

CROMIL

CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

№ 12

YEAR 6

OCTOBER 2014

EXERCISE

UDAR 2014

CROWNING THE ONE-YEAR TRAINING
CYCLE OF THE MECHANISED INFANTRY
COMBAT GROUP

INTERVIEW

BRIGADIER GENERAL
GORDANA GARAŠIĆ
GENDER ADVISOR TO ISAF
HEADQUARTERS

THE MAIN CHALLENGE
ACHIEVING AND SUSTAINING
THE PROGRESS

INTERNATIONAL
MILITARY CO-OPERATION

JOINT POLISH-CROATIAN SPECIAL
MILITARY POLICE FORCES LAND
AND AMPHIBIOUS TRAINING

SPECIAL OPERATIONS BATTALION

COMMANDO BERET FOR THE BEST

THE FIRST CROATIAN **AVPD TEAM** EVALUATED

ISSN 1847 - 2036 PRINTED IN CROATIA





CAF

***Croatian Armed Forces
in NATO operations***



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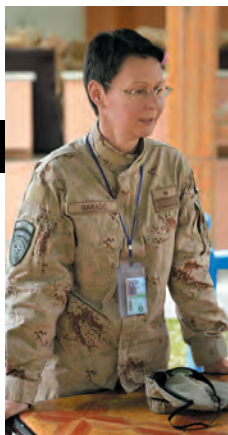
INTERVIEW

Brigadier General
Gordana Garašić,

Gender Advisor to
ISAF Headquarters



During our stay in Kabul we had the opportunity to talk to Brigadier General Gordana Garašić, the Gender Advisor to the ISAF Headquarters and the first female officer of the Croatian Armed Forces to be commissioned to a General rank in ISAF. Her mission in the months ahead will be to promote the integration of women in the security institutions of Afghanistan. It is a highly responsible duty, bearing in mind the complex cultural, religious and customary implications of the gender issue in the country. That is why the progress and sustainment of gender equality has been among the primary missions of ISAF until its completion.



intention was to encourage the Afghans to open the ranks to women, as they make up 50% of the population. The obstacles, primarily stemming from the dominant culture and customs in Afghanistan, have to be taken into account but I can see the situation has improved. For example, the Afghan Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence issued documents and strategies mandating the quotas and the terms to fulfill the set goals, namely to lift the percentage of women to 10% in the Army within the next decade, compared to the present 776 or 0.4 %. The situation in the Police is slightly better, with 1900 female members or 1.3%. Another

THE MAIN CHALLENGE - ACHIEVING AND SUSTAINING THE PROGRESS

Our mission is to raise the awareness in Afghanistan to allow women, who account for 50% of the population, to enlist in Army and Police. My view is that women serving in peace missions should become a regular practice and that every hard working individual, regardless of gender, should get an opportunity. The Croatian contingents respect gender equality, as evinced by female soldiers serving in the Croatian Military Police platoons, including the very first unit in 2003, who assisted with patrolling, security checks and the communication with the local female population and have set the example to follow

You have been appointed to the gender advisor post to the ISAF Headquarters, a highly responsible and demanding duty, considering the host country, where the gender equality is lagging behind the western countries. What will be Your mission in the coming months?

My office is in charge of co-ordinating of ISAF and the subordinated commands' efforts related to gender equality in ANSF and the co-operation with the international community, primarily the United Nations and other government and NGO organisations. NATO acts in accordance with the UNSCR "1325" titled "Women, peace and security", and issued the Directive 40, and integration of gender equality in ANSF and security institutions was one of the ISAF objectives in the first place. Our underlying mission was to promote gender equality and the projected outcome of ISAF as military mission primarily in the security sector, the Army and the Police. Its

Our mission is to promote the gender equality and the projected outcome of ISAF as military mission primarily in the security sector, the Army and the Police. The intention was to encourage the Afghans to open the ranks to women, as they make up 50% of the population. The obstacles, stemming from the dominant culture and the customs have to be taken into account, but I can see the situation has improved

problem for our mission is the attrition of women, considering the unfavourable working conditions. The international community, along with NATO and ISAF, is conducting different projects in that regard. The Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior co-work with the Afghan government bodies on a daily basis to define the necessary standards, norms and procedures towards a new structure for the post-ISAF period that will resist the reversion. The biggest problem consists in altering the traditional mindset and attitude towards women's role, but some progress has been achieved. The objective of ISAF to the end of 2014 is to do as much as possible to create the conditions for sustainable one. This implies providing the adequate housing for the female staff of the Army and the Police, for example, but several other important non-existent things as well, such as the maternity leave, kindergartens, to name some. Regarding the very post of the Gender Advisor, it was established by NATO two

INTERVIEW



years ago to demonstrate to the Afghanistan forces the acceptability of appointing women to a general rank and equal to the male colleagues with whom they work on the same important tasks, and I did see some successful examples in that regard. As an illustration - the Kabul Police district has a woman general commander, a thoroughly competent officer trained to exercise the duty. She is assisted by six more women, who testify that the changes are possible. The human rights and the gender equality Directorates have been opened in the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior respectively. The Directorate in the Ministry of the Interior is headed by a female general, and the Directorate of the Ministry of Defence by a male General officer,



but staffing a female Colonel in charge of gender equality. The intention has been to get substantial presence of women in the Army and Police to ensure safer working environment for them. Furthermore, as domestic violence is a common problem in Afghanistan, the 119 help line has been opened, operated by women and enables reporting of violence cases. We are not directly in charge of mentoring or advising, but we are working closely with the advisors of the Ministries, with the representatives of the international organisations, the NGOs and of women's organisations in Afghanistan. One of the tasks of the Office of Gender Advisor to the ISAF Headquarters consists in co-ordination with other international subjects to ensure the unity of effort by all subjects and to have the Afghans realise the importance of the progress with respect to gender perspectives.

The Gender Advisor post is the first general rank post occupied by the Croatian personnel to ISAF and a highly responsible duty, in view of the importance placed on the gender equality in the NATO- and the UN-led operations.

This appointment is a great honour to me and a major challenge to justify the trust placed in me. It is also a great pleasure to be able to exchange my experiences with the generals in the Afghan Army, who are pioneers as well. The background intention is to encourage the female population to contribute economically and to have their share in the future of their country and ensure access to the things previously denied to them.



The objective is to lift the percentage of women to 10% in the Army within the next decade, compared to the present 776 or 0.4 %. The situation in the Police is slightly better, with 1900 female members or 1.3%. The biggest problem consists in altering the traditional mindset and attitude towards the role of the women, but a progress has been achieved.



What is the importance of female personnel in the military and how do You comment the fact that the Croatian contingents included a total of 159 women in their composition?

In my opinion the Croatian contingents have included a commendable number of female members of the Croatian Armed Forces, and some of them served multiple terms. I see women's participation in international missions quite acceptable and what is important is that every hard working individual regardless of gender should get an opportunity. Women do have certain physical limitations, but I think everyone can find a post and role suiting his or her abilities. What is important is to have an understanding, as we all make up our social community where women too can give their contribution in the army, the police and other professions traditionally seen as "male". The Croatian contingents respect gender equality, as evinced by female soldiers serving in Croatian Military Police platoons, including the very first unit deployed in 2003, who assisted with patrolling, security checks and the communication with the local female population and have set the example to follow.

This is not Your first stay in Afghanistan, as You served a 6-month term previously. Do You see any positive change in the lives and functioning of the people of Afghanistan, primarily concerning women's rights?

My first term in Afghanistan was in the Regional Command North, as Head of the J1 Directorate and Legal Advisor to the Commander. It was back in 2010, in Mazar-e-Sharif in northern Afghanistan, which is known as a calm and safe zone. My work was different from the present one, and working in a multinational Headquarters I learned a lot from my colleagues from other contingents. I look on it as a very useful experience. Comparing the situation in country four years ago and now the things have



definitely changed for the better, although it is still far from the desired state. The recent presidential elections, unlike the previous ones, ran smoothly, with Afghan forces securing the polling stations and demonstrating the ability to assume the responsibility for the situation in the country, which was the cause for launching ISAF. This time saw 36% of women voting too, according to the reports, which is a commendable fact. I believe the situation has stabilised and allows ISAF to enter a new phase, as the Train, Assist and Advise mission in support to the Afghanistan security forces.

The duty in front of You is a challenging one. What problems and obstacles do You expect?

The biggest challenge of the duty is to see visible progress eventually, not solely through statistics. We cannot do what is beyond our power, but can establish good relations with all those who co-operate with the Afghan government bodies and encourage them with our example. The biggest challenge for ISAF is to achieve quantifiable progress to the end of 2014, to assure us that we have done a good job indeed. For your information, there has been a recruiting conducted in a camp for a platoon of the Afghan National Army; seven out of nine women who made it to the second round of screening have met the criteria. We survey the data on the application on a monthly basis and develop projects for enlistment of women through contracting to retain them in the Army for a certain amount of time once they have completed their training and education. This is one of the mechanisms presented by the international community, however our paramount goal is to raise awareness in the Afghan society of the acceptability of the women serving in the Army and in similar institutions.



The Afghanistan National Security Forces have been in the lead for quite some time for the security for Afghanistan and that they have done a tremendous job as evidenced by your last question, regarding the presidential elections and I think that they will continue to do the great job. We are still here and we are going to stay for some time, to train and assist them, but they are doing the fine job here and will only get better in the future

INTERVIEW

Brigadier General Craig Timberlake, Deputy Commander Regional Command North, Marmal



We are going to continue training the Afghans, at the level higher than we did in the past; in other words, we used to train the Afghans at what is considered at the tactical level, now we are going to operate at the operational and strategic level. So we'll train them at that level, advise them on that level, and assist them at that level. The Croatian soldiers will be handling what we call the Provost Marshal office – the military policemen. They will be assigned to that unit and its functioning

THE CAF HAVE HAD A HIGHLY POSITIVE AND CONTRIBUTION TO ISAF

During our recent visit to Afghanistan and the Croatian Contingent we met Brigadier General Craig Timberlake, the Deputy Commander of the Regional Command North. The Command is located in Camp Marmal in Mazar-e-Sharif, where the majority of the Croatian Contingent is based. Brig. Gen. Timberlake shared his views on the current situation in the theatre of operations and the earlier and the present role of the Croatian forces in the upcoming phase. A proud member of the U.S. Marine Corps, Brig. Gen. Timberlake provides vital support to the RC North Commander.

The Operation ISAF is entering its last phase, with the Transfer of Authority to the Afghanistan National Security Force, which is expected by the end of 2014. What role will ISAF and the Regional Command North have in the process?

