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ANNIVERSARY

TORPEDO

INVENTION OF CROATIAN
MIND AND SPIRIT

15 YEARS OF WINGS OF STORM

TWENTY YEARS OF
CROATIAN SOLDIERS'
PARTICIPATION IN

PEACEKEEPING
MISSIONS AND
OPERATIONS

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EXERCISE

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

19

DEMONSTRATION OF
POWER AND UNITY

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ON 30TH MAY 2020, THE COASTAL CITY OF ZADAR WILL HOST THE INAUGURAL CROATIAN INTERNATIONAL MILITARY AIR SHOW. UP TO 450 PARTICIPANTS AND 100 AIRCRAFT FROM CROATIA AND ITS PARTNER AND ALLIED COUNTRIES ARE EXPECTED TO CREATE A SPECTACULAR PERFORMANCE IN FRONT OF 100,000 PEOPLE



Croatian Air Force Display Team *Wings of Storm* in formation above Zadar, where spectators will enjoy a spectacle featuring the world's most renowned display teams and aerobatic pilots

CROIMAS 2020

Thanks to the initiative of current and former members of the Croatian Air Force, the inaugural Croatian International Military Airshow (CROIMAS 2020) will take place above the coastal city of Zadar on 30th May 2020.

"CROIMAS is of manifold importance for the Croatian Air Force, the Croatian Armed Forces, Zadar and all of Croatia. It will give impetus to the early tourist season and be an advertisement for Zadar. Moreover, such an event entails great economic benefits for the local community and allows us to strengthen the Croatian Air Force's co-operation with its allied and partner air forces. Essentially, it is an opportunity to create a stronger bond between the Croatian Armed Forces and the local population as well as to promote the Croatian Air Force and the military pilot profession," said Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Damir Krstičević during the formal announcement of CROIMAS at the Lt. Col. Mirko Vukušić Barracks in Zemunik Donji near Zadar on 23rd August. Krstičević added that the air show enjoyed support from the Croatian Government, concluding: "It gives me great pleasure to know that Croatian aviators initiated this project."



The Croatian Air Force will be in charge of the main event – the flying programme. In addition, event co-organisers the City of Zadar and Zadar County will provide the ground-based entertainment and support. All the aircraft will operate from the 93rd Air Base, where pilots and ground personnel will be accommodated and receive the necessary logistic support. Up to 450 participants and 100 aircraft are expected, which should not offer any additional challenges to the personnel of the 93rd Air Base. They already supported a large number of NATO aircraft and personnel during international military exercises at the Zemunik Donji barracks in July. Moreover, two renowned military display teams, *Frecce Tricolori* (Italy) and the *Red Arrows* (UK) have made several friendship visits to the base in recent years. It is not anticipated that flying operations during dress rehearsals, the event programme itself or the arrival and departure of display aircraft will greatly interfere with regularly scheduled flights at the nearby civil airport.

Up to 100,000 visitors will enjoy a spectacular performance led by the most renowned display teams from

Text by Domagoj Vlahović
Photo by Mladen Čobanović,
Katsuhiko Tokunaga, *Wings of Storm*

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WORLD-CLASS AIR SPECTACLE

NATO and other countries. Aerobatics in the skies above the Zadar Canal will be viewable from a main grandstand on the Zadar quayside, various locations on the broad stretch from Kolovare Beach up to the area of Punta-mika, the nearby island of Ugljan and from any marine craft moored in the canal.

Naturally, air shows taking place over the sea are nothing new (e.g. Bari in Italy), but nowhere in the world is there a location as well-placed, safe and attractive as Zadar, the cradle of the Croatian Air Force. The show will also feature Croatian naval, land and special forces, officer cadets from the Croatian Defence Academy and many more who will have a chance to showcase their talents. Visitors will be able to tour the Croatian Navy's vessels and get up close to static displays of weapons and equipment.

Zadar and its people will ensure that spectators want for nothing; the necessary infrastructure is already in place and admission to the air show will be free. The only condition that the Croatian Air Force and its partners cannot vouch for is – fair weather.

The most frequently asked questions at the formal an-

CROIMAS 2020 will take place on Croatia's Statehood Day in a year that includes three important landmark commemorations: the 25th anniversary of the Homeland War's Operation Storm; the 29th anniversary of the formal establishment of the Croatian Armed Forces; and the 15th anniversary of the formation of the Croatian Air Force Display Team *Wings of Storm*.

nouncement of CROIMAS were about participating aircraft and the cost. Official invitations have already been sent to the addresses of the best air display teams. The reputation of *Wings of Storm*, Croatia's premier aerial ambassadors, and their network of contacts will certainly help draw in contributors. "Our maximum capacity is 100 aircraft and 450 participants. We estimate that 50-70% of invitees will take part in the airshow. That would be a fantastic figure for the first CROIMAS and would make it one of the largest air shows in Europe. The flying programme could run for up to nine hours, but a realistic estimate will be five hours," said Lt. Col. Damir Barišić, Head of the Operations Section at the 93rd Air Base Command.

The first CROIMAS is just over six months away. The time frame might seem too brief for organizing such a complex event, but the staff of the 93rd Air Base are already well prepared, as they have the required experience as well as material and human resources for fulfilling their part of the project. The civil authorities are also prepared to play their part in a successful aerial spectacle next summer.

AS PART OF THE CROATIAN AND BRITISH ARMIES' SEVENTH BILATERAL EXERCISE, MEMBERS OF THE 2ND MECHANIZED BATTALION *GRO-MOVI* (THUNDERS) AND THE QUEEN'S OWN YEOMANRY DEMONSTRATED AN ATTACK ON A FORTIFIED ENEMY POSITION AND AN AMBUSH OF AN INFANTRY PATROL AT THE *CRVENA ZEMLJA* (RED LAND) TRAINING AREA...



SAVA STAR 19

CROATIAN AND BRITISH INFANTRY FORCES TRAINING

Sava Star 19, a traditional bilateral exercise conducted by the Croatian and British armies, was held for the seventh time at the *Crvena zemlja* (Red Land) Training Area in Croatia from 5th to 22nd September 2019. For the Croatian Armed Forces, the objective was to train infantry platoons/companies for engagement in an international environment and to provide support to the training of the British Armed Forces' light armoured reconnaissance unit. The training group at *Sava Star 19* comprised some 200 Croatian and British soldiers. "Conducting this interesting activity with the Brits is a whole new experience," says Private Natalija Mladenović. Equally interesting are the conversations between soldiers off field: "We discuss weapons and equipment; the differences are astonishing. As far as procedures go, they are similar in some aspects, but dissimilar in others." "Today's attack was really good. We had been practicing all day today and last night, getting routines together and adjusting differences. The Croatians led the attack

The commanders expressed their satisfaction at the manner in which all the tactics and procedures had been jointly implemented by both armies, who made the most of what the *Crvena zemlja* Training Area had to offer.

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brilliantly; they were very quick. I like Croatian radios, which are smaller and lighter than what we carry. However, the most interesting piece of equipment is probably the VHS-2 rifle. The terrain here is different to what we are used to. We train mostly in the rainy north of England, where we have a lot of open fields," said Second Lieutenant Geraint Bartie of the British Armed Forces.

The attack on an enemy stronghold was not the only activity demonstrated by the two allied militaries that day. Shortly after the first exercise, the soldiers made their way to a wooded part of the training range. They moved into positions and kept a watchful eye on a road twenty metres downhill. The location was ideal for laying an ambush for an enemy infantry patrol. The same scenario as before was repeated: shooting occurred and the "blue" team won in the "finale". The commanders expressed their satisfaction at the manner in which all the tactics and procedures had been jointly imple-



Text by Domagoj Vlahović
Photo by Mladen Čobanović

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QUEEN'S OWN YEOMANRY

The usage of the word *yeoman* was first recorded c. 1300. Originally, it denoted a freeholder, ranking just below a nobleman. In later usage, it referred to a servant in a royal or noble household.

The Queen's Own Yeomanry is a light cavalry reconnaissance regiment of the UK's Army Reserve. Overall, there are four regiments in the British Army Reserve with the traditional term *yeomanry* in their title.

The Queen's Own Yeomanry has been active since 1971. It is made up of five units from the Midlands, north of England and south-west of Scotland comprising reservists who serve in various parts of the world, if required. Among others, they have taken part in Operation Herrick in Afghanistan and Operation Telic in Iraq.

The regiment is based at Fenham Barracks in Newcastle upon Tyne and has squadrons in York, Wigan and Chester.

Dubravka Marić



mented by both armies, who made the most of what the *Crvena zemlja* Training Area had to offer.

CROMIL's team witnessed the field part of the exercise, which was conducted without a break for six days. A mixed company of British and Croatian soldiers continuously undertook practice operations throughout that time period. Captain Frano Šesto, Commander of the 1st Company, 2nd Mechanized Battalion *Gromovi* (*Thunders*), acted as liaison officer, bridging the communication gap between the two militaries. "All the Croatian participants agree on one thing: such activities increase the interoperability between us and our NATO partners. With combined training, we upgrade our capabilities for conducting joint operations, as well as those skills that are inherently ours. The *Gromovi* are also glad to be on the *Crvena zemlja* Training Area. Though we train on all the ranges in Croatia, this is the one where we spend the least time," concluded Captain Šesto.



INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS ARE A MEANS THROUGH WHICH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY STRIVES TO HELP PARTIES IN CONFLICT CREATE CONDITIONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF STABLE SOCIETIES.



TWENTY YEARS OF CROATIAN SOLDIERS' PARTICIPATION IN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS

In today's world, the need for peacekeeping missions is on the rise. At the same time, the missions are growing to be more demanding and complex. Security, development and support for the rule of law are among the fields of activity in which soldiers participating in missions are engaged. Depending upon the mandate, states participating in individual missions are involved in a range of different activities.

In the last three decades, the Republic of Croatia has come a long way from a country needing and making use of international assistance to a country capable of providing assistance to other countries in need as a part of international forces. According to data from the Republic of Croatia's 2018 Annual Defence Report, members of the Croatian Armed Forces, alongside partner and

In 2019, the Republic of Croatia marks 20 years of participation in international peacekeeping missions and the 10th anniversary of its accession to NATO.

