan. The training, with prominent participation of the Croatian Armed Forces members throughout the cycle, emerged within the Smart Defence Initiative, compliant with the effective NATO guidelines promoting and assisting with joint training, logistics, maintenance and development of partner countries armed forces and maintaining the cost level



## "ZEMUNIK" BARRACKS

# SHARED HELICOPTER TRAINING RESOURCES AND

The 93<sup>rd</sup> Croatian Air Force and Air Defence Base was the venue of the second part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Air Advisory Team Pre-deployment Course for the Croatian, Czech, and for the first time the Hungarian Armed Forces, joined by Slovak Armed Forces representatives as observers.

Croatian Armed Forces members have had a prominent role in design and conduct of the training, conceived as a Smart Defence programme, implementing NATO's guidelines promoting and assisting with joint training, logistics, maintenance and development of partner armed forces and maintaining the level of the costs. The first part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Course was conducted in Ostrava in the Czech Republic from 16-27 January 2013 at a Mi-171 heli-

**Flight training in Zemunik comprised 30 classroom units and 7 individual flying hours on the Mi-171 Sh and included mountain flying, group tactical flying and side guns live firing in the Croatian Army Exercise Area "Crvena zemlja"**

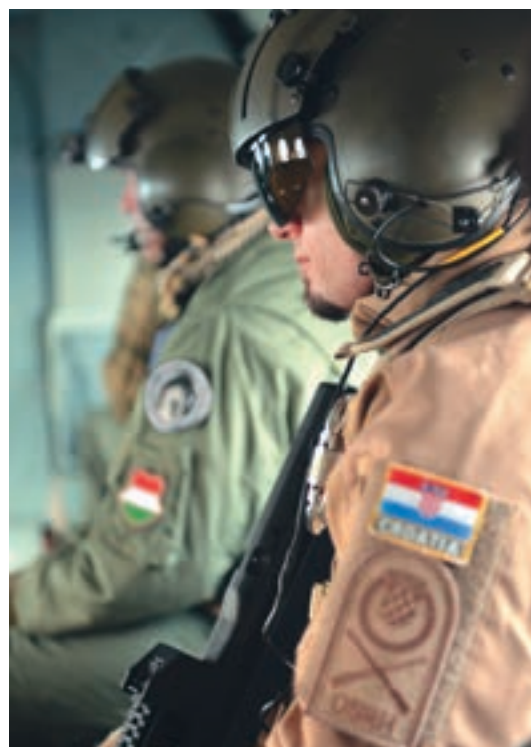
copter simulator, followed by the February training in Croatia comprising 30 in-classroom units seven flying hours with the Mi-171 helicopter per pilot. The described was a pre-deployment joint training of helicopter crews and aviation maintenance technicians for the duty of Air Advisory Teams in ISAF in Afghanistan, commanded by a Croatian pilot. Lt. Col. Michael Križanec.

The first part of the training comprised seven flying hours and 23 classroom units, aimed at placing the crew members in multinational environment in a helicopter cockpit to harmonise normal and extraordinary situation standards respectively. The crews took flying tasks, including high altitude flying, landing at unprepared, snow- or dust-covered



By: Lada Puljizević, photo by Davor Kirin

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# TEAM TRAINING AND CAPACITIES



surfaces, reacting in the engine failure situations and other emergency procedures throughout the flight. Moreover, the crews exercise tactical tasks at the peak of the first phase of the training, which combines all previous elements along with simulated tactical conditions of the operation (enemy presence, extraordinary situations caused by enemy action, co-ordination with fighter helicopters, the loss of a helicopter from the formation etc.)

## TARGET SHOOTING AT THE "CRVENA ZEMLJA" EXERCISE AREA

The latter part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> AAT PCT held at the Zemunik Barracks included flights of multi-national crews in the Mi-171 Sh and exercise of the previously defined



The Republic of Croatia and the Czech Republic realised the value of the concept and co-operation and co-designed an air advisor training course, which has won the interest of other countries for "Smart Defence" projects

## SMART DEFENCE

### MAJ. TIBOR BALLA, HUNGARY



We attended the first part of the Course on flight simulator in the Czech Republic, but the actual flight experience we undergo in Croatia is fantastic experience. The training includes 7 flying hours which complemented with the 7.5 hours performed on the simulator constitutes solid preparation for our upcoming deployment in Afghanistan and the challenges inherent in

our 4-month term. The Air Force Base at Zemunik and the natural configuration of the surrounding terrain is an asset for the training which we in Hungary do not have at our disposal

tasks. One of the flights, scheduled on 8 February, included live ammunition M-84 firing against ground targets. The helicopter took off towards the "Crvena zemlja" Exercise Area and the targets for the helicopter gunners. Some 40 minutes later, upon the signal by the Course Commander, Lt.Col. Michael Križanec, the side door of the helicopter opened and the Czech and Hungarian waist gunners set the guns and took their positions, awaiting a helicopter manoeuvre, the left turn and a series of short gunbursts. The feedback from the Commander was positive and reassuring. A new manoeuvre, two more turns and a long burst against the target. All the attendees demonstrated their efficiency and readiness to take over their prospective tasks within the ISAF.

The shooting was an integral part of the Course programme and was intended to help attain superior levels of co-ordination of helicopter crews for joint pilot operation, flight technicians and side gunners for air mentoring of Afghanistan Air Force members.

### COURSE IDEATION, DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDING

The Course was designed at the bilateral Croatian-Czech level, with support by the SOCEUR (Special Operations Command Europe), motivated by the high-level curriculum and specific requirements for the ISAF mentoring teams. The Project was also sustained by the Multinational Helicopter Initiative as a multi-national unit with funds to support projects designed to facilitate establishment of autonomous helicopter force of the Afghanistan Air Force. Having declared the intent to financially support the Course until the nations reach full capability to



### WO JIRI OHNUTEK, CZECH REPUBLIC

I came to Croatia to attend the second part of the Course, having completed the first one in the Czech Republic. The curriculum provides an excellent opportunity to prepare for the deployment and to perform the duty of mentoring of the members of the Afghanistan Air Force in the best possible manner. I rate the Course very good and useful for all participating nations

organise by themselves a complex training of the kind within the "Smart Defence" or the Multinational Aviation Training Centre (MATC) respectively, the MHI covered the operations expenses (simulator and helicopter use) for all the six Courses, and reimbursed other expenses specified by the business plan of the project to the nations where those were incurred, after the completion of the Course.

