Eleven Eleventh at Eleven hours



On the occasion of the Remembrance Day, a ceremony took place on the Vítkov Hill in Prague, attended by Speakers of both Chambers of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Přemysl Sobotka and Miloslav Vlček, Prime Minister Jan Fischer and Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Martin Barták.

Minister of Defence Martin Barták used the occasion of the Remembrance Day to commission Colonel Robert Matula and Mikuláš Končický, two veterans who manifested extraordinary bravery during World War II, into the rank of general.

Robert Matula is the last paratrooper of the WOLFRAM group alive. After the Communist putsch in 1948, he had to leave Czechoslovakia and Canada became his second home. His decorations include several war crosses and medals.

Mikuláš Končický was involved in fighting at Jaslo, the Dukla Pass, Svidník, Opava, Ostrava, Olomouc and Prague. He holds several Czechoslovak and Soviet decorations and honours. He was thrown out of the military after 1968.

The Minister of Defence commissioned both Colonels into the rank of Brigadier; Robert Matula was promoted in lieu. “When I was thinking about what would be best to say in such a moment, the words came to my mind about a payment of another debt the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic is having as a heritage from the period of totalitarian regime, when a number of honest and brave men were given a strange award: they were thrown out of the military, sentenced on fabricated charges, imprisoned and persecuted,“ said Martin Barták and thanked both new retired Brigadiers for everything they have done for their homeland and its military.

”In an instant, all of my memories revived of the period that was not easy for anybody. I regard the promotion a great satisfaction and I am very pleased with that,“ shared Brigadier Mikuláš Končický his feelings.

In conjunction with the Remembrance Day, the honorary courtyard of the Vítkov National Memorial was the venue to a ceremony in honour of victims of World War II and the Communist regime.

During the ceremony, Minister Barták bestowed the Cross of Merit of the Minister upon six persons and promoted twenty-nine veterans into higher military ranks.

by Věra Černá















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Cover photos by Warrant Officer Daniel Hlaváč

ARMED FORCES REVIEW

CZECH ARMED FORCES REVIEW
2/2009
Published by Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic, Presentation and Information Centre

Address:
Rooseveltova 23
161 05 Praha 6
Czech Republic
Tel.: + 420-973 215 553
Tel./fax: + 420-973 215 569
E-mail: caft@army.cz

Identification number: 60162694

www.army.cz

Date of publication:
December 2009

Editor-in-chief:
Jan Procházka

Layout:
Jitka Oktábcová

Translation:
Jan Jindra

Printed by:
TISKÁRNA K-TISK s. r. o.

Distributed by PIC MO:
Rooseveltova 23
161 05 Praha 6
Czech Republic
Tel.: + 420-973 215 602

Registration number:
MK ČR E 18227

ISSN 1803-2125

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Presentation
and Information Centre

Security Preconditioning Development



H.E. Martin Povejšil
Ambassador of the Czech Republic to NATO

Martin Povejšil assumed the office as the Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Czech Republic to NATO at the end of August earlier this year. The Czech Armed Forces Review visited the Ambassador at the NATO Headquarters in Brussels in mid-November 09 for the following interview.

Your Excellency, foreign-deployed operations, and ISAF in Afghanistan in particular, represent a key priority for both NATO and the Czech Republic as well. What is the present situation in this context?

Our priorities are naturally much broader than operations alone, but from operational viewpoint, the mission in Afghanistan is the largest, most complex and has most extensive political implications. In the NATO framework, we have currently seen Commander ISAF, US Army General Stanley McChrystal, present his strategic assessment and propose modification in NATO's strategy in Afghanistan. So, we are in a situation when we individually in each capital, at our Defence Ministries and Foreign Ministries, develop our way ahead on the proposals. Second, the evaluation is naturally done on collective basis, which is the hallmark of NATO. Because dialogue or continuous debate on these pressing matters is the fundamental attribute of how Allies shape their opinions. The triggering mechanism for further progress will be the outcome of the U.S. Administration's evaluation that we expect in the matter of weeks. We assume that by the turn of November and December we will know how the documents General McChrystal presented to the White House and the whole U.S. Government were received. That will be an indication for our next course of action.



Are there any specific steps already known on the presented documents?

It is becoming obvious that NATO will send additional troops to Afghanistan and that the strategy will be modified in the sense that Afghan population's security will become the central matter. In addition to that, the ISAF training component will be strengthened and tasked to accelerate training of greater numbers of Afghani National Security Forces, both Army and Police. Finally, there will be a clear definition of specific counter-insurgency strategy. Those will be primary drivers in modifying the current strategy.

You just mentioned a modified strategy. But discussions are often about a new strategy ...

Yes, changing the strategy is discussed by many. We believe it is about modifying and refining elements of what has already been included in the current strategy on

Afghanistan. Subject to successful achievement of the mission, the vision is to train that many Afghani National Security Forces within four or five years to enable a stepwise consistent transfer of responsibility, I should emphasise the primary responsibility, for security to Afghani National Security Forces. For the time being, it is not viable as Afghani National Security Forces have neither sufficient troops nor adequate capabilities.

Speaking about increasing troop levels, could you comment on the position of the Czech Republic and those of other Allies?

All NATO Allies have been in the process of considering higher troop contributions or rationalising their operations in Afghanistan for quite some time. Under the 2010 foreign deployments mandate, the Parliament of the Czech Republic endorsed certain increases in our ISAF posture already in June earlier this year. But I should underscore that it is not just about the number of soldiers, but also about quality, about force capabilities. The Czech Republic will make a major step ahead at the turn of the year in this respect. Once we are able to deploy the Czech helicopter component in Afghanistan, we will be providing a capability that is truly in high demand in the theatre. One should realise that the modified strategy is not necessarily just about the number of troops. That can be made up for in other ways. There are nations not in position to send more troops than they have currently deployed, but they may make important contributions to trust funds used to finance training of Afghani National Army and Afghani National Police for instance. They may also step up their civilian capabilities in the theatre. It holds true for Afghanistan more than any other country that there is no development without security and, contrarily, there is no sustainable growth in security without development. Civilian capabilities obviously play a critical role. The example of Afghanistan clearly demonstrates the need for a comprehensive approach currently under a very intensive discussion at NATO.

Is it useful to increase the number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams and enhance their capabilities?

Provincial Reconstruction Teams have been in operation for some time in Afghanistan. The important thing is that we strengthen their civilian capabilities. In this regard, the Czech Republic has a pretty good track record, a good renown. As opposed to other PRTs, the Czech PRT has worked in close contact with Afghani authorities and Afghani contractors from the very beginning. We are exceptional in the sense that we do not use foreign subcontractors in realising specific projects, but we work and deal directly with Afghani contractors. We seek – and we will continue to do so – to draw in contributions by other actors, not only by the Czech Republic to support PRT-run projects. The projects are not funded using Czech budget only, but there are contributions from other partners, which is one of the ways to enhance civilian capabilities. We seek to reach for European Unions funds to the effect of enhancing PRT capabilities. The other thing important for development is to strongly and consistently emphasise cooperation between civilian components and military forces known as CIMIC.

So, another accentuation of civilian capabilities?

The importance of developing this cooperation is twofold. First, it contributes to development in concerned locations, and what is equally essential,





is that the perception of forces by Afghani population changes. If local inhabitants are able to see that we can do something for them, it will change their perspective on the presence of forces. The current challenge in Afghanistan is that certain part of population does not know what side they should incline to. They cooperate with those giving them a better future prospect. The important thing is that the prospect be permanent.

You mentioned using funds and contribution to joint projects. What impact does the current economic crisis have on realisation of individual projects and their future development?

Of course, the recent economic crisis affects national budgets of all NATO Allies. There have not been any cuts so far in budgets financing either operations or civilian projects in Afghanistan. Allies do recognise Afghanistan's strategic importance, not only with a view to political centrality the mission bears for the profile and future of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation as such, but they are also aware of the strategic importance Afghanistan and the whole Central and South Asian region have for European security. Let us make no mistake, if there is a safe haven left for terrorists, they may strike again and become a threat not smaller but greater. That is not only about the endeavour to bring well-being and good governance across the region, but this is a matter of our security. If we do not prevail, the threat to us will grow in the future.

Your Excellency, another operation having a great importance for NATO is definitely the KFOR mission in Kosovo. In contrast, discussions have been underway for some time about reducing NATO forces there. What is the situation in the region?

Kosovo should be viewed from two angles. On one hand, there is a purely military perspective and I think there are good reasons to be rather satisfied than discontent, because military goals have been largely achieved. At the same time, there are reasonable expectations that the remaining missions will be accomplished in foreseeable future. That is naturally also a reason for us to have discussions in the NATO Alliance and plan restructuring the standing military operation into a new shape with fewer personnel and lower costs. That will save us certain military capability for possible other assignments. The other perspective, which must not be contradictory by any means with the one I am discussing, is the political perspective. That is naturally based on the premise that military presence in Kosovo does not only play a purely military role, but is a guarantor of continuous stable political development in the region. It is hardly imaginable for us that we could conclude that military tasks have been met one-hundred percent and that we could start redeploying KFOR forces starting tomorrow, on Day 2. We are confident it would be risky and could result in instability not only in Kosovo but in the wider region.

What are the principal factors affecting reduction of force levels under consideration?

We agreed to adopt a phased approach. Each of the phases will be under political control of the North Atlantic Council; each phase will entail a reduction in the robust military force. At the same time, it is and will be our aim to make sure we are having available standby reserve forces and assets that could immediately deploy down there in case the relative stability comes off balance. So, it is by no means any hasty withdrawal of forces from Kosovo.

Is there any specific timing aligned to those phases?

There were some 17,000 troops deployed in Kosovo in the beginning of this year. Now we are in so-called Gate 1, whose goals are to be achieved at the beginning of the next year, at the turn of February and January 2010. A reduction roughly to 10,000 soldiers is expected by then. It is a substantial reduction, but we are still maintaining pretty a robust force there, which will be able to effectively intervene in case of contingency. Only after that we will discuss further steps, including timing of so-called Gate 2, which is another objective to be achieved. As a part of that phase, we will be seeking to reduce KFOR posture to the final number of five to six thousand men and women



in uniform. Specific timing of that step is unknown yet as it depends on future developments. I should emphasise that the whole process has been and will be under political control of the North Atlantic Council, who are well aware of KFOR's political stabilising power. It can be expected though that over foreseeable period of eighteen to twenty-four months, the current 17,000 forces will be reduced to approximately 2,000 service personnel. To say how fast those steps will take place is a matter of discussions and actual security developments in the region.

Reduction of troop levels in Kosovo is also associated with cooperation between NATO and EU ...

There are two different roles there. The EU effort is a civilian mission not intended to demonstrate military presence. Contrarily, it focuses on introducing the rule of law, Kosovo institutions building, and nation-building. There are absolutely no problems in this respect and cooperation works in a truly exemplary manner. What is sort of in the background of this process is the future of the Kosovo Security Force built with NATO's involvement, which will progressively take over the responsibility for security in Kosovo both from NATO forces and the police security component of the European Union's mission. The prevailing challenges pertain to Kosovo as such. The developed forces - Kosovo Security Corps - are to be built on multiethnic basis as an example of how Kosovo should look in the future. There are certain shortcomings in this respect, but neither the process of building the Kosovo Security Force signals shows anything dramatic, no dramatic delays, and is implemented in consequence to the progressive restructuring and reduction of KFOR.

Your Excellency, evaluating the Czech PRT's performance, you said we had a good record. Where do you think the Czech Helicopter Initiative ranks in that respect?

We can be rather proud of the helicopter initiative. We feel a great support both by the NATO Secretary General and by all Allies. The Helicopter Initiative is designed to pool resources for NATO to be effectively able to tackle helicopter capability shortfalls. The challenge has been around for some time, not only in NATO. Although Allies do have a sizeable number of helicopters in their national inventories, the rotary-wing assets are not interoperable and not usable for operational deployments. The Czech Helicopter Initiative is designed to join nations willing to be involved in tackling interoperability issues, both nations having Mi family of helicopters in their inventories and nations that have training capacity or are willing to make financial contributions to the project. At present, nine nations are involved in the project and there are reasonable expectations that the number of participating nations will grow to ten and perhaps more. The project looks promising: we hope to establish some sort of a consortium that will effectively use source capabilities of individual participating countries. It is essential to modernise rotary-wing aircraft and make them interoperable, or usable in foreign operations. The Czech Republic will put this capability to a test shortly, as it prepares three air mobility helicopters for deployment in Afghanistan. For many months already, we have undergone an immensely difficult and truly complex process to operationally deploy Mi-171Sh helicopters. All of that should be much easier in the future thanks to the Czech helicopter initiative.

Final question, Your Excellency, with your permission. Your delegation here also includes the military section. How do you find the cooperation with soldiers?

The Czech delegation at NATO Headquarters in Brussels comprises of three sections. There is a policy section comprising mostly personnel of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, then we have defence advisors' section, which are individuals from the Ministry of Defence, and, finally, the military section. I should say that the Czech government suffers from departmentalism to an extent, not only among individual Ministries, but also within these institutions. Most of the time, there is no problem working along vertical lines, but there are frequent problems in horizontal and diagonal communication, not to speak of collaboration. Although the Czech delegation is located in three corridors, I do not feel any dividing lines here among individual sections. If I am treating the issue of Afghanistan for example, it goes without saying that there is an officer from the Foreign Ministry, another one from the defence ministry as well as a soldier, employed by the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic, with me at the table. We are trying to foster a truly integrated culture here. The advantage as well as disadvantage of the ambassador is that he often finds himself acting as an arbiter of the process.

by Pavel Lang and Jan Procházka
Photos: Radko Janata, Marie Křížová and MoD PIC



An Alliance of Cooperation

In the third week of September, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Czech Republic, Martin Barták, undertook a trip to the USA and Canada to have discussions with senior political leaders and military officials.