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allied states' armed forces, took part in peacekeeping missions and operations in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Iraq, Poland, Lithuania, India and Pakistan, Western Sahara, Lebanon, Somalia, Kuwait and the Mediterranean. In total, 1,072 officers, NCOs and enlisted personnel of the Croatian Armed Forces, 54 of whom were female, rotated in those activities. That is just one indicator of the Republic of Croatia's active contribution to NATO and Europe's defence policy in terms of the development of peace and joint military capabilities. The North Atlantic Council recognizes Croatia's contribution as a valuable form of "investment into the Alliance's defence." NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg addressed that point during an official visit to the Republic of Croatia in October 2018, when he commended Croatia for its engagement



Text by Lada Puljizević
Photo by Archive of the Croatian Military Press
and Publications Department

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in international missions and operations, particularly in NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in Lithuania and Poland as well as in NATO's maritime operation Sea Guardian.

In 2018 alone, 320 members of the Croatian Armed Forces were engaged in eFP activities in Lithuania and Poland. In the latter country, Croatian forces were augmented by a battery of *Vulkan* (Volcano) 122mm self-propelled multiple rocket launchers. Since December 2018, Croatia has been taking part in the NATO Mission Iraq (NMI), where seven Croatian soldiers have been engaged as advisors and instructors. Likewise, the Signals Battalion's Deployable Communications Module (DCM), one of NATO's four national DCMs, has served in the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan and NATO's Patriot Mission in Turkey. In 2018, 315 members of the Croatian Armed Forces served in the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. An engineer company was formed, equipped and trained for participation in UNIFIL, the UN's peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, during 2017 and 2018. The 1st Croatian Contingent in UNIFIL was deployed in 2018 and a rotation of contingents took place at the end of that year. Overall, 106 members of the Croatian Armed Forces served a tour of duty in Lebanon in 2018. The Croatian Navy made a significant advance in its contribution to allied maritime security in 2018. In September of that year, 33 Croatian Armed Forces personnel and the missile boat RTOP-41 *Vukovar* participated in the Sea Guardian peacekeeping mission in the Mediterranean. Further 15 Croatian soldiers served in Operation Atalanta, while three Croatian soldiers were deployed to the EU's Naval Force Mediterranean Operation Sophia (EUNAVFOR MED Sophia).

In 2018, 118 Croatian soldiers were engaged on peacekeeping duties in Kosovo and 106 in Lebanon.



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That same year, 18 members of the Croatian Armed Forces took part in peacekeeping activities in the UN-MOGIP mission in India and Pakistan, while further 13 soldiers from Croatia were deployed to Western Sahara (MINURSO).

In 2019, the Republic of Croatia marks 20 years of participation in international peacekeeping missions and the 10th anniversary of its accession to NATO. The year has been punctuated by one tragic event: whilst serving with the Resolute Support Mission's 10th Croatian Contingent in Afghanistan, Corporal Josip Briški died in a suicide bomb attack on a Croatian Armed Forces' vehicle in Kabul, while two other Croatian soldiers sustained injuries. Corporal Briški was the first Croatian soldier to die in an armed conflict within a peacekeeping mission or operation.



CROATIAN ARMY

Taking into account today's strong presence of Croatian soldiers in numerous crisis hotspots around the world and the development of their many military capabilities, it seems almost unbelievable that only twenty years ago, in the late 1990s, Croatia was a war-torn country in need of the international community's assistance to maintain a new constitutional and legal system within its own borders.

REPUBLIC OF CROATIA AS RECIPIENT OF INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Prior to joining various peacekeeping missions and operations as an active contributor to international peace and stability, the Republic of Croatia had been a recipient of international assistance. From 1990 onwards, numerous peacekeeping missions set up by the United Nations and the European Union (ECMM, UNPROFOR, UNCRO, UNTAES, UNMOP, UNPSG) contributed to the peace process in Croatia. The European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM) was the first mission established by the European Union (then the European Community) on the territory of the Republic of Croatia. After the peaceful reintegration of Eastern Slavonia, the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) concluded its mandate in January 1998 as the most successful peace operation in the history of the UN.



The first UN peacekeeping mission on the territory of the Republic of Croatia was the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). It was created by UN Security Council Resolution 743 on 21st February 1992 for the purposes of restoring peace and creating preconditions for a peaceful resolution of the crisis on the territory of former Yugoslavia. UNPROFOR's mission was renewed and extended several times until 31st March 1995, when UN Security Council Resolution 981 ended UNPROFOR, renaming it the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO). UN forces in UNCRO were mandated with implementing a ceasefire agreement between the Croatian Armed Forces and Serbian insurgents as well as monitoring the demilitarization of the country's southernmost Prevlaka peninsula. UNCRO's mandate concluded with the establishment of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP) and the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES). UNTAES was established on the grounds of the Erdut Agreement of 12th November 1995 and its mandate was concluded on 15th January 1998, thus marking the end of the peaceful reintegration of Eastern Slavonia into the Republic of Croatia's constitutional and legal system.

The United Nations Police Support Group (UNPSG) was engaged on the territory of the Republic of Croatia from 16th January to August 1998. This 180-strong international police unit was tasked with monitoring Croatian police units on the country's eastern borders.



REPUBLIC OF CROATIA AS PROVIDER OF INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

The beginnings of Croatia's participation in international missions can be traced to late September 1999, when members of the Croatian Armed Forces were deployed to the UNAMSIL mission in Sierra Leone as unarmed military observers. Other missions followed, while the scope of work and duties performed by Croatia's representatives in those missions was broadened. Five military observers were deployed to the peacekeeping mission UNMEE in Ethiopia and Eritrea in March 2001, while two members of the Croatian Armed Forces were involved in the UN's peacekeeping mission in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) for the first time in 2002. That same year, two members of the Croatian Armed Forces joined the MINURSO peacekeeping mission in Western Sahara. One year later, three officers went to Liberia as military specialists with UNMIL. Two medical officers also travelled to East Timor with Slovakia's medical contingent in UNMISSET in July 2003. In June 2004, a military psychologist was deployed to the MINUSTAH mission in Haiti for the first time. In August that year, members of the Croatian Armed Forces were deployed to the UNOCI mission in Côte d'Ivoire. The successful co-operation with the Slovak military from East Timor continued in September 2004, when two Croatian officers were deployed to the UNFICYP mission in Cyprus as a part of a joint Slovak-Hungarian contingent. In 2005, Croatian military observers also began taking part in the UNOMIG mission in Georgia.

That April, Croatian soldiers were deployed to UNMIS in Sudan, where they served as staff officers at UNMIS Headquarters.

Involvement in peacekeeping operations continued to expand, so that Croatia began participating in the UNMIN (Nepal), UNIOSIL (Sierra Leone), UNIFIL (Lebanon) and BINUB (Burundi) missions in 2007.

At first, Croatian soldiers served strictly as military observers. Later on, they filled various specialist posts as staff officers – commanders, medical officers, psychologists, public affairs officers, etc. One of the biggest acknowledgements of Croatia's contribution to world peace was the appointment of Major General Dragutin Repinc as Chief Military Observer – Head of Mission for UNMOGIP in India and Pakistan (January 2006 – December 2007). A company of the Croatian Armed Forces was also deployed to the Golan Heights in 2008. At the time, the 95-strong infantry company was the largest Croatian contingent to be deployed to a UN peacekeeping mission. The same year, members of the Croatian Armed Forces were deployed to peacekeeping operation European Union Forces Chad/CAR.

Alongside UN and EU peacekeeping missions, Croatia has also been active in NATO's peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan since 2003, when 50 Croatian Military Police, staff officers and NCOs were deployed with ISAF. Since then, members of the Croatian Armed Forces have regularly rotated through the Afghanistan mission, known as Operation Resolute Support since early 2015. Overall, 5,474 members of the Croatian Armed Forces have served in the ISAF and Resolute Support missions in Afghanistan.

In 2009, Croatia joined KFOR in Kosovo with 20 Croatian soldiers and two Mil Mi-171Sh transport helicopters. To date, 674 Croatian military personnel have served a tour of duty with KFOR.

The Croatian Armed Forces began participating in the European Union's peacekeeping mission EU NAVFOR Somalia – Atalanta in April the same year, when Croatian Navy personnel were deployed aboard the French frigate *Aconit* in the Gulf of Aden.

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INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EXERCISE



DEMONSTRATION OF

IN MAY AND JUNE, THE EUGEN KVATERNIK TRAINING AREA IN SLUNJ PLAYED HOST TO SOME 1,600 SOLDIERS, 30 HELICOPTERS AND 200 VEHICLES FROM 14 ALLIED AND PARTNER COUNTRIES. THE EXERCISE TESTED THE CAPABILITIES OF NATO ALLIES AND PARTNERS IN BORDER CROSSING OPERATIONS BETWEEN MEMBER STATES, WITH THE MAIN EVENT BEING THE MOVEMENT OF FORCES FROM CROATIA INTO HUNGARY.

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE 19

POWER AND UNITY

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EXERCISE

In May and June, the Eugen Kvaternik Training Area in Slunj played host to some 1,600 soldiers from 14 allied and partner countries who participated in this year's largest training event, the international military exercise *Immediate Response 19*. Alongside a large number of soldiers, the exercise included 30 helicopters and 200 vehicles.

CROMIL's team toured the training area on several occasions. Even at the entrance, it was clear that foreign soldiers were present – alongside soldiers of the Croatian Armed Forces, access to the training range was guarded by personnel of the Albanian Armed Forces. All participants in exercise *Immediate Response 19* were accommodated at a camp set up for the purpose. Furthermore, NATO's Multinational Battalion, comprising 626 soldiers, was also installed in Slunj.

As the host country, the Republic of Croatia had the largest share of soldiers (320 overall) in the Multinational Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Samir Mršić of the Croatian Armed Forces. The exercise was planned and led by United States Army Europe, under the command of Lieutenant General Christopher Cavoli.



For the first time in history, the Croatian Navy's vessels transported forces from a port of embarkation in another country. On 20th May, 63 members of the Albanian Armed Forces, 45 members of the Kosovo Security Forces and 23 vehicles embarked aboard the Croatian Navy's DBM-82 *Krka* and DBM-81 *Cetina* landing ships / minelayers in Durrës, Albania, disembarking at the Dalmatian port of Gaženica in Zadar the same day.



"The main objective was to train member states' reception, logistical and movement capabilities within and beyond NATO's borders. Apart from Croatia, the exercise also took place in Hungary and Slovenia. During the first phase, the U.S. Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade carried out a joint force entry. Although parachute jumps at the Josip Jović Barracks in Udbina had been planned, bad weather meant this part of the exercise had to be conducted by land. U.S. soldiers practised the arrival of their forces by air, entering and securing the territory as well as seizing a key facility (an airfield)," explained Colonel Ivica Matanović of the Croatian Armed Forces General Staff, who acted as director of the Croatian Exercise Control (EXCON). A mechanized company of the Croatian Army's 1st Motorized Battalion *Vukovi* (Wolves) also participated in that part of the exercise, receiving praise from the 173rd Airborne Brigade's commander, said Matanović.

