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Samuel LÉGENDRE
Dear Brigadier General, after a short period of absence, you returned to the Land Forces Staff as its commander. What are your objectives for the beginning?

I came back to Land Forces after two years and for the next period I intend to continue the ongoing projects of the former commander, Lieutenant General Ghica Radu; at the same time I want to suggest a proper development regarding the participation of Land Forces in the theaters of operations in Afghanistan, according to the previous commitments of our country, a high level of a better quality for the selected personnel assigned on key-positions in the theaters of operations, the improvement of infrastructure within Combat Training Center of the Land Forces as well as emphasizing the promotion in higher positions of the best officers, NCOs and warrant officers, taking into account that human resources represent the main richness of the Romanian Land Forces.

The last but not the least, considering the effects of the economic crises which affects us financially, for this year we plan an efficient use of material and financial resources which are available, the main challenge for us being not that of preserving the present situation, but moving forward in some basic fields, for example we have to continue the operational process of the units in the following years, to maintain the operational structures that have already been implemented, to take part in activities and exercises within the regional initiatives, to implement the new feeding concept at the level of Land Forces, to keep on developing the operational process of the maintenance structures already in place, and to maintain a proper level of our capabilities to act in cases of civilian emergencies and natural disasters.

We are already implementing the second phase of the Romanian Army Transformation Strategy, part of NATO and EU operational integration - 2008-2015. What does this mean for the Land Forces?

For the present and the following years we intend to continue the process of training standardization and military assessment of the main units, the command and control process, the working and operations procedures within NATO member states, which are militarily advanced, achieving the required level of personnel according to the essential capabilities of the Alliance, to develop the process of reorganization in accordance with the plans approved by the Ministry of the National Defense, without affecting the Land Forces Personnel, increasing the operational capabilities for headquarters and forces specific to each mission and structure. An important challenge for us is the implementation of the logistic strategy, approved by the Ministry of National Defense, meeting the personnel requirements for the maintenance structures already existing.

As we all know, we are in the middle of a difficult financial and economic period. Are there many changes during this year in terms of equipping the units with proper battle techniques and weapons?

Yes, there are the important programs which we consider as being a priority and having already the financial needs allocated will be developed, but other programs which are not so important will be postponed for the next year. The economic crises affect us too, and it is normal to prioritize our performance objectives according to our available resources.

The military training is influenced by the difficult financial period our society is experiencing at the moment?

First of all, I want to specify that at the level of the important units within the Land Forces, the military training is quite well. In terms of the specific of each structure, if the structure is going to participate in the theaters of operations, if the operational process is ongoing for the Alliance’s needs or if it took part on operations in such theaters in the previous years. We mainly focused on our financial and material efforts to that the military training be the least affected. I have to emphasize the fact that we had to adapt ourselves to the current situation in order to concentrate our efforts to accomplish our training objectives and standards, considered as priorities or to optimize the use of material, financial, fuel, lubricants and human resources. However, this year, more than ever, we train ourselves but we can’t afford wasting resources.

What do you think about the cooperation between our soldiers and those of other states, allied or not, both in the theaters of operations and on different missions and exercises?

Both I and others in positions of authority within the Ministry of National Defense, NATO and the international environment in general, consider it as being an excellent one. We act in many regions of external cooperation; in the theaters of operations in Afghanistan we have around 1,500 military; in Bosnia-Herzegovina we are also present; we participate with structures and personnel in the combat teams of EU. We take part in numerous regional initiatives with partner military structures in Hungary, Slovakia, Ukraine, and Serbia; we are involved in joint training exercises in Romania and abroad; we are members of FINAREIL; we participate in the annual Conference of the Land Forces commanders in Europe; we assign experts to the NATO workgroups; we are also in charge of some of them. At the same time, last year we organized the Joint Conference for engineer commanders within the NATO member states; we have an excellent cooperation with our strategic partner - USA - specially in the training field for military who are about to go on missions in the theaters of operations.

Besides this, we are supported by ODC and CUBIC structures and we want to thank again for the outstanding cooperation and results, particularly for our military that are about to deploy in the theaters of operations. It’s not something new that our structures in the theaters of operations were endowed lately with high armored vehicles, and I refer to HUMVEE and MRAP, which wouldn’t have been possible without our USA partners’ support, and we, the Land Forces, are deeply grateful to them.

Taking into account that this interview will be edited around closing, on this occasion, we ask you to express some of your thoughts for the Land Forces personnel.

I want to take advantage of this opportunity to tell all Land Forces military, from general to privates, that I respect and appreciate their daily work. I wish them health and I ensure all wounded personnel in the TO, undergoing treatment in Romania or in Germany, of all our support. I also send our best thoughts of trust and support and hope to the families of those who have sacrificed their lives and obeyed their military oath. At the same time I transmit the respect of the Land Forces Staff to the families of our soldiers and I thank them for all their understanding and support, taking into consideration the hardships and needs of military service.