The accommodation, food and local transportation expenses were regulated mutually free of charge for attendees and instructors, by means of the tripartite technical agreements.





**LT.COL. MICHAEL KRIZANEC,**  
COURSE DESIGNER



**Where did the idea of a common flight training helicopter teams (AAT PCT) come from?**

The idea of a common flight training of helicopter teams of Nations (AAT PTC - Air Advisory Team Pre-deployment Training Course) came about in late 2011 as part of the NATO's strategic Connected Force Initiative, whereby training and certain capabilities of partner armed forces are shared to minimise the expenses and enhance the connected capabilities. In that framework the Republic of Croatia and the Czech Republic co-designed a project whose intent was to combine pre-deployment

training for Air Force mentoring teams operating jointly in Kabul, assisting the members of the Afghanistan Air Force in their preparation for autonomous flying and protection of the national security. The project has been recognised by the Multinational Helicopter Initiative, a multinational body with a budget available for funding the projects intended for optimising the establishment of autonomous helicopter units of the Afghanistan Air Force. The Multinational Helicopter Initiative accepted to cover partially the cost of the Course, while the participating nations contributed their own resources and deployed their trained mentors to Afghanistan.

**The first Course was held in May 2012 and was attended by the Croatian and Czech Armed Forces. Only nine months later they were joined by the Hungarians and Slovaks in the Zemunik Air Base. It suggests that the benefit of the Course has been recognised and won new members?**

Correct, the Course was recognised, and to prove it is the increasing interest in it. To illustrate: the first Course, held in May 2011, was attended by 11 Croatian and eight Czech participants respectively, whereas the next one, scheduled in September and October 2012, we welcomed the Hungarian Air Force officers first as observers, and as equal participants in the third Course. The Slovak team is presently participating in the observer status, and we expect their full participation in the course of 2013 or in 2014.

**This is the first of the series of three courses scheduled for 2013. year. What are their curricula like and will they differ from the previous ones?**

The Courses are scheduled prior to deployment to the area of operations in Afghanistan. Their duration is three and a half weeks. The first part is held in Ostrava, Czech Republic, using the Mi-171 simulator, followed by the second part of the Course, the flying part, conducted at the 93<sup>rd</sup> Defence Force airbase in Zemunik, Croatia, using the Mi-171 Sh helicopters. The specific feature and at the same time the benefit of the Course is reliance on the experience of the mentors who have served their terms in ISAF, as well as on the current situation in the dynamic Afghanistan reality and introduction of latest developments into the curricula. The participants are provided up-to-date information and are familiarised with the recent trends, to make them well-prepared for the mission. Thus, each new Course differs somewhat from the previous one.





The Multinational Military Police Battalion (NATO MNMPBAT), composed of the MP members of Polish, Czech, Slovak Republic and Croatian Armed Forces

## INTERVIEW

Col. Grzegorz Pardo,

Commander of NATO Multinational  
Military Police Battalion (MNMPBAT)

We are looking forward to more demanding challenges such as the international missions and I can assure you that we are prepared well.

I am certain that the unit is going to demonstrate its strength and will serve as an example of a well-planned and implemented concept of an international military police unit.

The four member nations have proven that the most important factors for international co-operation are strong will, partnership and common objective



# PARTNERSHIP OF FOR A COMMON C

The Multinational Military Police Battalion (NATO MNMPBAT), composed of the MP members of Polish, Czech, Slovak Republic and Croatian Armed Forces was at the Exercise "SHARP LYNX 12" certified and declared fully operationally capable. Following the signature of the respective document, the MNMPBAT has been affiliated into the Multinational Corps Northeast (MNC NE). Thus, a decade after the Prague conference, where the need for Military Police Force capable of responding to the global terrorism challenge was recognised, and half a decade following the first review of the four countries' members under the same flag at Gliwice (Poland), the MNMPBAT completed successfully the development cycles planned up to now, demonstrating progress at all levels and justified the years-long efforts by all the subjects of this project.

At the occasion of successful certification of the NATO MNMPBAT and affiliation into the MNC NE, Lt. Col. Grzegorz Pardo, the NATO's MNMPBAT Commander gave us an interview.

**During the SHARP LYNX Exercise held late last year at the Polish military training area Wedrzin, MNMPBAT was certified and declared fully operationally capable (FOC) and began the process of affiliating into the NATO's Multinational Corps Northeast (MNC NE)**

**The concept of establishment of a MNMPBAT has existed for a decade now. How do you evaluate the development of the NATO project up to now?**

The project has been growing and has evolved since 2007, and so has our awareness of the strengths and shortfalls. We are looking forward to fulfilling more demanding missions, such as international missions for which, I assure you, we are prepared well.

**The co-operation of the four nations over the past four years has included, among others, the Black Bear Joint Annual Exercises. Can you tell us something about how did the co-operation of the MNMPBAT members run?**

My view, although one can find it surprising, is that there have been no major changes. All nations have been focused on developing well-prepared MP units. We were capable of planning and conducting any task in co-ordination with the MNC (Multi-national Corps). The decision to join the MNC NE was one of the most demanding commitments and will im-

The singularity of the MNMPBAT consists in the fact that this is the only NATO unit operating on a multinational basis, fostering equality and reciprocity, which means that all countries MNMPBAT are equal and that no nation can make a decision without coordination and agreement with the other members of the Battalion

By: Lada Puljizević, photo: CMPD

CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE



# FOUR NATIONS CAUSE

ply additional tasks in the near future to ensure smoother co-functioning with the Command.

## What were your biggest obstacles and achievements in the period?

We have been faced with the same obstacles from the beginning to this point. One of them had to do with the language barrier within the Staff and the other is constant fluctuation of the MNMPBAT personnel owing to national requirements such as training missions abroad, rotation and the like. The biggest achievement of the Project is achieving Full Operational Capability.

## Colonel, You have been appointed MNMPBAT Commander since 2011, but had been included in its establishment prior to that. What does it mean for You to be the Commander of the Unit joining military policemen of the four nations?

It has crowned the four years spent on the project. I was honoured to be appointed the Battalion Commander for the year and for the Exercise.



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## The MNMPBAT Certification initiated the affiliation into the MNC NE-u. What benefit does it bring to the MNMPBAT and for the MNC NE respectively?