For the first time, the Croatian Navy's vessels transported forces from a port of embarkation in another country. On 20th May, 63 members of the Albanian Armed Forces, 45 members of the Kosovo Security Forces and 23 vehicles embarked aboard the Croatian Navy's DBM-82 *Krka* and DBM-81 *Cetina* landing ships / minelayers in Durrës, Albania, disembarking at the Dalmatian port of Gaženica in Zadar the same day. From there, they were transported to the Slunj training area by road.

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EXERCISE

The next day, the military equipment and members of allied and partner armed forces entered Croatia through four border crossings. These included 22 soldiers and six vehicles from Montenegro; 99 soldiers, 17 Humvees and three trucks from Bosnia and Herzegovina; 30 soldiers and 12 vehicles from the Republic of North Macedonia and 135 soldiers with 36 vehicles from Slovenia. Following the arrival of all these forces at their allotted destinations, the second phase of the exercise could begin. In that phase, the Multinational Battalion practised carrying out tactical assaults, driving in convoy and crossing a state border.

MARKING TEN YEARS OF CROATIA'S MEMBERSHIP IN NATO

The second phase of the exercise was conducted on Distinguished Visitors' Day and was tied to the Adriatic Charter and the ten-year anniversary of Croatia's entry into NATO. During the exercise, visitors had a chance to witness the engagement of forces within the Multinational Battalion following a period of short-term integration training. The exercise aimed to demonstrate the synchronized movement of mobile units, co-ordinated field artillery as well as air and frontline logistical support in simulated battlefield conditions. "In spite of bad weather in the field, I can report that the exercise was completed brilliantly," said Colonel Matanović.



DEMONSTRATION OF



"The objective was to test our allies and partners' capabilities in border crossing operations between NATO member states. The movement of the Multinational Battalion's six convoys was conducted successfully and without any hitches. Simultaneously with the movement through Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia, NATO forces were also moving from Germany into the Alliance's southern wing – Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. We received commendations from both the Multinational Brigade Command and Lieutenant General Cavoli. I wish to express my appreciation and praise to everyone at EXCON for doing a tremendous job," Colonel Matanović told *CROMIL*.

The Multinational Brigade Command undertook the role of Exercise Command and the secondary training group, with leading staff positions allocated to Brigadier General Tihomir Kundid, Commander of the Croatian Army's Guards Armoured Mechanized Brigade and his team. Brigadier General Kundid spent over a fortnight at Slunj, monitoring the activities of the soldiers deployed there. "It is extremely important that all these nations train together. Through joint activities, they develop combined tactics, techniques and procedures that can be employed in joint operations if required," he commented.



POWER AND UNITY

SIDE BY SIDE WITH PARTNERS AND ALLIES

All of the soldiers we spoke with in Slunj were extremely pleased with the accommodation in the Multinational Battalion's camp and the organization of the base. Toni Nikolov, a platoon leader in the Rangers Battalion, Army of the Republic of North Macedonia, shared his views with us: "We collaborate well with the members of other nations' armed forces. Our roommates in the tent are from Lithuania. The Macedonians are all quartered in different tents, so we can exchange experiences with soldiers from other countries. We are quite pleased with the exercise, in which our army has been assigned two tasks. This is a good opportunity for North Macedonia to showcase itself and its armed forces as well as to demonstrate that, as a future NATO member, we are capable of fighting side by side with our partners and future allies. We hope that we will develop the friendships made here." Second Lieutenant Sulejman Pašić of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina was also happy to take part in the event. "It is a pleasure to be here and take part in such an exercise. For soldiers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, this has been a great experience."

As the host country, the Republic of Croatia had the largest share of soldiers (320 overall) in the Multinational Battalion, the commander of which was Lieutenant Colonel Samir Mršić. The exercise was planned and led by the United States Army Europe, commanded by Lieutenant General Christopher Cavoli.



We have been given an opportunity to apply our knowledge and learn something new from soldiers from Croatia and other countries. Also, this is a chance for us to represent our country and demonstrate that we belong within this big family," said Second Lieutenant Pašić, adding that the logistical support in the camp and the exercise itself were top-notch.

After the redeployment of the Multinational Battalion from a support base in Kaposvár, Hungary to the training range in Slunj in the final phase of the exercise (2nd - 5th June), the Deputy Commander of the Multinational Battalion Captain Damijan Korpič explained how the convoy had crossed the state border.

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EXERCISE





Sergeant First Class Damir Sertić,
MILITARY POLICE REGIMENT

"As a member of the Military Police Regiment, my job within the EXCON of *Immediate Response 19* encompassed planning, overseeing, managing and keeping an eye on all activities related to the protection of participating forces. We were faced with the challenge of safeguarding a large number of participating foreign soldiers during their training and preparations. Furthermore, we had to protect distinguished visitors during a demonstration of the exercise components' capabilities. I would like to underline that I am proud of all Croatian participants in this complex exercise. Their task execution was on a high level and no glitches occurred."



"The guiding principle in the whole exercise was that multinational forces have to cross borders as quickly as possible. The inspection at the border between Slovenia and Croatia was not too strict because officials already possessed all the paperwork regarding our vehicles and equipment. *En route* to Hungary, our 120 vehicles were divided into six 20-vehicle convoys. Around 560 members of the Multinational Battalion set off from Slunj. We drove down a country road to Karlovac and then switched onto the Zagreb-Goričan motorway, along which five checkpoints were scattered. As deputy commander, I was in the lead convoy. We expected to encounter some difficulties during the border crossing, but the convoys

The main training event was the movement of forces into Hungary. The objective was to test allies and partners' capabilities in border crossing operations within NATO. The movement of the Multinational Battalion's six convoys was conducted successfully and without any issues.

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were held up for only about ten minutes, which is not much given the number of vehicles and personnel. Minor breakdowns occurred along the way; out of 120 vehicles, only two failed to finish the 300-kilometre journey in both directions," said Captain Korpič, a member of the Slovenian Armed Forces' 72nd Brigade, whilst sharing his positive impressions of the journey.

"Members of the Multinational Battalion not only had to cope with the language barrier but also the fact that they come from different units and different arms of the military. In spite of that, all the participating nations collaborated well with one another. The Multinational Battalion's structure was atypical and its task was spe-



cific (border crossing). All of the nations deployed in Slunj operated in accordance with NATO standards. Our objective was to reinforce those standards and harmonize our procedures," he concluded.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY TRAINING GROUP

The Multinational Battalion Command took on the role of primary training group. Its personnel included soldiers from Germany, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Slovenia and the United States. The Multinational Battalion was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Samir Mršić of the



Croatian Armed Forces, while Captain Damijan Korpič of the Slovenian Armed Forces acted as his second-in-command. Leading staff duties in the Multinational Battalion Command were allocated to members of the 3rd Mechanized Battalion *Pauci* (*Spiders*) of the Croatian Army's Guards Mechanized Brigade. The Multinational Brigade Command acted as secondary training group. It was comprised of members of the armed forces of France, Poland and the United Kingdom, with members of the Croatian Armed Forces' Guards Armoured Mechanized Brigade, commanded by Brigadier General Tihomir Kundid, assuming leading staff duties.

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EXERCISE



IN JUNE, AIR ASSAULT UNITS OF THE BRITISH, FRENCH AND AMERICAN ARMED FORCES CONDUCTED AN EXERCISE AT BARRACKS AND TRAINING AREAS THROUGHOUT CROATIA...



PROMOTING SECURITY

In June, international military exercise *Swift Response 19* was conducted by air assault units of the British, French and American armed forces across the territories of Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania. The Croatian Armed Forces provided host nation support, while a Croatian mechanized company equipped with Patria AMVs played the role of opposing force (OPFOR).

The U.S. Army Europe (USAEUR) exercise was led by the U.S. Global Response Force (GRF) comprising eight NATO member states: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom and the USA. The objective of *Swift Response 19* was to promote stability and security in south-east Europe, strengthen partnerships and develop interoperability among allied countries. In Croatia, the exercise took place at the Lt. Col. Mirko Vukušić Barracks in Zemunik Donji, the Josip Jović Barracks in Udbina, the Eugen Kvaternik Training Area in Slunj and the *Crvena zemlja* (Red Land) Training Area near Knin.

The special quality of international military exercise *Swift Response 19* is the challenges that may occur during air operations in terms of organization, support, co-ordination or delivery.

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The opening of the exercise was marked by the arrival of helicopters from the French and British air forces at the Zemunik Donji barracks on 10th June. The UK's Royal Air Force arrived with CH-47 Chinook, AH-64 Apache and AW159 Wildcat helicopters, while the French brought in their NH90 NFH Caiman and EC-665 Tiger helicopters. An Intermediate Staging Base was set up for the accommodation of paratroops, helicopters and vehicles at the Croatian Air Force's 93rd Air Base in Zemunik Donji. Wing Commander Jeremy Robinson of the Royal Air Force expressed his appreciation of the Croatian Armed Forces for their excellent co-operation and support to the reception of incoming forces. "Side by side, the exercise's 25 participating nations contribute to peace and stability in this part of Europe with training and joint endeavours. I look forward to continued collaboration with the Croatian Armed Forces and further joint training activities," said Wing Commander Robinson.



Text by Marinko Karačić, Domagoj Vlahović
Photo by Tomislav Brandt, Vinko Jovanovac, Marinko Karačić

RESPONSE 19

AND STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

Specialist teams of the Croatian Armed Forces were heavily engaged in the execution of exercise *Swift Response 19*. Among others, they successfully organized and carried out the combined reception of British and French air force personnel, vehicles and helicopters. Croatian pilots Major Vlado Pavlinec and Captain Josip Jurjević played a key role by contributing to the safe and swift organization of the Intermediate Staging Base, thus setting the stage for flying activities.