I also wish all the best to the military far away, for their effort in the TO in Afghanistan and Bosnia-Herzegovina.
The engineer battalion
145 years of existence

The 72 Engineer Battalion celebrated, on the 19th of February, 145 years since its foundation, and the festivities were held in Braila garrison. The unit carries on the battle traditions of the first pontoon bridge company, which was part of the first Engineer Battalion, founded on the 31st of May 1859, by the authority of Alexandru Ioan Cuza.

Major Ion Adrian CURIMAN
Transl. by: Andreea TURCU

A pleasant event organized on this occasion was the launch of the book “The evolution of pontoon bridge troops in the Romanian Army”, by Reserve Colonel Marian Garpa and “A life for an idea – the liberation of the pontoon bridge companies”, by Colonel Mircea Vladi, now commander of the 10th Engineer Brigade “Dunarea de Jos”, preambled held at the Military Club in Braila in the afternoon of February the 18th.

There were many important military figures invited at this festivity: the Chief of Land Forces Staff, Brigadier General Arion Ionita, Braila county’s prefect, Braila’s vice-mayor, engineer D. Popa, the commanders of structures in the National Defense system in Braila, reserve military personnel who were part of the 10th Engineer Brigade’s headquarters.

The 145 years of unit existence “represent for us a reason to be proud of and also feel responsible for, because we are among the few units in the Romanian army with such a history and the only engineer one”, emphasized Lieutenant-colonel Marian Iarantu in his speech, as commander of the 72 Engineer Battalion.

The pontoon bridge companies have managed to identify themselves as a distinct branch of the Engineers, through outstanding results during their accomplished missions.

The first notable mission achieved by the pontoon bridge company took place during the Independence War and consists of building a bridge over the Danube, 1 100 m in length. Then they took part in the Balkan War in 1913, in the first and second World Wars. The pontoon bridge companies have always fulfilled their missions and for their efforts, they were praised by their military leaders in those respective times. The revolution of the technique started in 1964 when officer Constantin Savu “managed to shape into metal the pontoon bridges with the help of which he liberated the pontoon bridge companies”, mentioned Colonel Vladi in his book.

The pontoon bridge companies have created a tight bond with the civilian population in the last few years due to the accomplishment of missions like crossing the Danube and other rivers, reinforcing the dams, supporting with personnel and specific means the population affected by floods.

Within the programme of the ceremonies on the following day, held at the 72 Engineer Battalion headquarters, an opening festivity followed by guest’s speeches were included. On this occasion, the Chief of Land Forces Staff, Brigadier General Arion Ionita read out the message of the Minister of Defence, Gabriel Oprescu, in which he emphasized the high degree of proficiency showed by the men in the Engineer Battalion, during their engineering missions, thus contributing to promoting a positive image of Romania around the world.

This beautiful anniversary, beside the moments of joy, fulfillment and satisfaction, must also be seen as a challenge left by the generations of pontoon bridge companies who have written a history in this unit, together with its accomplishments and failures, inherent with today’s and tomorrow’s younger generations.” Said in his speech general Ionita and as former commander of the 10th Engineer Brigade he wanted to mention “I spent some of the most beautiful years of my military career as commander of this brigade, of which you are also part of, and I felt as part of a big family and I state again the fact that I was never let down by you and for that I thank you all.

An important moment of the activity was the handing out of the Battle Flag of the 72 Engineer Battalion “Matei Basarab”, on the blue of the flag you can see the representative elements of the Battalion: A sketched bridge, a rescuer and 2 crossed harpoons. Under these graphic drawings is written the name and honorific name of the Battalion.

During the 145 years of its existence, the unit encountered various forms of organizations, according to the doctrines by which the Romanian army was led. The structural modernization was determined many times by the modernization of the technique with which the pontoon bridge troops were endowed. The current structure of the unit is based on the structure of the 72 Battalion, founded in 2002 by the merger of the 72 Pontoon Bridge Regiment “Matei Basarab” with the 550 Engineer Battalion. The current technique is the result of extraordinary work led by Brigadier General Constantin Savu, who revolutionized the engineering instruction as water introducing the pontoon bridge PR-71, as colonel Ioan Mocan pinpointed in the foreword to the book “A life for an idea – the liberation of the pontoon bridge companies”.

The future plans of the 72 Engineer Battalion personnel are related to the duties that derive from the operativity of the pontoon bridge company, but also to the hope that in the near future they will have an opportunity to carry out a mission abroad.
Romanian Mountain Rangers, pioneers in China

Based on Land Forces Staff international activities plan for 2010, approved by the Ministry of National Defense, between 31.10. – 15.11.2010, a common Romanian – Chinese training exercise took place, at mountain rangers platoon level, in China, in which a sub-unit of the 26th Mountain Rangers Battalion “Avram Iancu” took part.