Initial meeting took place in Florida on Tuesday, September 15, 2009, where Minister Barták had discussions with General David H. Petraeus, Commander US Central Command, who is responsible for key operations in the Middle and Far East. US CENTCOM reports directly to the U.S. Secretary of Defense and its area of responsibility covers the territory of twenty countries including Iraq and Afghanistan. It was the State of Afghanistan that became the central focus of discussions. According to Gen. Petraeus, situation could get better in Afghanistan within twelve months, similarly as it was the case with Iraq. But he regards the key matter to win the confidence of Afghanis and persuade them that the reason for Allies to be present in their country is to bring back normal life and security.

"We are very much committed to eastern part of Afghanistan, where the Czech Provincial Reconstruction Team operates, because that area is used by Taliban combatants to penetrate the Afghani territory from the neighboring country of Pakistan," said General Petraeus.

"I immensely value the realistic and expert attitude by General Petraeus on the global security situation. His decisions are also critical for our military personnel in Afghanistan. Thanks to our meeting today, the Czech Republic gains valuable information that will be used including as an input for developing the Czech Foreign Deployments Concept for 2011-13," stated Minister after the meeting.

On the following day, the Czech Defense Minister headed for Eglin Air Force Base and Hurlburt Field AFB, Florida, where he was introduced to the Lockheed C-130 Hercules aircraft is in service the U.S. Special Forces in specific variants. C-130s in an air mobility variant should become a part of inventory of the Czech Armed Forces in the future. C-130s can operate on unpaved field strips and have a high payload and long range. "There are intensive negotiations currently underway with the U.S. on acquiring several Hercules aircraft. But the thing is that operating and maintenance costs be sustainable even under the present comprehensive budgetary restraints," said Minister Barták.

On Thursday, September 17th, 2009, the Czech Minister of Defense visited the NATO Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk to meet with Deputy Commander ACT, Admiral Luciano Zappata. This NATO command headquarters is also important for the Czech Republic for the input it makes into shaping NATO Force



Martin Barták met his counterpart, Canadian Minister of National Defence Peter MacKay, in Ottawa

Goals, thereby affecting the development of our armed forces. There are 13 personnel of Czech Armed Forces serving at ACT, and one of the important posts, ACT Senior Enlisted Leader, is held by CSM Luděk Kolesa, Czech Army.

On the fourth day of his stay in the North American continent, Minister Barták met with President Obama's National Security Advisor, General James Jones, in the White House. "The missile defense program will continue and focus on the most pressing missile threat of the present – short and medium range ballistic missiles," said the Czech Minister of Defence after the meeting. "In this field, missile defence development will considerably accelerate contrarily to original plans," added the Minister and said that the Czech remained committed to be involved in the missile defense system. But it is premature to speculate about some of its components being located on our territory as that will be on the agenda several years from now.



During his visit in the United States, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Czech Republic Martin Barták also met with the U.S. Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates.

After a sixty-minute call with the U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, they jointly delivered a media statement in front the Pentagon. Secretary Gates reaffirmed that scientific and industrial cooperation between the Czech Republic and the US, spawned as a part of negotiations on missile defence, will carry on regardless of the change in the form of the missile defence adaptive approach. He underscored his high regard for the effort Czech personnel were making in restoring security and national economy in Afghanistan. Vice Prime Minister Barták pointed out that the primary reason for his visit was not missile defense, but military, scientific and industrial cooperation between the two countries which had seen an important progress. "There will be an important bilateral session of the US-CZ High-Level Defence Group taking place in the Czech Republic in the fall to provide specific conclusions, for example on the issue of acquiring the C-130 capability for the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic. Another potential project is a delivery of Czech L-159 light aircraft for Afghani National Army, which could only be realised in close cooperation with the US."

Secretary Gates and General Jones commended the efforts of Czech Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan, who operated in conjunction with U.S. Special Forces helping create safe and secure environment in the country.

On Saturday, September 19th, Minister Barták continued his program meeting his Canadian counterpart Peter MacKay in Ottawa. Minister MacKay said after the meeting that even after potential withdrawal of Canadian forces from Afghanistan, envisioned to take place not before two years from now, Canada would continue its strong engagement with that country. "It is not just military force that makes the difference in Afghanistan, but also diplomacy, economy development and training of the Afghani National Security Forces. Activities such as building schools or vaccination for kids bring about a great progress that the Afghans recognise," he emphasised.

Minister Barták said Canada was one of the Czech Republic's key Allies in the defence domain. He pointed that the Czech 601st Special Forces Group operated shoulder-to shoulder with Canadians in Kandahar, Afghanistan. The Canadian and Czech defence minister also debated issues of mutual defence cooperation. Since Canada is considering a new training aircraft system for the Canadian Air Force, the Czech L-159 aircraft comes into play. In turn, Czech Armed Forces could use Canadian C-17 aircraft for transporting forces and materiel for deployed operations.

by Věra Černá incl. photos



The presence in Afghanistan has a great significance for the Czech Republic



At the end of November 09, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Czech Republic, Martin Barták, travelled to Afghanistan for a three-day visit with delegation comprising the Director of Military Intelligence, Lieutenant-General Ondrej Páleník, and Joint Force Commander, Major-General Hynek Blaško. The delegation also included Senator Pavel Trpák, Members of Parliament of the Czech Republic Antonín Seďa, Michael Hrbata, Václav Klučka, Zdeněk Boháč, Tomáš Dub and Robin Böhnisch, Attorney General Ms. Renáta Vesecká and judge of the Supreme Court of the Czech Republic, Stanislav Rizman.

MEETING WITH COMMANDER ISAF, GENERAL McCHRYSTAL

On the first day, Minister of Defence Martin Barták met with Commander ISAF, General Stanley A. McChrystal. The meeting also involved Director Military Intelligence Lieutenant-General Ondrej Páleník, Antonín Seďa MP and Senator Pavel Trpák. They discussed topics included the current and expected situation in the country, possible increase of troop levels and its spectrum, assessment of the Czech deployments and their future outlook. Commander ISAF provided a detailed review of the current situation and outlined future development and plans.

On the same day, the historically first visit of Czech parliamentarians was organised in the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, where they had discussions with Afghani Members of Parliament. They heard a detailed explanation of the situation in the country and attitude of Afghanis. In the exchange, the hosts clearly expressed their desire for our units to stay in the country as an important help and stabilising factor.

Next, the delegation met with the Commander of Afghani Air Corps, General Mohammad Dawran. They were briefed on development of the Afghani Air Corps and discussed the possibility to use L-159, the condition of the inventory and use of the equipment. The guests then paid a visit to the Czech Air Operational Monitoring and Liaison Team stationed at the Kabul International Airport, whose mission is to train Afghani pilots of helicopters that the Czech Republic donated to Afghanistan; they also train ground technical personnel. Members of delegation received a briefing on operations of the team and were invited to see a display of the aircraft. They also visited the station of military meteorological personnel of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic stationed at the Kabul airport.

CZECH PRT HAVING A GOOD RENOWN

At the U.S. base Shank, the Minister of Defence was welcomed by the commander of the Czech Armed Forces 4th contingent in Operation ISAF PRT Logar, Colonel Milan Schulc, the head of the PRT's civilian component, Ms. Bohumila Ranglová, and Commander Task Force Spartan, Colonel David B. Haight. Minister Barták and guests were introduced to the Czech PRT mission and responsibilities, toured housing facilities and viewed a display of arms and equipment. The members of Parliament personally tested the driving properties of DINGO and IVECO vehicles used by Czech soldiers for missions outside the base on daily basis.

In conclusion of his visit, the Minister of Defence said he valued the efforts that the PRT Logar members were making. "Our presence in Afghanistan has a great significance for the Czech Republic," said Minister Barták and added: "It is very pleasing to hear Colonel Haight say that the job the Czech Team does cooperating with Operation ISAF coalition forces in the Logar Province is evaluated as very good."

Upon returning to Kabul, Defence Minister Martin Barták, Lieutenant-General Ondrej Páleník and Antonín Seďa MP, Tomáš Dub MP and Robin Böhnisch MP met with the U.S. Ambassador in Afghanistan Karl W. Eikenberry at the U.S. Embassy to discuss political situation in the country, possible increase of troop levels in Afghanistan,



current position of the United States and of President Barrack Obama and possible additional cooperation with the U.S. in Afghanistan.

In parallel to the meeting at the U.S. Embassy, working meeting took place with the Commander NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan (NTM-A), Lieutenant-General William B. Caldwell in the seat of NTM-A. The Czech delegation there was led by Director of the MoD Defence Policy an Strategy Division, Mr. Ivan Dvořák, and involved the Czech Joint Force Commander, Major-General Hynek Blaško and some of the parliamentarians. The discussion centered on the situation in the training of Afghani National Security Forces comprising of both the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police, the Czech contribution to ANSF training (the existing Air OMLT and a Ground OMLT which is currently under consideration for deployment), as well as possible future use of the L-159 aircraft capability for the Afghani Air Corps.

CZECH DELEGATION IN KANDAHAR

As a part of his visit in Afghanistan, Defence Minister Barták also visited the Czech Special Forces contingent at "Camp Prostějov" in the Kandahar province. The contingent comprising the members of 601st Special Forces Group already completed the performance of its operational assignment in an operational tour lasting 18 months (three rotations) and presently prepares to terminate their assignment and redeploy back to the Czech Republic (in line with the Czech Parliament's mandate authorised till the end of this year). Contingent commander Colonel Kovanda provided an in-depth briefing to the delegation on the performance of the Special Forces' operational assignment.

The delegation also visited the Operations Center of the U.S. Special Forces Command in Kandahar, in whose area of operations the Czech special forces performed their missions. The Czech Members of Parliament heard a briefing on workings of the center.

Minister Barták thanked to soldiers for an excellently accomplished operational assignment and representation of the Czech Republic and decorated some of the U.S. Special Forces personnel with the Foreign Service Medal of the Czech Minister of Defence, 3rd class, for their excellent cooperation with our Special Forces.

The ceremony was attended by the representative of the Afghan National Army (ANA) General Kasimi, who is the deputy commander 205th ANA Corps operating in the territory of Regional Command-South (RC-S), whose members were trained with the help of our special forces and led joint operations with them. General Kasimi thanked to Czech Special Forces personnel for their excellent professional performance and assistance provided to Afghanis. He also urged Czech Members of Parliament to endorse another deployment of Czech Special Forces to Afghanistan, because a unit trained and performing to such highly professional standards is able, despite its limited size, to provide a substantial assistance.

Accompanied by Robin Bohnisch MP, Minister Barták also met with the new Commander RC-S ISAF, Major-General Nick Carter of the UK. Their discussion covered the future development in this most problematic region of Afghanistan and possible involvement of Czech forces. MG Carter said he highly valued the contribution of our special forces operating in the RC-S area of responsibility and expressed his conviction that special forces will continue to play an important role in Afghanistan and have their critical position in efforts to provide security to the region.

by Jiří Sezemský, Ministry of Defence
of the Czech Republic,
Captain Pavel Kočvara,
Press and Information Officer,
4th Czech Armed Forces contingent
in Operation ISAF PRT Logar

A Heart of Ninety Years



Both general public and personnel of the MoD Department attended a ceremony marking the ninety years' anniversary of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic held at the Memorial to Czechoslovak Soldiers who fought abroad during World War II in the Vítězné náměstí in Prague on October 15th, 2009.

"I am pleased that we are commemorating this important anniversary in such a respectable manner," stated the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic, H.E. Václav Klaus, and said that the path the General Staff's development followed was winding during its ninety years' existence. "But I am confident that today our Armed Forces are in a good condition and able to perform all their assigned missions."

"Members of the General Staff must belong among the elite in their respective areas of specialty," stated Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Martin Barták in his remarks. "Decades ago, this was not an exception but a matter of fact. All of that must contribute to a continuous recognition by the society of service in the Czech Armed Forces and its General Staff as a highly esteemed profession."

Speakers in the ceremony frequently referred to the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic as a heart, without which the life of the military organism would not be possible. "When the book titled "Heart of the Army" was published five years ago to mark the General Staff's eighty-fifth anniversary, some might have thought the title was perhaps slightly exaggerated. But I am confident that the General Staff is a true centre of the armed forces and that it fully deserves to be called that way," added the Chief of General Staff Armed Forces of the Czech Republic, General Vlastimil Picek.

The presentation ceremony of the updated book "Heart of the Army", published by the Presentation and Information Center of the Ministry of Defence, became a part of the program to honour the 90th anniversary of the Czech Armed Forces General Staff. "It was my interest in the destinies of soldiers who served at the Main Staff, later renamed the General Staff, that drove me to write this book. Speaking of the ninetieth birthday of the Czech Armed Force's General Staff, we know very well that there are concrete people behind every institution," explains the author, Lieutenant-Colonel Eduard Stehlík, who's book represents an in-depth coverage of the past, sometimes unique, sometimes tragic, ninety years of existence of the Czech Armed Forces General Staff.