"The reception process was co-ordinated by Croatian teams and the representatives of allied nations. The Republic of Croatia thus confirmed its capability to provide host nation support (HNS)," Major Pavlinec explained. Major Pavlinec had actively participated in the planning of exercise *Swift Response 19*. He explained that the most challenging part of preparing and conducting the exercise had been ensuring the safe co-ordination of all participants in the exercise, in line with the laws of the



INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EXERCISE

COLONEL IVICA MATANOVIĆ

Exercise *Swift Response 19* is relevant not only for the American, British and French forces directly involved in it but also for the Croatian Armed Forces. Never before have they had to organize and plan anything as complex as parachute landings and air assaults on their military facilities in and around Udbina, Slunj and Knin. The experience is of immense value for Croatia. Its soldiers are highly motivated to participate in multinational exercises such as *Immediate Response 19*, *Astral Knight 19* and *Swift Response 19*, demonstrating a great desire and willingness to work, regardless of weather conditions or the hour of the day.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ANDREW WAREING, COMMANDING OFFICER, 4TH BATTALION, PARACHUTE REGIMENT (UK)

The Commanding Officer of the 4th Battalion, Parachute Regiment (UK) Lt. Col. Andrew Wareing highlighted the good collaboration with the Croatian Armed Forces, who had been very supportive of the participating forces when most needed, especially as the exercise plan changed on the go. "Conducting this exercise is really challenging. It would be really challenging to conduct it in the UK and we have come to Croatia, a long way from home, in order to conduct the exercise. So far, it is going really well. The Croatian Armed Forces have been fundamental to its success. The terrain is very demanding to operate on and it is also very hot for our soldiers from the UK," said Lt. Col. Wareing.



host country. "As the participating countries are also NATO member states, the level of interoperability is defined by NATO standards, which have been adopted by all of them. These standards regulate the training and deployment of forces as well as the planning and execution of the exercise," Major Pavlinec said.

Following a successful arrival and the establishment of the Intermediate Staging Base at the Lt. Col. Mirko Vukušić B in Zemunik Donji, the main part of the exercise (an air assault) lifted off from the Josip Jović Barracks in Udbina. More than 600 paratroopers jumped out of C-130 Hercules, Transall C-160 and CASA/IPTN CN-235 aircraft as well as the CH-47 Chinook helicopters. Simultaneously, other flying activities, co-ordinated by Croatian teams and allied forces, were conducted in support of the exercise scenario.

"I had a chance to work with Croatian and foreign paratroopers. Drops from Croatian helicopters gave me an insight into the procedures involved in parachute operations. I will make use of that experience whenever I have to maintain and facilitate an operation on as large a scale as a parachute landing," Captain Jurjević said. As far as the foreign pilots' impression of working with their Croatian colleagues was concerned, Captain



FIRST LIEUTENANT JASMINA VRGOČ, HEAD OF MEDIA RELATIONS TEAM

I was deployed to exercise *Swift Response 19* as the head of our media relations team. This was my first time playing such a role in an international environment. My task was to create a plan for the media coverage of the exercise and deliver it with the help of other members of the team. This included collaborating with "civilian" media; gathering and processing video and photo footage from different locations during various stages of the exercise; organising the arrival of the UK's Commander Field Army Lt. Gen. Ivan Jones; and preparing interviewees. The co-operation with British and French media teams was fruitful in the sense that we exchanged footage, photographs and information, arranged coverage of key moments in the exercise and brushed up on our foreign language skills. All members of my media coverage team demonstrated an enviable level of professionalism, motivation, readiness for co-operation and flexibility.

MAJOR ĐURDICA POLJANČIĆ, HEAD OF EXERCISE FORCE PROTECTION TEAM

I headed a team comprising 12 members of the Military Police and the Military Security and Intelligence Agency. Our basic tasks were the protection of forces taking part in exercise *Swift Response 19*, counter-intelligence and other military policing duties. Although I have been performing security-related tasks in the defence sector for a number of years, this was my first time heading a force protection team in an international military exercise. Undertaking this role in the exercise was a new experience for me, a great challenge and a large responsibility considering the amount of personnel and equipment I had under me. I should stress that we communicated with coalition forces well and that the flow of information vital for the safety of the personnel and equipment involved met with no issues.

CSM GORDANA FILIPOVIĆ, LOGISTICS OPERATIONS CENTRE, SUPPORT COMMAND / MEMBER OF HOST NATION SUPPORT (HNS) TEAM

The basic task of the Host Nation Support Centre was the co-ordination of all activities for efficient logistics support at the training areas in Croatia where the exercise took place. This was my first time being a member of a host nation logistics support team in such a complex international military exercise. The co-operation with members of foreign armed forces was similar to my experience with the ISAF and Resolute Support missions in Afghanistan, where teamwork is the key to getting the job done.

Jurjević was clear: "While working in an international environment and collaborating with pilots from partner countries, our foreign colleagues have formed an impression that Croatian pilots are highly knowledgeable and capable professionals, while the Croatian Armed Forces are professional, committed troops who conduct every task assigned to them responsibly and are willing to lend a helping hand anytime, anywhere. The special quality of international military exercise *Swift Response 19* is the challenges that may occur during air operations in terms of organization, support, co-ordination or delivery. What I will remember most about this exercise is the invaluable experience I gained supporting and co-ordinating a large number of aircraft and helicopters during mass air assaults and parachute landings."

The Croatian Army played the role of opposing force (OPFOR) in *Swift Response 19*, fielding a company consisting of two platoons from the Guards Mechanised Brigade's 1st Mechanized Battalion *Tigrovi* (*Tigers*) and 2nd Mechanized Battalion *Gromovi* (*Thunders*), a *Strijela S-10CRO* A1 Surface-to-Air Missile System Platoon and the Air Defence Battalion's *Giraffe* radar system.

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a soldier in full tactical gear, including a helmet and a large backpack. The soldier is shown in profile, facing right, and is holding a rifle. The background is a dark, clear night sky. In the lower-left background, there are a few small, distant lights. The overall mood is serious and focused.

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EXERCISE

TROJAN FOOTPRINT

THE FINALE OF THE CROATIAN PORTION
OF INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EXERCISE
TROJAN FOOTPRINT 19 WAS MARKED BY
A DYNAMIC ACTION CONDUCTED JOINTLY
BY AMERICAN AND CROATIAN SPECIAL
FORCES ON A HIJACKED VESSEL...

In a series of international exercises held in Croatia in 2019, *Trojan Footprint 19* might be regarded as the most discreet. Held in June, it passed in silence, without an announcement or a press release, as is the custom in the U.S. Armed Forces units organizing and conducting it. Exercises bearing the same name had previously been conducted in Poland and the Baltic in 2016 and 2018, respectively.

Trojan Footprint 19 was held in Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary and Romania. Alongside the special forces of those countries, working under a joint headquarters were special forces from North Macedonia, Slovakia, Slovenia and the USA. *Trojan Footprint* was a continuation of the *Black Swan* exercise held earlier that month with participants from all of the above countries except for the US. Fittingly, the exercise scenario was conducted in several phases across multiple locations, with the Special Forces Command in Croatia taking part in practice operations both on land and at sea.

19

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EXERCISE



Before the arrival of *CROMIL*'s team, the 2nd Special Forces Group had conducted several tracking, identification and tactical reconnaissance activities by air, land and sea together with the Croatian Air Force. During these preliminary exercises, they successfully seized an OP-FOR base and established that insurgents had hijacked a vessel, filled it with explosives and were planning to blow up a naval base with it.

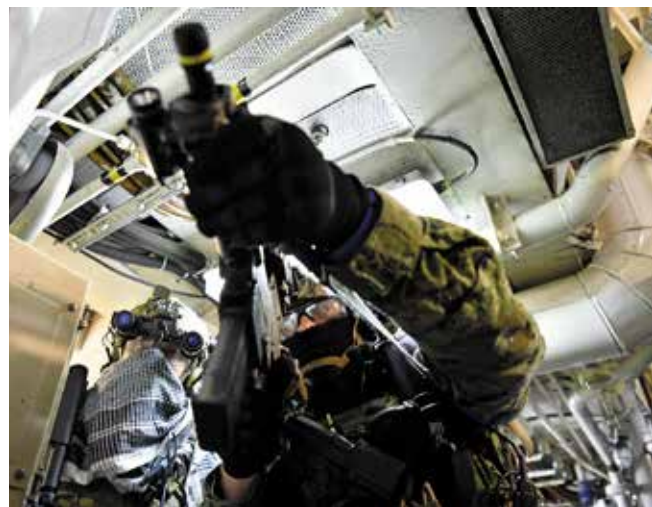
"At the moment, the vessel is in the aquatory of the island of Žirje. An American and Croatian team will recapture it, free the crew and prevent a disaster. They will be assisted by the Croatian Air Force's Kiowa Warrior helicopters. For the Special Forces Command, this is the final and most complex practice operation in *Trojan Footprint*. They will have to gain access, overpower an unknown number of insurgents and seize control of the vessel so that no hostages are hurt and the explosives are not detonated," a Croatian officer said, visibly pleased with the course of events leading up to that point. "For the first time, we have included the Croatian Air Force in our practice operations. With their excellent detection, observation

Acting under cover of night, the American and Croatian special forces proved themselves swift, silent, highly co-ordinated and deadly effective. We were honoured to have observed the special forces undertaking such a demanding and complex operation.

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and tracking capabilities, the Kiowa Warrior helicopters will be our eyes in the sky." In order to follow the action, we had to join the opposing force. After briefing, we set off for the harbour and embarked aboard *Oluja 2*, the Special Forces Command's rigid-hulled rubber assault craft. After sailing between Žirje and the coast for some time, we spotted the hijacked vessel: the Croatian Navy's DBM-82 *Krka* landing ship / minelayer. No other vessels were in sight, as it was still too early for the multitude of tourist boats. At sunset, the *Krka* set off for Split, indicating that the exercise was about to begin. "The conditions are excellent," said one of the Americans of the fair moonlit sky. Nobody knew when the action would start; rumour had suggested just before midnight, so we passed the time chatting. It was nice to hear American soldiers from the 19th and 20th Special Forces Groups speak highly of Croatian soldiers, including those in other arms of the Croatian Armed Forces. The Croatians had left a positive impression on the Americans not only in this exercise but also during previous encounters in international operations and exercises, particularly in Afghanistan.



At around 1:30 a.m., the ship's alarm bell and shots shook everyone out of their lethargy. We spent ten minutes not knowing what was happening, but were soon given the opportunity to watch the resolution of the hostage crisis. American special forces, masked and equipped with night vision goggles, comms sets, helmets, tactical vests, M4 carbines and various other gadgets, broke in and let the insurgents "have it" (using airsoft guns, of course). No hostages were harmed. Eventually, we were allowed to go on board, where the special forces were keeping a watchful eye on the whole vessel.

We saw the outlines of two rubber speedboats moored against the *Krka's* stern. From the bulwarks, we noticed fluorescent lamps discreetly shining a light onto a scaling ladder that the special forces had used to clamber aboard. The "bodies" of insurgents who had tried to put up resistance were "lying" about. Here in the dark, it was difficult to distinguish American and Croatian special forces, for their equipment was so similar. The Croatians used Heckler & Koch MP5SD sub-machine guns and, just like the Americans, wore an indigenously produced



digital pattern camouflage instead of the usual MultiCam uniform. The soldiers communicated with each other in hushed voices or through gestures.