The decision to initiate affiliation into MNC NE is of great importance for the Battalion. Upon the completion of the affiliation we are going to take part into the Corps Training Cycle, which is going to reflect on the level of demand of the command and staff exercises, which is beneficial for us. On the other hand, we shall have to harmonise our respective Standard Operational Procedures with the MNC NE demands. The fact that MNC NE is a highly demanding organisation raises hopes on the level of capability attained and of participating in the support provided to the MNC NE with its deployment.

## MNMPBAT' affiliation into the MNC NE opens the phase of new tasks and challenges. What are Your projections of the MNMPBAT for the future?

Although many had doubts about this project, I can only confirm that the four nations have proved that strong will, partnership and common objective make the most important factors in international cooperation. I am sure that the unit will prove its worth in missions abroad and will serve as a model of a well planned and implemented idea of an international military police unit.



Set in the Split Spaladium Arena in 2013 for a second time, the international **Adriatic Sea Defense & Aerospace Exhibition and Conference (ASDA)** is becoming a traditional event and confirming its position in the international exhibitors map

## INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EXHIBITION

By: Domagoj Vlahović



## INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EXHIBITION HOSTED IN SPLIT

# ASDA 2013

The town of Split is to host the "Adriatic Sea Defense & Aerospace Exhibition – ASDA" for the second time since 2011. The exhibition, planned as a biannual event to stretch to 2019, is thus becoming a tradition and is establishing itself in the international defence industry exhibition map.

The Exhibition project was ideated in 2010 upon the initiative by the Office of Defense Cooperation of the US Embassy to the Republic of Croatia. It is organised by the TNT Productions Inc from the United States and under the auspices of the Government of the Republic of Croatia. The main support to the organisers is provided by the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia and the town of Split itself, and other relevant ministries and state government bodies assist too.

The initial ASDA of 2011 was a major success - 138 exhibitors from 23 countries, 2300 accreditations issued, and 18 senior foreign delegations from the defence or equipment sector – are the figures to prove it.

The Croatian exhibitors appeared as well (in total 54), which speaks of the importance of the Exhibition for the Croatian economy and international



ASDA bears large regional importance too as it gathers the most important political and military industry representatives of the countries of south-east Europe, where the Republic of Croatia has a leader role

presence of defence equipment industry. The ASDA has an additional dimension too, as an opportunity for business contacts with the leading world's weapons and equipment manufacturers and for contracting deals on the spots, minimising the side expenses. ASDA has a pronounced regional importance too, gathering the most important political and military industry representatives of the southeast Europe countries, where Croatia has a lead regional role.

"The Exhibition will be an opportunity to see the state-of-the-art achievements in defence technology and the a possibility for further enhancing of the co-operation in the political, economic and technical aspect", stated the Defence Minister, Ante Kotromanović, in his Welcome Letter to the visitors.

Good reception is expected for this year's ASDA too. The Ministry of Defence has sent out invitations to 51 delegations and as many as 478 firms and potential exhibitors (66 domestic and 412 foreign). The Exhibition will include a number of presentations and meetings, and a joint military exercise performed by the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia.





# International Exhibition and Conference for Defense, Homeland Security, Safety & Security and Aerospace



**Exhibition Organizer**



**April 24 - 26, 2013**  
Split, Croatia



Organized with the  
support of the Ministry  
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[www.AdriaticSeaDefense.com](http://www.AdriaticSeaDefense.com)



The **"Hemco Ltd."** has been the Ministry of Defence's and the Croatian Armed Forces' business partner since 2001, manufacturing pilot suits and multi-purpose overalls, pilot jackets, water-proof and wind-proof jackets and special underwear, and was also included in design of the uniforms with the recognisable Croatian pixellated print, worn today by the Armed Forces members

## CROATIAN DEFENCE INDUSTRY

**"The fabric used for orders from the Armed Forces is of high quality, adjusted to special requirements of any individual user and to the function of the particular item. We process the fabric used by all world military equipment manufacturing corporations, including the manufacturers for the U.S. Armed Forces. Likewise, all our products are made by state-of-the-art technologies"**



# HEMCO

Te "Hemco Ltd." from Đakovo is a protective garment and equipment manufacturer, a family business initiated by the Mihalj family from Đakovo during the Homeland War. Constant investing into human resources, the know-how, technology and the infrastructure have made Hemco a firm with over 100 employees and present in the international market.

Hemco manufactures a wide series of protective and working garments, and has co-worked with the Ministry of Defence and the Croatian Armed Forces since 2001, providing them with pilot suits and multi-purpose overalls, pilot jackets, water- and wind-proof jackets and special underwear, and was also included in the project of design of the uniforms with the recognisable Croatia-shaped pixellated print, worn today by the members of the Croatian Armed Forces.

"During the test-project of the uniforms with green and desert pattern, the HEMCO staff was in charge



of the uniforms' cut, and the firm manufactured a major part of the total order", says Slobodan Mihalj, the owner and the director of Hemco Ltd. "The fabric used for orders from the Armed Forces is of high quality, adjusted to special requirements of any individual user and to the function of the item. We process the fabrics used by all world military equipment manufacturing corporations, including the manufacturers for the U.S. Armed Forces. Likewise, all our products are made by state-of-the-art technologies, adjusted to our needs", underlines Slobodan Mihalj.

Hemco Ltd. has enjoyed support from the government institutions of the Republic of Croatia with its presence in the international market, as have the rest of the defence manufacturers in Croatia. Thus, their motto is "Croatian soldier and policeman wear and use the products Made in Croatia". The support has also been a factor of quality. "Our co-operation with the Ministry of Defence and the



By: Domagoj Vlahović



In addition to the previously won ISO 9100 Certificate of Quality, Hemco Ltd. has also won the NATO Cage Code, placing it among the renowned manufacturers from the NATO nations and partners. In the domestic market, the biggest award was presented to Hemco by the Croatian Ministry of the Economy in 2011 as "the most innovative entrepreneur".

# PROTECTIVE GARMENT AND EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURER

Armed Forces constitutes a progress for Hemco, enabling the development of some items that are now placed in the European Union market". Furthermore, the co-operation with the Ministry of Defence earned them the NATO Cage Code, placing the firm among the renowned manufacturers from the NATO nations and partners, in addition to the previously won ISO 9100 Certificate of Quality. In the domestic market, the biggest award was presented to Hemco by the Croatian Ministry of the Economy in 2011 as "the most innovative entrepreneur".

The future plans for the Hemco include further quality development and entry into foreign markets. For that purpose Hemco participates in renowned international military equipment and protective garments fairs (such as the exhibition in Kazakhstan and in Abu Dhabi), and they will be present at the Adriatic Sea Defense & Aerospace Exhibition and Conference to be held in Split in April 2013.