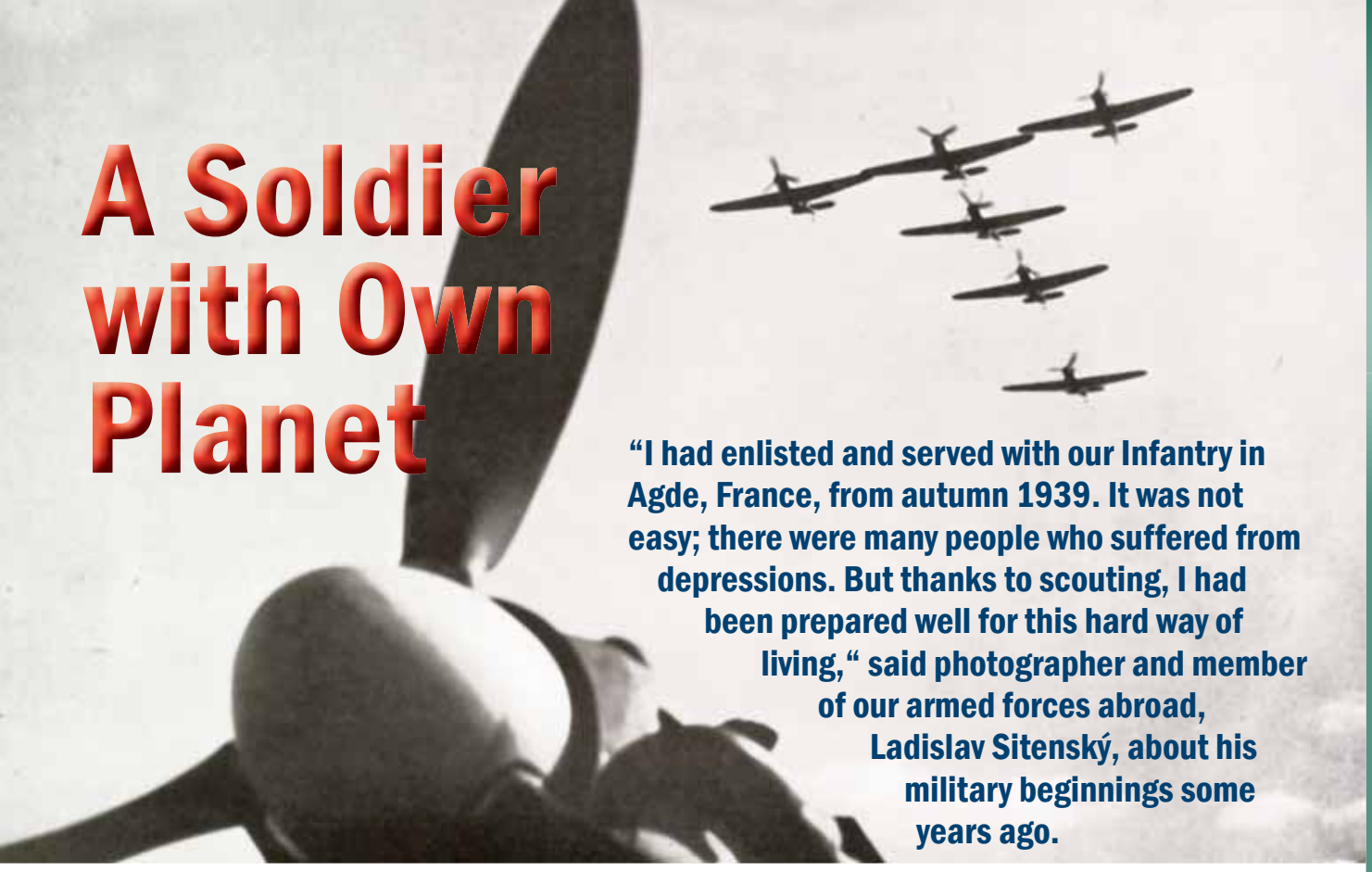
Attendees were then invited to watch a documentary on a large screen covering historical moments of General Staff's existence. In the closing part of the ceremony, seven members of the General Staff were decorated with the Honorary Medal of Przemysl Otakar II, the King of Iron and Gold, for personal merit and exemplary performance in assignments associated with development of all-volunteer Armed Forces of the Czech Republic. Deputy Chief of General Staff-Inspector General, Major-General Čestmír Tesařík, was decorated with the Cross of Merit of the Minister of Defence, 1st Class.

by Pavel Lang
Photos by Radko Janata, Marie Křížová





A Soldier with Own Planet



"I had enlisted and served with our Infantry in Agde, France, from autumn 1939. It was not easy; there were many people who suffered from depressions. But thanks to scouting, I had been prepared well for this hard way of living," said photographer and member of our armed forces abroad, Ladislav Sitenský, about his military beginnings some years ago.

He was born in the Prague Vinohrady district on August 7th, 1919. One of his schoolmates at the primary school was Radovan Lukavský, a renowned actor. He began photographing at the age of fourteen in the Junák scouting organisation and his photos were published in magazines such as Pestrý týden, Ahoj na neděli and Junák.

He became famous for his photographic reportage from the funeral ceremony of President T. G. Masaryk. After completing school-leaving exam in 1938, he started to study architecture at the Czech Technical University and was awarded scholarship in France. In March 1939, he managed to cover the arrival of German occupation forces to Prague. Despite all complications, being arrested and released, he eventually got to France just five months later, where he enlisted with the Czechoslovak forces abroad shortly after World War II had broken out. Through service in command support company, he got into air forces, where he also applied to serve at after being evacuated to Liverpool, UK. As a member of the 312th Czechoslovak Fighter Squadron, he was responsible for camera guns.

In 1941, Sitenský got close to becoming a pilot. Together with other three colleagues, he was about to depart to pilot school in the Bahamas. However, Inspector General of Czechoslovak air forces in the Great Britain General Karel Janoušek intervened. With regard to Sitenský's photographic proficiency, he wanted to keep him for photographic service. A year later, Sitenský was reassigned to the Inspectorate of Czechoslovak air forces, where he was responsible for archives, but primarily produced photo coverage of our air squadrons.

In April 1945, he married Paullete Bosch, his love of long standing, whom he met prior to the war, in the cathedral in Lille, France.

Upon his return to homeland, he worked as an assistant to director during shooting a documentary about the Czechoslovak Armoured Brigade's besieging the port of Dunkirk. He was assigned to photo section of the Main Staff. He was deactivated as late as at the end of 1946. From that time on, he did photography for living. His principal themes include mountains, rocks, rivers and landscape at large. He took liking of Prague and southern Bohemia.

The less recognition he received from official structures of the pre-1989 regime, the more his friends appreciated him. In 1986, astronomer Antonín Mrkos named planetoid No. 5998 after Sitenský.

Ladislav Sitenský was a man of extraordinary vision. Throughout his life, his took some five hundred thousand photographs, fifty thousand of which were published. He is an author of twenty photographic books. He died aged ninety on November 14th, 2009.

by Vladimír Marek
Photos by the Institute of Military History and from publication "Wings in exile"



Aged ninety, resistance fighter and photographer Ladislav Sitenský deceased in mid-November.

A Small Payment of a Great Debt

On the Remembrance Day, November 11th, 2009, at 11:00 hours, the seaside community of Arisaig saw a memorial unveiled in honour of Czechoslovak soldiers in Scotland.



It was just here, at Scotland's northwest seashore, where Czechoslovak soldiers trained fighting against Nazis in 1941–1943. Special training provided by the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) organisation involved sergeants Jan Kubiš and Josef Gabčík, members of the ANTHROPOID airdrop, who performed one of the most important acts of Czechoslovak resistance during World War II, the assassination of a war criminal, Reich Protector Reinhard Heydrich, in May 1942.

In total, more than three hundred members of the Czechoslovak Brigade went through training in Scotland. Para training was carried out in Ringway in Manchester and final training in southern England. Out of forty-eight planned drops, thirty-nine were eventually performed, involving over a hundred paratroopers. The airdrops targeted not only the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, but also France, Italy, Slovakia and Yugoslavia.



"Out of more than one hundred people, only forty-four lived to see the end of the war," says Colonel Jaroslav Klemeš, one of the last two men alive who had underwent SOE training in Scotland and were dropped into the their occupied homeland.

Together with other two war veterans, Army General (Ret.) Tomáš Sedláček, and Lieutenant-Colonel (Ret.) Ján Bačík, COL (Ret.) Jaroslav Klemeš came back after sixty-eight years to the place where they had trained fighting against German occupants. "Return to Scotland means a lot to me," said Jaroslav Klemeš and adds: "I would particularly like to thank to all those who, even after those years, have not forgotten about us the soldiers who had trained here and fought against Nazis."

Paul Millar, Hon. Consul-General of the Czech Republic in Scotland and a chairman of the Czech Memorial charity, was the principal person standing behind the







initiative to build a memorial to Czechoslovak soldiers in Scotland. "We are happy that we can celebrate this great day together with Czechoslovak veterans who had undergone training here and to whom the memorial unveiled today is dedicated."

The unveiling of the memorial that took on the form of a large granite stone with a parachute on landing sculpted on top, was accompanied by remarks delivered by officials present, including Deputy Minister of Defence Jan Fulík: "Seeing veterans here, who returned to this place after long sixty-eight years, is what I consider a small payment of the great debt we all owe them. Their memories again elucidated the meaning of patriotism to all of us."

Upon the unveiling ceremony, Deputy Minister of Defence Jan Fulík decorated Lieutenant-Colonel Ján Bačík with National Defence Cross of Merit of the Czech Republic. Ján Bačík took part in fighting in France, underwent para training in the Great Britain and became involved in fighting at Dunkirk with the 1st Czechoslovak Armoured Brigade. "I did not expect to ever come back to this place. I have enjoyed a wonderful day here, full of memories of my youth," says ninety-three year old Ján Bačík.

The memorial unveiling ceremony was attended by nearly all villagers from Arisaig and the broader community, Lord High Commissioner George Reid, other senior Scottish and British officials and many British veterans of war. By their presence and remarks, they expressed their gratitude to Czech and Slovak soldiers, who came to the Great Britain to join fighting against common enemy and that way to defend their homeland as well.

by Olga Haladová



Confidence First



Confidence plays a key and often crucial role in international security. That was also proven by events that took place in the Czech Republic on October 5-9th, 2009.

The Vienna Document on confidence and security building measures was adopted 1999 in Istanbul and represents an update to the 1990 and 1994 versions. It was signed by representatives of fifty-six OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) participating states. Apart from the 1990 Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, known as CFE, the Vienna Document is another arms control document that is binding for the Czech Republic.

Signatory states seek to build mutual confidence and develop cooperation through a broad-based exchange of information. To that effect, VD participating states perform mutual inspections as needed. Once in five years, each of the participating states is obliged to organise a visit in its territory for observers, the OSCE representatives, specifically a visit to an air force base, a ground forces installation or observation of a military exercise. In addition to that, in case the participating states introduce to their inventory some type of major weapon and equipment systems, they are obliged to perform demonstration thereof for representatives of other VD states within twelve months from the introduction.

EQUIPMENT DEMONSTRATION

The invitation to Prague was eventually accepted by representatives of 29 OSCE countries, the CPC OSCE (Conflict Prevention Center) and RACVIAC (Center for Security Cooperation in South-East Europe). In attendance of Director of Czech MoD Defence Policy and



Strategy Division, Mr. Ivan Dvořák, and the First Deputy Chief of General Staff, Major-General Josef Prokš, OSCE observers were briefed on security and defence strategy, organisation and mission of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic. Then the group elected their leader and spokesman at the same time to present the observers' opinions. Colonel José Evaristo of Portugal came out of the vote, an officer with many years' experience in the field of implementing arms control treaties, which indeed applied to most of foreign observers on the group.

On 6 Oct 09, the Hradiště Military Training Area in the Czech Republic became the venue to the demonstration of new equipment in service with the 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade. That was primarily the question of the Pandur II 8×8 CZ wheeled armored fighting vehicles. The Caiman offroad enhanced protection vehicle drew no smaller attention. The last new item presented was the BMP-1 VOV armoured command and control vehicle. Demonstration attendees also had the opportunity to view infantry weapons and other equipment used by 4th RDBde members.

Most of the 48-member observer group did not resist and tested the vehicle's interior in person. "It is not for me", concluded a tall representative of Italian Armed Forces laughing as he descended the rear ramp bowed. But otherwise the group fell to like the vehicle and took photos keenly. The Pandur crew had no choice but to chill their enthusiasm by alerting them to possible activation of the vehicle onboard fire sensor and the resulting foam shower.





The remote-controlled weapon station supplied by Rafael and vehicle sensor fit attracted most attention. There were also rather specific questions asked. One of the observers wanted to know how the vehicle would continue driving if a wheel or axis is damaged in a mine explosion. The answer he received was that the chassis design ensures mobility even in case two wheels with suspension are taken out. 4th RDBde personnel provided explanation in English. Slightly shocking exception for some of them was the representative of Switzerland, First-Lieutenant Richard Janda, who spoke perfect Czech.

EXERCISING IN THE FIELD

After the equipment demonstration, observers were invited to watch 4th RDBde units in exercise, directed by Commander 4th RDBde, COL Ladislav Jung. Brigade members presented the new equipment in a situation that may well occur in operational deployments on daily basis: a convoy of vehicles got ambushed moving on unpaved road and one of the vehicles was damaged by a mine or improvised explosive device. As part of that demonstration, several other activities and procedures were seen involving both land and air force assets.

Being shot at, the convoy halted and vehicles fired live ammunition from mounted weapons at targets in the area of enemy's suspected position. Some soldiers dismounted Pandur vehicles, took positions in the terrain and fired small arms and Carl Gustaf recoilless antitank launchers with replacement barrels.

At the same time, convoy commander called in air support and a medevac helicopter. One of the crews





designated the landing site with a smoke pot. Mi-35 gunships from Náměšť AFB stormed past the control tower, performed a strike with rockets and then assaulted the enemy with machine gun fire. They covered the area for an Mi-171 utility helicopter to come in and evacuate casualties. It was the version modified for operational deployment in Afghanistan through the installation of additional ballistic protection. Pilots displayed their skills as always and their low-flying performance met with deserved appreciation.