At the end, we were given a chance to speak with the soldiers who had successfully carried out their task and learnt that the main part of the exercise had lasted barely a few minutes. Nevertheless, maximum vigilance was required; surprises could lurk around every corner of the vessel, which was large and therefore able to conceal all sorts of threats. We also witnessed the questioning of a freed hostage; until identities were confirmed, nobody was to be trusted. Both the training group and the role players carried out their tasks according to plan; no wounds or injuries were sustained. Acting under cover of night, the American and Croatian special forces proved themselves swift, silent, highly co-ordinated and deadly effective. We were honoured to have observed the special forces undertaking such a demanding and complex operation. That night confirmed their extremely high level of operational readiness and tactical ability.

THE MULTINATIONAL SPECIAL AVIATION PROGRAMME ENVISAGES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CENTRE FOR THE TRAINING OF HELICOPTER CREWS WHO WILL AFTERWARDS BE INTEGRATED WITH THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES. THE TRAINING WILL COMPRISE BOTH THEORY AND PRACTICE, WITH THE INITIAL GROUND-BASED TRAINING FOR INSTRUCTORS HAVING ALREADY COMMENCED IN SEPTEMBER...



ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW NATO

In 2015, Croatia adopted specific Capability Goals and thus committed itself to establishing a Special Operations Air Task Unit (SOATU). Leading on from that commitment, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia decided to establish the Multinational Special Aviation Programme so as to strengthen their national defence capabilities. The Multinational Special Aviation Programme envisages the establishment of a centre for the training of helicopter crews who will afterwards be integrated with the Special Operations Forces. The training will comprise both theory and practice. The initial courses are intended for instructors, who will pass their skills and knowledge onto colleagues in their parent units so that the latter can attain the same level of capability. The first conference of the Multinational Special Aviation Programme (MSAP), which included a meeting of the Multinational Executive Board (MEB), was held at the Lt. Col. Mirko Vukušić Barracks in Zemunik Donji near the Dalmatian coastal city of Zadar in mid-May 2019.



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING IN BRUSSELS

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Croatian, Hungarian and Slovenian ministers of defence as well as Bulgaria's deputy minister of defence in the presence of NATO Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller at NATO Headquarters in Brussels on 4th October 2018. For Croatia, the MoU included the establishment of the MSAP, which will be run jointly by the Croatian Air Force Command and the Special Forces Command, with support from the Croatian Armed Forces General Staff and Ministry of Defence.

The Zemunik Donji conference was opened by the Commander of the Special Forces Command Brigadier General Perica Turalija, who extended his gratitude to the representatives of NATO's Special Operations Headquarters (NSHQ), Poland Special Operations Forces Command (POLSOFCOM), Special Operations Command Europe



Text by Doris Ravlić
Photo by Tomislav Brandt, Mladen Čobanović

CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

IDEAL CHOICE

Throughout most days of the year, the climate and terrain in Zemunik Donji are favourable for flying, so the Lt. Col. Mirko Vukušić Barracks proved to be the ideal choice for a new NATO training centre. A characteristic feature of special operations is that they are conducted in diverse settings and under various weather conditions, therefore special forces have to be trained to conduct operations in every kind of situation imaginable. The climate on nearby Mount Velebit and in the region of Ravni kotari is suitable for mountain rating and air navigation, while the Adriatic Sea and myriad islands along the Dalmatian coast meet rigorous requirements for practicing maritime operations. An additional advantage of this location is that the Zemunik Donji barracks is only half an hour's rotary flying time from most of Croatia's military training areas.

CENTRE IN ZADAR

(SOCEUR) and NATO International Staff (NATO IS) for valuing the full potential of the signatory nations to the MoU, which would offer a focal point for the development of multinational capabilities and in the spirit of partnership, strive to maximize the possibilities for pooling knowledge and resources.

Alongside soldiers from the MoU signatory nations (Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovenia and host country Croatia), other participants at the conference included representatives from the NSHQ and SOCEUR as well as a representative of the NATO IS, with a representative of the Polish Armed Forces participating as an observer.

The first part of the conference saw three working groups assembled to address training, legal affairs and human resources. Their task was to draft documents and lay the groundwork for the start of MSAP operations. At the first working meeting of the MSAP's Multinational Executive Board (MEB) on 10th May, chairmen for both the MEB and MSAP as well as the MSAP director were elected.

The initial ground-based training for the Multinational Special Aviation Programme's instructors commenced in early September. Delegates hail from the armed forces of the MSAP's signatory nations (Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia).

Colonel Dean Kranjčec, Head of the Defence Capability Planning Department at the Croatian MoD's Defence Policy Directorate, was appointed chairman of the Multinational Executive Board.

Lieutenant Colonel Tomislav Pušnik from the Croatian Air Force Training Centre's Flight School was elected director of the MSAP, the headquarters of which will be at the Lt. Col. Mirko Vukušić Barracks in Zemunik Donji. The MSAP's deputy director will be chosen from the ranks of the Hungarian Defence Forces. Two positions at the Multinational Special Aviation Programme will be filled by members of Bulgarian and Slovenian armed forces, while the remaining five posts will be allocated to members of the Croatian Armed Forces.

Brigadier Kranjčec pointed out that the MEB would meet twice a year with more frequent meetings taking place if the need arose. The board provides guidance and monitors the work of the MSAP. All signatories to the MoU are represented within it.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION



COLONEL DEAN KRANJČEC, CHAIRMAN OF THE MULTINATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

MEB Chairman Colonel Dean Kranjčec joined the Croatian Armed Forces in 1991. So far, he has undertaken a number of roles within the Croatian Armed Forces and has ample experience in training units of the Croatian Armed Forces and evaluating their combat readiness in accordance with NATO standards. He has performed several staff officer roles within NATO. He spent three years at Allied Joint Force Command Lisbon as the deputy chief of Combined Joint 9 at Regional Command North (CJ9 RC North) for ISAF in Afghanistan and has served with KFOR in Kosovo. Colonel Kranjčec has completed a course at the Air Command and Staff College in China and attended Croatia's Vice-Roy Josip Jelačić War College.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL TOMISLAV PUŠNIK, DIRECTOR OF THE MULTINATIONAL SPECIAL AVIATION PROGRAMME

MSAP's Director Lieutenant Colonel Tomislav Pušnik has been with the Croatian Armed Forces since 1997, when he completed the Croatian Air Force's inaugural pilot training course. Since then, he has led and commanded various units in the Croatian Air Force and on international missions. He has served with KFOR in Kosovo and ISAF in Afghanistan. He has trained and advised the Afghan Air Force (AAF) as part of the Air Advisory Team (AAT) in the Resolute Support Mission and had a share in preparing, organizing and conducting six Air Advisory Team Pre-Deployment Training Courses (AAA PTC) for Croatian, Czech, Hungarian and Slovakian AATs. During his career, Colonel Pušnik has acquired a broad spectrum of knowledge, skills and experiences in the domain of Special Air Operations.





TRAINING OF INSTRUCTORS

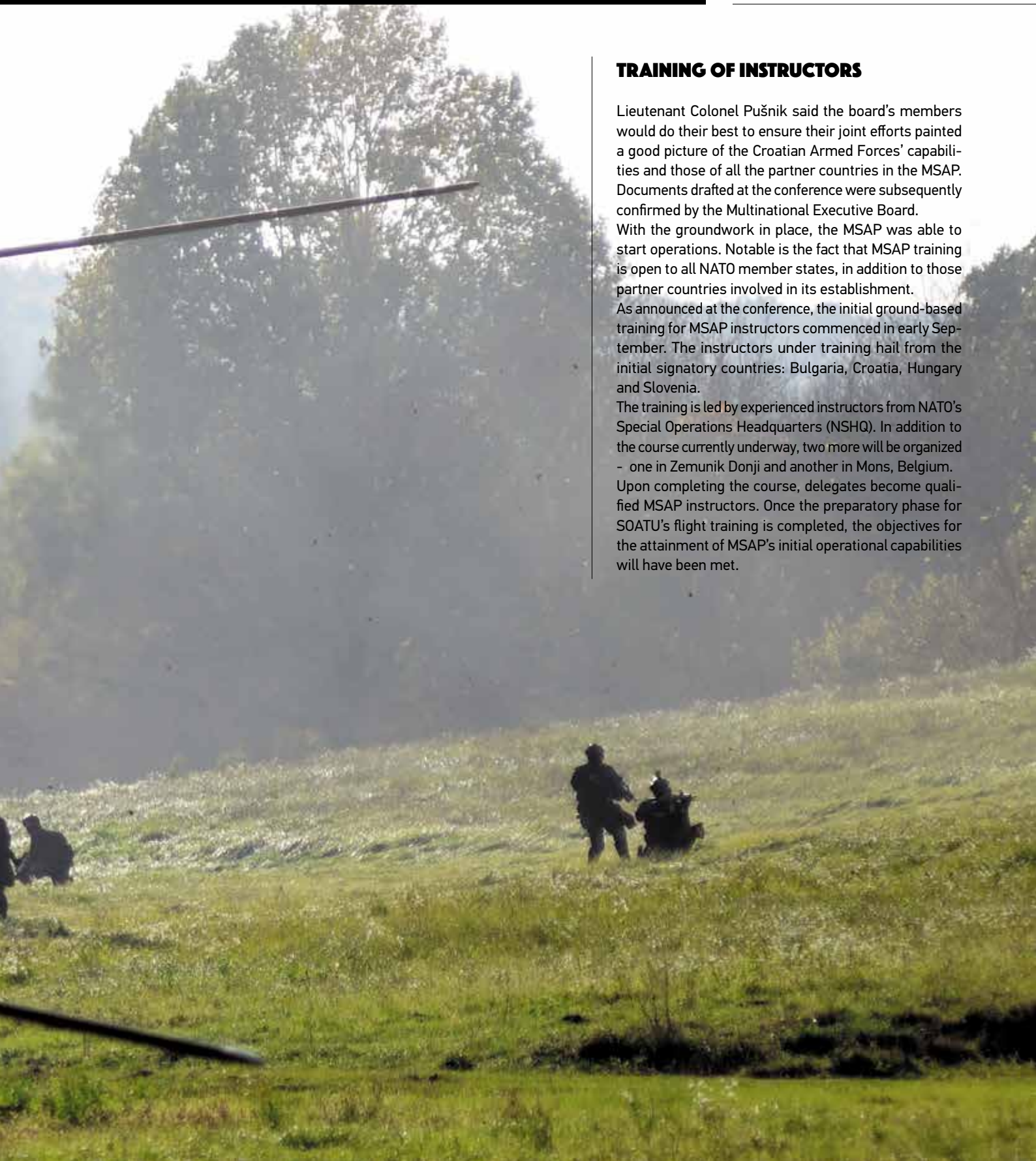
Lieutenant Colonel Pušnik said the board's members would do their best to ensure their joint efforts painted a good picture of the Croatian Armed Forces' capabilities and those of all the partner countries in the MSAP. Documents drafted at the conference were subsequently confirmed by the Multinational Executive Board.