Captain Remus Adrian Bercea
Translated by: Andreea VARTOLOMEI

The activity continued with an experience exchange carried out by different activities, performed by mountain rangers structures during the previous years, with mountain structures from foreign armies, and it met the cooperation requirement with the specialized structures within other armies. The first stage of the exercise took place between 11-25 of September 2009 within the 26th Mountain Rangers Battalion “Avram Iancu” around the Brad area, and Găina and Ştiurţ firing ranges from Abrud. The purpose of this activity was to perfect and develop the skills of the soldiers in military actions in mountain areas, along with the from mountain ranger sub-units to carry out military actions in mountain areas, along with the Chinese soldiers. The mountain rangers sub-unit that took part in the common instruction was the first structure within Romanian Army to attend such an exercise in China.

The journey to and back from China was executed by a C-130 H aircraft belonging to the Land Forces Staff, on the Otopeni-Beijing route and back, with stops at Baku and Alma Ata, with a total flight time of over 20 hours (thus I’ve realized that the flight to Afghanistan is a really short one). Also, transport of Sergeant Daniel Porumb (r), injured in Iraq, to a specialized clinic in China was provided, to benefit the necessary treatment for his recovery. We would like to thank, on this occasion, to captain commander Viorel Pana and to Lieutenant Commander Adrian Takacs, for the exemplary manner in which they ensured the transport for the mountain rangers sub-unit.

The activity was extremely well organized and had a great impact on the Armed Forces of People’s Republic of China, as well as on the local population. The Chinese officials underlined the importance of military cooperation relations between the two countries, as well as the traditional friendship relations between Romania and People’s Republic of China. Also, they thanked the Romanian authorities for the manner in which the exercise from 2009 was organized. For the Chinese Army, this exercise was the first common training activity together with a sub-unit from an European, representative group was General Mihai Ciungu, who outdid us with his precision.

Physical training consisted of running, hurdle race, and close combat. During the first day, altitude was a perturbing factor, because the activities took place at over 2,000 meters, and the military had small problems adapting to the climate. I would like to highlight that, although the mountain obstacle track has no equivalent in our army as difficulty and danger, Romanian mountain rangers surpassed easily all obstacles. As an anecdote, the only obstacle that was a problem for Romanian soldiers was a tunnel, which was too narrow for their size.

During mountain training, all rope climbing procedures (using double and simple string), climbing through the interior of rock chimneys, crossing by funicular (cable car) and rappel, were used. Climbing buildings with improvised means (cables, bricks), with no safety measures, was a new element.

During tactical training, the course of action in tactical field was presented, for each specific unit, at section and platoon level,
along with a final exercise presented during the closing ceremony. Two mixed platoons took part in the final exercise and acted out as one to fulfill the mission. Each group performed a specific activity during the final exercise: hurdle race, building climbing, mine field crossing, NBC techniques, area reconnaissance, capturing an objective, trench cleaning, destroying a bunker, etc. A very important detail consisted in the fact that video cameras were in place at all the important points, and the performance of the soldiers was watched live.

The importance of the activity resided in the rank of the officials attending the ceremonies during the exercise. Thus, to the opening festivity, on Romanian behalf, attended the Ambassador of Romania in People’s Republic of China, His Excellency, Mr. Viorel Istitioaia, as chief of the Romanian group, Brigadier General Mihai Ciungu, the Romanian military representative for the Ministry of Defense, and Lieutenant Colonel Cristian Dobre, as representative of the mountain rangers group. On Chinese behalf attended the Deputy Commander for the military region of Cengdu, Lieutenant General Li ZuoCheng, the Commander of the 14th Army Group from the military region of Cengdu, Major General Zhou Xiaozhou, deputy director for the International Relations Department within the Chinese Ministry of Defense, and Major General Ci Guowei, as well as other Chinese generals and officers.

To the closing ceremony, on Romanian behalf attended, besides those previously mentioned, the Minister of National Defense, Mr. Gabriel Oprea, the General Director for Army Defense Intelligence, Major General Gheorghe Savu, and the Deputy Operations Commander for General Staff, Major General Valeriu Nicuț.

At the end of the closing ceremony, the minister of National Defense, Mr. Gabriel Oprea and General Li Shining, commander of the Military Region of Cengdu, awarded medals and appreciation certificates to the best 10 military from each detachment.

The activity had also a cultural aspect that consisted of visiting traditional landmarks for the geo cultural Chinese space such as: the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Stone Forest and the Ethnical Minorities Village. The Romanian military appreciated the visits, because they could get in touch with Chinese history and the country’s natural beauty. Sport activities, like football and basketball matches and games also took place.