All Regional Commands will transfer to a system called TAA – Train Advise Assist Commands: what it really means is they will concentrate on increasing the linkages between what is at the Corps level and the Ministerial level in the Government of Afghanistan.

What will the Resolute Support operation be focussed on and how do you see the CAF engagement in that context?

We are going to continue training the Afghans, at the level higher than we did in the past; in other words, we used to train the Afghans at what is considered at the tactical level, now we are going to operate at the operational and strategic level. So we'll train them at that level, advise them on that level, and assist them at that level. The Croatian soldiers will be handling what we call the Provost Marshal office – the military policemen. They will be assigned to that unit and its functioning.

Croatia has recently marked its eleventh year of participation in NATO; how would you evaluate the entire Croatian participation to the ISAF Operation.

It has been a very positive and much needed contribution to the mission itself. RC North is a very diverse Regional Command, where we have 17 dif-



ROLE

ferent flags – 17 different nations, and everybody gets an opportunity to learn from others, and we adopt best practices and lessons learned from each country that is represented here and share them among ourselves.

In what field of training and mentoring have the Croatian Armed Forces been most active and which contribution is particularly valued?

The majority of the Croatian forces here in the Regional Command North are out every day patrolling in we call them the “Blue Box”, which is the area right outside of our Camp and they are the ones out providing force protection for the rest of the Camp, so that it can continue to function.

How do you assess the current security situation in Afghanistan?

During the presidential elections the Afghan forces showed that they can provide a secure and safe en-

The Croatian Armed Forces have had a very positive and much needed contribution to the mission itself. RC North is a very diverse Regional Command, where we have 17 different flags – 17 different nations, and everybody gets an opportunity to learn from others, and we adopt best practices and lessons learned from each country that is represented here and share them among ourselves

vironment for the presidential elections and I think they will do the same thing for the runoff, if we'll have a runoff. That was the test for Afghanistan Here in North the Afghanistan National Security Forces have again shown that they can provide a very secure environment for elections, and other things that they provided security for here in the north.

To what extent has the ISAF operation contributed to the capabilities of ht ANSF and how do you see their future development?

It has to be clear that the ANSF has been in the lead for quite some time for the security for Afghanistan and that they have done a tremendous job as evidenced by your last question, regarding the presidential elections and I think that they will continue to do the great job. We are still here and we are going to stay for some time, to train and assist them, but they are doing the fine job here and will only get better in the future.

Thousands of hours of drill, isolation, constant struggle between the mind and body, special operations on the land, water and in the air, the prison camp amalgamated in the special operations training administered by the Special Operations Battalion. Seven out of fifty soldiers made it to the very end. The training encompassed five phases carried out at different locations from March to late August, alternating learning and endurance tests. The training, lasting for three months previously, was this year extended to six, and included levelling up with the candidates from throughout the Croatian Armed Forces prior to the training, because the programme itself was re-tailored to incorporate new operational requirements for the special forces. Once the training was initiated, the candidates found themselves in isolation each of the phases was selective and only the fittest candidates made it to the end, overcoming fatigue, hunger and hardship.

COMMANDO BERET FOR THE BEST

TAKING THE TRAINING WAS THEIR OWN DECISION. THE DETERMINATION AND ANGER LED THEM TO RESIST THE HEAT, HUNGER, PAINS AND CRAMPS. WHEN REACHING THEIR PERCEIVED LIMITS, IT WAS THE MIND THAT CONVINCED THEIR BODIES TO PUSH THEM EVEN FURTHER. THE STRUGGLE WITH THEIR INNER FORCES, THAT LASTED THROUGHOUT THE SIX-MONTH TRAINING, WAS SUCCESSFUL FOR SEVEN SOLDIERS, AND EARNED THEM THE COMMANDO BERET

The initial phase, the fortnight preparatory one, consumed 8 hours a day to prepare the candidates for novel conditions and the following phases of the training. It was succeeded by the fortnight selection phase, taking 16-18 hours a day and envisioned for the candidates to convince the instructors (the selectors) of their ambition to become commandos. The third phase, focused on individuals and lasting for seven weeks, entailed individual paratrooper, first aid and tactics training, survival skills, infantry and anti-tank weapon familiarisation and aerial operations. The circle of the candidates who made it to the paratrooper training was reduced to 20, with the decreasing tendency.

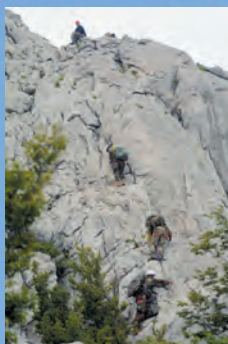
SPECIAL OPERATIONS BATTALION



The fifth phase comprised five weeks – the candidates were operating in pairs, teams and groups progressively, planning and conduct of special operations. It crystallised the natural leaders. However, only seven candidates reached the commando training – the fifth phase.

URBAN WARFARE

The candidates were still in good shape when they took on the first phase of the commando training – urban warfare. The emphasis in urban warfare is placed on live firing and it requires utmost concentration. The effort is dictated by the instructors, who need to notice exhaustion in the candidates to allow them to rest briefly and to resume the training. Urban warfare holds a prominent place in commando training for being a form of the modern asymmetrical warfare. It necessitates teamwork, procedures, response, precision and primarily identifying the enemy. The candidates were practicing



forcible entry and mopping up of the facility. Having received the guidelines from the instructors, the bearded and camouflaged faces attach their weapons and abseiling gear and go off. They enter the house quietly and disappear from the sight. Suddenly yelling, the shots and the smoke come out. The trainees practice the entry by means of a 3-m long and 50-cm wide board that is placed on the back of one of them to enable the others jump over the window. No favouritism and no permissiveness – the criteria are absolute and imperative. The instructors have applied the same criteria since the 1990ies, and go through the commando training each year, while most trainees only experience it once. The urban warfare training entails all infantry weapon shooting forms (the snapshooting, stress situation firing), so within the 10-day the trainees fired over 2000 bullets. “The commando training activates the senses and strength that you were ignorant of thereto”, says one of the instructors.



The segments of the commando training: urban warfare, the alpine training (survival and alpine warfare), amphibious training (survival and surface warfare) and the continuous operations – each of them placing the candidates in an unfamiliar area where they are required to build a logistic and command network unobserved and perform an array of special tasks. They are constantly in the open, operating around the clock and searched for by the enemy

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THE 7-DAY ALPINE WARFARE

The exhausting urban warfare was succeeded by fighting in challenging natural conditions – canyons and woods – in full climbing gear. Mastering the knots and equipment handle, the week-long alpine warfare phase served to prepare the candidates for survival in an alpine environment and overcoming the barriers – the climbing basics and rope crossing over vertical barriers, canyons and over water. They were also taught to perform small unit tactics in mountain environment and to assist conventional units to cross the stretches of mountain land. The instructors warned them of the peril of being over self-confident and the importance of relying on the equipment and on the peers. Cohesion and mutual trust in real situations of the kind saves lives. The trainees practice under the surveillance of physicians and psychologists, to assist in the event of succumbing to the effects of months-long fatigue, isolation and separation from the family.



SPECIAL OPERATIONS BATTALION



SURVIVAL AND WATER AWARENESS

Another tough test lied in coping with various water barriers. The candidates' faces reveal tiredness coupled with the determination to pursue. The worsening weather conditions complete the amphibious training scenario. The trainees threw the Australian poncho rafts into the sea and jumped behind them, simulating helicopter jumps. They then swam for hundreds of meters in full gear and prepared the formation for landing. The first component to land is the reconnaissance, and the trainees secure the beach zone. The pennants signalled the coast clear for the landing of the rest of the troops. Mission accomplished, no time to rest. The next one awaits - spread out from the boats. The trainees jump into the sea one at a time, their faces camouflaged as instructed. To a spectator this appears to be painful, but the trainees safely return to the boat and repeat the technique until perfected.

The last day of the training was complemented with the Croatian Navy's landing amphibian craft - the swimmers spread out from the craft and trainees enter the kayaks and row as fast as possible towards the craft and board onto it. The mission accomplished, the equipment cleaned and folded, the trainees are allowed the well-deserved yet short respite prior to taking the last and the hardest phase of their training - the continuous operations in the Dinara Mountain.



In line with the tradition, the successful trainees of the basic special operations training recited their commando prayer and received their certificates of the completed training at a ceremony in the light of torches



CONTINUOUS OPERATIONS

The trainees have infiltrated the area of operations by land to destroy the terrorist strongholds without being allowed the time to adapt to the new environment physically. Reconnaissance, position changing, neutralising the stronghold and withdrawing to the staging point. For 15 days the food was scarce and the trainees had to live on what they found around, including the snakes, only the water was sufficiently available. The orders, food, water and the ammunition was stored in caches. Their only external communication was radio-conversation with the instructors twice a day to receive further instructions and via the satellite telephone for urgent cases.

The goal of this training segment was to observe the candidates' performance under stress and deprivation in an unfamiliar setting, realistically simulating the situations normal to special forces. The live communication took place at briefings when the instructors came to check the preparation for the following phases. The talk went on like this: "It will be a bit difficult, instructor. We can't make it to the cache within five hours". "I don't want to hear that. Use your resources. We will be waiting there for you". And they managed, at the cost of sleeping two to three hours a day, never in a row and always under pressure. A typical situation for any special force member - having destroyed the enemy stronghold, the trainees were withdrawing to the staging point moving tactically and running in full 30-kg kit.



The training was administered by the Training Squad of the Special Operations Battalion, commanded by Command Sergeant Major Vlatko Menalo and composed of excellent and experienced instructors - veterans of the Homeland War and participants of the international missions. They were joined by the NCOs of the Battalion's Command



PRISONER CAMP

They were taken prisoners however and brought to the camp, a situation to anticipate too. The training was conceived to give the candidates the opportunity to "experience" the prisoner camp to learn to behave in such a situation. The instructors made it thoroughly realistic and for one of the trainees it has been the worst experience of his life. Nevertheless, the training was their own decision. The determination and anger led them to resist the heat, hunger, pains and cramps. When reaching their perceived limits, it was the mind that convinced their bodies to push them further.

When they learned that the release from the camp was the end of the training, which they completed successfully, the candidates couldn't believe, as they had previously been told that the training would last to a later day, but that was a part of its scenario too. The six-month struggle and motive finding was worth the while - it earned them the commando beret.

COMMANDO





THE CROATIAN ARMED FORCES

Favourable weather and other conditions at the Rt Kamenjak Training Range near Pula facilitated the joint conduct of the exercise by the Croatian and the Slovenian Armed Forces **ŠTIT 14**, giving it international character.

The "ŠTIT 14" inter-service exercise engaged 550 members of the Croatian Armed Forces and 50 members of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Slovenia. The main objective of the Exercise was to demonstrate the Air Defence units' firing competence and trainedness.