The damaged vehicle was immobile and therefore destroyed on spot by a "high explosive" simulated by a smoke cartridge, and the convoy got moving again.

Although the 4th RDBde personnel introduced Pandur and Caiman vehicles to their inventory just a short time ago, they managed to perform smoothly. Obviously, they practised such episodes many times before and some of soldiers experienced them practically, as was obvious in specific details, such as signalling, the way they moved around in the field and other procedures not visible to an untrained eye.

There was no need for lengthy discussions to arrive at an assessment. Colonel Evaristo, encrusted by the media, was able to conclude that the 4th RDBde highly impressed OSCE observers and that tasks of the day were accomplished.

AIR FORCE BASE

On the next day, the OSCE observer group visited the Čáslav Air Force Base, where JAS-39 Gripen multirole fighters, L-159 ALCA light combat aircraft and Mi-171 multirole utility helicopters from Přerov AFB awaited them. Apart from the static display, visitors were invited to gain familiarity with trainer for L-159 aircraft, operations at the tower and to hear a preflight briefing.

Perhaps the greatest attention was paid to so-called airfield biological protection, a group comprising of several trained birds of prey.

There were additional demonstrations performed without media presence, but the key thing was the final assessment of the whole activity by OSCE representatives. The observers agreed that the Czech Republic organised the visit to high quality standards and met its obligation under the 1999 Vienna Document one-hundred percent.

by Martin Koller

Photos by Martin Koller and Jan Kouba



Discussions on Czech-U.S. defence cooperation

At the beginning of November earlier this year, Prague was the venue to a session of the High-Level Defence Group, which debated specific forms of Czech-US defence cooperation.



U.S. delegation led by Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security, Alexander Vershbow, met with their Czech counterparts headed by Deputy Minister of Defence for Foreign Affairs, Jan Fulík.

Both delegations exchanged their positions on current issues. Principal topics included the efforts to develop NATO's new strategic concept, relationship of the two countries and the NATO Alliance with partners, including the Russian Federation, and naturally the new missile defence architecture.

The U.S. side expressed their explicit interests in the Czech Republic's participation in the modified missile defence project. "We believe our new approach is more flexible and allows for a broader involvement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. It is our aim to carry on developing defences not only against current threats, but also against threats foreseen in the coming decades. We regard the Czech Republic a very close Ally in our endeavour," said Alexander Vershbow.

As a part of the discussions, the Czech party expressed its readiness to react positively to the offer of assigning an expert of the Czech Ministry of Defence to U.S. missile defense institutions, who would be tasked to evaluate options for expanding cooperation between the two countries in spheres of common interest. There were additional U.S. proposal the Czech Republic will consider. Deputy Minister Jan Fulík said he valued the U.S. proposal for the Czech Republic to become involved in sharing information gained by U.S. sensors. "This fact as such may well enhance security of citizens in the Czech Republic's, without us needing to build any new facilities or sites," stressed Jan Fulík.

The U.S. side also recognised the Czech involvement in reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and appreciated a range of joint projects being realised in Afghanistan, while many of those have an economic dimension in addition to the military aspect.

In the domain of bilateral cooperation, both delegations underscored their readiness to carry on their defence cooperation, in efforts on operations, especially in our joint endeavour in Afghanistan, training of military specialists, as well as possible U.S. assistance on development of Czech Armed Forces' capabilities. Discussions on these issues will continue.

The U.S. also highly valued the Czech partners' preparedness to cooperate in the field of hi-tech research and development, which has already been set underway by the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and Czech Technical University. The U.S. confirmed its readiness to pursue this cooperation in the future. During the meeting, the Agreement on the exchange of engineers and scientists was sealed to further rationalise and to intensify cooperation in this sphere.

by Jan Pejšek, photo by Radko Janata

The High Level Defence Group works on the basis of Declaration on Strategic Defense Cooperation between the Czech Republic and the USA, signed by the Minister of Defence of the Czech Republic and U.S. Secretary of Defense in London on September 19th, 2008. HLDG represents a forum to exchange opinions on strategic issues and serves at the same time as an effective instrument for enhancing Czech-U.S. defence cooperation

"I wear a Czech uniform, but the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic is not my current employer," says Brigadier Pavel Adam

CZECH NATO GENERAL



It is ironic. The name of Brigadier Pavel Adam does not ring a bell with four out of five Czech military professionals. But he is a high-ranking Czech Armed Forces general officer with his office in Boulevard Léopold III in Brussels and his door bears the inscription Deputy Assistant Director Cooperation & Regional Security Division. Insiders know that he is an employee of the International Military Staff (IMS) at NATO HQ.

General, most of the public is not authorised to have any information about your person. Could you reveal some of it?

Before being assigned to Brussels, I had served with the Military Intelligence of the MoD Czech Republic. At the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Headquarters, I have worked as a deputy director of a division responsible for NATO's cooperation with approximately forty countries in most diverse formats.

Did you strive after your current assignment, or were you just lucky?

I succeeded in a selection procedure. I was proposed by the Czech Republic as candidate to this post and representatives of the International Military Staff selected Brigadier Adam as the most suitable candidate. I received the highest number of votes in a secret vote by the IMS. All general officer ranked positions at NATO HQ are filled in the same manner.

What makes the post of "DAD" or Deputy Assistant Director you occupy special?

Although I am wearing a Czech uniform, I do not work in favour of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic in general terms. Here I am a part of NATO's establishment, not a military representative of the MoD Czech Republic. That is an essential difference.

Do you mean to imply that you do not convey "important" messages to Prague?

That is absolutely not possible. It is completely prohibited for All IMS employees to pursue agendas of their home countries. So, any vocational consulting with the General Staff Czech Armed Forces is ruled out. I may not inform the Czech Republic about steps the International Military Staff intends to make. As a professional, I am doing my best to live up to that requirement.

You consented with an interview for Czech defence media, you came in a general officer uniform and we may even take photos. Is not the case that you as a member of intelligence community reveal your cards too much?

(laugh). I am not afraid of being blown. And why do I wear a general officer's uniform? Check the calendar.

Pardon?

It is Thursday today, which is the day for the NATO Military Committee to be in session. It is mandatory for attendees to wear uniforms. But I do not have a problem with it on other working days either.

Let me ask you a more personal question: is a Czech soldier with general officer's rank insignia in equal esteem at NATO as for instance a German general officer?

Interesting question. My personal experience leads me to conclude that yes. The order of military ranks applies in the same manner in all armed forces. Once you are a general officer, everybody recognises that. As far as my person concerned, I would add two marginal aspects: I am the first Czech general in this post and I rank among the youngest general officers at the IMS. I say to you earnestly: I have not encountered a case that any of my subordinates would negate a decision of mine in the context of the size of the Czech Republic, or in relation with the number of Czech Armed Forces military personnel.



What is the difference between your previous responsibilities at the Military Intelligence and your current ones at NATO Headquarters?

In fact it is a similar kind of activity. In my previous capacity, I had also frequently met representatives of foreign countries to the effect of exchanging information. Here, it is enhanced by the senior level of diplomatic contacts. I have no problem working in an international environment. I have previously served tours in the Federal Republic Germany and in Iraq. There are no fundamental differences.

But there is a difference: at the Cooperation & Regional Security Division, you are in a senior post. How does it feel like to be in the head of an international staff?

I should say that the Division is headed by a French general officer, and I am his deputy. Of course, a senior post in an international staff component entails much specificity. You are simply not born with those qualifications; it takes time. But it is not so much about nationality, but about individuals. There are two officers from a single country and they are completely different personalities. Obviously, you would approach them differently.

What is the key principle for you in the superior-subordinate relation?

A permanent personal example. When your subordinates are assured they are supervised by a person knowing the business, they start to respect you. You gain authority you can build on. The key thing is to persuade people that they are a part of the team and everybody is in the same boat. That it is really up to every single one of them how the Division is appraised. It may sound atypically, but I lay bet on common sense in this respect. Everybody knows there is no general without troops.

Could we take a look behind scenes of a NATO HQ Division?

There are sixty military professionals comprising the Cooperation & Regional Security Division.

Our products are all background documents pertaining to NATO's cooperation with other countries, which we submit both to the NATO Military Committee and the Chairman Military Committee. In contrast to intelligence services, we use open sources to obtain the information we need.

NATO's cooperation with partners and other entities is a general phrase; could you elaborate on that?

Following political decisions and guidance on what course should cooperation with respective countries take, we prepare specific activities in the military sphere. The members of the Military Committee judge them and take decision on implementation. It goes without saying that this is a very sensitive area with dynamic developments. Our recommendations may influence highly important processes.

The Division's operating radius is extensive; could you specify priorities?

You are right. Moreover, the framework of cooperation and its contents differs from country to country. With some of them, such as Malta or Sweden, the dialogue is held on political level and pursuant to so-called field of action for military cooperation, while with others, especially Partnership for Peace countries, there is already a long-standing cooperation. NATO's strategic interest is to pursue cooperation with Russia, the Ukraine and Georgia.

by Pavel Lang and Jan Procházka
Photos by Marie Křížová and Radko Janata



Amateur – Professional

In a tough competition of Czech professional photographers, Warrant Officer Daniel Hlaváč of the 43rd Airborne Mechanised Battalion based in Chrudim again scored success in Czech Press Photo 2009.

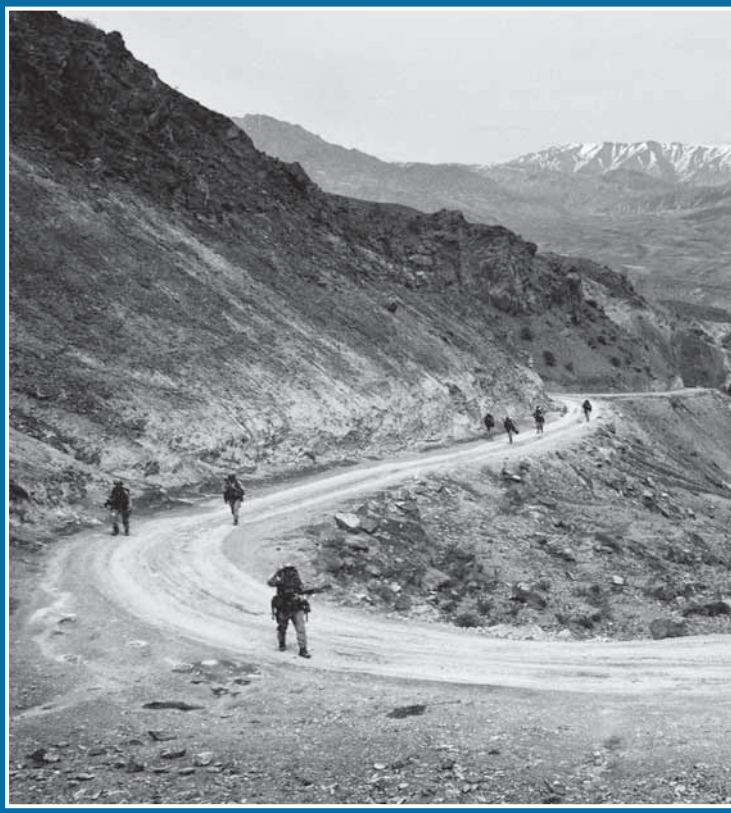


This time, the jury awarded him the second place in the category of reportage style series of ten black-and-white photographs named ISAF aeromobile operation in Afghanistan, which came into being during his operational service in Operation ISAF-PRT Logar.

The accomplishment by Warrant Officer Daniel Hlaváč is the more resounding as he succeeded among professionals already back in 2007, when competed with his work called Faces of Afghani Schoolkids, ending up in the third position the Daily Life category.

Warrant Officer Daniel Hlaváč was born in Ústí nad Orlicí, Czech Republic, in 1974. He grew up in the city of Česká Třebová, where he learnt the trade of car mechanic. In 1999, he became a military professional. From the very beginning of his career, WO Hlaváč has served with the 43rd Airborne Mechanised Battalion in Chrudim, where he is currently assigned as a platoon leader.

His service with the 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade provided Warrant Officer Daniel Hlaváč with opportunities to be involved in several foreign operations as a proper contingent member. He served operational tours in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and in Afghanistan, from where he returned back home just a couple of days ago.