From our point of view, the entire activity represented a good opportunity to emphasize the professional qualities of Romanian mountain rangers, who successfully represented the Romanian Land Forces, as well as the Romanian Army in general, and opening new horizons for multinational instruction activities. Even if small problems occurred due to flight hours fatigue, altitude and Chinese cuisine, mountain rangers proved once more that they are part of the Romanian military elite. On this occasion, I would like to thank everybody involved in organizing and developing this exercise, not only to those who participated in China, but also to those who remained in the country, for their joint efforts to make this exercise a success. Among these, I would like to mention Captain Dragoș Petrache, Sergeant 1st class Gheorghe Gică and Corporal Constantin Pășăreanu.
Training for next mission in Afghanistan
The Constructive Simulation Training Exercise „Argedava 25-10”

1st Infantry Division “Dacica” led the constructive simulation training exercise „Argedava 25-10” at the Simulation Training Center to develop the skills of accomplishing the mission in the theatre of operations in Afghanistan. This exercise took place between 1-9 March 2011, being planned by the Land Forces Staff and the geostategical framework was on the Afghan territory.

Lieutenant Bogdan RĂDULESCU
Translated by: Daniela RISTEA

The exercise was one of rehearsing the mission at tactical level, by Combined Team Zabul (1st Mechanized Brigade Headquarters “Argedava”), 1st Maneuver Battalion composed of soldiers from 495th Infantry Battalion “Captain Stefan Sovery” for the theatre of operations in Afghanistan, through constructive simulation. Between January-May 2011, the Brigade Headquarters, 2nd and 495th Infantry Battalions carry out the training necessary to the ISAF mission in the theatre of operations in Afghanistan, which will begin in July this year.

Colonel Pompiliu Sora, from the Simulation Training Center, speaking about the importance of this exercise, mentioned that the target is “the training of the Headquarters and Staffs commanders of the 1st Mechanized Brigade „Argedava” and of the battalions to plan and lead the military actions, in order to be deployed in the theatre of operations in Afghanistan, using the JCATS (Joint Conflict and Tactical Simulation). The Simulation Training Center provides the technical and intelligence support in order to accomplish the objectives of training the structures participating in this type of exercise.”

The Simulation Training Center supports the training of the armed forces to plan and lead the combined and joint military forces, increasing the interoperability with the NATO and UN through simulation exercises (MIMEX). It acts as a sentry in Romania for NATO Education and Training Network and cooperates with NATO, excellence and national centers for the standardization of the procedures regarding the organizing and deployment of simulation training.

The scenario was oriented to the detachment training in order to participate in the theatre of operations in Afghanistan, in a politico-geographical area as real as possible.

Colonel Dumitru Laurentiu, the deputy of CTZ, emphasizes that “the biggest influence and the positive aspect was due to the participation of the supervisors from 81st Mechanized Brigade, which has just come back from the theatre of operations in Afghanistan, because this way we had the opportunity to encounter the Afghan reality and, within the possibilities of the system which applies the exercise, we changed everything we could so that it might be appropriate to the present situation in Afghanistan. Taking into account the number of structures which are components of the CTZ, this is the first moment when we could realize what everyone knows and is able to do, it is the moment when we can check everything we have learnt until now, during the training and, in the same time, this is the first moment when the actions are live, when the astronomical time corresponds with the operational one, all the briefing being in English.”

1st Mechanized Brigade “Argedava” is the continuation of combat traditions of 34th and 36th Infantry Regiments which participated in military actions both within I and II World War. The two Infantry Battalions of the 1st Mechanized Brigade „Argedava” “Argedava” participated in missions in the theatre of operations in Afghanistan, Angola, Balkans and Iraq.

During the exercise we focused on the personnel training to carry out the standard procedures of operation during the planning and simulation operations of stability, support, transition, reconstruction and counter-insurgency combat.

Lieutenant-Colonel Iulian Berdea, the commander of 2nd Infantry Battalion “Calugareni”, mentioned that “this simulation exercise, as usually because it is not the only one we participate in, represents a very important moment to make a structure meet operational standards. Obviously, apart from the exercise, we all have established standard operating procedures, techniques and tactics at the subunits level but, now it is one of the moments when we succeed, in a simulated environment, to check them, and to update some of them.”

The personnel from 2nd Infantry Battalion “Calugareni” participated in September 1994 in the first NATO-PfP exercise “Cooperative Bridge” in Poland. The following years, this unit also participated in other seven NATO-PfP exercises within our country or other countries like Czech Republic, Netherlands, Turkey and Germany.
The mission of participating to the peacekeeping operation UNAVEM II in Angola was the first participation of a Romanian combat unit in international operations. 

Infantry Battalion “Calugăreni”, operated in Zabul with a maneuver battalion, and in Kandahar with an infantry detachment, being at the same time the first Romanian unit which was responsible for Zabul area.

From the training objectives we remind the training improvement of the Combined Team Zabul Headquarters in order to plan and lead the military actions of the subordinated structures, the training of the battalion, company and platoon commanders in the process of taking decisions, the elaboration of the courses of action after a scenario, proper to the missions which are going to be carried out in the theatre of operation. It was taken into account the skill improvement of the use of the command-control system, the ability development of applying the standard operation procedures, and also the real training to accomplish coalition assignments.