With the groundwork in place, the MSAP was able to start operations. Notable is the fact that MSAP training is open to all NATO member states, in addition to those partner countries involved in its establishment.

As announced at the conference, the initial ground-based training for MSAP instructors commenced in early September. The instructors under training hail from the initial signatory countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia.

The training is led by experienced instructors from NATO's Special Operations Headquarters (NSHQ). In addition to the course currently underway, two more will be organized – one in Zemunik Donji and another in Mons, Belgium.

Upon completing the course, delegates become qualified MSAP instructors. Once the preparatory phase for SOATU's flight training is completed, the objectives for the attainment of MSAP's initial operational capabilities will have been met.





ON THE OCCASION OF THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FORMATION AND FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE OF THE CROATIAN AIR FORCE DISPLAY TEAM *WINGS OF STORM* AS WELL AS FOURTEEN YEARS OF PERFORMING IN AN OFFICIAL CAPACITY, *CROMIL* BRINGS AN OVERVIEW OF THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENTS THAT HAVE DEFINED A DECADE AND A HALF OF SUCCESS...

15 YEARS OF WINGS OF



2004

DISPLAY TEAM'S FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE

23rd July, Zadar. The fledgling Croatian Air Force aerobatic team's first public display in a formation of four Pilatus PC-9M aircraft. The historic flight at the opening ceremony of the Junior European Sailing Championships featured Miroslav Franjić as team leader, Damir Barišić as the 1st left wing, Diana Doboš as the 1st right wing and Saša Joković as the slot.

Major Doboš was only the third woman in history to fly in an aerobatic display team.

2005

OFFICIAL PRESENTATION AND FIRST APPEARANCE AS *WINGS OF STORM*

5th August, Knin. The official *début* of the Croatian Air Force's aerobatic team and their first display under the banner *Wings of Storm* at a ceremony marking the tenth anniversary of the Homeland War's Operation Storm. The same team from the year before overflew the old fortress of Knin to mark the national day of victory.

That autumn, an additional member was introduced and a five-aircraft formation *débuted* on 15th October in the skies above Knin.





Text by Marinko Karačić
Photo by *Wings of Storm*

CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

Wings of Storm have performed two hundred displays over the last decade and a half. They have presented their programme at the most prestigious air shows across fifteen countries (Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom).



WINGS OF STORM

2006

FIRST INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE

29-30th July, Constanța, Romania. The first international performance at the Romanian International Air Show (RoIAS), where the team performed a five-piece formation display with their PC-9s.

2007

AT THE TOP OF WORLD AEROBATICS

Wings of Storm added the tail slide to their programme, the first of many demanding and rarely seen manoeuvres for which the team are internationally renowned.

2008

NEW AND IDENTIFIABLE LIVRY

In August, *Wings of Storm* began to perform in flying helmets specifically designed for them by Silvano Mainini and the Old Crow Team. On 12th December, *Wings of Storm* made their *début* in trademark red flying suits at the Croatian Air Force Day ceremony at the Zemunik Donji barracks.

For the first time since the team's formation, the *Wings of Storm* leadership changed when Damir Barišić took over as group leader from Miroslav Franjić in September. 2008 was also memorable for eight displays flown outside of Croatia, the largest number of international displays in a single year to date.



2009

**DISPLAYS IN SIX-PIECE FORMATION
ON PILATUS PC-9M AIRCRAFT**

On 25th March, a sixth member was added to *Wings of Storm* and the team began flying a six-ship formation with its Pilatus PC-9M aircraft.

That year, the team introduced their best known and most graceful manoeuvre – the triple mirror, also known as the *dia*.

2010

**DISPLAY IN FRONT OF HALF A
MILLION SPECTATORS**

11-12th September, Rivolto, Italy. *Wings of Storm* performed a display in front of 500,000 spectators – their largest audience to date. They presented their programme at an air show on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Italian Air Force's aerobatic team *Frecce Tricolori* (Three-Coloured Arrows).

2011

FIRST DISPLAY OUTSIDE EUROPE

4-5th June, Izmir, Turkey. *Wings of Storm* performed outside of Europe for the first time, at a ceremony marking the centenary of the Turkish Air Force. Their performance was viewed by more than 60 air force commanders from all over the world.

2012

FIRST INTERNATIONAL PRIZES

10th June, Aalborg Air Base, Denmark. *Wings of Storm* won their first international prize for the best display, at an air show in northern Denmark – the northernmost location of their displays to date. Furthermore, the team also won an award for the best display at the Czech International Air Fest (CIAF), which made 2012 their most award-winning season to date.

In September, Matija Vrđuka took over as team leader from Damir Barišić.

2013

ZADAR CITY AWARD

Wings of Storm received the Zadar City Award for their outstanding contribution to the promotion of Zadar at the city council's formal session on the occasion of Zadar City Day and the feast of Saint Chrysogonus, the city's patron saint (24th November).



2014

**100TH OFFICIAL DISPLAY BY
WINGS OF STORM**

Wings of Storm performed their 100th display above the northern Adriatic town of Rovinj on 13th April.

2015

**REACHING NEW HEIGHTS WITH
NEW, YOUNG LINE-UP**

With the departure of the previous line-up, Damir Barišić took over the leadership of the display team once more and *Wings of Storm* began to perform with a new, significantly younger line-up.

2016

**GREATEST RECOGNITION FOR
WINGS OF STORM**

9-10th July, Fairford, United Kingdom, Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT). Prince Faisal bin Hussein of Jordan presented *Wings of Storm* with the King Hussein

**JUBILEAN
200TH DISPLAY
IN FRONT
OF HOME
CROWD**

Wings of Storm have performed two hundred displays (143 in Croatia and 57 abroad) over the last decade and a half.



Memorial Sword, the most prestigious award at RIAT, which they won for the best overall formation aerobatics demonstration.

RIAT has been held since 1971 and is considered to be the most prestigious military air show in the world. Its 2003 show was recognized by *Guinness World Records* as the largest ever military air show, with 535 aircraft in attendance. Six awards are given out and the main award is named in honour of the late King Hussein of Jordan, a long-time sponsor of RIAT.

2017 COLLABORATION WITH WORLD'S MOST RENOWNED AEROBATIC DISPLAY TEAMS

In 2017, *Wings of Storm* began working alongside leading aerobatic teams *Frecce Tricolori* (Italy) and *Red Arrows* (UK). Since then, the teams have undertaken mutual visits and joint training every year.

In March, the current Team Leader Darko Belančić succeeded Damir Barišić. Later that year, the team scooped another award for a precision aerobatics display at an air show in Slovakia.

2018 50TH INTERNATIONAL DISPLAY

25-26th August, Radom, Poland. *Wings of Storm* performed their 50th international display at the Radom Air Show.

2018 will also be remembered for record-breaking 25 displays in a single season, five of which took place outside Croatia.

2019 ORDER OF CROATIAN BRAID

Both former and current members of the display team – Lt. Col. Miroslav Franjić, Lt. Col. Damir Barišić, Maj. Diana Doboš, Maj. Ivan Andić, Maj. Zvonimir Mravunac, Capt. Darko Belančić, Capt. Goran Grgić, 2nd Lt. Denis Živaljić and 2nd Lt. Ivan Rendulić – were each decorated with the Order of the Croatian Braid for their exceptional contribution to the international reputation of the Croatian Air Force, Croatian Armed Forces and Republic of Croatia.

THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST WHITEHEAD TORPEDO'S CONSTRUCTION HAS BEEN MARKED WITH A SERIES OF EXHIBITIONS, LECTURES AND PUBLICATIONS. THE CONCEPT FOR SUCH A WEAPON WAS DEVISED BY A CROATIAN NAVAL OFFICER, CAPTAIN IVAN BLAŽ VUKIĆ...



TORPEDO

Croatian scientists, engineers, museologists and weapons experts have marked the 150th anniversary of the first Whitehead torpedo's construction with a series of exhibitions, lectures and publications. The concept for such a weapon was devised by a Croatian naval officer, Captain Ivan Blaž Vukić.

In his book *Mornari i brodovi (Sailors and Ships)*, Petar Mardešić, one of the leading experts on Croatian maritime history, tells a historical tale that begins on a stormy day in 1860, when the commander of the Austro-Hungarian Navy frigate *Bellina* Capt. Ivan Blaž Vukić (commonly referred to in literature under the Italianised name Giovanni Luppis) was patrolling the Kvarner Bay in the northern Adriatic against a strong wind. Born in the port of Rijeka, Vukić was familiar with the vagaries of the Adriatic Sea and knew just how high-risk of a cruise that was. He had cause to wonder if there was a safer way of protecting the Croatian coast and islands, preferably from land. The idea of constructing coastal artillery batteries came to mind, but he quickly dismissed the idea, knowing that the concentration of cannon aboard



Ivan Blaž Vukić came up with the idea on an unmanned, explosive-filled boat that could be launched against an enemy vessel, ram it and explode

mobile, seagoing vessels could not be matched by fixed batteries ashore. If even a small vessel like the *Bellina*, a frigate with two rows of guns, were to launch an attack against the coast, just a handful of cannons at best would be squaring off against two dozen cannons aboard the frigate. Something more effective was needed and Vukić came up with the idea of an unmanned, explosives-filled craft that could be launched towards an enemy vessel, ram it and explode. The unmanned boat would be directed from the coast using a glass sail to render it less visible to the enemy.