The Croatian and the Slovenian units demonstrated to the visitors and media representatives their ability firing the "Strijela" and "Igla" portable missile systems, in a simulated battlefield campaign against hostile airborne targets.

"The participating air defence units of the Croatian Army have demonstrated a high level of trainedness and ability, in a synchronised operation with the members of the friendly Slovenian forces" said the Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Croatian Armed Forces, Vice admiral Ante Urlić, who also underlined that the joint exercise made part of the Smart Defence and the Pooling and Sharing initiatives to economise resources and to optimise the results.

The Exercise was a testing event for the platoons declared for the European Union task force; the organiser was the Croatian Army, supported by the Croatian Air Force, Croatian Navy and the Support Command who used the event as complementary training. Organised for 27 times over 20 consecutive years (previously held semi-annually), the "ŠTIT" is the longest-running exercise in the Croatian Armed Forces. The international exercises are regarded as the realistic readiness test for participation in joint operations with their NATO partners.

THE "ŠTIT 14" INTER-SERVICE EXERCISE ENGAGED 550 MEMBERS OF THE CROATIAN ARMED FORCES AND 50 MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA. THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE EXERCISE WAS TO DEMONSTRATE THE AIR DEFENCE'S ARTILLERY AND MISSILE UNITS AIRBORNE TARGET SHOOTING COMPETENCE AND TRAINEDNESS

"ŠTIT 14" INTERNATIONAL EXERCISE CROATIAN AND PROTECT



Organised for 27 times over 20 consecutive years (previously held semi-annually), the “ŠTIT” is the longest-running exercise in the Croatian Armed Forces. The international exercises are regarded as the realistic readiness test for participation in joint operations with their NATO partners

Petra Kostanjšak, photos by Tomislav Brandt

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COLONEL MILAN ŽURMAN,
COMMANDER OF THE LOGISTIC BRIGADE;
SLOVENIAN ARMED FORCES

The Commander of the Slovenian Logistic Brigade, Colonel Milan Žurman stated that the Exercise was the first Slovenian activity at the Rt Kamenjak with the Croatian units. He rated the conduct excellent and stressed the importance of joint exercise at the training range and of good co-operation with the Croatian military. “In line with the Smart Defence concept, we have constructed the joint logistic base, thereby reducing the cost of the Exercise as well” stated Colonel Žurman.

SLOVENIAN AIR DEFENCE AIR SPACE





CROATIAN ARMED FORCES





Author: Petra KOSTANJŠAK, photos by: Josip KOPI

CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

“UDAR 2014”

CROWNING THE ONE-YEAR TRAINING CYCLE OF THE MECHANISED INFANTRY COMBAT GROUP

THE GOAL OF THE EXERCISE WAS TO DEMONSTRATE THE ATTAINED LEVEL OF TRAINEDNESS AND PREPAREDNESS OF THE COMPONENTS OF THE MECHANISED INFANTRY COMBAT GROUP AND CROWNED THE ONE-YEAR TRAINING CYCLE AT DIFFERENT LEVELS BEHIND THEM AND PRIOR TO ENTERING THE NATO POOL OF FORCES, AS OF 2015





Training under heavy rain and poor visibility at the Eugen Kvaternik Training Range near Slunj was just a normal training situation for the members of the Guards Motorised Brigade of the Croatian Army, the Support Command, Military Intelligence Battalion in the live firing tactical exercise "Udar 2014". They compose the future Mechanised Infantry Combat Group, conducting the training and the exercise to prove its attained readiness level, in compliance with NATO goals and commitments.

"The exercise served to demonstrate the attained level of trainedness and preparedness of the Group components. It crowns the 1-year cycle of training at different levels", explained Colonel Tihomir Kundid, the Exercise Director, who also stressed that the Group entered the NATO Pool of Forces as of 2015. Heavy rain at noon signalled the beginning of the Exercise and firing. A striking view from behind: six camouflaged howitzers shelling upon the adversary from one side of the Range, followed by the MRLs and mortars positioned on the opposite side. Soon, two F-16s of the United States Air Force, the regular Croatian partner in the exercises, arrived from the Aviano Air Base to provide aerial support to the Group in two passes. Within the 1-h time span of the tactical exercise 150 shells were fired. The artillery arsenal employed in the exercise comprised the 122-mm howitzers, the self-propelling multiple rocket launchers BM21 "Grad", the 120-mm mortars and the "Fagot" anti-tank missile system. Two M84 tanks and the Konsberg remotely controlled weapon station mounted onto the Patria AMVs were also utilised. The infantry fired from the RPGs and

"The Exercise has been highly complex in terms of planning and conduct equally. It has proved the high level of the Group's readiness", said the Exercise Director

the double-barrelled grenade launcher attached on the VHS rifle", says Lieutenant Colonel Ivan Jenjić, Head of the EXCON of the "Udar 2014" Exercise. "The Exercise has been highly complex in terms of planning and conduct equally. It has proved the high level of the Group's readiness", said the Exercise Director. The Croatian Army Commander, Lieutenant General Dragutin Repinc stressed that the demonstrated level of readiness was compliant with the NATO goal mandating a stand-by Mechanised Infantry Combat Group from the Croatian Armed Forces by January 2015. The synchronised operation and artillery fires have demonstrated the group's planning and implementation ability, and I as Army Commander give them a high mark. The first part of the mission being completed, the unit will undergo evaluation as scheduled", said General Repinc.



THE INTERNATIONAL COMPUTER-ASSISTED CIVIL-MILITARY EXERCISE **SEESIM 14** IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PROJECTS WITHIN THE SEDM INITIATIVE, THE FORUM OF SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN DEFENCE MINISTERS, OPEN TO OTHER COUNTRIES TO FOSTER INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION...

Author: Domagoj Vlahović, photos by: Domagoj Vlahović

SIMULATION CENTRE

"SEESIM 14" EXERCISE



The Republic of Croatia hosted the large computer-assisted civil-military exercise titled SEESIM (Southeastern Europe Simulation Network Computer Assisted Exercise 14) in the Simulation Centre of the Croatian Army's Training and Doctrine Command in the Croatian Defence Academy's barracks in Zagreb in late September 2014. The Centre was connected to other locations in the SEDM countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Romania and Macedonia) and with the SEEBRIG Headquarters in Larissa, Greece respectively. The U.S. attended the Exercise as the Supporting Nation and Georgia as Observer.

The computer-assisted simulation SEESIM Exercise has been conducted biannually since 2002 as one of the major projects of the SEDM - the South-East Defence Ministers, which is open to other countries fostering the international co-operation. It has entailed networking of national simulation centres. Croatia has taken part in all SEESIM Exercises held so far (through the Simulation Centre of the Croatian Army's Training and Doctrine Command) and this year, for the first time, it co-chaired the exercise with Bulgaria.

The purpose of the Exercise was to promote co-operation, coordination and interoperability of SEDM countries with respect to procedures applied by the respective civilian and military organisations in the event of major disasters, catastrophes and terrorist attacks by means of effective computer modelling and simulation. The Exercise Scenario's focus this year was based on terrorist and cyber attacks as well as on man-made and natural disasters that prompted real-time response by national crisis headquarters composed of representatives of

The purpose of the Exercise was to promote co-operation, coordination and interoperability of SEDM countries with respect to procedures applied by the respective civilian and military organisations in the event of major disasters, catastrophes and terrorist attacks by means of effective computer modelling and simulation

relevant civilian and military institutions and NGOs as training audience. Following the incidents, the national staffs were coordinating the assistance received from national and international organisations and neighbouring countries.

The scenario entailed role-players assigned with responding to the requests for assistance from the training audience and procured the respective resources (equipment, manpower, supplies) used by the crisis headquarters in planning the crisis response.

Along with the main scenario handled by the headquarters, each participating nation developed its own. As underlined, the broad scenario highlighted the SEDM role in support to NATO policy of enhancing the security, stability and lasting peace in the region. It promoted the strategic communications, information management and crisis response operations, regional information sharing, consequence management, counter-terrorism warfare, counter proliferation, energy and border security, key infrastructure protection, the solutions to transnational issues and the implementation of conventions facilitating the provision of resources for relief operations.



JOINT POLISH-CROATIAN FORCES LAND AND

Military Gendarmerie of the Polish Armed Forces and the Croatian Special Military Police conducted a characteristic special forces drill in the "Josip Jović" and "Kovčanje" barracks, demonstrating a broad capability framework (safe firing, coercion measures, high-risk situations resolving employing tactical teams in day time, night time and reduced visibility conditions. The training conducted in Mali Lošinj included amphibious operations. The two forces demonstrated all customary procedures applied by the special military police units and an entire range of multi-national land and amphibious operations", explained the commander of the special MP company, 1st Lieutenant Andrej Smolek



Author: Leida Parlov, photos by Tomislav Brandt

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SPECIAL MILITARY POLICE AMPHIBIOUS TRAINING

The forces of the Military Gendarmerie of the Polish Armed Forces and of the Croatian Special Military Police Snage took control of the terrorist stronghold in a remote area of Mali Lošinj, where terrorists were preparing for the next fierce attack. The special forces had to strike swiftly and precisely and were not allowed to fail. Within seconds they seized the house. No casualties on their side. They were alerted in the middle of their shooting practice at the Udbina range, marksmen included. Following another "routine" operation for them, the soldiers were not talkative and preferred to disassemble their equipment and resume their everyday assignments. The intervention was one of them and not unexpected – it was their job, although in this case it enabled the exchange the experiences between the members of the Military Gendarmerie of the Polish Armed Forces and the Special Military Police Company of the Military Police Regiment. The Polish guests spent ten days in Croatia, hosted by the Croatian Special Military Police.

1ST LIEUTENANT RYSZARD KABACINSKI

"This is our first time here. I think the co-operation is very good and useful and I hope it will expand. Its biggest value consists in the exchange of experience; we share some similar experiences, but there are differences as well, primarily in the ways either side approaches different situations. But we are given the opportunity to learn from each other, which is a huge asset", said 1st Lt. Kabacinski, who emphasised the excellent co-ordination of joint activities.

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY COOPERATION



The two units were highly compatible and versatile. Their bilateral activity was part of the MNMPBAT project, which incorporates a platoon of the Special Military Police Company. The training and practice conducted at the tactical level in the "Josip Jović" and the "Kovčanje" Barracks were "a characteristic training event of special MP forces with a broad capability framework. The Croatian and Polish special force members practiced safe firing, applied coercion measures, resolved high-risk situations employing tactical teams in day time and night time conditions. Croatian teams included the military working dogs. Furthermore, a series of counter-terrorist and urban warfare conditions have been carried out. The segment of training conducted in Mali Lošinj included amphibious operations. Put similarly, the two forces demonstrated all custom-

ary procedures applied by the special Military Police units and an entire range of multi-national land, amphibious and under-water operations", explained the Commander of the Special MP Company, 1st Lieutenant Andrej Smolek.