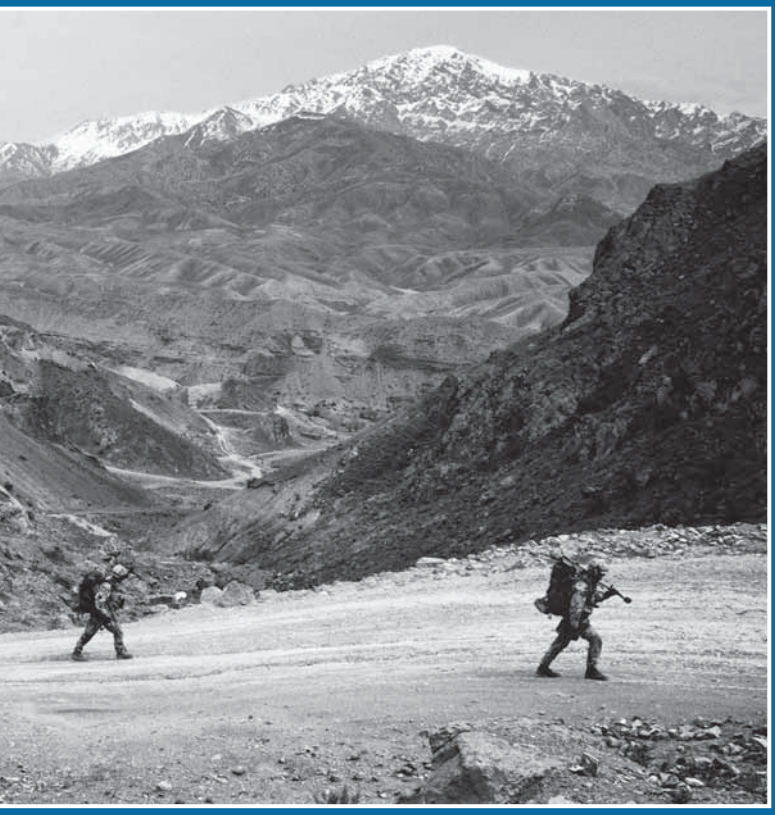






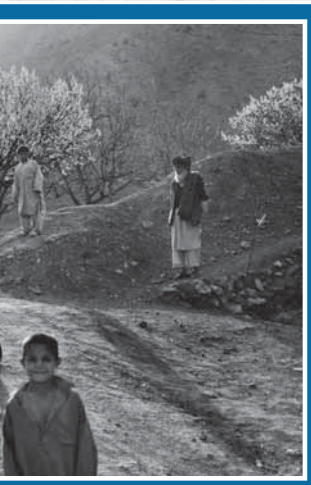












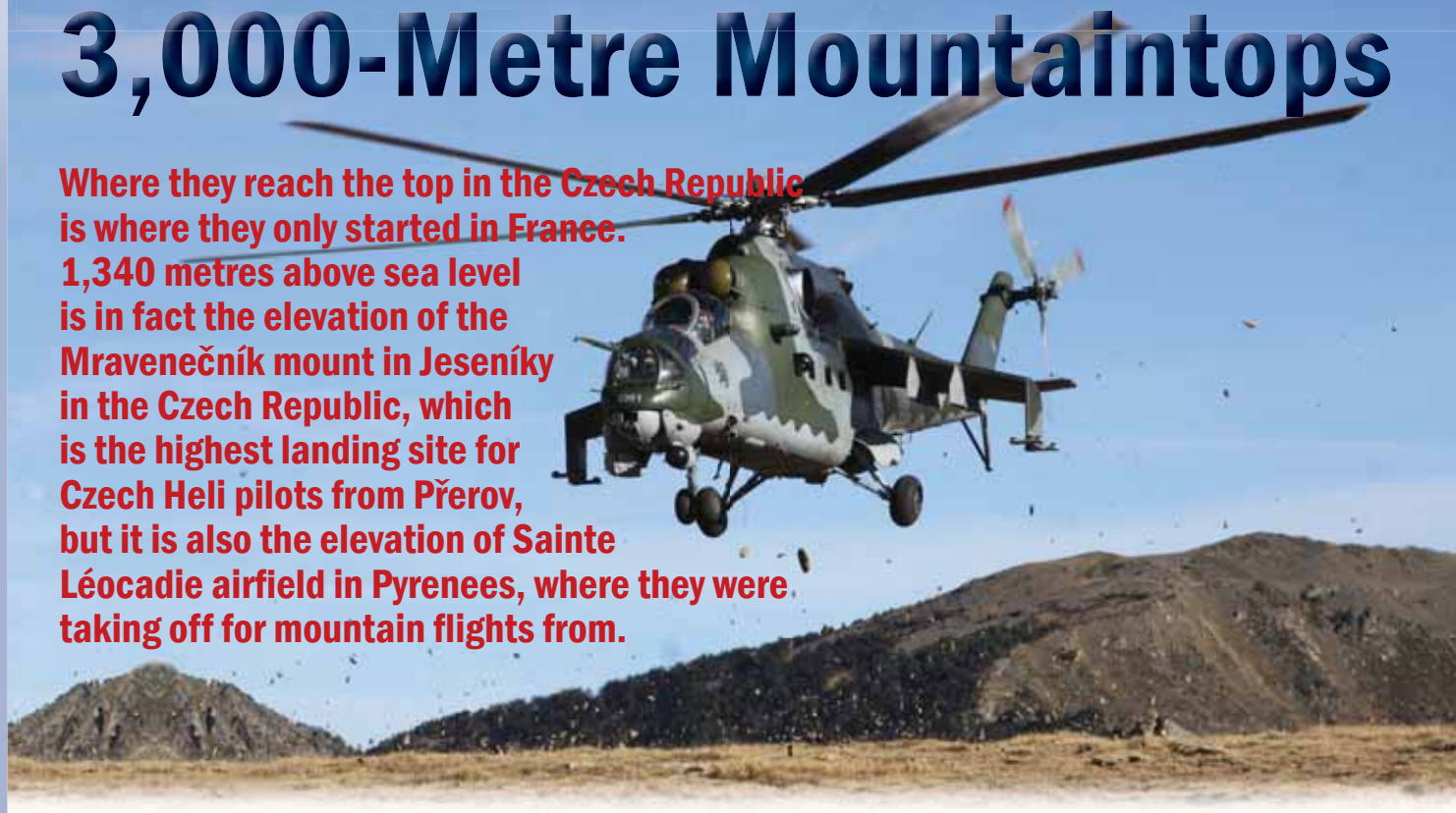




Czech helicopter units' training in French Pyrenees prior to their deployment in Afghanistan

Rehearsing Among 3,000-Metre Mountaintops

Where they reach the top in the Czech Republic is where they only started in France. 1,340 metres above sea level is in fact the elevation of the Mravenečník mount in Jeseníky in the Czech Republic, which is the highest landing site for Czech Heli pilots from Přerov, but it is also the elevation of Sainte Léocadie airfield in Pyrenees, where they were taking off for mountain flights from.



The final predeployment exercise before their departure for operations in Afghanistan was the Mountain Flight II in Pyrenees. Nearly eighty-member contingent of Czech Air Force with four Mi-171Sh Hip utility helicopters and two Mi-24/35 Hind gunships moved into the mountain flight training center close to Saillagouse, France, for the exercise. "Over the period of two weeks, heli crews will be performing mountain flights day and night, primarily practising landings at mountain plateaus higher than two thousand metres above sea level," specifies Major Karel Valvoda from the Czech Joint Force Command Olomouc and adds: "Apart from this primary exercise objective, pilots will be practising flights in deep mountain valleys, using night vision goggles (NVG) and hoist operations in mountain environment."



Reasons are obvious. Similar assignments and similar mountain environment awaits them on deployment in Afghanistan.

"HIPPOS" AROUND CARLIT

The motto of the 231st Helicopter Flight based in Přerov is fitting: "Nothing is impossible to us, anytime – anyplace." This time, the crews of Mi-171Sh or "flying hippos" first had an eight-hour transfer flight from the Czech Republic with landing in Phalsbourg and Orange enroute.

"After entering the zone, you report to the control officer that you start the mission and you contact the officer every thirty minutes. Do not forget there are areas in every zone that must not be flown over," underscores Major Karel H. during the preflight briefing and alerts crews to some flight safety precautions. The flight personnel are given the flight timetable with departures and arrivals, including their turns in cockpits, and the flight shift begins.

A couple of minutes later helicopter captain CAPT Jan C. sets the rotor blades of one-seven-one with registration 9904 in motion. Other three Mi-171Sh crews follow the suite. Until late afternoon, the will be practising landings on mountain plateaus, so-called Helicopter Landing Sites (HLS) in eleven working zones in close vicinity of





Carlit and Puigmal, Pyrenean peaks reaching 2,921 and 2,910 metres above sea level, respectively.

"Flying in mountains is specific for unpredictable weather conditions and high altitude. The higher the machine flies, the lower its performance gets and piloting becomes more demanding," explains the chief navigator of the 231st Heli Flight, 1LT Jitka S. In contrast to some wondering men, she does not see anything special about herself piloting helicopters and preparing for mission in Afghanistan as a female. "Onboard a helicopter you can neither play anything peculiar nor make differences - no matter whether you are male or female. Everybody must display the highest readiness without exceptions. And Afghanistan? I am serving with this unit and if the unit is assigned for deployment, I will naturally go as well."

THIRTY-FIVERS AT HLS TOO

"Exercise Mountain Flight II is for us a final rehearsal prior to departing to Kabul airport as part of next rotation of the Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT). Upon return from France, we will undergo final concentrated preparation and then, starting end November, we are transferred under the command of the MoD Joint Operations Center that will specify timing of our tour in Afghanistan," says the commander of the Náměšť-based 221st Helicopter Squadron Lieutenant-Colonel Rudolf Straka and walks off to Mi-24/35 gunship with registration 3371, where he is awaited by pilot-instructor CAPT Vladimír Vladík.

Ninety minutes later, the helicopter lands at the base and LTC Straka consents to brief interview. "I am



experiencing flying in mountain environment for the first time and I should say I am learning new valuable lessons. What we were taught about mountain flying academically gets fully confirmed in practice. Wind direction and velocity is unpredictable, the machine's performance also depends on altitude. I take it with a great respect and as you can see, I have sweated doing that a bit," tells the experienced rotary-wing aircraft pilot about his impressions and emphasises the importance of mental endurance with flight personnel. "Not only military professionals with operational experience in Afghanistan, but also chaplains of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic are involved in the effort to improve mental endurance at our home base," he comments.

The other "thirty-fiver", no. 3361, rolls to the apron. Helicopter technician crosses hands above his head and Captain Pavel Nezdoba switches the machine off. "We practised landings on various mountain sites in zone two, five and six. We started approximately at two thousand metres and stepwise climbed higher. During a two-hour flight, we performed seven landings below peaks nearly three thousand metres above sea level," he states and discusses specificity of these operations. "It is up to the helicopter captain to select area suitable for landing. First we recce the area from above, than we do a full circle above the landing site in horizontal level turn flight and thirdly, upon assessing essential parameters, we are touching down. In the final phase, I am relying on my flight control officer's instructions, who watches the situation beneath the machine."

IN THE DARK, GOGGLES ON

"The French allocated us two flight days for night flights with NVGs," says the Czech commander of exercise MAJ Valvoda in an additional flight briefing. Upon task specification, Mi-171Sh crews put their flight vests and new helmets. After that, they fix the night-vision goggles and quickly depart to their assigned machines. "Mountain flying is demanding for piloting techniques, which must be many times more subtle than when flying back at home. The night only adds complexity and is substantially more demanding in terms helicrew interaction," says Lieutenant-Colonel Milan K., commander 231st Helicopter flight of the 23rd (Helo) AFB in Přerov. "The NVG system works as an amplifier of residual light that must have at least two millilux. This type of night-vision goggles cannot be used in absolute darkness. In an optimal situation, the pilots using goggles can see near-real image in grey outlines on a green background," explains LTC K. and points out the fact that NVG flights are closely associated with calculating SA (Safe Altitude), MSH (Minimum Safe Height) and RA (Reversionary Altitude) for route sections and the area of operation.

The Mi-171Sh squadron commander does not forget to point out the system's positive aspects. "Using NVGs has a lot of advantages, for example, it gives a tactical edge over the enemy, who do not see you. At night, we can do low-level flying and land almost everywhere. When there were no goggles, we needed to use the light, which quickly gave away the chopper's position."

The technology is not really "light". Coupled with the helmet, it weighs close to three kilos. A three-hour flight with such a weight on top of your head is really no luxury.

LOOKING BEHIND THE SCENES

It would be incorrect not to mention other occupational specialists, who went through the preparation for deployment in Afghanistan at the French Centre de vol en Montagne this time. "You would not identify any peculiarities in activity of technical personnel, although





specific air missions are being performed here. All occupational specialists do standard procedures, including preflight, inter-flight and after-flight checks or maintenance after fifty flight hours," explains Major Vlastimil Martínek, Deputy contingent commander for flight support service, and states that the ground personnel brought roughly two hundred spare items for the exercise.

Aircrews of one-seven-oners also include gunners and flight control officers. With their departure to Afghanistan drawing nearer, they have the following opinions: "We know the situation is not calm down there, but now is the right time for every individual to settle with it. I am a soldier and I have no additional comments on that," says Major Michal L. His colleague, warrant officer Jaroslav F. follows: "Many of us have had operational experience before. We were told at the beginning that we would deploy to Afghanistan for an operational tour; those who did not want go had enough opportunity to say no. It will not be easy, but I trust we will be able to make it without any harm."

It is no secret that an advance party has been working at the Forward Operating Base Sharana in Afghanistan already for two months. They are involved in developing essential support facilities for the Czech contingent, including mobile maintenance shop and mobile command post. Prior to them, from January till July, Captain Jan Dubec, an Mi-24/35 gunship pilot from Náměšť AFB, had been posted at FOB Sharana: "I worked there as a liaison officer and my mission was to realise all requirements the Czech contingent had before arriving at the base. My initial mission was to take care of design documentation, including utilities and various distribution systems and cabling during earthworks. Then I presented to builders proposals for reinforcing operating areas, building necessary structures, fencing of assigned areas and other elements essential for operations by a heli unit. Luckily I could use the experience I gained building my own house before," says the helicopter captain smiling and adds that besides initiating support facilities, he held coordinating talks with superior Allied command headquarters on modalities of operational deployment of Mi-171Sh helicopter crews.