## INTERVIEW

Col. Željko Dadić,  
20<sup>th</sup> HRVCON ISAF Commander

The commitment and professionalism evinced by the members of the 20<sup>th</sup> HRVCON during their 6-month term in Afghanistan have again demonstrated the reason for the respect by the Allies and by the local population alike

In late March the 20<sup>th</sup> HRVCON returned from ISAF, having concluded the successful deployment and handed the duty over to the succeeding Contingent. It was an occasion for an interview with the Contingent Commander, Col. Željko Dadić, who shared his impressions with us on the period spent in Afghanistan, the tasks incumbent for the succeeding Contingent, co-operation with other nations and with members of the Afghan Security Force.

### **How would you evaluate the past six months in Afghanistan?**

As commander, sharing the belief of all members of the Contingent at the end of our mission we can be proud to have contributed by our committed operation to the reputation of the Croatian Armed Forces gained through participation in ISAF.

We have built our part into the overall picture of Croatian operation in Afghanistan, demonstrating our ability to perform demanding tasks and to assist the Afghan National Army build their own capabilities through conveying our expertise and experience. We have actively supported the main mission of ISAF – transfer of responsibility for stability and security of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to Afghan security force, guided by the principle “Shohna ba Shohna” – side by side.

### **The succeeding Contingent will be reduced in size. What will be its principal objectives then?**

It is absolutely worth emphasizing that our Afghan friends recognised our good intentions to understand them and assist them as much as we could. I am especially proud of the solid and lasting friendships built with the armed forces of partner nations. We have been and remain committed to our common goals and are confident in the success of ISAF



# LASTING C COMMON C



and in a happier and more prosperous Afghanistan. Therefore, the principal objective of our successors is continue to nurture the lasting partnerships and friendships.

### **How do you evaluate co-operation with the Allied Forces within ISAF, and with the ANA members, mentored by Croatian officers respectively?**

We can be proud of our achievements. We have grown into a reliable Ally who performs its duties side by side with Coalition partners. In communication with the ISAF C2 commanders we notice respect and appreciation for our contribution to ensuring of peace and stability in Afghanistan. It is a confirmation that we are proceeding well in building of our Armed Forces, who have demonstrated professionalism and expertise. We have a full right to say that we have become compatible with our partners of the big ISAF family. I have to underline high the trust of the members of the Afghan National Army, which has not been won overnight, but through years-long



By: Silvia Filošević, photo: 20<sup>th</sup> HRVCON archive

CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

The main goal for the succeeding Contingents is continue building solid friendships and partnerships

**We have won high trust by the members of the Afghan National Army, which was not achieved overnight, but through years long efforts of our mentoring teams, of their expertise and readiness to assist**

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proves the respect and trust enjoyed by the Croatian components with the Coalition partners.

The other new component is the Consolidated Fielding Centre Training Team, whose principal duty is thorough military training with the ANA members, which is to be conducted in the Kabul Military Training Centre Range. The post has been assigned to Croatia in recognition of the excellent performance by Croatian mentoring teams.

**What is the single most important heritage of the jubiliary 20<sup>th</sup> Contingent to the succeeding ones?**

The commitment and professionalism evinced by the members of the 20<sup>th</sup> HRVCON during their 6-month term in Afghanistan have again demonstrated the reason for the respect by the Allies here in the international environment too. I am confident that the succeeding Contingents will continue building on the reputation of the Republic of Croatia and its Armed Forces, much to the pride of all of us.

# COMMITTMENT TO GOALS

efforts of our mentoring teams, their expertise and readiness to assist.

**The 21<sup>st</sup> Contingent contains two new components, the National Police Coordination Centre and the Consolidated Fielding Centre. What duties they are going to be assigned with?**

The 21<sup>st</sup> HRVCON does comprise the two new components – the National Police Coordination Centre – Advisory Team, which is assigned to the Joint Operations Directorate system and is integrated into the Afghanistan Security Forces OPS. Its title is somewhat misleading, as it is not only assigned with the advisory duty with the National Police Coordination Centre, but in view of the interest attached by the ISAF Command to situation in the Planning and Operations Department of the Ministry of the Interior's Security Directorate, the NPCC AT is in charge of the Department. Therefore, we are talking of a highly responsible duty, which along with the leading role assumed by Croatia in this area,

**Shaking hands with the Commander of the Regional Command Capital**





## ISAF OPERATION

One of the main tasks of this mixed Team, manned by the Croatian Armed Forces members and by four officers of the Ministry of the Interior, along with two members of the Police Directorate of Montenegro, is to support and assist the Afghan police with exercise of police tasks. The Team also advises Afghan police officers on planning and implementation of tasks within the ISAF Operation and acts as liaison between the Balkh Province Police Directorate and the ISAF staff



The 22-member 1<sup>st</sup> Police Advisory Team is the successor of the former components of the Police Mentoring Teams (POMLTs), based in the Mike Spann Croatian Camp in the vicinity of Mazar-e-Sharif in the north of Afghanistan. The Team has been assigned with the complex duty of advising Afghanistan civilian force in accordance with the guidelines by the Afghan Ministry of the Interior in all functional areas within the responsibility of the Balkh Province Police Command. The Team is tasked with support to Afghan civilian police members in familiarisation and implementation of police tasks, as well as with the ISAF-related tasks. It also acts as liaison and co-ordinator between the Balkh Province Police Directorate and ISAF staff.

### ADVANCED MILITARY TOPOGRAPHY COURSE FOR AFGHAN POLICE

The authority of the Balkh Province Police Directorate extends over 16 district-level police commands and 9 police stations in Mazar-e-Sharif. The Directorate is headed by Maj. Gen. Mohammad Salem Ahasas, who has a Croatian Advisor – Cpt. Davor Perak, the PAT commander, serving his fourth term. The Croatian Police Mentoring Team does more



# THE 1<sup>ST</sup> CRO ADVISORY

**One of the main tasks of this mixed team, manned by the Croatian Armed Forces members and by the four officers of the Ministry of the Interior, along with two members of the Police Directorate of Montenegro, is support and assistance the Afghan police to comprehend and implement police tasks**

for their Afghan colleagues than basic advisory assistance. Thus, the advanced military topography course is planned soon, requested by Gen. Ahasas in person, complementing the previously conducted basic course. It is going to be conducted by Croatian officers and NCOs, and was designed to provide Afghan civilian police with the necessary expertise in military topography. Sfc Krešimir Zrnić, course conductor, explained that the objective of the Course was to ensure co-ordination and compatibility of the police with the Armed Forces, in view of jointly performed operations. The duration of the Course is four to five weeks, three times a week and it is going to be attended by the twelve best students from the