The Polish Gendarmerie platoon, divided into tactical teams, was equipped with the tactical night vision communications equipment and with infantry and specialist weapons. The two specialist forces, albeit performing similar duties and possessing experience from the international missions, their respective weapon- and asset-using tactics and procedures may be different, which, 1st Lieutenant Smolek explains, was evident during the training. "The co-operation of the kind offers many advantages. We welcome any joint activity facilitating the performance and pre-deployment preparation





SPECIAL MILITARY POLICE COMPANY OF THE MP REGIMENT (CROATIAN ARMY)



The Special Military Police Company of the Military Police Regiment of the Croatian Army has developed a wide capability framework. Its members are acquiring and maintaining additional capabilities, in compliance with the MP Scope of Operations, Duties and Authority Regulation Book (such as diving, alpinism, parachuting). They are in charge of high-risk situations, convoy and VIP escort and other policing

duties in the Armed Forces. The training is highly demanding, especially the segment of new specific knowledge and capabilities. Along the domestic duties, the Company is in charge of securing VIPs in ISAF, and has detached a platoon to the MNMPBAT. Last but not least, the Company' personnel is a combination of experienced military policemen and young officers recruited through semi-annual internal competitions (presently only at the Army level). The Company members have taken several training cycles in 2014, covering tactics and procedures in urban warfare (encirclement and search), convoy and VIP escort in the theatre of operations, marksmanship and amphibious operations in adverse conditions. The planned upcoming operations include a cycle of helicopter operations in daytime and night time conditions and the extremely difficult night urban warfare.

1ST LIEUTENANT ANDREJ SMOLEK, COMMANDER OF THE SPECIAL MP COMPANY

The Exercise has been a great opportunity to compare the procedures, the drills, the training strategies and other essential characteristics of the two participating units, which are compatible and versatile.



We have been NATO member for five years and Poland for ten years, their experience in that regard is valuable to us. The Exercise has been the realistic test of the units' interoperability with the comparable units from other countries.

The biggest asset of the Croatian forces is the versatility and adaptability. They have to maintain flexibility required for operational efficiency.

The command of the unit of the kind is a highly complex task, but with proper presentation of the mission and the objective of the unit, the members can be prepared to co-operate and join all similar units within NATO.

The Alliance being a large organisation, it requires connecting of forces through the Smart Defence initiative. We hope that this form of co-operation will continue and that it will open to more nations and their forces of comparable profile.



of the personnel. The intention is to upgrade the procedures, the use of the communications systems and to familiarise with the combat weapon systems of partner countries. The co-operation is also the opportunity to present our capabilities and the capabilities of the Croatian Armed Forces respectively", explained 1st Lieutenant Smolek. His Polish colleague, 1st Lieutenant Ryszard Kabacinski commended the co-operation with the Croatian Military Police as well-tailored and useful to both participating nations, and particularly beneficial in terms of exchange of experiences. "The operation has been an opportunity to learn from each other, and that's a major asset", stressed 1st. Lt. Kabacinski. The co-operation will continue in 2015, through a return visit by the Croatian Special MP to the Polish Gendarmerie.

SIXTH INTERNATIONAL NCO CAMP IN SPLIT

The sixth NCO Camp held in Split was attended by 17 NCOs from 11 countries. The NCO Camp is a joint effort of Croatia and Slovenia, and its objective is to upgrade the communications network in NATO and PfP countries. The Camp curriculum attaches considerable attention to the training capacities and programmes offered by the countries in SE Europe in line with the cost reduction and resource sharing policy. For the first time the Camp welcomed non-commissioned officers of the Afghan National Army



VALUABLE EXCHANGE OF

In the period from 31 August to 8 September 2014 the Lora Navy Port in Split hosted the sixth Summer NATO and PfP Senior NCO Camp, attended by 17 officers from 11 countries (Croatia, the United States, Canada, Germany, Slovenia, Hungary, Macedonia, the Czech Republic, Montenegro and NATO Commands).

"The Camp is a joint effort of Croatia, which hosts summer camps, and Slovenia, which organises winter camps respectively. The objective of the Camp is to upgrade the communications networks in NATO and PfP countries", says Command Sergeant Major Davor Petek, the Senior Enlisted Leader of the Croatian Armed Forces. The Camp attaches considerable attention to the training capacities and programmes offered by the countries in SE Europe in line with the cost reduction and resource sharing policy. This year, along the traditional exchange of experience among the participants, the Camp has hosted NCOs from the Afghan National Army, led by the Senior Enlisted Leader of the ISAF Joint Command, who familiarised the Camp attendees with the development of the Afghanistan Army.

The Senior Enlisted Leader of the Afghan National Army, Command Sergeant Major Mohammad Ali Hussaini held a presentation on the development



The Senior Enlisted Leader of the ISAF Joint Command, Command Sergeant Major Isaia T. Vimoto

of the NCO corps of the Army. "Everyone here is aware of the situation in Afghanistan and the fact that the national army was established in 2001. A young army enabled our nation assume the responsibility for the security of the country last year. It is valuable for us to be given the opportunity to participate at this Camp and meet senior enlisted leaders from different countries and the presenters and learn from their experiences", said Ali Hussaini

The Senior Enlisted Leader of the ISAF Joint Command, Command Sergeant Major Isaia T. Vimoto, the mentor to Ali, delivered a detailed outline of ISAF and the post-ISAF period. Afghanistan has made a huge progress in many an aspect, including the growth of the NCO corps, but still needs advisory and mentoring support from the Coalition and NCO of partner countries", said CSM Vimoto. The Senior Enlisted Leader of the USAREUR, Command Sergeant Major David S. Davenport stated that the Camp was the second large conference organised by the Croatian Armed Forces that he took part in and that both were major events, attended by many officers and visitors. It featured discussions on the challenges met by the soldiers, on training upgrade and presented proposals to develop the NCO corps. "Our co-operation



Author: Petra Kostanjšak, photos by Petra Kostanjšak

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THE IDEA OF THE CAMP

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR IGOR TOMAŠIĆ,

SENIOR ENLISTED MEMBER OF THE SLOVENIAN ARMED FORCES



The idea to organise senior NCO Camps as a joint project came about in 2007, with the first NCO conferences held in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, that encouraged the then Senior Enlisted Leader of the Croatian Armed Forces, Command Sergeant Major Goran Turk and me to consider a solution for difficult situation in the region and present it to NATO. Slovenia being a mountainous country was seen as a suitable location for winter camps, and Croatia as largely Mediterranean summer camps. We co-work on the activity, our respective curricula are comparable, and we always have Croatian NCOs as guests to the camps in Slovenia. This is my third time as lecturer in Croatia and I can say that our communication is friendly as it is professional. We took the opportunity to invite the attendees to our eighth winter camp to be held in March 2015".

EXPERIENCES FROM NATO AND PFP

commenced two years ago and proves that the relations, once established, need further nurturing. During the two years we trained a number of Croatian soldiers in our NCO Academy in Germany, conducted a series of exercises in Hohenfels and therefore I believe our partnership is not limited. It is maintained by the events of the kind, where we discuss the issues affecting us, the NCO and provide suggestions for improved training and mutual assistance", said Command Sergeant Major Davenport.

During their stay in Croatia the Camp participants also visited the Croatian cultural and natural landmarks, and were received in the 93rd Croatian Air Force and Air Defence Base at Zemunik. "I rate the 6th Summer NCO Camp highly, primarily the many presenters from various posts, including NATO strategic and operational commands. Regarding the discussion related to NCO training matters, this Camp exceeds all others", concluded Command Sergeant Major Davor Petek.

ATTENDEES' IMPRESSIONS

MARCUS KEISER, SERGEANT FIRST CLASS, GERMAN ARMED FORCES



My specialist is paramedic, and I belong to the medical instructor team in Kirchheim near Munich. Here at the Camp I had the chance to talk to my counterparts, attend presentations and familiarise with other countries' experiences. For me this experience is valuable, as in Germany we don't have NATO NCO Corps structure – we have the concept of warrant officers assigned with NCO duties, which means that I hold the same rank but occupy a lower position in the chain of command compared to non-commissioned officers in other countries.

MOHAMMAD ALI HUSSAINI,

SENIOR ENLISTED LEADER OF THE LAND FORCE OF THE AFGHAN NATIONAL ARMY



The security in Afghanistan is at a much higher level today and so is the Army's morale, which we proved providing the security for the presidential elections. Speaking of the importance of the NCO Corps, I have to say that the NCOs are the executive force in the militaries of the world, and their indispensable component. In Afghanistan the commissioned officers do planning, issue commands and guidelines, but only nominally. NCOs are the executive force. Only the professional NCOs as the executive force can guarantee a strong military.



INTERVIEW

Command Sergeant Major Jack Johnson,

(US Air Force), Allied Command Transformation Command Senior Enlisted Leader

The ACT Command Senior Enlisted Leader, Command Sergeant Major Jack Johnson assumed the duty two months ago, and he took the Summer Non-commissioned Officer Camp in Split as his first international assignment, where he gave us an interview on the role, training and education of non-commissioned officers in NATO and Partnership for Peace countries.

You have recently been appointed Command Senior Enlisted Leader in ACT. What is the importance of CSEL Corps in NATO and Partnership for Peace nations and how do you see the role of non-commissioned officers in general?

I assumed the position of CSEL in ACT approximately two months ago. First I have to say it is a tremendous honour, as it means the integration within the ACT and beyond - it is the entire Alliance, Partnership for Peace. So, first for me personally and professionally it is a tremendous honour. To answer your question - the role of non-commissioned officers is extremely important. When you look at any military force approximately 75% of that force look just like me, that is they are enlisted. History has shown that the success of the military is built on a competent professional military - the more educated and trained they are, the greater will be the success for your country, for your alliance and obviously for NATO. So it is one of the reasons why they are important; in the Allied Command of Transformation the role of the non-commissioned officers is built in everything that we do - be it exercise, training, education, or building of a capability of the future military, the non-commissioned officers are implicated into that process. And equally important, one of the reasons why we are here today, is critical thinking. We need critical thinkers of every rank, of every country of every military to bring our thoughts and ideas together for the sake of the safe and secure Alliance and Partnership for Peace.

So non-commissioned officers matter, and every step of the way; and Allied Command of Transformation takes their role very serious. Therefore I have been allowed the opportunity to participate in this great Camp here.