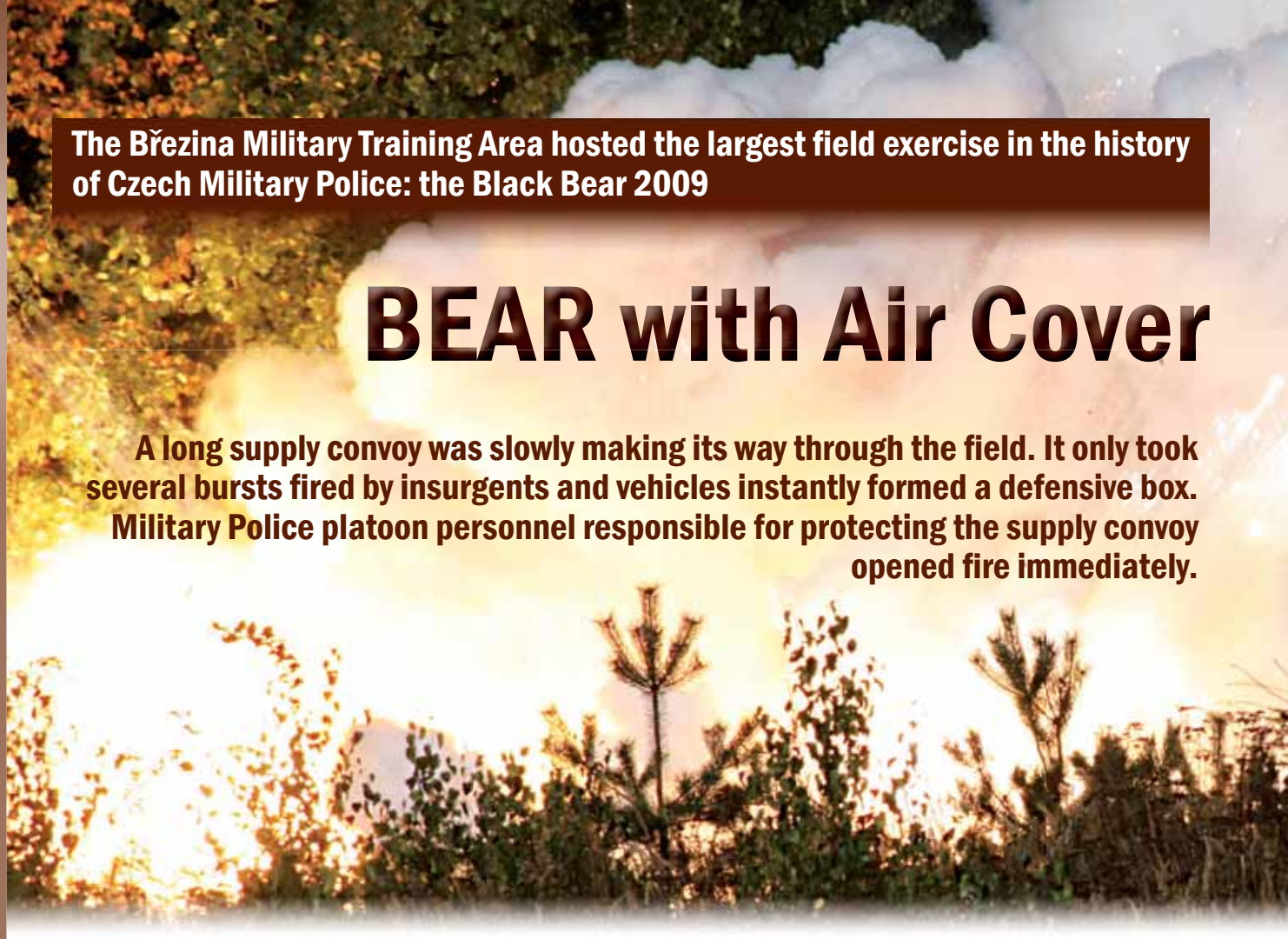
by Pavel Lang and Jan Procházka
Photos by Jan Kouba



The Březina Military Training Area hosted the largest field exercise in the history of Czech Military Police: the Black Bear 2009

BEAR with Air Cover

A long supply convoy was slowly making its way through the field. It only took several bursts fired by insurgents and vehicles instantly formed a defensive box. Military Police platoon personnel responsible for protecting the supply convoy opened fire immediately.



But it was clear at the first sight that they cannot resist the enemy superior in numbers for long. Platoon leader requested air support and a quick reaction team to come in. In a couple of minutes, L-39 Albatros aircraft appeared on the horizon to drop their bombs onto the margin of the forest. A narrow strip of land, full of assaulting terrorists a short while ago, turned into a land of fire at once (imitation through pyrotechnical devices was very credible this time). Before the aircraft managed to return and check the outcome of their strike, a Mi-17 Medevac helicopter with medical aid landed nearby vehicles. Military Police personnel placed casualties onboard, disengaged from the hamstrung enemy and left the threat area together with the convoy.

That was just one in a sequence of episodes in what was the largest field training exercise in the history of the Czech Military Police, the Black Bear 2009, which took place in the Březina Military Training Area in the Czech Republic on September 14-23rd, 2009.

"The aspect of close air support presently gains an increasing importance. The latest operational experience from Afghanistan clearly confirm the critical importance of air support and the substantial role it plays in saving lives of personnel who got ambushed and were unable to disengage," explained one of the exercise directors, Lieutenant-Colonel Roman Gottfried, the reasons why they incorporated this type of training into the exercise. "It is for the first time in its history that the Czech Military Police train cooperation with forward air controllers. First they introduced us to how we can use their services.







Now it is up to us to train it in practical terms.“ The Black Bear field training exercise seeks to improve the NATO Multinational Military Police Battalion’s ability to plan and perform force protection missions in stabilisation operations using different equipment and weapon systems.

The idea to form such a multinational force was conceived at the NATO Summit in Prague in 2002.

Besides the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Croatia and Bulgaria originally joined the initiative. The latter nation, however, withdrew from the project in 2005. The lead nation is Poland, which assigns the combat company and combat support company. Another company comprises a Slovak, Czech and Croatian platoon. Croatia assigned members of the elite special counterterrorist unit to the NATO MNMP Battalion. Lieutenant-Colonel Ľudovít Bálint of the Slovak Armed Forces has been the commander of multinational battalion since January 09.

The exercise involved roughly two-thirds of the multinational unit’s 264 service personnel. Another hundred of soldiers provided support to the exercise and acted as opposing forces. Initial exercise of the unit took place Wedrzin, Poland, in 2008.

The battalion’s preparation is scheduled to come to a head next year in Croatia. MP force protection missions performed in the exercise fully reflected requirements for the planned operational capabilities of the battalion. Military Police personnel comprising the multinational MP battalion can be assigned for duty in providing public security, managing civil unrest, establishment of checkpoints, road checks, crime investigation, patrolling the area of responsibility and providing convoy security. The will also be involved in overseeing the activities by police stations in the area of their deployment and will provide assistance to the local police forces. That was also reflected in the exercise scenario, which was played in a fictive country of Alphaland. On the occasion of the exercise, a mass took place, which saw the premiere of the prayer of the Military Police.

by Vladimír Marek incl. photos



The first Czech Armed Forces contingent accomplished its premiere deployment for Baltic Air Policing mission excellently

ALPHA eight times



With all due respect for all previous deployments by the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic, the Baltic Air Policing mission was exceptional. Not only was it a premiere for a Czech Air Force tactical unit to deploy for a foreign operations, during which QRA pilots from Čáslav-based 211th Tactical Squadron flew in excess of 404 flight hours, but they got lifted on "Alpha" or A-scramble signal eight times, which is the same number of QRA flights all nineteen from thirteen nations had performed.





"Cleared for takeoff at runway three two, turn to heading three sixty, climb to level two hundred," they receive orders. Within less than fourteen minutes after Alpha-scramble had been declared by Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC 2) located in the Federal Republic of Germany, the twosome of Gripens successively lifts off the runway.

Fifteen minutes: the time limit for a pair of Czech JAS-39C Gripen quick reaction alert aircraft to take off Shiauliai airfield in Lithuania in performance of air policing missions in the airspace over Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the framework of the NATO Integrated Air Defence System (NATINADS) from May till September.

"Alpha" is announced by the piercing sound of alarm siren. The first thing pilots do is getting dressed. First they put their shoes on, then the anti-G suit, the vest and helmet. Three minutes off the QRA takeoff limit are gone. Both pilots quickly grab for two cartridges, where flight data will be loaded to and dart from the building with inscription QRA (Quick Reaction Alert) to the car to take them to the nearby apron. A while ago, technicians and mechanics servicing both JAS-39C had already set off in that direction. In concert with tug truck drivers, they pull the machines from shelters and open the canopy exactly as pilots jump out of their car and race towards the aircraft.

The lead pilot, Lieutenant-Colonel Miroslav Kopáček, heads for the airplane with registration 9241, his dash two, Captain Pavel Štrůbl, to 9238. They insert the media into Gripens and begin engine starting process with prescribed check of all onboard systems. Before rolling off the QRA area, they contact the tower and request take-off clearance.

THE BALTIC EXPERIENCE

It is a matter of prestige for every QRA pilot to have an Alpha scramble. Major Roman Svoboda and First-Lieutenant Jiří Čermák were the first from the Czech Air Force contingent in the Baltic States to experience an A-scramble, when they took off towards a small civil turboprop with German insignia on the twenty-first day of May. Then as if it started to rain with A-scrambles: over the next three months, military professional of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic went through seven more tests of that kind.

"During my two-month tour in the Baltic region, I had alpha two times," states LTC Kopáček and expands: "First time, our mission was to perform visual identification



of the target. We identified the target as a Russian Air Force reconnaissance aircraft. In the first instance, we observed the target from the rear hemisphere for about ten minutes and then the Swedish QRA took over.

In the second A-scramble, the target was about a hundred-ninety miles from us. We were cleared to fly supersonic to the target. After reporting all requested information to our superior echelon and documenting the airplane, we returned to the base.“

Major Martin Nezbeda and Captain Jaroslav Tomaňa, who were scrambled to fly into airspace over international waters of the Baltic Sea, have a similar experience. “It was a military airplane heading for the Kaliningrad area. The aircrew did not communicate in standard manner, so the CAOC scrambled us onto it.

Having monitored the target for about thirty minutes, we made an egress and the airplane carried on flying its route,“ specifies CAPT Tomaňa. A couple of days later, QRA pilots of the 211th Tactical Squadron were tested by a civilian airplane bearing a Russian air carrier insignia. ”When we got close to the target, we realised what was going on. Commercial aircraft do not have such type of







antennas," smiles MAJ Nezbeda. No doubt that those eight A-scrambles have been a significant source of experience for pilots home-based at Čáslav AFB.

"Although we have been through some lessons in the NATINADS system, A-scramble is always a unique experience. Initially you do not have a clue what you are up to. We only get that information from the control and reporting center after taking off," explain pilots and add: "From the sound of the siren to take-off, it is full of adrenalin. All your emotions are put aside, because it is about hurrying and making it within the fifteen-minute limit.

Once you have sat in the cockpit and headed to the target for some time, the time comes for you to lower your heart rate and calm down. You perform the mission with maximum concentration and in compliance with defined procedures. The Baltic mission gave us many positive lessons. Apart from being able to try additional technical and flight properties of Gripen aircraft, we were confronted with airplanes that you would not encounter in the domestic arena. Flights over the sea were a specific chapter in our deployment, often performed at low levels and/or at supersonic speed. Infinite water surface arouses respect. But it is an important part of our training, during which you also remove specific mental barriers."

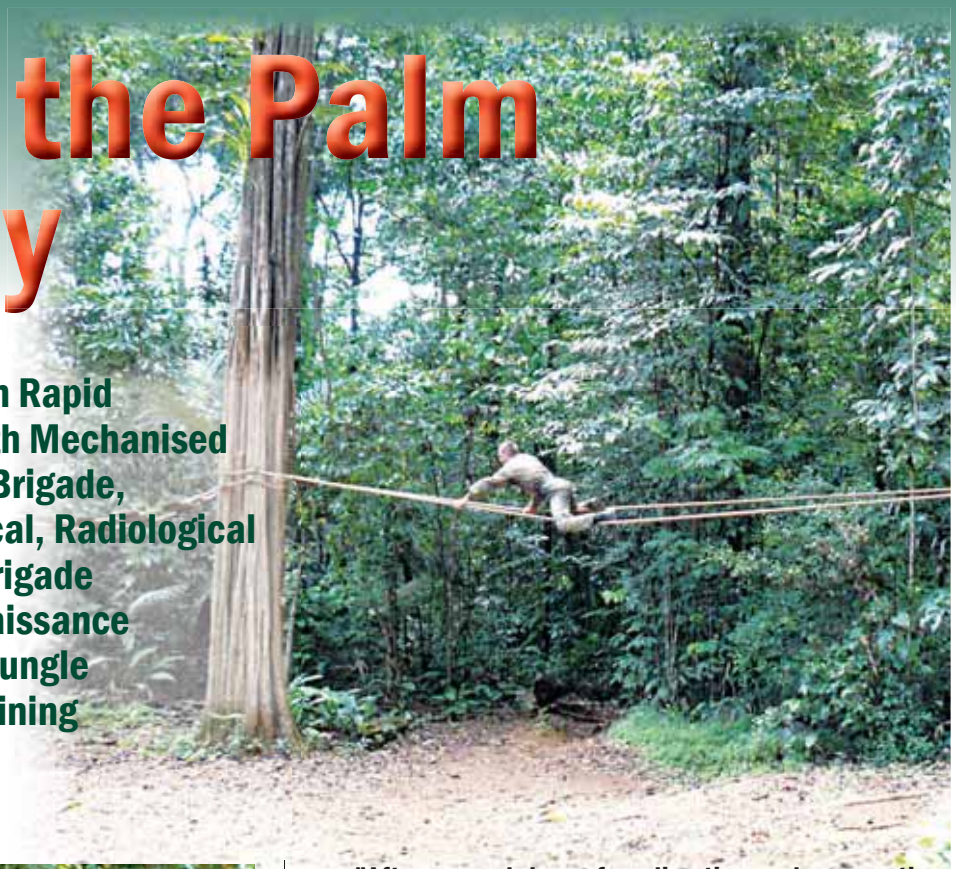


INDELIBLE FOOTPRINT OF CZECHS AND GRIPENS

Apparently, reviewing the deployment for Baltic Air Policing mission is very pleasing for Major Jaroslav Míka. "We demonstrated our readiness and professionalism. Eight A-scramble flights, always within the time limit, clearly proves that," he relishes. "On our part, it was definitely no arms rattle. We sent a clear message that NATO's airspace is inviolable." Major Míka also thinks the Baltic Air Policing mission was very instrumental in terms of growing confidence with his subordinates at the 211th Tactical Squadron. "The joint success pulled us more together. No special orders were needed. Everybody was in the same boat and exerted maximum efforts. After every successful alpha, you could immediately tell it of the people. Rivalry among individual shifts increased the performance of the whole contingent," says the seasoned military pilot and adds a personal experience: "Before Lithuania, I had the feeling sometimes during exercises that we were still sort of newcomers to NATO and that we were still missing something to come on terms with greater air forces. With Baltic mission, we made a great progress. I feel the respect and recognition by NATO colleagues. The credit for that also goes to the JAS-39 Gripen fourth-generation fighter that proved its high quality here," concludes MAJ Míka.

by Pavel Lang and Jan Procházka
Photos by Marie Křížová and LTC David Schreier

Under the Palm Canopy



Thirty soldiers of the 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade, 7th Mechanised Brigade, 13th Artillery Brigade, 31st Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence Brigade and the 102nd Reconnaissance Battalion underwent a jungle combat and survival training in the French Guyana on July 10-29th, 2009



”After several days of acclimation and preparation, the French led us into the jungle in the evening on Monday, July 13th, 2009. We were to set up bivouacs to sleep in. But a torrential rain started to pour down at that moment, so we really savoured that, according to what instructors said,“ recalls the lead of the group, 1LT Roman Příhonský.