GLASS FAILURE

Seeking to turn his idea into reality, Vukić built two prototypes with carpenter Petar Turčić and gunsmith Vinko Smojver. The glass sails on the prototypes were a failure, so the three men constructed a third prototype, significantly different from the previous ones. The vessel was enclosed, with its upper part being made of cork floats to prevent it from sinking. The explosives were housed in the forward part of the craft and could be



A glimpse of the exhibition *First in the World: 150 Years of Rijeka's Torpedo* in a former industrial site in Rijeka

Text by Marinko Ogorec
Photo by Tomislav Brandt, Mladen Čobanović

CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE



The firing of the Mark 46 Mod 5A practice torpedo from the destroyer USS *O'Kane* (DDG-77). The nose of the torpedo bears a red-and-white chequerboard pattern, also found on Croatia's coat-of-arms - a coincidence that adds symbolic value to the photograph. (U.S. Navy)

INVENTION OF CROATIAN MIND AND SPIRIT

activated using a modified flare pistol. The vessel was propelled by winding up steel coils and steered via two contra-rotating rudders. These were controlled by ropes trailing astern of the vessel and steered remotely from ashore. Vukić named his invention the *Coast Guardian* and presented it to the Engineering Committee in the town of Pula on the southern tip of the Istrian peninsula. The committee responded positively to the idea, but found it to be poorly executed. They concluded that the propulsion system was too weak, its range too small to be effective and the steering mechanism ungainly and inefficient.

The remarks were fair and Vukić duly took note of them. Nevertheless, he lacked the technical expertise to solve those problems and approached Ivan Čiota, a future mayor of Rijeka who introduced him to Englishman Robert Whitehead, technical director at the city's marine engineering factory *Stabilimento Tecnico di Fiume*. Whitehead was a prodigious engineering talent - his business was booming at the time and he was already under contract to a number of projects,

The ungainly and highly inefficient steering mechanism was abandoned in favour of fixed rudders to maintain a steady underwater course, without ropes or other instruments linking the vessel to its source.

so Vukić's scheme failed to draw his interest at first. It was not until 1864 that Whitehead took up the technical challenge of perfecting Vukić's *Coast Guardian*. He undertook significant changes to the overall shape of Vukić's design, believing that an underwater weapon should have a hydrodynamic shape similar to that of a fish. He modelled the new design on the tuna, one of the fastest fish in the world. He then replaced the coil-based propulsion system with a compressed-air engine. The ungainly and highly inefficient steering mechanism was abandoned in favour of fixed rudders to maintain a steady underwater course, without ropes or other instruments linking the vessel to its source. The fully remodelled craft was dubbed the *Minenschiff* (Mine Ship) and offered to the Austrian Navy in 1866. The *Minenschiff* was propelled by a two-cylinder engine with a container of gas compressed to 25 atmospheres. It had a range of 640 metres at a speed of six or seven knots. The steel-plate structure was 3.35 metres long, had a diameter of 35.5 millimetres and weighed 136 kg, with an 8-kilo warhead. The Austro-Hungarian Navy bought

Exhibitions in Croatia feature numerous archive photographs, overviews of the torpedo's historical development and detailed information on its manufacture and systems



four examples of the weapon for trials in 1869, despite harbouring a deep mistrust of its qualities.

BIRTH OF A NEW WEAPON

Less sceptical was the leading naval power at the time – the United Kingdom. The British bought the manufacturing rights in 1871 and insisted upon a name change. Inspired by the Latin name for the marbled electric ray (*torpedo marmorata*), they named their “newborn” weapon the torpedo. They also recognized its essential advantage over the cannon, the dominant ship armament of the period: Whitehead’s weapon travelled underwater and could strike an enemy vessel below the water line, enabling a catastrophic amount of water to flood into the target vessel. It took a torpedo significantly less strikes to sink a ship than a cannon, which could only strike parts of the vessel above water. The Italians followed the British by purchasing the torpedo in 1872, naming it *il siluro* (catfish). After France and Italy, torpedo was also bought by Germany, which demanded that its range be extended and speed increased to 16 knots. Whitehead complied and used the large advance he had received from the Germans to open the world’s first torpedo factory in Rijeka, dedicating himself to further developing and manufacturing the weapon. In the meantime, Ivan Vukić withdrew from the project and retired, but Whitehead continued to honour his contractual obligations towards the Croatian naval captain. Vukić passed away in the Italian resort of Torriggia near Lake Como in 1875. The further development of torpedo technology was linked to the evolution of its launch mechanism – the torpedo tube. Whitehead rejected Vukić’s idea that the

The principle of using compressed air to launch torpedoes remains true today, although the basic mechanism has undergone extensive modernization since.



weapon should be held in the water like any other vessel and directed towards an enemy vessel when required. Rather, he believed that it should be launched like a rocket; firing the torpedo like a missile meant that its initial velocity no longer mattered. On the contrary, too great a velocity could potentially cause damage as the torpedo impacted upon the water surface. Equally unimportant was the distance at which the torpedo was launched; it was merely required to reach a safe enough distance from its launch point. Accordingly, the first tube-launching mechanism for torpedoes was constructed in 1876. The principle of using compressed air to launch torpedoes remains true today, although the basic mechanism has undergone extensive modernization since.

IDEAL TORPEDO BOATS

At the same time, the British came up with the idea that torpedoes could be installed on small vessels and used for surprise attacks, naming the concept torpedo boats. The predecessors of such light craft were steam-powered boats employed by both sides in the American Civil War (1861 – 1865). The principal weapon was an explosive charge set with a contact fuse and fitted on a long pole in front of the bows. The principle was to approach an enemy vessel as swiftly and silently as possible, striking it with the explosive charge. Shortly before impact, a sea mine would be dropped against the side of the enemy vessel in an attempt to hole it below the water line. Such attacks launched against enemy vessels in small and completely unprotected boats were inherently almost suicidal in character. If spotted too soon, the ship’s cannon would sink the boat; if the attack was successful, the detonation



A mock-up of the *Coast Guardian*, Vukić's concept developed from 1860 to 1864



Some of the torpedoes in Croatian museums have been recovered from the bottom of the Adriatic Sea

of the explosive charge at the boat's head would be likely to engulf the attacker as well as the target vessel.

The British were quick to recognise that these boats would be far more efficient if equipped with torpedoes and HMS *Lightning*, the first torpedo boat armed with Whitehead's weapon, was launched in 1877. It had a displacement of 27 tons and a top speed of 19 knots. A fixed torpedo tube was installed at the bows; once a torpedo was launched, its warhead was guided by gyroscope towards its target. Originally intended as a defensive weapon, Vukić's *Coast Guardian* had now become one of the deadliest offensive weapons available. The French were the first to recognize the value of the new type of warship. Inspired by the *Jeune École* (Young School) doctrine, they began to introduce torpedo boats into their fleets on a massive scale. The torpedo enabled the development of smaller, simpler and cheaper naval craft that, in the right circumstances, could inflict damage and losses on substantially larger, more complex and more expensive battleships and cruisers. Furthermore, the need to protect torpedo boats led to the development of destroyers, somewhat larger vessels armed with breech loading guns and torpedoes.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Meanwhile, the development of the torpedo continued as navies demanded increasing its range, velocity, explosive capacity and accuracy underwater. The problem with maintaining course stability was resolved with the introduction of twin contra-rotating propellers. Before 1875, the torpedo had a single propeller enclosed in a circular shield that offered protection to delicate blades

The torpedo enabled the development of smaller, simpler and cheaper naval craft that, in the right circumstances, could inflict damage and losses on substantially larger, more complex and more expensive battleships and cruisers.

when they struck water. During experiments in Woolwich in the mid-1870s, the British installed two coaxial contra-rotating propellers one behind the other. This innovation significantly increased the torpedo's speed and balance during its run in to the target. Since 1875, all torpedoes have been equipped with this mechanism. The torpedo acquired its familiar shape at the end of the 19th century. Initial marks of the Whitehead torpedo had a pointed nose, which was deemed the most suitable for moving through water while causing the least hydrodynamic resistance. British hydrodynamicist R.E. Froude put forward the idea of rounding out the torpedo's sharp nose to increase the capacity for explosives in its warhead at no loss in speed or buoyancy. A committee was formed in the UK to study various aspects of torpedo design and extensive test firings confirmed Froude's theory. In fact, blunt-nosed torpedoes were found to be a knot faster than their sharp-nosed predecessors. Those tests defined the shape of the torpedo, which has remained unchanged since 1896.

CHANGES AND EXPANSIONS

Around this period (in 1854), an employee at Whitehead's Rijeka factory, Ludovico Obry from the port of Trieste refined and adapted a gyroscope that was installed in a torpedo by an engineer named Czerny. The new mechanism effectively resolved the problem of regulating a torpedo's course and depth after launch. At this time, the original two-cylinder motors were replaced by more powerful four-cylinder power-plants and there were even some experiments with eight-cylinder radial units (the star engine). While the star engine was more powerful

and versatile than other propulsion units and significantly increased a torpedo's speed, it failed to enter production due to high cost and complexity.

An Ottoman ship named the *Intibah* became the torpedo's first "casualty" when it was sunk by Russia's torpedo boat *Grand Duke Konstantin* during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. The second usage of the torpedo was recorded during the Chilean Civil War of 1891, when the armoured frigate *Blanco Encalada* was sunk by a torpedo launched from the torpedo boat *Almirante Lynch* on 23rd April. The third "victim" was the Chinese armoured vessel *Dingyuan*, destroyed in multiple attacks by Japanese torpedo boats during the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894. Widespread use of torpedoes only began during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, the first great war of the 20th century. Russia had secured a patent for torpedo production in 1896. The Japanese had followed suit two years later and had been much quicker at recognizing the torpedo's potential, focusing on the development of torpedo boats and destroyers that had a crucial impact during the naval battles of the Russo-Japanese War. The torpedo was still not technically perfect and its hit rate was very low, but its destructive capacity when on target was highly effective. According to the late Croatian naval author Boris Prikrlj, over a hundred torpedoes were launched during the final phase of the Battle of Tsushima, when Japanese torpedo boats and destroyers pursued a routed Russian fleet. Only seven torpedoes hit their mark, nevertheless accounting for three battleships and a cruiser. Both sides used the same 561-kilo, 457mm long version of the Whitehead torpedo with a maximum speed of 26 knots, a range of 800 metres and a 90-kilo warhead.



FROM AN EXHIBITION TO A PERMANENT DISPLAY

Croatian scientists, engineers, museologists and weapons experts have marked the 150th anniversary of the first Whitehead torpedo's construction with a series of exhibitions, lectures and publications. Most impressive was an exhibition entitled *First in the World: 150 Years of Rijeka's Torpedo*. Developed jointly by the City Museum of Rijeka and the Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral Rijeka, the exhibition took place in a former industrial site in Rijeka. From December 2018 to March 2019, another exhibition entitled *Rijeka Torpedo – First in the World* occurred at the Nikola Tesla Technical Museum in Zagreb. A 2016 exhibition entitled *The Adriatic, Cradle of the Infernal Device – 150 Years of Luppis-Whitehead Torpedo* eventually grew into a permanent display at the Croatian Maritime Museum in the Dalmatian port city of Split. All three exhibitions feature numerous historical examples of torpedoes, archive photographs, overviews of the torpedo's historical development as well as more detailed information about its manufacture and systems.