The focus of the Camp is on education and training in member countries. Have you identify any gaps in the current education and training system of non-commissioned officers? Where do you maybe see room for improvement?

We have to respect that every nation is autonomous; it has its own means how they use the force, how they train and educate and there are different variations in the experience levels of different countries. Some countries invest harder in the education of non-commissioned officers and in some cases some do not invest as much; it is easy to see that there may be some gaps there. One of my immediate responsibilities with the Allied Command of Transformation is to help identify and quantify those areas where we can strengthen our non-commissioned officers. In doing so we have got education centres that we rely heavily on - I would suggest the NATO School in Oberammergau, the Swiss Armed Forces College, and many more, where the Allied Command Transformation is functioning as oversight to ensure that I can help support those countries and those militaries to get the education and training so that we are seen as equal. When you see one country you really see the Alliance and you see a strong balance with the Partnership for Peace countries as well. Some countries may not value the importance of having one Command Senior Enlisted Leader that works for the Chief of Defence. The importance of that is, being enlisted members, we are trained from our very junior levels for a particular craft, and all the way up until you become Command Senior Enlisted Leader. In my case it is 30 years of experience. And just because you are enlisted does not mean that our education, your training is not valued - it is valued, it should be valued more, because you had the privilege and opportunity to work with and view your troops from the youngest age all the way up to be at the side of your Chief of Defence and be able to share with your senior leaders the preparedness, the discipline, the training and operation of one's forces. By not having that you don't have trusted advisor by your side that is able to share with you an unfiltered view



History has shown that the success of the military is built on a competent professional military – the more educated and trained they are, the greater will be the success for your country, for your alliance and obviously for NATO

Petra Kostanjšak, photos by Petra Kostanjšak

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I CHOSE CROATIA AND NCO CAMP FOR MY FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT ABROAD

I decided to participate at the 6th International NCO Camp here in Croatia as my first official assignment abroad because I valued its importance. Croatia occupies an important place and I must say that it has been a privilege to meet your senior leaders, who have made quite a reputation working in the Headquarters. Therefore, it wasn't by mistake that I sought my first view of the Alliance through a professional army at a location that is held in high esteem

of your forces. I think that is imperative. Over the years it has increased but there are few out there that I would simply recommend they review that.

What can you tell us about the education and training in NATO in near future, including the curriculum standards?

One of the things I am very proud of here is the privilege of travelling around the world and of watching various countries curricula and seeing what an individual country values. It is also the privilege of seeing the non-commissioned officer reference curricula, of which I passed one copy here. It was produced by many countries of NATO and Partnership for Peace to include senior members of different institutions around the world. That reference curriculum binds with the best and the most powerful NCOs in the world. Never in my 30 years have I seen a guide that addresses every aspect for a professional NCO. It was built several years ago and has been used throughout the Alliance. So when we speak within NATO we speak with one voice and one viewpoint, all of us moving in the same direction. And that doesn't speak to any country, to any service (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines) – it speaks to the professional. It constitutes an excellent NCO curriculum. My close colleagues who work at other strategic headquarters (such as Command Sergeant Major Small, the Command Senior Enlisted Leader to Allied Command of Operations) and the interaction between our offices reveal that one of the primary elements of transformation is both to have the best curriculum and to scrutinise it years later to ensure it addresses the future of a professional NCO.

What can you tell us about the current education options for non-commissioned officers?

There are presently 19 Centres of Excellence. The Allied Command of Transformation also has excellent relations with a series of other institutions. Plus, we have NATO schools in Italy,

the aforementioned NATO School in Oberammergau and the Swiss School, so I believe that we have all the required staff and prerequisites in place but in line with the Transformation principles we will always look to continue for more – to look for the most creative ideas to achieve our objectives. Our Capabilities Development Directorate is a body of leaders from all different nations, who are looking for how do we build up our capabilities. That information was closely related to our Strategy and Plans and Policies Directorate who work closely with our training and education experts; it is all interconnected to ensure that NATO and PfP countries are preparing to face any challenges ahead.

Lastly, we would like You to share Your impressions from the Camp and possibly Your experience working with the Croatian Armed Forces.



Despite my experience across the globe, I have been in this position for approximately two months. Over my two months in the Command, I took extraordinary time in the Command to ensure that I understand the Allied Command of Transformation and General Palomeros' intent. I met with all of us Senior Leaders across the Command, and attended every meeting that I could to know exactly what was important. I postponed all travels first two months to ensure that my first visit was here in Croatia, to the 16th International NCO Camp. It was the intentional first visit because I valued the importance of this Camp. Furthermore, Croatia is a special place, and it is a pleasure and privilege to talk to your national senior leaders here in Croatia who are doing tremendous work in the headquarters, who educated me on professionalism of the Croatian military.

Quite frankly – I like the programme, but need to commend Command Sergeant Major Petek, who brings tremendous reputation and represents your army exceptionally well. He is known to have built excellent relations throughout the Alliance. So it was not by mistake that I sought my first view of the Alliance through a professional army at a location that is held in high esteem. And I don't want to miss to say that Croatia is a wonderful place and wonderful environment, and I am happy to be here. Unfortunately, I couldn't bring thousands of my friends with me this time.



CROATIAN NAVY

The Lora Navy Port hosted the final evaluation of the first Croatian Autonomous Vessel Protection Detachment – AVPD, to be deployed to EU NAVFOR SOMALIA – OPERATION ATALANTA by the end of the year. The responsible unit is the Croatian Navy, whose members have successfully participated in the operation at officer posts in the ATALANTA Headquarters in Northwood and aboard the ships deployed in the area. The first Croatian AVPD team will be composed of ten members, commanded by Lieutenant (N) Nenad Kontri.

The AVPD stand for armed military teams deployed to the ATALANTA Operation aboard merchant vessels engaged within the World Food Programme off the Somali coast and the neighbouring countries, delivering humanitarian aid and supplies to the population. The AVPD teams operate onboard the vessels during navigation, at ports and at anchorage, providing security and protection for the vessels from the pirate attacks, robberies and hijacks at sea and in ports.

The establishment of AVPD teams as ship protection strategy has turned out highly beneficial - the year 2012 saw 75 pirate attacks, 14 of them effective, compared to nine futile attacks in 2013. The most recent information reveal one big vessel hijacked with 39 persons held to ransom, while at the peak of crisis in 2011 as many as 32 vessels were hijacked and 763 seamen held hostages and the amounts paid in ransom mounted to 157 million USD.

To highlight the role and the importance of AVPD teams, Captain (N) Joško Šantić, the Head of the Training and Doctrine Department of the Croatian Navy Command, has explained that the teams provided sufficient protection as the previously deployed frigates or larger vessels which had to be deployed constantly to escort the ships they protected. „The Somali pirates’ operating within an area larger than Europe, the protection of the ships by frigates increased largely the expenses related to per diems, fuel and amortisation, which led to the idea of replacing them with trained, armed and prepared

THE FIRST CROATIAN AVPD

FOLLOWING THE MONTHS OF HARD WORKING AND TRAINING AT VARIOUS LEVELS, THE FIRST CROATIAN AUTONOMOUS VESSEL PROTECTION DETACHMENT HAS COMPLETED EVALUATION; THE TEN BEST CANDIDATES SCREENED OUT FROM FIFTEEN CANDIDATES DURING THE 24-HOUR TRAINING ARE SOON TO JOIN THE “ATALANTA” OPERATION IN SOMALIA.



The introduction of AVPD teams as ship protection strategy has turned out to be highly effective

Lada Puljizević, Photos Lada Puljizević

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PIRATES ATTACK

A major threat to international maritime traffic, piracy came about in the beginning of 2000, during what was the second phase of the civil war in Somalia. In 2005 Somali pirates seized the international petroleum tanker MV Feisty Gas, for which they sought and obtained 315 000 USD in ransom. The event was a trigger for poor locals and fishermen to indulge in piracy as a profitable activity.

We know from the experiences so far that pirates mostly attack in the early morning hours, less often during nights. They approach the prows or sterns sailing in their skiffs at 25 knots, and climb onto the deck using the hook with rope and light ladder. Upon embarking they proceed to the bridge, seize the ship and halt it, allowing the rest of the force to embark. Their weaponry includes small arms and RPGs to intimidate the crew. The introduction of AVPD teams has affected the pirate attacking technique, who have subsequently adopted the "soft" approach – the pirate skiffs slowly approaches the target ship, attempt to communicate with the crew and check the existence of an armed escort. If they estimate that the ship is unprotected, they will call in more skiffs to attack it. The very presence of armed teams has turned out to be a sufficient deterrence.

TEAM EVALUATED

CROATIAN NAVY





To be members of the first APVD team to a new operation for the Croatian Armed Forces is a matter of pride

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teams constantly onboard the WFP vessels protecting them 24 hours a day. The idea turned out to be a very reasonable one. The Croatian Navy has seen its opportunity in the Operation, given its maritime environment, and has obtained the approval from the General Staff of the Croatian Armed Forces as the main authority for the AVPD teams", said Captain Šantić.

The final evaluation event was preceded by lengthy work and preparations at all levels – talks, consulting other nations' experiences, particularly of Germany and the Netherlands, who already had



their AVPD teams deployed to ATALANTA; drafting and acceptance of the pre-deployment training programmes at all levels and the final screening of the best candidates for the first Croatian team followed by a months-long demanding training. The Chief of the General Staff's Combat Readiness Evaluation Team, Colonel Mijo Kožić rated the preparations demanding. He commended the demonstrated readiness and knowledge and told the Team members: "To be members of the first APVD team to a new operation for the Croatian Armed Forces is a matter of pride".

LIEUTENANT (N) NENAD KONTRI, CROATIAN AVPD TEAM COMMANDER

Lieutenant (N) Nenad Kontri is soon to assume the command of the first Croatian AVPD team. Since joining the Croatian Army in 1991, Lieutenant Kontri was member of the Croatian Navy Special Forces and of the Diver Company of the Special Operations Battalion. At present he is diving instructor of the Naval Training Centre. His international mission career includes one-year military observer term served in UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone and the leadership of the first Croatian Contingent to Tchad. The "ATALANTA" may mean a new country and the environment for him, but the mission is always the same – to be among the top ones.

How did the Team prepare for the mission?

The pre-deployment training was very well-designed and administered by officers with the experience of participating in ATALANTA, either posted to the Operation Headquarters in Northwood, UK or aboard the ships in the theatre. The Team members have worked hard, often in the after hours as well, committed and striving for better. We familiarised ourselves thoroughly with the equipment and spent extra nights to train, practice and upgrade our abilities.



necessitate mental readiness and stamina. Physical readiness is a must for a soldier, but it is his mental composure that overcomes the challenge.

This is Your third mission; can You make an apriori comparison with the previous two, based on the information available?