I consider that we’ll have a good co-operation as long as we focus on the basic task, to accomplish the ascertained mission.

Focus on the basic task, to accomplish the mission

Interview with Colonel Harabagiu, 1st Mechanized Brigade Commander

Major Ion Adrian CURIMAN

Colonel, what was unfolding the mounting-like until now?

We are in the last phase of the training in order to carry out our mission in the Theatre of Operations in Afghanistan. Up till now, the drill accomplished its aims. This is one of the important days of the exercise because two of our companies are involved in a joint coordinate and search action with the role players: National Afghan Army and National Afghan Police.

What is the units’ training in Cincu made up of?

During CIL-FT we try to simulate the real battlefield. The exercise set up was elaborated on the grounds of the Romanian Army forces’ experience in the Theatre of Operations in Afghanistan. In my opinion it represents the most important and decisive stage of the 2nd Battalion training and also to the future CTZ. The military, acquired their lessons, the headquarters staff operates together and activities unfold according to the established set up.

What can you tell us about the CTZ’s missions?

CTZ is a multinational framework consisting of American and Romanian military personnel under our American partners command. Under the CTZ command there are the two infantry battalions that will be deployed in the Theatre of Operations, respectively “Gălățeni” 2nd Infantry Battalion and “Captain Ştefan Şoverth” 495th Infantry Battalion. Their activity is generally similar to a Headquarters in a operations area and is grounded on the ISAF Commander’s orders and directories, with the view to rules of engagement and international legislation regarding to the war rights /laws comply.

“Captain Ştefan Şoverth” 495th Infantry Battalion.

What do you think will be your collaboration with the American partner like?

I consider that we’ll have a good co-operation as long as we focus on the basic task, to accomplish the ascertained mission. This is one of the issues that belong with interoperability. Without English communication at least in CTZ situation, functioning isn’t possible. It is the same in the infantry battalions’ case that are under the CTZ command. According to their participation to co-operation activities they have to speak in English. It is for sure that communication in foreign language will increase in a certain extent the difficulty of the mission.
The 2nd Infantry Battalion is training in Cincu Range

The 2nd Infantry Battalion „Călugăreni” participated in the real live training and firing stage (SIMFTX-LFX) of „ARGEDAVA 25 – 10” Exercise in the Army Combat Training Centre (CIL-FT Cincu) in the period 04.04. – 17.04. 2011.

Major Ion Adrian CURIMAN
Translated by: Valentin PICIOREA

This final stage of the exercise was the most important in the 2nd Infantry Battalion training and its main purpose the battalion’s staff, in order to accomplish the particular missions in the Theatre of Operations in Afghanistan. The training was carried out applying MILES and HITS (equipment of implement and combat engagement relying on laser technology).

During the exercise proceeding period was pointed out the personnel training regarding standard operating procedures according to every section. In this manner the Battalion Headquarters performed particular activities in order to upgrade operations planning, organising and conducting according to the Theatre of Operations in Afghanistan characteristics, training in live conditions alike in order to fulfill coalition’s tasks in Counterinsurgency Operations (COIN) and to LCEM set, English knowledge and particular theatre of operations terminology improving and last but not least the framework’s cohesion.

The battalion personnel /staff training focussed on skills and abilities improving concerning the manoeuvre of forces’ assets and firing conducting and executing through patrol missions, observation posts set up and some other intricate tasks. It was also considered soldiers’ skills improving regarding technique, weapons and materials maintenance in the TO particularities.

The exercise scenario was elaborated to realize the tactical operational framework/draft with the view to the non-art.5 Operations of planning, conducting and executing in the TO Afghanistan. They were taken into account different threats and risks that the Romanian soldiers can be subjects, risks that are distinct depending on the take place Zone of Operations and reasons of engendering. From this point of view there were identified terrorist risks and threats, standard armed risks on behalf of the local armed group leaders, risks come out because of the combat against structured crime activities or intercede with them, risks work up by some local workers’ combat in the coalition forces
Training the trainers

495th Infantry Battalion „Ştefan Şoverth” during the preparation for the ISAF mission in Afghanistan received, in March 2011, advising from a team of instructors of BMATT (British Military Training Team) from Czech Republic.

Lieutenant Bogdan RADULESCU

As an additional guarantee for the success of the mission, the team consisting of two British teachers and a Czech instructor continued the preparation of our instructors and conducted the training monitoring. A further element of the mission training effort in theater of operations, the UK partners support was “very consistent and the activity beneficial in all aspects,” said the commander of the 495th Infantry Battalion „Ştefan Şoverth”, Lieutenant-Colonel Dorin Toma.