By: Silvija Filošević

CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

## NOTHING BUT PRAISE FOR CROATIAN OFFICERS AND NCOs

**The 22-member 1<sup>st</sup> Police Advisory Team is the successor of the former components of the Police Mentoring Teams (POMLTs), based in the Mike Spann Croatian Camp in the vicinity of Mazar-e-Sharif in the north of Afghanistan. The team has been assigned with the complex duty of advising Afghanistan civilian force in accordance with the guidelines by the Afghan Ministry of the Interior**

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The Afghan policemen appreciate Croatian officers and NCOs to a great deal, as is evident from the invitation by Gen. Ahasas to Croatian Police Advisory Team to escort him on his visits to the Police Stations in Hayratan and Kaldar (located to the border with Uzbekistan) to attend the ceremony of awarding of the best performing policemen. Gen Ahasan presented Cpt. Perak with the Afghan national costume in appreciation for the excellent co-operation Cpt. Perak assisted Gen. Ahasan with awarding the best performing policemen, and was also invited to the meeting with the Station commander and his staff, where Gen. Ahasan confirmed himself that he was honoured to work with Croatian officers and stated that he greatly appreciated the contribution of the Republic of Croatia and its Armed Forces to stability of Afghanistan. Gen. Ahasan in particular praised the commitment of Croatian police officers to development of Afghan police towards future autonomy. We witnessed a number of times that the Croatian participants have been doing a really good job in Afghanistan and have represented Croatia in the best of ways, as a credible Ally in ISAF. Impartially omitting the names, the 1<sup>st</sup> Police Advisory Team is entirely committed to their tasks which they perform as top professionals and as a real team.

# CROATIAN POLICE TEAM

basic topography course. The Course curriculum includes familiarisation with map details, identifying possible control points, symbol description and the use of transparencies and will be concluded with an operation planning task. As the Afghan police officers are not using the maps for the time being, the Advanced Military Topography Course will certainly add to modernisation and progress in their work and will enable them to apply military topography to plan patrol routes and map them in the city plan. Upon successful completion of the Course, and if the Afghan side shows the interest, the Croatian staff also envisages to conduct a training in GPS, and possibly a radio-communications course.







For the excellent results achieved and the flights performed with the Afghanistan airmen the Air Advisory Team received a series of commendations by Brig. Gen. Steven Shepr, the Commander of the 438<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Wing



# AIR ADVISORY

## MENTORING THE

The 6<sup>th</sup> Air Advisory Team comprises 11 members of the Croatian Armed Forces (three pilots, three flying technicians, four aviation maintenance technicians and a flight safety officer). The Team is commanded by Lt. Col. Davor Tretinjak in his second term to Afghanistan. The Team was deployed previously - as the 4<sup>th</sup> Air Advisory Team - manned entirely by experienced and professional officers, the great majority of whom took part in the Homeland War. The Croatian Air Advisory Team (AAT) makes a part of the 438<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron (seven pilots) and the 440<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron (4 aviation maintenance technicians) and their umbrella organisation in ISAF is the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A). They have been mentoring and advising the 377<sup>th</sup> Rotary Wing of the Afghanistan Air Force, jointly with the U. S., the Czech and the Hungarian Armed Forces members respectively and are based in KAIA in Kabul.

**The Croatian Air Advisory Team (AAT) makes a part of the 438<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron (seven pilots) and the 440<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron (four aviation maintenance technicians) and their umbrella organisation is the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A). They have been mentoring and advising the 377<sup>th</sup> Rotary Wing of the Afghanistan Air Force**

The Team's mission is mentoring of the Afghan colleagues on matters from all functional areas, on the ground or in the air, using the Mi-17V1 and the Mi-17V5 transport helicopters, to train them to perform the flight operations and proper helicopter maintenance autonomously.

Their mission consists in capability-building tasks and theoretical and practical mentoring of the Afghanistan Air Force technical maintenance personnel. The Croatian AAT team also mentors the flying crews at the squadron levels on operations tasks, training plans drafting, file management and flight safety. In addition, they also conduct flying missions, including test flights and reception of new helicopters, testing of readiness and evaluation of flying staff of the Afghanistan Air Force.

Following the undergraduate training attended at the Shindand Air Base, the members of the Afghanistan Air Force get trained, evaluated and mentored by the Air Advisory Team to get prepared



The Air Advisory Team nurtures excellent co-operation with the mentored members of the Afghanistan Air Force, which is also characterised by mutual trust and respect

# TEAM

The members of the Air Advisory Team mentor their Afghan counterparts on matters in all functional areas on the ground and in the air (on the Mi-17 V1 and Mi-17V5 transport helicopters) to train them to autonomously perform flight missions

## AFGHANISTAN AIR FORCE

to autonomously perform flight missions in support to the Afghan National Army.

The mentoring co-operation established with the members of the Afghanistan Air Force is excellent and characterised by mutual trust. The Afghan airmen have a profound respect for the AAT members, who in their turn, says Lt. Col. Tretinjak, are highly motivated and willing to acquire new knowledge, which considerably facilitated the duty.

The particularity of this team consists in the fact that its members drafted and implemented the Syllabus for Ground Runs and Maintenance Test Flights, took by an Afghan crew of two pilots and two technicians for the purpose of trial flights for the first time in history. The Syllabus comprises four weeks and has won considerable interest by the Afghanistan Air Force members. The Syllabus could also be conducted in Croatia, with minimal expenses, as further promotion for its Armed Forces, said Lt.Col. Tretinjak.

**The 6<sup>th</sup> Air Advisory Team is completing its term in Kabul and the succeeding one, the 7<sup>th</sup> AAT is to assume the duty in Mazar-e-Sharif, in recognition to all the previously deployed Teams who have over the past years conveyed their expertise, skills and experience to their Afghan counterparts**

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For the excellent results achieved and the flights performed with the Afghan airmen the Croatian Air Advisory Team received a number of commendations by Brig. Gen. Steven Shepro, the Commander of the 438<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Wing.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Team is completing its term in Kabul, and the succeeding one, the 7<sup>th</sup> AAT is to be deployed to Mazar-e-Sharif. The new duties confided in the north of the country are recognition to all previously deployed Teams, who have been transferring their knowledge, expertise and experience to the Afghanistan Air Force personnel. In the period spanning from 2010 to 2013 the Team crews have performed over 1000 flights throughout the territory of Afghanistan and offered another valuable example of promotion of the Republic of Croatia and its Armed Forces in ISAF and of their acceptance by the Afghan National Army and the local population.