ATALANTA will be the most demanding operation for the Croatian Armed Forces so far, in view of the specific operating conditions – aboard the ship, no shift work, customary accommodation or spare time – we will not leave the ship from our first to the last day. Our team is composed of ten people, among whom a physician and a paramedic. They will be working around the clock for three months, which will be very tiresome and will

Having in mind the demanding nature of the Operation, how useful in Your view has been the preparatory period?

I rate the preparations highly useful, primarily in terms of the screening of the personnel, which took into account the expected level of demand of the operation. The majority of the Team members come from Croatian Navy's special units and from the Special Operations Battalion – all experienced and proved servicemen with a number of demanding training events behind them. I can say that the first Croatian AVPD Team, under my command, is thoroughly prepared to carry out its mission as top professionals.

Major General Antonio Satta,
Deputy Commander of the
International Joint Command,
ISAF

COMMON EFFORT TOWARDS SECURITY

ONE OF THE MAJOR STRENGTHS OF ISAF IS BEING A PART OF THE COALITION FORCES AND THE FACT THAT SO MANY COUNTRIES ARE REPRESENTED HERE IN THE COMMON EFFORT OF SUPPORTING AFGHANISTAN. EACH NATION HAS GIVEN ITS CONTRIBUTION – SOME OF THEM ARE MAJOR AND SOME MINOR IN TERMS OF NUMBERS - BUT ALL OF THEM HAVE BROUGHT PROFESSIONALISM TO THE COALITION, THE INCREASED AWARENESS OF THE BENEFIT FOR THE POPULATION AND THE UPGRADING OF THE CAPABILITIES OF THE ANSF

Some 20 members of the 23rd Croatian Contingent (HRVCON) to ISAF were assigned to a number of posts in Kabul, among whom the Croatian representatives to the International Joint Command (IJC), located at the KAIA. The IJC monitors all activities in ISAF and controls all troops' movements and activities in the field. During our visit to the Croatian soldiers deployed to Afghanistan, we took the opportunity to talk to Major General Antonio Satta, Deputy Commander of the International Joint Command. Major General Satta is an officer of the Italian Armed Forces with a rich experience from the international missions and operations (served in Lebanon, Somalia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan).

Could You present the International Joint Command and its tasks?

The International Joint Command is responsible for the operations in general, and in particular for the transition towards the Resolute Support, which is mainly a training, advising and assist mission to the ANSF, so at the moment we are primarily focused on that transition. We have withdrawn most of our forces from the field into the bases, from where we continue providing assistance and training to the entire ANSF.



Author: Vesna Pintarić, photos by Stjepan Brigljević

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Will the structure of the International Joint Command change once the Resolute Support begins?

You are probably referring to the end of 2014; we shall continue working on the ANSF to acquire the autonomy and full responsibility to carry out the operations, which is the case already. You are probably familiar with the fact that the ANSF have already taken control over the counter-insurgency operations in the field. We still have to refine some areas which we are working on, such as the logistic supply, some flaws and procedures, but the majority of the operations have already been taken over by the ANSF, and by the end of the current year they will also take full responsibility for all security in Afghanistan.

All ISAF nations have their representatives in the International Joint Command. What are Your experiences working with the Croatian soldiers here?

I find it one of the major strengths of ISAF to be a part of the Coalition forces and the fact that so many countries are represented here in the common effort of supporting Afghanistan, primarily in security for the population but also in building of the government institutions and of the ANSF. Every nation has given its contribution – some of them are major and some minor in terms of numbers – but all of them have brought professionalism to the Coalition, the increased awareness of the benefit for the population and the upgrading of the ANSF's capabilities. So there are a number of areas – e.g. force protection,

What also remains our task is to make sure that the efforts invested in training and support will not be wasted and will have the time to be consolidated and mature, and probably this success will be consolidated and last in years and at last give peace and stability to Afghanistan

individual polling sites, including the participation of the Afghanistan national police and the ANA. The ANSF continue operating and introducing improvements wherever possible and where shortfalls have been identified, and their organisational capability is improving constantly.

You have a rich international experience serving in the missions and operation. Can You compare them to ISAF?

Every mission and every country has different specific characteristics. It is not to say that we started from scratch every time, but to carry out the proper mission in a crisis situation one has to adapt to the given country where one is operating in – its culture, mentality and habits. Imposing our culture to that country would mean a huge mistake. Therefore, ISAF has been conducted balancing the determination and the will to support the country on one side with the respect for the culture and our adapting to it, making sure that they are the «owner of the country» and we are in support of them. In this regard ISAF at least so far, has been a big success.

However, we should really not leave the job half-way. There is still some work that needs to be done that will probably go beyond 2014 and that depends mainly on the will of the Afghan government; what also remains our task is to make sure that the efforts invested in training and support will not be wasted and will have the time to be consolidated and mature, and probably this success will be consolidated and last in years and at last give peace and stability to Afghanistan.

AND **PEACE** IN AFGHANISTAN

the intelligence sector or training, mentoring and advising – and if you put them all together, you prove the support of the international community and the benefit of the professional contribution of all Coalition members

How do you evaluate the security situation in Afghanistan?

The security situation in Afghanistan, particularly to the south and east, is still challenging, in view of the continued threats, however the successful organization of the elections and the large number of voters are a result of the preparations conducted capillary throughout the country. On the day of the elections the ANSF, supported by the Coalition, but only supported, organised the security system based on the

You have been in Afghanistan since 2007. Have You noticed any progress since then and at what scale?

Yes, I spent a year here commanding the Regional Command North, and coming back I was impressed by huge improvement that I could record going everywhere around. Back in 2007, one would have never expected such an improvement in so short span. The period of six to seven years may be a long time in a human life, but is just a snapshot for a country. The ANSF have achieved a huge improvement and acquired the capability to reach solutions autonomously. Obviously, they can still benefit from the assistance in resources, capabilities and expertise – we need to refine the consolidation – but again we can be impressed with the great successes achieved over a very short period of time.



INTERVIEW

Brigadier General
Mohammad Asharaf,
Commander of the Balkh Wing,
Afghanistan Air Force

WE HIGHLY VALUE THE KNOWLEDGE PASSED ON BY THE

The members of the Croatian contingent are among the few with Air Force training capability. Ten Air Advisory Teams, composed of fourteen instructors, flying mechanics and technicians were assigned with training the Afghan Air Force and the instructors; moreover, the first Afghan pilot was mentored by a Croatian pilot. Prior to the completion of the mission in mid-July, the Team advised the Afghan pilots on a daily basis to prepare them for autonomous operation and provided assistance with the establishment of the squadron with the required number of co-pilots and captains and trained the Afghan instructors for more complex tasks.

Visiting Afghanistan and the Croatian Contingent deployed there we took the opportunity to talk to Brigadier General Mohammad Ashraf, the Commander of the Balkh Wing of the Afghanistan Air Force which was trained by the Croatian Air Advisory Team. Enthusiastic about the Croatian soldiers, General Asharaf commended their contribution and professionalism and extended his appreciation for the assistance provided to the Afghanistan Air Force. The Balkh Wing is composed of 240 airmen and is equipped with four helicopters. It provides support to the Afghan military and police forces of the Regional Command North, primarily in accident response, VIP and troop transportation and emergency medical evacuation.

Croatian AF members have been here mentoring the Afghan for some years. How do you rate their achievement?

Coalition forces made a great plan to come to Afghanistan. The most important thing for Afghans after the war is education. Fortunately we have had the Croatian advisers working with us and we have learned a lot from them. Our two members are prepared for demanding flights; they have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills and can work as instructors themselves: there are two troop commanders, pilots, flying as instructor pilots and one of our pilots has been promoted to the rank of troop commander; and two are ready for flying mission as co-pilots. The training for our co-pilots is still ongoing. We highly appreciate Croatia and Croatian Government for having deployed its officers to teach us.



Vesna Pintarić, photos by Stjepan Brigljević

As an Afghan and a soldier I want to stress that the Afghan soldiers learned a lot from the Croatian soldiers and appreciate Croatia and its government for having deployed its soldiers with us to pass on their knowledge to us. I appreciate truly hard work and what they are doing for the Afghans. I hope they continue and execute all assignments with us

CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

Where is the training of the Afghanistan Air Force most intensive?

Our pilots were sent to our official School (College) in Shindand, in Herat first, which took a long time. We were short of the personnel ready to perform the flights, which created the problems for the Afghan air forces; so we appreciate the Croatian mentors to have come over here to train us. We no longer have to send the pilots to Schindand.

Air Force is a highly demanding service; what selection methods do you use to get the adequate candidates?

In Afghanistan we had a lot of problems previously; we had nothing: no Air Force; no helicopters, no parts; and since the Coalition forces got to Afghanistan, and we had the Croatian advisors here, we got helicopters to support the Afghanistan people but still don't have enough helicopters; for example a couple of days ago there was the earthquake in Badakshan province, in Argo; 200 families were affected. We sent two helicopters there to support them. Of four helicopters available two were operational to be sent to the mission. The two remaining



helicopters were not available: they needed inspection following 100 and 300 flight hours respectively to be sent to Kabul for this mission.

We can do our 25 hours inspection and 50 hours of inspection; we need a new hangar here in Balkh and helicopter parts. I hope that in the future we will have the capability to conduct 100 hours, 200 and

The experience of our Croatian colleagues has been very useful. Croatian soldiers and teams display have good qualities, they are disciplined and kind. The Croatian team has been working with us right now and I highly value their expertise. As an Afghan, and soldier I want to stress that the Afghan soldiers learned a lot from them and appreciate Croatia and its Government for having deployed its soldiers with us to pass on their knowledge to us. I appreciate truly hard work and what they are doing for the Afghans. I hope they continue and execute all assignments with us

CROATIAN SOLDIERS



The experience of the Croatian colleagues has helped us learn a lot. In my view Croatian soldiers and teams have good qualities, they are disciplined and kind

300 hours inspection in our detachment.

My wish is that we receive the main parts we need for the helicopters here; RC North is responsible for 9 provinces; we support them with 4 helicopters only; we need more helicopters to be able to execute the mission timely - that is the our biggest issue. Many of the previous issues have been resolved with the Croatian team helping us, particularly with practice flights: we still need more helicopters to execute the training mission with the Croatian unit.

How do you rate the expertise and the professionalism of the Croatian soldiers?

The experience of the Croatian colleagues has helped us learn a lot. In my view Croatian soldiers and teams have good qualities, they are disciplined and kind. The Croatian team is working with us right now. As an Afghan and a soldier I want to stress that the Afghan soldiers learned a lot from the Croatian soldiers and appreciate Croatia and its government for having deployed its soldiers with us to pass on their knowledge to us. I appreciate truly hard work and what they are doing for the Afghans. I hope they continue and execute all assignments with us.