The activity enabled 495th Infantry Battalion „Ştefan Şoverth” military to improve the knowledge planning, organizing, directing and execution of training activities and specific actions of Afghan theater of operations. Were also improved leadership and execution skills regarding the response to incidents, the course of action in case that improvised explosive devices or unexploded munitions items are initiated, how to request close air support and medical evacuation, first aid procedures for gunshot wound and accidentally triggered landmines or improvised explosive devices. During this activity, the British team leader and training advisor, Major Colin McNerney, thanked the Romanian party for the professional manner they organized and conducted their training. At the same time, cultural activities like sightseeing in the Olt Valley and Sibiu were greatly appreciated by the BMATT instructors. The activity ended with a ceremony, in which were changed diplomas and platelets between members of the British team and the 495th Infantry Battalion „Ştefan Şoverth”.

The BMATT is located at Vyškov, within the Military Academy of the Czech Armed Forces, and has been in existence since 2000 and it’s Mission Statement is: “to provide military training courses, training assistance and advice to Partner Countries, in order to further develop their professional armed forces and their capabilities to participate in multinational Peace Support Operations.” The combined impact of this training is to help partner countries to improve their training capabilities, especially in respect of Peace Support Operations training.
A large international organization had been developed following a relief between western and eastern relations, when the politics of national interests indicated the image of a friendly and relaxed prime minister more favorable than the ‘iron’ premier, whereas the wish to prove openness and sincerity was beyond former prudence and intransigency, still the organization has been generated by a thorough complex process of negotiation between small and medium states, which had to bear the Malta agreement when the continent was separated between West and East.

The Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe was initially conceived to cover three stages:

a) at foreign affairs ministry level;

b) at experts’ level;

c) at higher level.

The negotiations were concluded on 1 August 1975 at Helsinki, when the Final Act of Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe was signed, at high level; it was also known as the Final Act of Helsinki.

Embracing all the basic principles which govern the OSCE – the envisaged step forward

Established in a period of time marked by significant transformations, with years of conflicts, industrial, military and cultural revolutions, the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which later on became the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) may be regarded as one of the few international forum which have maintained its original direction due to the promotion of innovating ideas regarding dialogue and multilateral negotiations.

Mariana ANCUŢ, PhD

Translated by: Elena CIŞMAŞU

Although it is ascertained that this international organization had been developed following a relief between western and eastern relations, when the politics of national interests indicated the image of a friendly and relaxed prime minister more favorable than the ‘iron’ premier, whereas the wish to prove openness and sincerity was beyond former prudence and intransigency, still the organization has been generated by a thorough complex process of negotiation between small and medium states, which had to bear the Malta agreement when the continent was separated between West and East.

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Thus it became the first tool in conflict prevention and crisis management. Consequently, its first decision was to deploy an OSCE peace maintaining mission in Nagorno-Karabah area. Also in Budapest, The code of conduct on military aspects of security was adopted, containing the governing principles on the role and use of armed forces in democratic societies. It has also envisaged the beginning of discussions within OSCE regarding the common pattern of European security in the XXI century, based on the OSCE principles and commit-
OSCE holds a unique place within the political and economic field. To enhance measures for confidence and security (CSBMs) as well as in the field of armament control, in order to develop agreements on small arms and light weapons, which are certain, efficient and noticeable steps made in promoting its objectives. The establishment of the CSBMs has determined the extension of a relationship network with other international organizations, ranging from the United Nations, European Union to NATO. The reason for its development is that through its activities, OSCE has succeeded in strengthening certain mechanisms and procedures which to enable efficient dialogue between belligerent sides or rapid response in case of emergency. Some of these decisions may not need consensus as in UN or NATO case. Also, OSCE has enhanced partnership with regional organizations and economic entities. Although some may claim that OSCE has not succeeded to cope with the challenges imposed by the lack of consensus on the manner of approaching the international security, it has led to the creation of diverse groups of interests at all levels which prevent the elaboration of consistent policies. Also, the multiple national and international institutions which approach security issues from various points of view and generate fragmentary decisions add to the dynamics and complexity of international environment.

The Statement of Astana, on 2 December 2010 stipulates that “the security of each participating state is inherently related to that of the others. Each participating state has equal rights to security. We reaffirm the inherent right of each participating state to be free to choose or replace security arrangements, to include treaties or alliances, according to their own assessment. Each participating state shall respect the rights of the others. They will not enhance their own security at the expense of the other participating states”. Nowadays, one of its areas of responsibilities, the armament control, represents one of the most important European instruments for security within the international environment.

Whether there are debates in what regards the politics and reforms which should be achieved by NATO or European Union, if we question the efficient manner for conflict annihilation, especially of low or medium intensity, then the politics promoted by OSCE indicate that the steps made in promoting its objectives are certain, efficient and noticeable to the international actors. This may be one of the reasons why the number of the organizations interrelating with OSCE is increasing.

And still, there are voices, who ascertain that, in spite of the difficulties generated by the absence of a clear and consistent vision over the definition and physiognomy of the armed conflict and post-conflict relief, in terms related to time, approach and actions of the conflicting parties, OSCE has become a brand in the field of international security, whether we refer to armament control, conflict prevention, free elections, environmental protection, or we speak of political and juridical actions.