Major Vladimir Plečko has been in four UN missions. He was one of the first 10 Croatian officers to take part in the UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone, the first UN mission engaging the Republic of Croatia and was the first Croatian military observer in the UNMOGIP in India and Pakistan, where he completed two terms, and a few months ago he also came back from Syria



# EXPERIENCED MILITARY DEDICATED

Leaving his native Canada at the age of 22, Maj. Vlado Plečko could not tell that his career of a Croatian Armed Forces officer would take him to Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Major Plečko was among the first officers deployed by the Republic of Croatia to peace missions worldwide. He has served terms in as many as four missions – among the first observers in Sierra Leone in 1999, followed by the status of the first Croatian military observer sent to UNMOGIP in India and Pakistan (where he served two terms). A few months ago he returned from Syria, as one of the first two officers to the UNSMIS.

## THREE TIMES ICE-BREAKER

Major Plečko prefers the challenge of going to an entirely new place to visiting a spot that is already well familiar. Being a part of the missions is always an opportunity to learn new things. Although he does not support serving in the same mission several times, he did go to India and Pakistan twice, it just turned out

**The peace-keeping missions he served in world-wide were an opportunity to witness for himself to the respect the international community shows to Croatia and her soldiers and officers**

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that way. My suitcase is always prepared for travel. While the basic principles to be followed by military observers to UN missions are more or less standard, each mission brings something new. In order to perform their duty well the observers always familiarise themselves with the country they are to be deployed to, with its history, customs and culture. "Being the ice-breaker in three missions", says Major Plečko, "I had no first-hand information to learn from. I had to do it myself I collected the facts about the particular country. Each country is a case for itself, they differ in culture and the views of the people, as well as in the background of the conflict. Military observers have to be aware what is customary and what is not allowed and adapt their conduct accordingly". He has had no unpleasant experiences, although Sierra Leone and Syria were far from calm. Along with good command of English, the duty of peacekeeper requires other skills and expertise. Major Plečko adds "Doing the job of a military observer is not always easy. NATO-



**Participation in international missions is always an enriching experience**

By: Leida Parlov, photo by Davor Kirin

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Maj Plečko was assigned Public Affairs Officer, and subsequently was in charge of security estimates for Damascus, Aleppo and Daraa. "We witnessed to armed conflicts and car bombs explosions but the armoured vehicles protected us". He finds the UNSMIS one of the riskiest UN missions, even compared to UNAMSIL. Participation in international missions is always an enriching experience. "You meet people from all over the world, different cultures, traditions, different ways of thinking, a valuable experience. You can learn something from everyone".

The four terms served were an opportunity to see for himself the respect that Croatia and its soldiers and officers enjoy by the international community. "IPO staff is glad to welcome Croatian officers, knowing that they have the necessary expertise and abilities and can very quickly adapt to any situation". Major also finds it necessary to continue working on oneself and learn new things. Therefore he even commenced learning Arabic, which would be of great help should he find himself deployed to that part of the world, either as observer or in another role.

# OBSERVER AND PEACEKEEPER

led missions, engaging armed participants, are not by extension harder. Language and other skills and expertise go hand in hand with diplomatic virtue, and are tools for balancing between the opposed sides and finding the right means, bearing in mind that each situation entails human lives. Sometimes not being armed is our main advantage. I've had no bad experiences".

## THE HARSH REALITY OF SYRIA

Major Plečko's last mission was in the UNSMIS. Upon the arrival to Damascus, along with his colleague, Lt.Col. Goran Božić, he had no sense of being in a war zone. "We arrived in the evening hours, everything was quiet, there was hustling in the streets". It was a kind of shock for them, and was followed by another one, getting to know the situation. In the course of their first weeks in Syria they were familiarising themselves with the mission mandate and the Resolution, the Rules of Engagement and the sides to the conflict.

**"In Sierra Leone the electricity was only available for 20 minutes per week. For a year's time we had to give up some of the normal things we had been accustomed to, such as the electricity or heated water. However, we could freely walk through Freetown, much unlike Syria, where every visit to the town is highly risky and you have to be on constant alert"**

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## RE-DEPLOYMENT IS A STRESS TOO

Re-deployment can be as stressful as deployment too, even more, and necessitates preparation of soldiers and of their family members alike, says this experienced military observer. Re-deployment entails re-adapting to the reality back at home and the daily routine utterly different from that of a distant and war-torn country. Major Plečko goes on to explain: "You get to see a lot – suffering of war-stricken people and children, you see their misery without being able to just cut off your emotions – be it fear, compassion, the urge to do as much as you can and the frustration over the sense that you could have done much more. It is difficult to forget all that, and for that reason preparation of military observers and of our families is a necessity". The wish in him to go to a peace mission is still alive, but he is going to respect the decisions by the Ministry of Defence. Going to Canada is not an option he considers, because as he says "Croatia is my homeland and this is where I am staying".





## ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

Application of elevated environmental standards and implementation of monitoring and environment protection measures at the training areas and installations utilised by the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia demonstrates the importance attached to environmental protection. It is operationalised with a series of activities conducted in compliance with the effective legal provisions of the Republic of Croatia as well as the military-specific provisions



## ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION POLICY BY THE ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

# ELEVATED ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS AT TRAINING AREAS



Environment protection is important across all segments of the society, including the Armed forces, in particular because the Armed Forces frequently operate outdoors and disposes with assets which contain environmentally-unfriendly substances. Application of elevated environment standards and implementing monitoring and environment protection measures at training areas and installations utilised by the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia demonstrates the importance attached to environment protection. It is operationalised with a series of activities conducted in compliance with the effective legal provisions of the Republic of Croatia as well as the military-specific provisions. Results of all measurements administered are forwarded to the relevant ministries, agencies and other state administration bodies. The entry into NATO and the obligatory harmonisation of the national legislation with the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union respectively has set new demands before the Ministry of Defence too, although Croatian legislation in the domain,



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## EXERCISES PARTICIPANTS OBLIGED TO RESPECT THE REGULATIONS IN EFFECT