Domagoj Vlahović

SUBMARINES AND AIRCRAFT

Meanwhile, a new type of vessel emerged onto the naval scene – the submarine. The first modern submarine was constructed by Alfred Maxime Laubeuf in 1889 and was introduced operationally by the USA in 1900, when the U.S. Navy commissioned the USS *Holland*. That the torpedo was an ideal weapon for such a vessel was immediately apparent. The first launch of a torpedo from a submarine in warfare occurred during the First Balkan War, when the Greek submarine *Delfin* launched an unsuccessful torpedo attack against the Turkish cruiser *Mecidiye* in December 1912. It was in World War I, however, that the role of the submarine in naval warfare became firmly established, with torpedoes inherently linked to it as its main armament.

Another torpedo carrier was developed in the same war – the combat aircraft. The idea of potentially



Part of the Torpedo Collection at the Croatian Maritime Museum in Split

employing aircraft as a platform for transporting and launching torpedoes had been developed by U.S. Rear Admiral Bradley Allen Fiske in 1912. Fiske had devised a method of torpedo attack by naval combat aircraft. Fiske's theories failed to strike a chord with the Americans, but the Brits' interest was piqued and they began deploying torpedoes experimentally from aircraft early on in the war. This innovation allowed combat aircraft to transport and launch torpedoes considerably faster and closer to an enemy vessel than surface vessels or submarines. The first combat aircraft successfully employed for carrying and launching new cutting-edge Whitehead torpedoes was the UK's Shorts Type 184 Admiralty two-seat seaplane. World War I undoubtedly confirmed the torpedo's destructive power and affirmed it as one of the most effective naval weapons.

Torpedoes remain common in today's navies; they are most commonly used as a main weapon in anti-submarine warfare and, to a lesser extent, in attacks upon surface ships.

VUKIĆ'S LEGACY

During World War II, the torpedo grew into a more versatile and deadly weapon. Torpedoes remain common in today's navies; they are most commonly used as a main weapon in anti-submarine warfare and, to a lesser extent, in attacks upon surface ships. In general, contemporary torpedoes are high-end products with homing systems and sophisticated electronics. From today's perspective, it could be argued that the idea of the *Coast Guardian* resulted in a weapon that sparked a revolution in naval warfare, initiated the development of new and diverse types of warship and caused a shift in the tactics hitherto employed by merchant convoys and naval fleets. It would be challenging to conclude whether Ivan Blaž Vukić would be proud of his work. As a naval commander, he would perhaps be impressed by the fact that his ideas caused a radical transformation in the strategies and tactics employed by the world's leading naval powers.

HOMELAND WAR (1991 - 95)

THE KARLOVAC-TURANJ HOMELAND WAR MUSEUM WAS OFFICIALLY OPENED AT A SPOT THAT FORMERLY SERVED AS CROATIA'S FRONT LINE OF DEFENCE IN 1991. SURROUNDED BY AN EXEMPLARY DISPLAY OF HEAVY WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT, A PRESERVED BUILDING DUBBED THE HOTEL CALIFORNIA IS HOME TO ONE OF THE MOST CONTEMPORARY INTERACTIVE MULTIMEDIA EXHIBITIONS IN THE COUNTRY...



THE KARLOVAC HOMELAND WAR MUSEUM

In early July, the Karlovac-Turanj Homeland War Museum opened its doors at a spot that formerly served as Croatia's front line of defence in 1991. Surrounded by an exemplary display of heavy weapons and equipment, a preserved building dubbed the Hotel California is home to one of the most contemporary interactive multimedia exhibitions in the country.

"The headquarters of the Turanj salient was located here in 1991," recalls Colonel (Ret.) Dubravko Halovanić while pointing at an unusual "building within a building" – a heavily pock-marked brick structure preserved inside a glass-and-steel frame. The immediate surroundings of the building and the bridge over the nearby Korana River were home to various armies for five centuries and played a pivotal role in warding off numerous invaders intent upon seizing and possibly destroying the central Croatian city of Karlovac. "The Yugoslav People's Army's Operational Group 1 launched an attack on the Vojnić-Tušilović-Karlovac line on 4th October 1991, with the objective of reaching the Kupa River. However, they

While the Hotel California's exterior appears wrecked and derelict, its newly-furnished, multi-storey interior is home to one of the most contemporary interactive multimedia exhibitions in Croatia.

were brought to a halt at this place. Later, members of the Croatian Army's 110th Brigade and the 13th Home Guard Regiment fought here until Operation Storm in 1995," relates Halovanić, himself a combatant in the Homeland War (1991-95).

Back in 2002, Halovanić brought items of military equipment that he and his associates had been collecting since 1993 to the Karlovac neighbourhood of Turanj, although the notion that they might become museum exhibits serving as a testament to history had taken hold following Operation Storm (1995). News of guns and tanks standing by the state highway appeared in Croatian media in 2002. In spite of an explicit explanation that the deactivated weapons were merely exhibits, the press published comments stating that a sight of the weapons could scare off tourists, who had only just started returning to Croatia in large numbers. Undeterred, Halovanić explained that the tanks were simply a part of a collection that would hopefully grow into a museum dedicated to the Homeland War.



Text by Domagoj Vlahović
Photo by Tomislav Brandt, Goran Resovac

CROATIAN MILITARY MAGAZINE

EDUCATIONAL FACILITY DEDICATED TO THE HOMELAND WAR

"The museum is intended for domestic and foreign tourists, individuals and groups, people with varying degrees of knowledge about contemporary Croatian history. Our primary target audience are primary-school, secondary-school and university students. We want Turanj to be a place where they can study the Homeland War and learn about that time period," says Hrvojka Božić, the museum's director.



TURANJ



HOTEL CALIFORNIA

In the years that followed, I would drive through Turanj many times and often spot a new exhibit. With time, I started noticing construction works on the prominent, battle-scarred building that Homeland War veterans had ironically dubbed the Hotel California. Every time I looked,

a few tourists (or sometimes a dozen) would be exiting their cars and buses to view the battered buildings and exhibits. It was rumoured that up to 50,000 visitors would stop by each summer. However, no official museum existed until recently, when the Karlovac-Turanj Homeland War Museum opened its doors on 5th July 2019.

"In 2007, the city council adopted a decision to transfer the location to the Karlovac City Museum for the development of a museum dedicated to the Homeland War," says Hrvojka Božić, the museum's director. For her, the most important part was the public response, especially from Homeland War veterans, who played a pivotal role in the realization of the project. The process took many years to complete and encountered a number of hurdles along the way. In 2008, Halovanić handed his collection over to the Karlovac City Museum. A team of historical experts began devising an exhibition concept in 2010, while construction works at the location began two years later. "We had a number of challenges, not merely with finance; the construction and conservation works also required a lot of planning and effort. Today, the building serves a dual purpose. On the one hand, it is an exhibit that bears witness to the mindless ravages of war. On the other, it serves as a framework for a contemporary

HOMELAND WAR (1991 - 95)



The former Turanj garrison site has been on the Register of the Cultural Goods of the Republic of Croatia since 2013. Architects Vlasta Lendler-Adamec and Tatjana Basar of architectural firm *Projektni biro 2A* designed the museum's building. The museum's concept was devised by curator Ružica Stjepanović, while Nikola Jelavić Mitrović designed the permanent exhibition. The project is valued at approximately HRK 26.3 million. The City of Karlovac, Karlovac County, The Croatian Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Homeland War Veterans' Affairs and the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds each contributed financially towards the realization of the project.



museum story," explains the museum's director, leading the way into the building.

While the Hotel California's exterior appears wrecked and derelict, its newly-furnished, multi-storey interior is home to one of the most contemporary interactive multimedia exhibitions in Croatia as well as a memorial hall dedicated to Karlovac County's fallen combatants of the Homeland War, a multimedia room for seminars, conferences and occasional temporary exhibitions, a library, souvenir shop and so forth.

"More than anything, I wanted to create a memento of the fallen Homeland War veterans from Karlovac and all of Croatia," Halovanić told *CROMIL*'s team after a tour of the museum. He has succeeded, together with all those who participated in the project, from Homeland War veterans and witnesses of that time to expert curators and historians. "We have put a



MUSEUM BY NUMBERS

The Karlovac-Turanj
Homeland War
Museum covers a

13,000

square-metre area of the
old Križanić-Turanj military
garrison site

The museum's permanent exhibi-
tion is divided into six subject
areas and contains over

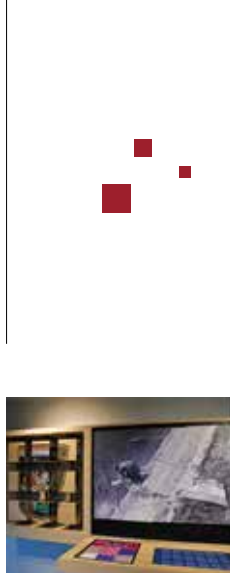
350

exhibits

The museum facility
includes more than

3

hours of multimedia
content and 23 outdoor
exhibits



lot of effort into making the museum a showcase of the Homeland War as it occurred here and across Croatia. The initial response has been positive and we are especially glad to receive responses from young people," adds Božić.

"The seeds have been sown, they have sprouted and now must continue to grow and create conditions for enriching the exhibition," says Halovanić as he observes the glass building and museum grounds that he so tenaciously "planted" with exhibits over the years. "The museum is intended to serve as a living organism. It can be expanded, especially in the unlimited space of multimedia. Of course, working in a museum is not just about organizing exhibitions but also about gathering, restoring and protecting exhibits. I wish to continue collecting material and testimonies of the Homeland War," Božić concludes.

Our products...



20 YEARS OF CROATIAN ARMED FORCES' PARTICIPATION IN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS

So as to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Croatian Armed Forces joining international peacekeeping missions, the Croatian Military Press and Publications Department has published *20 Years of Croatian Armed Forces' Participation in Peacekeeping Missions and Operations*, a book containing summarized information about all missions and operations in which Croatian soldiers have served.



CONTEMPORARY ARMED CONFLICTS (1945 - 2018)

Contemporary Armed Conflicts (1945 - 2018), published by the Croatian Military Press and Publications Department, is a book that in a simple language describes the causes, course and consequences of sixty-six armed conflicts which have taken place worldwide since the end of World War II. Each chapter contains a chronological overview of the most important developments in each conflict as well as photographs from battlefields.



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