OSCE has thus become, throughout its long process of development, the step forward which all the decision makers should undertake, in a world extremely unstable, volatile, blasting and under permanent transformation.
In the spotlight:
The 282nd Mechanized Infantry Brigade
We are adequately trained, we are highly responsible

Interview with Commander of 2nd Infantry Division „Getica”, brigadier general Nicolae Ciucă, PhD

Colonel Dragoş ANGHELACHE
Translated by: Elena CIŞMAŞU

Dear General, the 2nd Infantry Division, although it has been recently established, comprises units which had a significant presence in the theatres of operations and have a major combat background. How do you appreciate, by this date, the 2nd Infantry Division „Getica”?

The division I command today holds a beautiful and important place in the golden book of the Romanian Armed Forces history. The 2nd Infantry Division „GETICA” continues the traditions of the 2nd Army, which came into being 95 years ago, on 18 August 1916, in accordance with the „Plan for mobilization for 1916 - 1917 timeframe” and the stipulations of „Z Hypothesis” of the Romanian Supreme Headquarter. The 2nd Infantry Division „Getica” was established in 2010, as a major unit situated on the eastern flank of NATO, having a substantial strategic significance.

The transformation process generated by the subordinated tactical structures and foreseen by the Master Plan has been achieved based on major efforts and with the acknowledgement of the new missions by the entire division personnel. Within these circumstances, the transformation and integration process will require professional skills, capability to understand and comply with the training requirements, having also a holistic approach of the 2nd Infantry Division „GETICA”. Currently, one of our main missions is to reach the established standards of training and development, to preserve Romanian armed forces set of values.

The 2011 Training Plan of the 2nd Infantry Division aims at achieving the operationalization level which enables us to accomplish Afghanistan theatre of operation specific missions, to participate with forces at NRF-18, to maintain operational capability and inherently, to become a rapid reaction force on national territory, able to cope with any challenges, irrespective of their nature.

The entire division personnel remain a distinct professional category, bearer of military traditions and values, the symbol and embodiment of military fighter and expert, able to command, to train and to motivate his subordinated personnel in order to achieve the established tasks.

You are one of the militaries with a rich experience of international missions, as you have participated in operations in Africa, Balkans and Middle East. Also, at command level, you have been through all military hierarchy phases. What is the impact of the accumulated experience on the act of command?

The act of command, as well as the manner of command is achieved based on personal skills, through training, education and experience. Any commander, depending on his psychological and social maturity, may have an efficiently structured and transparent command manner. In other cases, this manner may still be under development. And this is shown not only in commander-subordinated personnel relations.

The accumulated experience is highly important in the act of command, as it helps the commander cope with different situations, with various degrees of complexity. Still, experience is not sufficient, and personally I am a supporter of joining experience with personal training, teamwork, general and specific education, permanently updated with the newest studies in the field of command.

What are your requirements and expectations from subordinated personnel?

PROFESSIONALISM, HONESTY, INTEGRITY, LOYALTY, EQUILIBRIUM, DEDICATION AND RESPECT, in other words, to comply with the 2nd Infantry Division” motto: „SEMPER DIGNITATE

What are the main goals of the division for the second half of 2011?

As we develop the division building process, by focusing on combat support and combat service support units which are planned to reach operatio-
In the spotlight, under UN aegis, we have enhanced training within the partnership and we prepared the first teams of officers, warrant officers and NCOs who have worked within multinational headquarters and the first structures who have taken part to missions within SFOR/ Bosnia Herzegovina and KFOR/ Kosovo. Afterwards, when Romania committed to anti-terrorism combat we have deployed battalion level units in Afghanistan and Iraq. Currently, we increase the instruction programs to comply with our engagement in Afghanistan.

As you have noticed, I did not mention any unit so that this should not be taken as a hierarchy, the militaries know themselves, and they respect each other in the spirit of soldier camaraderie. I appreciate that all units have successfully accomplished their tasks, at highest standards. Our country is the main beneficiary of these military performances and I am extremely honored to have taken part to such missions.

Would you like to make any other comments, in addition to our questions?

I would have liked to answer with Saint Augustine’s quotation: “Love God and do what you want” but I am afraid I haven’t reached such a self ascension, nor do I believe we are capable of such expectation. What we can do is follow his advice, adjust it to our dimension, integrate it and say: “Respect your comrade and do what you want!”

The problems of the militaries are also our problems, and our duty during peacetime it to show them that we care. Besides, this was also the message of the chief of General Staff during the last meetings in Focşani, Bârlad, Brăila and Galaţi garrisons.

To conclude, I may say that we have important responsibilities to cope with, we have assumed major objectives which we can only achieve through joint efforts of all command teams, based on the competence and dedication of subordinated personnel. It is the only way in which we can successfully accomplish our established mission.
Back in time

The 282nd Mechanized Infantry Brigade is inherited with the military traditions of the legendary 10th Regiment Dorobanți “Putna”.