“When everything was done, French sergeants departed and left us in the jungle all alone. We had connectivity with the base camp over the radio. Should anything happen to someone, we could request medical aid, or casualty evacuation. The first night in the jungle was very unusual for us. There were plenty of various sounds all around us. But we became so exhausted over time that we fell asleep.“

A BASE IN FOREST

The objective of the training course was to acquire individual and collective capabilities and skills in the sphere of survival and combat in an equatorial forest environment. Upon the course completion, the unit should be able to perform combat missions autonomously in difficult climate areas. Harsh conditions and a high physical and load eventually strengthened the unit and pulled them more together.

Several Czech soldiers previously underwent similar courses organised by the 3rd Infantry Regiment the French Foreign Legion (3.REI), but this time a platoon-equivalent unit was involved. One of the reasons for a larger team was that the Czech 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade has formed the core of the Czech-Slovak EU Battle Group from the beginning of July. The Battle Group can be sent to any location worldwide within the distance of 6,000 kilometres from Brussels, including jungle. The Czech soldiers travelled to French Guyana



on a Czech Air Force plane with refuelling stop at Cape Verde. They landed in Cayenne in South America, from where they departed directly to the CEFE Foreign Legion base located in the jungle. With respect to the season, temperatures were quite mild and fluctuated between thirty and thirty-five degrees Celsius, but air humidity reached up to hundred percent.

French units that go for training into this area usually have seven days for acclimation. Our soldiers were only allowed a weekend with respect to their shortened training programme, and yet they had to get issued materiel and equipment from French depot and gain some familiarity with it.

DANGEROUS ANIMALS

The training started right at half past four in the morning on July 13th with a reveille. Platoon members were then tested for the physical abilities. An explanation on conduct in the jungle and information on local plants and animals was accompanied with practical demonstrations.

To that effect, a small zoo is maintained on the base with majority of local animals, ranging from spiders and snakes to a jaguar. Being introduced to binding techniques, the course participants found out that the French mostly use slip knots. They also try to use field-expedient devices instead of some climbing gear items, such as harnesses. Bivouacs erected in the jungle are based on a rope stretched between two trees, with tarpaulin put over it. Thus, it represents both the carrying structure but it also protects the sleeping soldier against falling trees and big branches. Such danger is way too frequent in the jungle. Apart from the hammock, an additional net is stretched under the tarpaulin, into which all individual stuff is put including arms. The dryer is also placed there. Nothing can be left on the ground, otherwise dangerous insects will get into your clothes or shoes. For Czechs coming from a landlocked country, training on pirogues was of particular interest. The traditional narrow long boats are used both for transporting people and all materiel in the jungle. The trail to the CEFE base was only built recently. Previously, the French carried all materiel on pirogues. We practised getting in, disembarking, loading materiel, and especially what to do in crisis situations in case of





an accident on water surface. That was also associated with training water crossing and swimming in a rapid water course, naturally in full gear and with boots on. Each Czech soldier brought seventy rounds to Guyana and kept ten of them for self-defence. The rest was used in shooting practice for individuals, squads and from the pirogues. Shooting from pirogues was not easy at all. Shooting in forest is something completely different than we are used to.

It was not possible to use satellite navigation during geospatial training, because the signal did not come through the thick canopy of plants. Soldiers would need to climb up high into trees in every instance.

Orientation in the jungle is also completely different to our environment. The visibility there is only a couple of meters. There is nothing left to do than to follow the bearing consistently all the time. In the next part, Czech soldiers were to set up a helipad in the jungle, which was required to meet demanding flatness criteria, so they learned how to work with a chainsaw, machetes and high-explosives.

THE PIG TRAIL AND OTHERS

Sort of an icing on the Foreign Legion training's cake are four obstacle courses built directly in the jungle. The Pig Trail represents a system of obstacles leading through a muddy false stream arm. Military professionals practice crawling over, poising, crawling under, climbing, jumping, diving and swimming. "Bushrope trail" is nicknamed the monkey trail among course attendants. It primarily consists of ropes, nets, trees and wooden structures. It practises climbing, hand-over-hand moving, jumps and poising. The "Team Trail" takes longest, usually over two hours. There are nine obstacles that demand a collective effort by the whole group, that is at least seven persons. Most of all, it depends on the commander's leadership skills. Again, the trail consists of mud, trees and a giant slick rock wall.

The last trial is the transport of a wounded person by a group of at least seven people. The casualty is fixed onto a long log with ropes. That way, soldiers need to carry him across harsh muddy jungle terrain, with considerable elevation to follow. Each trail is normally practised several times, then the teams go live.

"We were also taught how to make fire in the jungle, in several different ways. For example using wet wood, palm leafs, resin, by rubbing wire against tree trunk, which produces a high temperature. All of that then came in handy during setting bivouacs and survival," explains First-Lieutenant Příhonský. "We immediately put theory into practice. Instructors proceeded at a very fast pace, so we needed to concentrate as much as we could and pay highest attention to them.

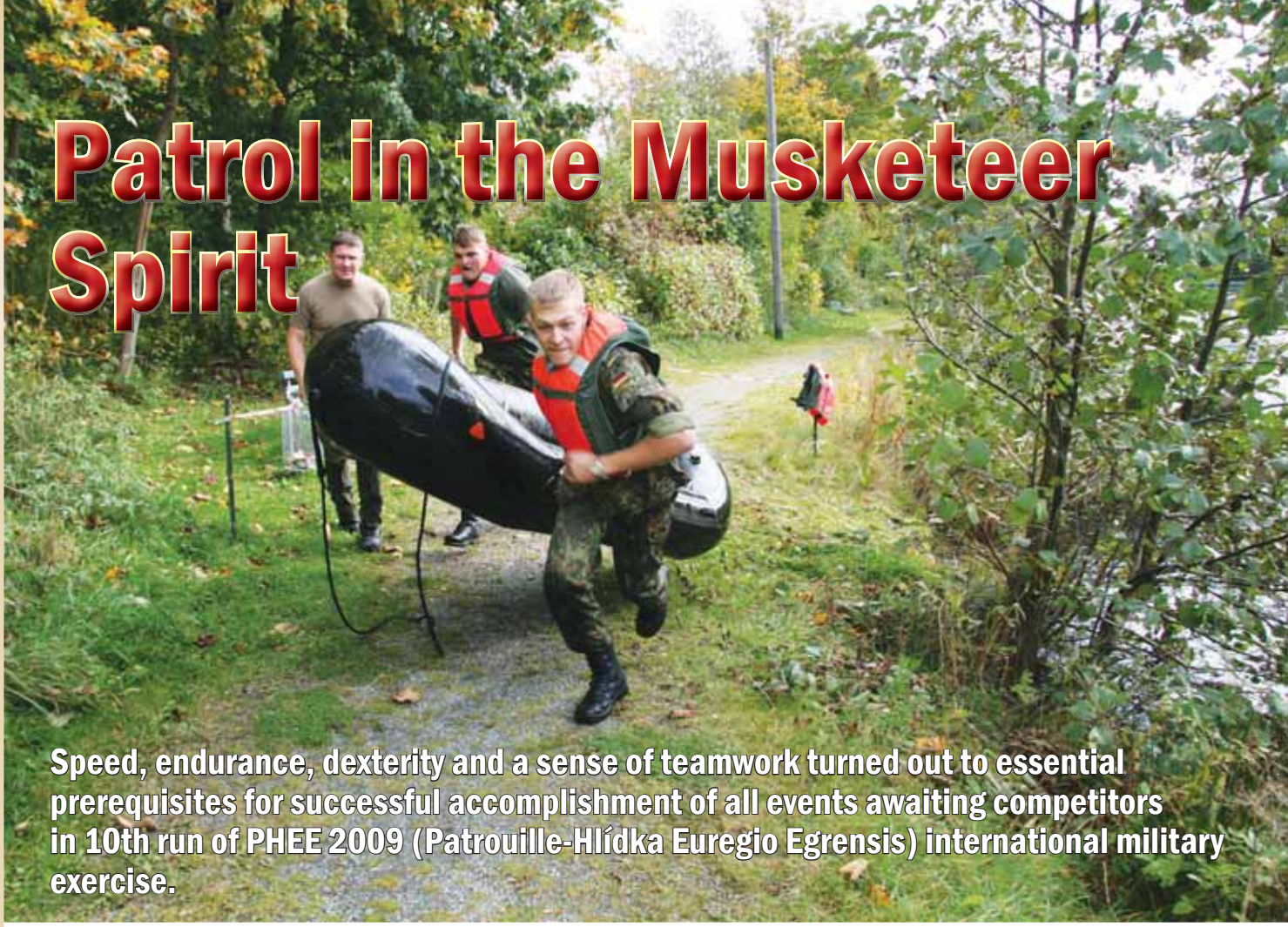
We practically did not need to speak French, it sufficed to watch closely. They demonstrated everything to us practically. Each of the instructors must be able to perform excellently in everything they want course participants to do. An outstanding physical condition is a must. The chief instructor was forty-seven years old and only a few of us younger ones managed to keep up with him."

The training usually ended at 6 p.m. At least a two hours' cleaning ritual followed, involving both own body and equipment. Without that, one would not be able to perform on the next day in the jungle.

by Vladimír Marek
Photos by personnel involved



Patrol in the Musketeer Spirit



Speed, endurance, dexterity and a sense of teamwork turned out to essential prerequisites for successful accomplishment of all events awaiting competitors in 10th run of PHEE 2009 (Patrouille-Hlídka Euregio Egrensis) international military exercise.

The two-day contest involving five ten-member teams comprising members of the Armed Forces of Germany, USA and the Czech Republic put to a test both physical and mental preparedness of competing soldiers as well as their ability to perform tasks in a multinational environment. On the Czech side, the exercise taking place in Tachov, Czech Republic, and Marienberg, Germany, was organised by the Regional Military Command Pilsen.

The very composition of teams, comprising six Germans, two Czechs and two Americans, implied that without basic English knowledge and the art of communicate in situations under pressure it will not be possible to think of or even reach to the winner's cup. Events were conceived in the way to display individual skills, but the resulting time and score always depended on the performance of the whole team. In nutshell, "one for all, all for one" applied.

PREMIERE IN TACHOV

Although the town of Tachov played an important role in the history of the Armed Forces, the PHEE international exercise was held for the first time there. In addition to that, the Czech day was associated with dynamic demonstrations and static displays prepared by components of the Integrated Rescue System for general public; competitors could present their skills not only to referees and invited guests, but also to thousands of citizens, especially schoolkids from local primary and secondary schools.

In five events, competitors were challenged to show their skills not only in typical military domains, such as





shooting, vehicle road check or passing a minefield, but also in disciplines relating to life-saving activities, such as overcoming firefighting obstacles and rendering first aid.

"Speak, speak! You have speak with us," was heard from a distance as we approached a simulated road accident, where soldiers extracted moaning wounded persons from a crashed car. "Bandage! Put a bandage here and fixate the broken leg quick," was heard on the radio. Nervousness was felt in competitors' voices, because every single movement they did was closely followed by referees, which was also the case with the mouth-to-mouth breathing simulator in the form of a dummy, which allows exact measuring not only of chest pressing frequency to restore heart beating, as well as correctness of inbreathing.

It did not get any easier for the teams in the firefighting event either. Running with ladder and climbing on a rooftop belong to general skills, but to deploy fire hoses and get them connected is not a daily routine for military personnel. Accurateness played its role in this event as well, especially in the final stage as teams were to use the water jet to shoot down a jerry can standing on a pedestal. Cheering by schoolkids in the large sports field created an amazing atmosphere for all teams.



THE MARIENBERG FINALE

While the Czech section of the PHEE 2009 international military exercise was more "civilian" in some aspects, the town of Marienberg, Germany, hosted five purely military events, including shooting G36 assault rifles.

Nearly a kilometre long obstacle course, at the end of which soldiers were to pull a track with rope, became a nightmare for some teams in their two-day effort. It showed here, for whom crawling and hand-grenade throwing are a part of routine military training. But it did not get any easier in river crossing and constructing a wooden separation wall.