The environment-related matters are principally visible when a major international exercise is organised in the Republic of Croatia. "Whenever an exercise is organised, its planning phase includes detailed elaboration and prescription of environment protection measures, in co-operation with other state administration bodies responsible for certain environment aspects, and these provisions get incorporated into the the exercises' memoranda of understanding and exercise-related agreements. Each participant at the exercise is obliged to respect the prescribed regulations, measures and the like. We have so far had only very good experiences", says Dramac, who stresses out the existence of prescribed measures of environment protection during the exercises conducted in the training ranges throughout the territory of the Republic of Croatia,

By: Leida Parlov  
Photo archive of the CMPD

# ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING RANGES

says Marjana Dramac of the Environment Protection Department of the MoD, is in some aspects even more restrictive compared to the legislation applied by the Union members. The Department is responsible for environment protection and functions within the Property, Environment Protection and Construction Sector of the Ministry of Defence. In view of the fact that the matter of environment protection and systematical waste disposal has been closely followed in public for some years now, the Ministry of Defence enhanced co-operation with the civilian environment protection associations. "At first, the environment protection associations were not informed at all about the measures undertaken by the Ministry of Defence in that regard, especially at training ranges, and misinterpretations occurred. This has changed, however, and every subject requesting the information receives them, the monitoring results are transparent, with no classified matters, and round tables are organised. The updated information can be found at the Ministry of Defence's official website: [www.morh.hr](http://www.morh.hr)

**Air quality monitoring is enabled by the automatic weather station, which is connected directly to the Croatian Meteorological and Hydrological Service, and which continuously monitors meteorological and chemical parameters of the air quality in the Range. The reports received so far have shown no unfriendly effect**

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whereby the utilisation of military equipment and ammunition is defined to prevent certain types of ammunition and weapons, as well as certain methods of conduct in cases where exercises are located in the vicinity of settlements or protected areas. It is but one segment that requires prescribing of environment protection measures. As the majority of the activities are conducted in the „Eugen Kvaternik“ Training Range near Slunj, under the Decree of the Ministry of Environment Protection, Physical Planning and Construction of 2004 on the acceptability of interventions for environment, the prescribed measures of environment protection are applied and an overall system of monitoring of the environment situation has been established, comprising the water, soil, noise, seismics and nature situation monitoring. Air quality monitoring is made possible by the automatic weather station, connected directly to the Croatian Meteorological and Hydrological Service, which continuously monitors meteorological and chemical parameters of the air quality in the Range. The reports received so far





## ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

have shown no unfriendly effect. Along with the Slunj Range, monitoring of soil and water was conducted in the „Crvena zemlja“ Range near Knin, as a part of the measures prescribed for the international exercises held there and upon the initiative of the local Environment Protection Association to check the condition of soil and underground waters.

The stretch of the river Mrežnica within the „Eugen Kvaternik“ Range, where the water quality and the flora and fauna situation is examined continuously, is an example of good care for the environment, and it should be noted that the analyses administered so far have showed high water quality, in recognition to the environment protection policy of the Armed Forces. The representatives of other state institutions of the Republic of Croatia as well as from other countries have been amazed by the condition of the water and the environment along the canyon of Mrežnica and in the entirety of the Range area.

Ms Dramac points out further that the inspections are administered by the Main Defence Inspectorate in co-operation with other state administration bodies, in accordance with the agreements in effect. The locations used by the Armed Forces are inspected by joint teams. On several occasions mixed inspections were executed of locations and of soil and water quality prior to and after military exercises, by the Main Defence Inspectorate, the Environment and Nature Protection inspection and Croatian Water Resources teams.

The Environment Protection Department, says Ms Dramac, has issued Studies on environment protection and water disposal systems for seven strategic locations for the Armed Forces, as well as landscape protection for a number of locations and environment protection projects for two training ranges (at Gašinci and „Crvena zemlja“)



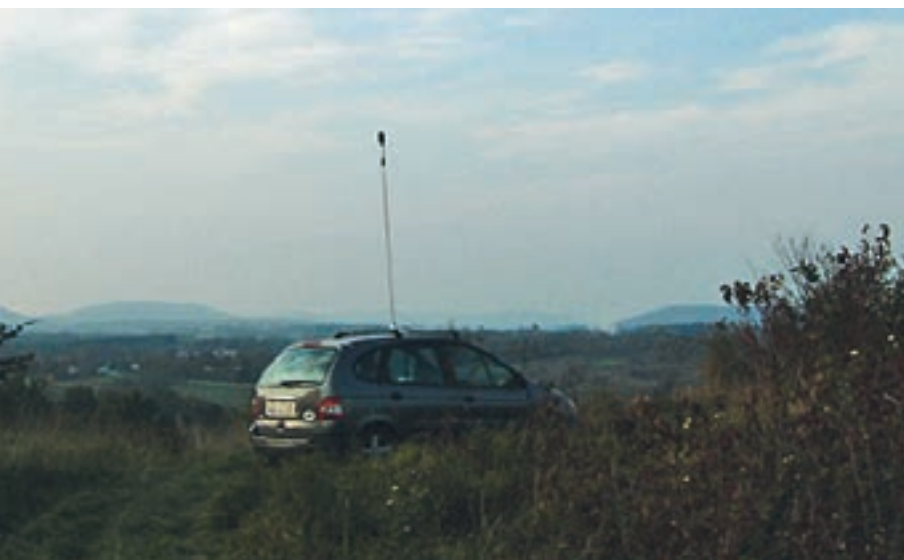
**The planning phase of each exercise organised in Croatia includes detailed elaboration and prescription of environmental protection measures, in co-operation with other state administration bodies responsible for certain environmental aspects, and these provisions get incorporated into the the exercises' memoranda of understanding and exercise-related agreements. Each participant at the exercise is obliged to respect the prescribed regulations, measures and the like**

in order to provide a projection of establishment of necessary measures of environment protection and future monitoring of the environment situation. Over the past few years there were a number of campaigns aimed at establishing of a waste sorting system, resulting in over 100 ecological containers for waste sorting and four green isles. Likewise, medical waste disposal has been regulated, containers provided and waste disposal agreed with contracted firms.

## ARMED FORCES IN ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ACTIVITIES FOR THE CIVILIAN COMMUNITY

Disposal of all kinds of waste is managed by the authorised companies or concessionaires authorised by the respective government institution. There is a lot of work to do, says Ms Dramac. One of the current project is draining of waste waters, which is an integral segment of construction, re-construction or adaptation of the existing infrastructure, whereby the waste water filters are built-in, as well as oil and grease separators, and sewage systems are being improved. It is a legally determined procedure.