THE MISSION OF AIR ADVISORY TEAMS IN AFGHANISTAN CONCLUDED, SEPTEMBER 2014 SAW ANOTHER COURSE JOINTLY CONDUCTED BY THE CROATIAN, CZECH AND HUNGARIAN AIR ADVISORY TEAMS, INTENDED TO ENSURE MAINTENANCE OF THE ACQUIRED CAPABILITIES OF THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES FOR FUTURE ENGAGEMENTS, EITHER IN "RESOLUTE SUPPORT" IN AFGHANISTAN OR IN OTHER CRISIS AREAS. THE ANNOUNCED EXTENSION OF THE COURSE IS ALSO A CONFIRMATION THAT THE GIVEN MODEL OF REGIONAL CO-OPERATION HAS FULL-FILLED ITS GOALS COMPLETELY...



MAINTAINING THE ACQUIRED CAPABILITY

The joint Croatian, Czech and Hungarian Air Advisory Team Pre-deployment Training Course, preparing the helicopter crews for mentoring of the Afghanistan Air Force members for autonomous flying and other air tasks under any operational and security conditions. A total of seven training cycles were carried out as a pre-deployment preparation for the Air Advisory Teams prior to departure for ISAF. The eighth joint course of the Croatian, Czech and Hungarian teams was completed in September 2014 with a new mission – to ensure maintenance of the acquired capabilities for future engagements, either in the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan or other crisis settings as required. The commander of the eighth PTC, a Croatian Air Force pilot, Major Andreas Duvnjak announced the planned conduct of three more courses of the kind in the year 2015 and expressed his satisfaction over the continued capability whatever the engagement context.

The Air Advisory Team Pre-deployment Training Course was designed to be flexible and adjustable to new missions calling for the engagement of air advisors, as is evident from the mission and different situations in Afghanistan

The Air Advisory Team Pre-deployment Training Course was designed to be flexible and adjustable to new missions calling for the engagement of air advisors, as is evident from the mission and different situations in Afghanistan.

As a reminder, the AAT-PTC project has been running since 2012 within the NATO's Smart Defence Initiative, co-designed by the Croatian and the Czech aviation teams (the design credit belongs to Lieutenant Colonel Michael Križanec) and supported by the U.S. Special Operations Command Europe. It was funded partly by the UK-French Multinational Helicopter Initiative – a body supporting the financing of deployment-related initiatives and by extension, facilitating the development of autonomous Afghan helicopter forces. The first segment of the Course was conducted in Ostrava, the Czech Republic, and the fortnight's advanced flight training in the Zemunik Air Base respectively. The training was realistic, adjusted



LEVEL

to the situation in Afghanistan, and was successively refreshed with relevant lessons learned from the theatre of operations. In Ostrava the advisors were trained on a simulator, which enabled them to take the flying tasks well-coordinated. The entire flight training was conducted in real-time conditions simulating the tactical conditions in the theatre of operations (e.g. emergency situations due to enemy attacks, co-ordination with the attack helicopters, loss of a helicopter from the formation and exfiltration of the forces from inaccessible areas, aggravated landing, flying at over-1500 m and the waist gunner capability to respond to incoming threats and to defend the crew and the helicopter). The Course also included the training of waist gunners - the active helicopter defence element assigned also with reporting of the air traffic and of landing zone conditions to the captain. According to the accounts by the Course graduates, the flying security in Afghani-

The AAT - PTC and the Multinational Aviation Training Centre (MATC) as compatible projects constitute an important regional venture. For the Republic of Croatia it is also a regional model for an exchange of capabilities to enhance the aviation training for new challenges and to consolidate the skills and knowledge required for the traditional tasks

stan has considerably improved since the deployment of the Air Advisory Teams, and there have been no incidents or casualties involving any of the advisors throughout their mission there. The three participating countries have managed to harmonise and improve the training practice in the Afghanistan Air Force. The announced extension of the Course is also a confirmation that the given model of regional co-operation has fulfilled its goals completely. The Air Advisory Teams Pre-deployment Course has introduced the Smart Defence concept into the 93rd Air base, which will retain a very important place in the future as the home of the Multi-national Aviation Training Centre (MATC). By implementing it the Croatian Armed Forces have confirmed their readiness and developed capability of conveying the expertise in compliance with the NATO standards in a multinational environment.



School bell-ringers



TWO VILLAGES

Afghanistan shows many contrasts; mud houses on one side of the road opposite vividly painted three-storey buildings; chaotic traffic; modern off-road vehicles driving among ramshackled and overloaded three-wheeled carts; modern petrol stations side-by-side with tin shanties with dilapidated and greasy fuel dispensers; traditionally dressed and veiled women in high-heel shoes; grubby and barefoot children dressed in raggy clothes, a few steps from surveilled blocks secured by concrete and wire. Wealth and poverty side-by-side, such as the villages of Ala Chapan and Amiri, the first one rooted in the past and the other open to novelties. The Croatian soldiers deployed there, who visit the village regularly, escorted us to Ala Chapan, which left a lasting effect on us in many a way...



With much interest, all ears, we joined a group of the Croatian soldiers around Sergeant First Class Mario Medenjak, who points at the map showing the planned destination – Ala Chapan, one of the poorest villages in the area. He briefly explained the route, the driving scheme, the SOP to follow on our way there and the motive of the visit in the first place. This time the group was visiting Ala Chapan to deliver school and other necessary supplies donated to the village school by the Croatian Contingent. The tour of the poor villages in the vicinity of Mazar-e-Sharif (some ten villages in the Croatian area of responsibility) is one of the regular and frequent tasks of the three village sergeants (as they are called), First Sergeant Kristijan Buhinjak, Sergeant First Class Mario Šimundić and the tour leader, SFC Mario Medenjak – the members of the 23rd HRVCON deployed to Afghanistan at the time of our visit.



TWO WORLDS APART

We take our seats in the Toyotas and ride slowly towards the Camp Marmal exit, probably the biggest military base in the north of Afghanistan. Having passed a series of security gates, we leave the well-secured Camp behind us and take the Ring Road, one of the busiest roads in the country. A heap of yellow-white cars catch our eye – it is a remnant from the times when cars could only be used as taxis, so the rest of the drivers painted their cars the same to be able to drive around. We are warned by our NCOs of the highly chaotic traffic and congestions on the roads of Afghanistan and the normalcy of seeing a car coming from the opposite direction in the roundabout or the right of way flouted by a vehicle with a trailer packed with people, livestock or other.

A SYMBIOSIS OF EARTH HOUSES AND SATELLITE ANTENNAS

We have almost reached the limit of the Blue Box – a wide belt around the camp that is regularly patrolled. We leave the main road and take a macadam service road towards the first village, some kilometers away from Ala Chapan. The road is becoming worse and worse, full of pits, and side ditches full of waste. Each new rain leaves a deeper trace, making the ride in our cars a real off-road experience. Although the summer has not come yet, the

Girls and boys study in separated classrooms, with no desks nor chairs, only coloured rugs covering the floor

season of unbearable heat, the ochre colour and dust all around make us wonder what it will be like in a month or two. We finally reach the nearest houses, or we'd better say walls, because the houses are found somewhere inside these walls, hidden from the view, painted ochre and looking all alike. Everything appears to grow from the ochre soil and to blend into a strange compound together, with only messy electricity pylons and wires sticking out, same as the negligently installed satellite antennas. The symbiosis of the modern technol-





The little pupils in Ala Chapan know that the Croatian soldiers never come without presents

ogy and the earthen houses in the remote area is most absurd to see, as is the throng of children running all around compared to only a few older men, languishing in a specific squatting position in a shade of a thin tree. They all got used to seeing the Toyotas with the Croatian soldiers visit them. Croatian village sergeants come to see them regularly, bringing them supplies, taking care of them, providing assistance to the extent possible on a daily basis or as necessary, but always there for them in need.

The sergeants receive a friendly welcome, with approval and anticipation. It is hardly surprising – Croatian soldiers have enjoyed recognition in Afghanistan for a long time, thanks to their friendliness, generosity and the comprehensiveness towards the Afghan population. This time is no exception. The village headman, malik, is waiting for us in front of the greenish-blue tin door – the entrance to the village school and is joined by the headmaster. They are extending warm welcome to SFC Medenjok and the rest of the soldiers, also knowing that Croatian sergeants never come without presents. The school is in need of everything, but as we gladly notice, it is full of pupils. Illiteracy, earlier rising to 90%, has in time decreased and the schools have opened their doors to girls too, thanks also to the efforts by the Croatian soldiers.

The hosts and the visitors sipping their tea in the headmaster's office, discussing the current political but also life-essential topics, we enter the empty



SFC Medenjok takes the school supplies out from the Toyota boot. A bag full of footballs as gift led to a burst of true joy among the children

school yard, as the children are in their classes. A small oasis amidst the all-ochre surrounding. A rough surface, obviously a playground, is also empty. Its refurbishment is on the agenda with the headmaster and the malik today. We step into the school and see hall walls all scratched and a wet, almost muddy floor. A notice-board-like object hanging on the wall is of more recent date, containing a clumsily cut paper football pitch and the FC Real Madrid 2014 team photo! Big letters in the middle read Modrich, Croatian footballer! Here too football is the most important unimportant thing!



ROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

THE ARTICLE **“TWO VILLAGES - TWO WORLDS APART”** HAS **WON** THE ANNUAL **BEST ARTICLE PRIZE** OF THE EMPA

The article “Two villages – two worlds apart” has won the annual Best Article prize of the European Military Press Association (EMPA), which was awarded to the author, Vesna Pintarić, during the EMPA Congress held 23-26 September 2014 in Tartu and Tallin, Estonia. The article was composed during the visit of the journalist and photographer team of the “Hrvatski vojnik” magazine to the members of the 23rd Croatian Contingent in Afghanistan. The EMPA Prize for the Best Article has been awarded since 2008, to promote the journalism in military magazines and is decided by voting of the EMPA members, composed of the editors of military magazines from 20 European countries.

The class doors are open, as the temperatures reach 40 degrees already. One class is composed of boys, the other of girls only. The boys bend their necks in curiosity and smiling, while girls shyly turn their heads down. There are no desks nor chairs, only coloured rugs covering the floor.

ENTHOUSIASM FOR FOOTBALL

A wrinkle-faced old man with piercing eyes goes out of the hall into the courtyard. He stops by the green spot, unhitches the hammer and beats strongly against the corroded metal plate. End of class! All of a sudden the courtyard teems with boys in blue shirts and girls with white headscarves, running towards our soldiers in anticipation and waiting patiently for the guaranteed gifts. The braver among them dare to say a word in English aloud, and our ears even discern a smaller group counting in Croatian.