"You just have to pull the saw, not push it," Czech soldiers repeated when cutting logs with nearly two-meter two-handed saws to prescribed length. Each centimetre played its role in the final evaluation. Indeed the tolerance was "cruel" – just two centimetres. Those team members to whom it fell to lift a 400-kilogram cage filled with sandbags using crowbars and oak planks did not have an easier task either. The effort required first harmony of arms and physical power and the ability to communicate. "We lost most of our points just in building the separation wall and in lifting the cage," told us later Lieutenant Martin Šimandl, the lead of the winning team that competed under the Czech flag. "Simply, we could not do without clear understanding and clearly defining the course of action. The obstacle course was definitely most demanding. We needed to cheer each other on, and that we helped somebody to get over a seven-foot wooden wall, was in compliance with rules."

"Shooting the rifle was the most difficult event for me. Because the weapon was not zeroed in as I am used to, I aimed according to initial practice hits," described his feelings another member of the winning team, Staff Sergeant Alvin White of US Army. He voiced praise on the address of Czech soldiers on the team. "Obviously, they are used to teamwork. There were some language difficulties sometimes, but we always eventually came to an agreement and accomplished the task. It was a great experience and a new lesson to cooperate with them."

by Jan PROCHÁZKA



The Czech Republic is becoming involved in the NATO early warning and control system and a Czech pilot goes through training in the cockpit of the E-3A Sentry AWACS airplane as was obvious in Brunssum and Geilenkirchen.

End Negotiations, Training Begins



NATO air exercise in the Czech Republic with a NATO E-3A AWACS early warning aircraft deployed: a Czech pilot sits behind the control stick and Czech Air Force specialists onboard monitor areas of interest. A couple hours later, the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic is the venue to a meeting of senior MoD officials, NAEW&C commanders and the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Programme Management Organisation (NAPMO) to assess the Czech Republic's integration in the NAEW&C programme (NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control). That is no longer a hazy vision, but a reality coming soon.

At present, sixteen nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation participate in the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control program, which provides a very effective complement to continuous situational air picture gained by stationary radars for use in operations and also provides command and control over air operations in case of absence of a ground command post to control NATO air forces in given territory. It is no secret that NAEW&C is also used for peacetime missions as a part of efforts to provide airspace security during high visibility events or in relation to crisis operations all around the world.

FULL MEMBERSHIP IN SIGHT

A look into the diary of flight engineer Jiří Bednář tells it all. January 2010 overwritten by letters reading: full membership! "I trust that the accession agreement of the Czech Republic to the NAEW&C programme will be signed that month," he says with a strong resolve. From September 08, when he was assigned by the Czech MoD Defence Policy and Strategy Division to Brunssum, the Netherlands, as the Czech Republic's liaison officer for integration to the project, he has intensively worked to achieve that goal. "Contrarily to the other two components that represent the command and executive part of the program, my responsibilities primarily focus on supporting the program and logistics related part of membership. Apart from that, I am involved in paving the way for subsequent filling of posts in the NAEW&C system by personnel of the Czech Ministry of Defence and members of Czech Air Force."

The Czech Republic has had the observer status assigned from June 2008. Since then, Czech representatives sought to negotiate terms and conditions that would bring benefit both for the state and for the Armed Forces. Besides military aspects, the decision to accede to the







programme also entails political, economic and industrial dimensions. The key incentive nevertheless is the Czech Republic's interest in deepening its integration in NATO's collective defence.

"This is a decision to provide our corresponding part to Allied capability building efforts and prove that we are not mere security consumers. We are becoming involved in a program that we have already used several times before. But it is not possible to hide under the umbrella and rely on others. We must show that we are also able to hold the umbrella. Qualities of Czech defence industries and professionals of the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic lead me to the conviction that we will join the NAEW&C program in a full-fledged manner," states Jiri Bednář.

What does he mean specifically? Operating principles allow all member nations, based on their financial contributions, to get a high percentage of expenses returned by the means of either direct or indirect industrial cooperation in the field of modernising AWACS aircraft and their maintenance. From 2009 on, NAPMO plans to launch a new stage of upgrading all seventeen units of E-3A aircraft in NATO's inventory, specifically in terms of modernising cockpits and enhancing their Network Enabled Capability (NEC). A new Depot Level Maintenance (DLM) program is under consideration for the years ahead.

The Czech Republic has already noted partial success in filling individual posts. At a recent conference, about a dozen positions were endorsed for the Czech Republic, both in the AWACS Flight Crew and in the Mission Crew operating systems onboard the aircraft. "Apart from a pilot who is already in the process of training, we have been assigned other posts not only in Flight Crew but also several specialists who will comprise the Mission Crew," specifies Jiri Bednář and adds that it will be up to the Armed Forces High Command what timelines they will select to fill the allocated posts. Naturally, funds will play an important role in the process. It should be noted in this context that program costs are covered by individual member nations in the form of annual contributions according to an agreed cost-sharing formula.

FLYING E-3A SIMULATOR

The clock shows a couple of minutes past 8 hours in the morning when an E-3A AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) with Luxembourg insignia and registration number 90458 lifts off the runway at the NATO airbase near Geilenkirchen. An international crew onboard the Boeing airplane just began what would be an eight-hour training flight. Interestingly, upon taking-off a German runway, AWACS aircraft is at once over a populated territory of the Netherlands. The noise produced by four Pratt&Whitney jet engines hauling the airborne center to assigned flight level is considerable. Additional three machines follow shortly. The last morning departure is a U.S. KC-135 tanker from the Air National Guard unit stationed there, whose mission will be to refuel the E-3A machines.

Major Milan Vojáček, the only Czech at the NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen, watches the activity from the ground for the time being. From August 09, he has been assigned at the NAEW&C main operating base in a dual-hatted post, being a senior national representative of the





Czech Republic and pilot in training for AWACS airplanes with the E-3A Component.

For MAJ Vojáček, initial two months were a pace lap, over which his responsibilities were of organisational and logistic nature. Since mid-October, he has operated at top gear and at maximum rpm. No way for him to downshift for a while. "It is a hectic time. I am experiencing first-hand that the path into the E-3A cockpit is long and extremely challenging," confesses the Czech military pilot who's last type flown was An-26 transport aircraft at the Kbely Air Force Base. His current challenge however is called Boeing B-707/320 with circular revolving radar antenna.

The first training benchmark is within sight: a six-month drill with the so-called Training Wing. "Together with my German and Spanish colleague, I am undergoing a first pilot course. My instructor is an American," allows MAJ Vojáček some insight into the Training Wing's multinational environment and describes the learning system. "The course taking roughly six months is planned in detail. The first block is dedicated to the material part, requiring trainees to gain knowledge of all onboard systems and subsystems. It is no exception that some systems cover a hundred pages of specialist reading



that you need to learn overnight. It is challenging to cope with the pressure on self-learning. You gain a great amount of new knowledge and practical skills all the time. I dedicate all of my free time to studying," explains MAJ Vojáček and describes his next professional step. "Subsequently, pilots transfer to simulator training. You start with simple piloting techniques; you gain familiarity with airplane manoeuvrability. Then the training comes of the most difficult flight phases: take-offs and landings. Emergency procedures, especially for flying upon engine failure, are included as well. Regular and detailed examining by specialists is commonplace there. In the closing of this training stage, we perform









roughly ten practise flights using the E-3A airplane. The TCA airplane, although designated Training and Cargo Aircraft, is used for training on exceptional basis only."

In ideal conditions, he should be able to complete his type-training at the Training Wing by March. But that is far from the finale yet. "Those making it past the TW are only half-way through – in reality it is a basic flight training. Then I get assigned to the first operational squadron for another six-month portion of training including in-flight refuelling. Upon achieving combat-ready status, I will finally have reason to be really happy. As an AWACS operational pilot, I can deploy for any mission all around the world anytime," says Major Vojáček and specifies that his tour is planned for four years, while minimum annual pilot flight hours at the wing is 200 hours. "The load on flight personnel is considerable here. On average, they fly among four to five hundred flights hours a year," he adds.

He does not want to comment on piloting the AWACS airplane. "I have not made it to the right-hand seat yet. I am only in training and anything can happen," he opines.

After short coaxing, he explains: "I am told by experienced AWACS pilots that flying this machine is not easy. Flight properties are largely determined by the positions of the four turbofans, specifically by the fact that they are under wings and far from the fuselage. If you do not pilot the airplane properly, it tends to pitch markedly on changing the engine thrust and also to rock as a result of its arrow wings. The radar does not impair on flight properties much, but it has a limiting effect on the permitted cross wind component on landing. Moreover, you really need to put in some effort piloting the airplane. You can feel the absence of hydraulic actuators. Pretty a slog, but beautiful and unique," concludes the Czech professional and mentions the old age of Boeing 707. "Seven-o-seven is already a lady of certain age, although full of state-of-the-art electronic systems, which you need to treat with respect. Now it is my task to get specificity of flying B-707 under my skin. My ambitions will then be even higher: for instance the seat on the left-hand side, that of the airplane captain. That is where I want to get. I will do anything I can to succeed," says Major Milan Vojáček.

by Pavel Lang and Jan Procházka
Photos by Jan Kouba





Military Sports (wo)man of the Year: Speedskater Sáblíková



On November 12th, 2009, the Prague district of Dejvice was the venue to award ceremony of the 14th Military Sportsman of the Year poll. The evening ceremony was also attended by Vice prime Minister and Minister of Defence, Martin Barták.

The world speedskating champion, Martina Sáblíková, became the winner, world vice champion in modern pentathlon, David Svoboda, finished second and last year's winner, javelin thrower Barbora Špotáková, ended up third by a narrow margin of two points.

Martina Sáblíková who first won the poll in 2007, did not attend the award ceremony; she addressed the audience in video teleconference call from Heerenveen, the Netherlands, where she was preparing for the World Cup. She thanked to her team and chiefly to her coach.

The fourteenth year of the poll was dominated by modern pentathletes, of whom four made it to top ten; they won the best small team and best military team award; Ondřej Polívka the best junior and Jakub Kučera became the coach of the year.

One-hundred and twenty coaches and personnel of the ASC DUKLA and the Ministry of Defence voted in the poll. Ondřej Polívka took the fourth position. The twenty-one year old supertalent of Czech pentathlon won four medals in top events including the title of European champion in Leipzig, he won a World Cup race for the second time, and became the youngest pentathlete to hold top rank in pentathlon in the middle of the season. Ranked fifth in the poll, skier Aleš Razým ruled the classic sprint in the under-23 world championship in France; sixth in the poll, Ondřej Synek won bronze medal in the world championship in Poznan. Ranked seventh, free-style skier Nikola Sudová won bronze medal in Japan v jízdě v boulích, ending eighth in the poll, shooting medal record holder Miroslav Januš, who brought home the total of seven medals (2-1-4) from world and European championship. Last two in top ten were Lucie Grolichová and Natálie Dianová – modern pentathletes, who celebrated a triumph in relay competition both in the European championship in Leipzig (together with Sylvie Černá), and in the world championship.



The title of cavalier of military sport was awarded to the living legend, rower Václav Chalupa, recognition was also given to high jumper Tomáš Janků and water slalom racer Marcela Sadilová. A new boat was then named after Václav Chalupa, a two without cox, brought by his crewmate Jakub Makovička and the cox Olda Hejdušek. Vice Prime Minister and Minister





of Defence Martin Barták, chairman of rowing association Kejval and Václav Chalupa became the patrons of the boat named after Václav Chalupa.

The 2010 Dukla calendar, second time produced by the world-famous photogrpaher Jan Saudek was presented for the first time. Apart from Minister of Defence Martin Barták and director of Dukla, Col. Jaroslav Priščák trio of legendary javelin throwers: Dana Zátopková, Jan Železný and Barbora Špotáková christened the calendar. The total of 34 sportspeople got into the wall calendar. Decathlete Roman Šebrle is the only one to have been on all eight previous Dukla calendars; contrarily to the 2009 calendar, photographs were mostly taken outdoors, only three times at the famous wall.

Vice Prime Minister of Minister of Defence, Martin Barták, needed to climb to the stage most frequently, but he played his part as congratulator and patron excellently. "We have not had such a minister so far," said military sport legends of the past and present. "I feel good in amidst yourselves. I highly value Dukla sportspeople, who represent both our armed forces and our country in an outstanding manner. I will do my best to provide the best environment that you rightly deserve. I will not let you down," said the Minister in his closing remarks, appreciating efforts by all those involved in achievement of our military sportspeople, because he recognises the essential role Dukla has in the Armed Forces. He received a long ovation for his exposé.

by Ivana Roháčková



2009 Military Sportsman of the Year:

1. Martina Sáblíková (speed skating)	1,147 pts
2. David Svoboda (modern pentathlon)	918
3. Barbora Špotáková (athletics)	916
4. Ondřej Polívka (modern pentathlon)	607
5. Aleš Razým (cross-country skiing)	467
6. Ondřej Synek (rowing)	465
7. Nikola Sudová (freestyle skiing - bouldering)	391
8. Miroslav Januš (shooting)	361
9. Lucie Grolichová (modern pentathlon)	213
10. Natálie Dianová (modern pentathlon)	188

Coach of the year:

1. Jakub Kučera (modern pentathlon)	57
2. Petr Novák (speed skating)	35
3. Václav Korunka (cross country skiing)	7

Junior of the year:

1. Ondřej Polívka (modern pentathlon)	63

Team of the year:

1. David Svoboda, Ondřej Polívka (modern pentathlon)	42

Military sport team of the year:

1. Modern pentathlon	77




Happy New Year
2010

CZECH REPUBLIC

ARMED FORCES REVIEW

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SECURITY PRECONDITIONING DEVELOPMENT