Along with environment protection in the installations and locations used for its purposes, the Armed forces also take part in the respective activities by the civilian community. An example can be the last year's campaign „Zelena čistka“ („Green Sweep“), where the members of the Armed Forces and of the Ministry of Defence took part in cleaning of spots in the towns of Karlovac, Vukovar, Osijek, Požega and Zagreb. Also, the Croatian Navy regularly joins the invitations from the local community for under-sea cleaning, while the Air Force and Air Defence readily responds to requests for disposal of bulky waste from the inaccessible areas. Furthermore, the Environment Protection Department of the MoD organises seminars for familiarisation of the Ministry's employees with the relevant legislation and commitments, jointly with the Environment Protection Agency, in a general objective of promoting the environment protection.



Women had an important role in making the dream of independent Croatia a reality. According to the data available, as many as 23 080 women took part in it, with 14 194 in the combat sector...

By: Izabela Jakarić Vonić, photo archive CMPD

ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA



# WOMEN IN THE HOMELAND WAR

Women participating in war operations and battles are not a uncommon thing – history shows a multitude of examples (take Joan of Arc, for instance). Those who took part in combat in earliest times were obliged to mask themselves up as men to be able to do so.

Evidently, the 20<sup>th</sup> century offers much more instances, be it the guerilla war in Vietnam, South Africa, Cyprus, Argentina or more extensively in the World War II, and the figures for the women fighting with the Russian Red Army mount to 800 000. The history of Croatia offers such examples too, but they are more evident for the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the World War II women in Croatia engaged in the Women's Antifascist Front

**Women volunteers were first recorded in the western Slavonia battlefield, and concluded with the "Storm" Operation. They were present in all fields, from the active duty personnel of numerous units to medical service**

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## **23 080 WOMEN PARTICIPANTS OF THE HOMELAND WAR**

Women had an important role in fighting for independence of Croatia. The available official statistics suggest 23 080 female participants in total, of which the combat sector engaged some 14 194, which may be a small figure in comparison with male defenders, but is valuable however. Women were not eligible for military service in the former Yugoslav National Army and were thus lacking military training, were not familiar with the rules of warfare and had no military skills in general.

In the Homeland War 117 women lost their lives. The first known participation of women in the War was in 1991 in the western Slavonia battlefield, and





they also combated in the “Storm” Operation. The women’s involvement ranged from active duty in brigades to medical service and food preparation. They were mostly girls motivated by the enlistment of their friends or family friends, but mostly by patriotism. They joined the military in different moments. At first their volunteering astounded and confused, and they found problems finding the posts, but in time the difficulties disappeared and as early as September and October 1991 the enlistment of women was administered regularly. There were no problems with cohesion in the units, and women were treated as fellow combatants, as wartime conditions favour solidarity over gender differences. A problem occurred with wearing the uniforms and

**According to the statistics available, some 23 080 women took part in the Homeland War, of which 14 194 is accounted for by the combat sector. Also, 117 women lost their lives in the War**

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boots, which were not tailored for women. Also, there was hardly the time to organise training for them, as they joined the war at its peak, so they had to learn in haste, while combating, from male peers and in quiet periods, often in several months time following the enlistment.

It is no surprise that they feel the pride for having taken part in the Homeland War. Their patriotism has not waned to this day. Their wartime experiences are kept in proud memory.

To conclude with, the fact of the courage, altruism and patriotism of women of Croatia, who prioritised the fate of their homeland over their families and joined the Homeland war out of patriotism, should be historically valued.



Women’s enlistment was a surprising phenomenon in a first time, but in time the obstacles disappeared. In dominantly male units they were treated as fellow combatants, as wartime conditions favour solidarity over gender differences

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# PROJECTS that WE ARE PROUD of...



## THE DOCUMENTARY - MILITARY AND POLICE OPERATION "MASLENICA"

The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the military and police operation titled „Maslenica“ was the occasion to release the fourth video of the series "Five Minutes for Remembrance". It is a brief reminder of the first large and crucial military operation conducted by the Croatian Armed Forces, which opened the way to definitive liberation of the Croatian territory. The documentary was filmed by the Multi-Media Department of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia, using the authentic footage from the Operation.



ODJEL MULTIMEDIJALNIH SADRŽAJA



## CROATIAN DEFENCE INDUSTRY CATALOGUE 2013

The Military Publications Department of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia issued the fourth and complemented volume of the Croatian Defence Industry Catalogue, containing basic information on the programmes and contact data for some fifty Croatian weapons and military equipment manufacturers, most of whom have been included in equipping of the Croatian Armed Forces.

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ODJEL HRVATSKIH VOJNIH GLASILA  
I IZDAVAŠTVA

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### Editor-In-Chief:

Željko Stipanović (zeljko.stipanovic@morh.hr)

### Deputy Editor-in-Chief:

Vesna Pintarić (vpintar@morh.hr)

### Journalists:

Leida Parlov (leida.parlov@morh.hr),

Domagoj Vlahović (domagoj.vlahovic@yahoo.com)

Lada Puljizević (ladapuljizevic@yahoo.com)

### Photographers:

Tomislav Brandt, Davor Kirin, Josip Kopi

### Translation and proofreading:

Dubravka Marić

**Layout:** Predrag Belušić

### Marketing and finance:

Igor Vitanović (igor.vitanovic@morh.hr)

### Print:



### Title of the Editorship:

Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia  
P.P. 252, 10002 Zagreb, Republic of Croatia

<http://www.hrvatski.vojnik.hr>

e-mail: hrvojn@morh.hr



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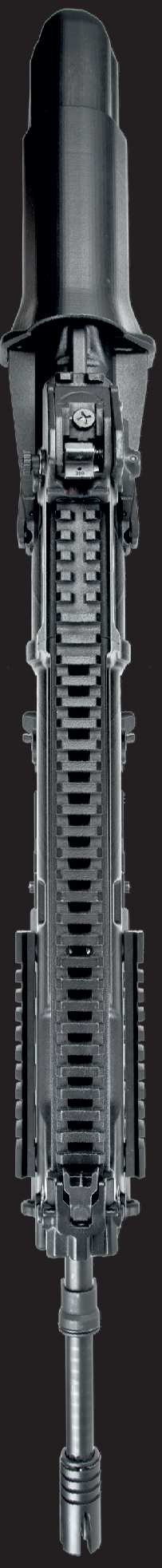
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