Sergeant Medenjok takes the gifts for the school out of one the Toyota boots, pulls a bigger parcel out of the other and opens it. It is difficult to describe the children's joy at seeing a football, a plain black-and-white football! Hundred footballs would sell like hot cakes, if available. Still, the sergeants are certain to come again and will feel glad to be able to fill the children's school days with joy.

It is time we went back to the base. The cheerful pupils want to say goodbye and shake hands with each soldier. They haul by the wooden sweets stand of a local trader and run behind our cars hang-



All pupils want to shake hands with the Croatian soldiers on their departure

ing onto the door handles while we are making it through the crowd towards its exit. It has been a day to remember, a day that remains carved in the journalist's memory.

Further down, a kilometer or two away, is the village of Amiri – another world, it seems. The vivid coloured multistoried buildings – purple, green, orange; they too are surrounded by a wall built of stronger and better materials and compounded by a modern school and much better roads. Once again we witness to Afghanistan as a country of striking contrasts, absurds, poverty and bare survival on the one side opposed by wealth and modernisation on the other one.

Two worlds and two extremes at each step along. A surrounding that to any Westerner depicts the year 1393 in history, which is just the running year according to the calendar in Afghanistan.





The Institute of Naval Engineering ("Brodarski institut") is a Croatian government-owned naval and environmental research and development institute. The core business of the Institute is full service in the ship building process. Brodarski institut was established in 1948 as a front-runner of science-based industry, and has developed its own military technology, and has promoted science and technology as the driving force of economic, social and geopolitical development

BRODARSKI

- READY-MADE SOLUTIONS

The "Brodarski institut" is the name of the Croatian government-owned naval and environmental research and development institute. Core business of the Institute is full service in the ship building process. The Institute performs experimental calculations and numerical hydrodynamic tests and analyses, provides services of conceptual and main design of vessels and off-shore structures, calculates and measures noise and vibration, designs and installs ship control systems, builds vessels, supervises vessel building at the shipyard and provides services of research of sea and the undersea. The Institute has the capacity to provide technology transfers. The "Brodarski institut" has been certified by Bureau Veritas Quality International with ISO 9001:2008 and ISO 14001:2004.

The Institute was established in 1948 as a front-runner of science-based industry, and has developed its own military technology and promoted science and technology as the driving force of economic, social and geopolitical development. As Ship Research Institute, it has been developing warships, submarines and military technology for over 40 years. During the Homeland War in Croatia the Institute continued its activities in the field of naval and military technology, developing defence systems, weaponry and equipment for the Croatian Army. The Institute is located in Zagreb, the business and scientific centre of Croatia, in a compound of about 150 thousand square meters. The proximity of the University and to the Adriatic Sea enables the Institute to perform both research and industrial commercial activities.

Laboratories and testing facilities of the "Brodarski institut" are equipped with the state-of-the-art equipment and measurement instruments:

- Test facility for ship hydrodynamics
- Laboratory for sea trials
- Laboratory for electro-hydraulics and pneumatics
- Laboratory for acoustics
- Laboratory for vibration and shock
- Calibration laboratory for acoustics and vibration
- Laboratory for internal calibration of measuring instruments
- Laboratory for thermal analysis
- Test facility for safety-at-work
- Laboratory for renewable energy resources
- Environmental laboratory

ACTIVITIES OF THE INSTITUTE

SHIP HYDRODYNAMICS

Numerical calculations in hydrodynamics in the early phase of the vessel design are performed with the state-of-the-art CFD software. Predictions of ship resistance, the flow around the ship, analysis of hull form, propeller in free flow and in its own drive, hydrodynamics of submerged objects and aerodynamic flow precede the model tests.

Experimental tests of ship hydrodynamics are performed in hydrodynamic laboratories and cavitation tunnels. Testing ship resistance, propulsion, propulsors, cavitations, manoeuvrability, sea-keeping and launching can be performed.





Prepared by Brodarski institute, photos by Tomislav Brandt

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designs heavy fast attack crafts, landing crafts, patrol boats, interdiction crafts and swimmer delivery vehicles. Series of six units of patrol vessels initially designed and developed by the "Brodarski institut", are now in the tendering process under the framework of the tactical-technical development study of the Croatian Coast Guard drafted for the Croatian Navy by the "Brodarski institut" staff. For all types of vessels the Institute provides documentation and detailed designs (workshop documentation), the research and development studies, concept design, classification documentation, as well as the interior and exterior design. The vessel construction is carried out in close cooperation with shipyards.

INSTITUT

IN NAVAL TECHNOLOGIES

The largest towing tank is 276 m long and the carriage attains speeds up to 14 m/s, which allows testing of high-speed vessels including speeds which exceed 60 kn. Ship and propeller models are manufactured in the Institute's own manufacturing workshops. Since the foundation of the "Brodarski institut", 1400 ship models and 1200 propeller models have been manufactured and tested.

The "Brodarski institut" performs prototype, delivery, and post-overhaul measurements (propulsion, manoeuvring and sea keeping) on sea trial. The Institute has been certified by CRS (Croatian Register of Shipping) and other classification societies. Measurements are conducted in accordance with the applicable ISO standards, IMO regulations, and other international recognised regulations.

VESSEL DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

The Institute designs and develops vessels that belong among the world's best in naval shipbuilding. The Institute has designed the frigates of the Split Class, the missile corvettes Kralj Petar Krešimir IV and Kralj Dmitar Zvonimir; the submarines of the Heroj Class, the Sava Class and "Una Class", the midget submarine Velebit, and the inshore mine countermeasure vessel "Korčula". Croatia is thus ranked among the few countries in the world with their own technology of the development and building of submarines, warships and mine countermeasure vessels. Along with frigates, corvettes, submarines and minehunters, the Institute also

The Institute boasts the staff of highly expert and skilled engineers (in Masters and Doctors degrees) of naval architecture, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, physics, chemistry, technology and industrial design

DESIGN OF SHIPYARDS, SLIPWAYS, FLOATING DOCKS AND TRAINING CENTRES

The Institute also develops and designs shipyards, slipways, floating docks, ship lifting systems and naval tactical training facility (training centres). Along with the elaboration of tender documents for the equipment and the technical documentation for the infrastructure, the Institute also develops plans for construction spaces (halls, transport roads, warehouses, outfitting area, slipway, main office building, staff restaurant etc); provides the description of the shipyard with the facilities maps (description of workshops, buildings and electricity and water supply network respectively etc.), provides description and designs for the construction and technological processes in shipbuilding, and outlines technical and managerial aspects of shipyard organisation, including personnel functioning and work post systematisation.





The Institute designs and develops vessels that belong to the world's top naval shipbuilding. The Institute has designed the frigates of the Split Class, the missile corvettes Kralj Petar Krešimir IV and the "Kralj Dmitar Zvonimir"; the submarines of the Heroj Class, Sava Class and Una Class, the midget submarine Velebit, and the inshore mine countermeasures vessel "Korčula"

MARINE CONTROL AND MONITORING SYSTEMS

The "Brodarski institut" develops complex ship control systems, such as control and monitoring of propulsion systems, control and monitoring of auxiliary ship systems, ship guidance systems including steering wheel, auto-pilots, co-ordinate guidance, trajectory tracking and dynamic positioning, submarine guidance and monitoring systems, systems for automatic compensation of ship underwater magnetic signature, computerised test stands for electro-hydraulic and pneumatic components and equipment, sonars, sonar signal analysing systems, sonar range prediction systems; submarine-ship underwater self-noise monitoring systems; stationary underwater intrusion protection systems, mine countermeasure systems for ships (integration of commercial and professional equipment), side scan and forward-looking sonars, underwater vehicles, explosive charges, DGPS navigation as well as development of bottom surveillance and charting procedures. In addition to project planning and project design, the "Brodarski institut" also assembles equipment and installs it onboard the ships, provides testing, commissioning, long-term maintenance, prompt interventions and periodical equipment renewing.

Croatia is thus ranked among the few countries in the world with their own technology of the development and building of submarines, warships and mine counter-measure vessels



SHIP ACOUSTICS AND VIBRATION

The "Brodarski institut" is the expert authority on air acoustics, noise protection, underwater acoustics, ultrasound as well as strength and resistance of ship constructions on vibrations, shocks and impacts. Noise level prediction in ships' working and accommodation spaces is performed in the design stage to meet today's standards. Measurements of noise and structural sound, sound absorption and isolation, damping and emission of materials and structures are performed onboard the built vessel. The Institute also performs characterisation and calibration of acoustic equipment, transducers, sensors (sonars, sea mines, diver communication, underwater remote control and activation). In the domain of hydro acoustics, the Institute performs measuring of ship hydro acoustic and magnetic signatures.

The Institute performs testing and monitoring of dynamic phenomena of different ship structures. Laboratory tests of mechanical resistance to shock, vibration, bumps and internal and external hydrostatic pressure are performed. Predictions of mechanical resistance level of a product or a structure can also be made and implemented in the design-development stage. The Institute also performs tests of stress and strain distribution on structures and models under static and/or dynamic loads, tests of vibration of ship structures and equipment, measurement of resistance of structures to underwater explosions as well as calculation and measurement of torsional, axial and lateral vibration of propulsion shafting systems.

Calibration of vibration meters and transducers is also done in-house.

The Institute boasts the staff of highly expert and skilled engineers (in master and doctoral grades) of naval architecture, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, physics, chemistry, technology and industrial design.

Our pride projects



THE DOCUMENTARY:

CROATIAN ARMED FORCES IN NATO-LED OPERATIONS

The documentary titled "Croatian Armed Forces in NATO-led operations", produced by the Multimedia Department was filmed in May 2014 during the visit of the journalist and photographer team of the "Hrvatski vojnik" magazine to ISAF in Afghanistan and KFOR in Kosovo respectively. The documentary portrays the Croatian soldiers participating in the two operations to the pride of the Croatian Armed Forces.



MULTIMEDIA DEPARTMENT



THE COMMANDO

The short film titled "Commando" was produced by the Multimedia Department and depicts the special operations training administered by the Special Operations Battalion of the Croatian Armed Forces. It is the most demanding military training, in the duration of six month and containing thousands of hours of soldier drill, the struggle between the mind and the body, the conduct of special operations at land and the sea and in the air. Only the best and the fittest soldier endure to the end and merit the commando beret.



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Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia
Public Relations and Publishing Service

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Print:

Print Office Zelina

Title of the Editorship:

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



THE CROATIAN MILITARY PRESS
AND PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

The views expressed in this Magazine are not necessarily those of the Ministry of Defence.