As of 1872, in order to improve the training capabilities of the Romanian Army, the Ministry of War - general Alexandru Cernat - ordered the creation of new 10 regiments. One of these regiments was the 10th Regiment Dorobanți “Putna”.

As of 15th of August 1877, during the Independence War, the regiment led by major George Măldărescu, and three battalions led by major Gheorghe Șonțu, captain Walter Mărăcineanu and lieutenant Chivu Stănescu with the regiment died in the battles along the Don River. The survivors had been taken prisoners by the Russian forces and moved to Celeabinsk concentration camp.

Due to the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, the Ministry of Armed Forces ordered on 24th of September 1968 the creation of the 282nd Mechanized regiment became the 282nd Mechanized Brigade “Unirea Principatelor”, and on 1st of March 2005 it became the 282nd Mechanized Infantry Brigade “Unirea Principatelor”.

The regiment became operational in a very short time, being capable to accomplish any kind of missions on national territory. According to the order of the Ministry of National Defense, on 24th of January 1994 the 282nd Mechanized regiment became the 282nd Mechanized Infantry Brigade "Unirea Principatelor", and on 1st of March 2005 it became the 282nd Mechanized Infantry Brigade "Unirea Principatelor". As of 21st of January 2011, Colonel Adrian TONEA, Phd was named commander of the regiment’s first detachment of conscripts sworn allegiance to their country.

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I am very trustful in the brigade command team

Interview with commander of the 282nd Mechanized Infantry Brigade Colonel Adrian TONEA, PhD

Major Ion Adrian CURRMAN
Translated by: Captain Marius DINIŢĂ

Colonel Sir, starting with January this year, you’ve been invested as commander of the 282nd Mechanized Infantry Brigade “Unirea Principatelor”. Which are your objectives now at the beginning of the decade?

Half of year has elapsed since I’ve been invested in this honorable position with a great responsibility, but I can say that time has passed very quickly. Running on the treadmill of all activities, the synergy of the human resource, the way this brigade “is moving”, literally, empowers me to strongly uphold the appellative assigned on this brigade as “The Spear Head” of the Romanian Land Forces.

I am very trustful in the brigade command team and subordinated personnel. I will apply a proactive management based on resources available, especially on very valuable human resource, resource that has been trained on NATO standards. The imperative is to highlight the value, with an emphasis on professionalism, initiative, deontological ethics and morality. We ought to work in an integrated way, to have the ability to adapt to any situation, to properly manage the present and to build a coherent vision for the future.

I am aware of the great tests that brigade has sustained and will sustain in the next period, and I personally took part in some projects as I’ve worked in the Land Operational Component and Romanian Land Forces staff.

Returning to your question, the main objectives that I follow very carefully in the next period will focus in particular; continue to prepare the staff and personnel to achieve the fundamental objectives laid down by the upper echelons orders or deliberated, preparing for the upcoming mission in Afghanistan, preparation for membership of NRDC–T (NRF), preparing the visit of the OSCE delegation, under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in July this year, the 282nd Mechanized Infantry Brigade will host a visiting delegation of the OSCE members from partner states, representatives of the two bodies responsible for arms control and coordination of the NATO and OSCE, as well as national structures.

Annual exchange of information with member countries of OSCE aims to present how were fulfilled the obligations of our country from the contents of those documents, as a signatory party, to implement the foresights and their transpose them in the real life of their spirit.

In this context, the OSCE delegation’s visit is a major opportunity not only to promote the image of the Romanian Army, but also the brigade, and to highlight the professionalism of the command and subordinated units, to demonstrate high standards achieved by the brigade in the framework of the international commitments assumed by Romania.

Sir, what can you tell us about the relationships between your institution and the local community?

Civil-military cooperation is an important component of the brigade activity. We keep close contact from the professional perspective with local authorities, and also government and non governmental organizations active in the brigade area of responsibility. We initiate and participate actively in the socio-cultural activities within local community. We have also taken part in numerous humanitarian actions with the Red Cross to help the elderly in asylum and institutionalized children with different disabilities. Furthermore, we are able to help the local population in case of emergency. We did it before with success and we will do it again whenever is needed!

A new mission is arising in Afghanistan this time with a much larger personnel. Considering the economic crisis faced by the Romanian society and hence, the national defense system, how do you think will be affected the military training and preparation of your subordinates for this new mission?

The effects of international financial and economic crisis are felt in the Romanian Army’s budget, and also in the brigade allocated budget. But I am convinced that, through effective management of available resources, we will, as before, successfully carry out our assigned missions. In these circumstances, we try to implement the motto that has three components: ability, adaptability, flexibility.

I am confident that we will identify with the upper echelons, the most realistic and consistent solutions to ensure the necessary support in the preparation at the level of performance previously established.

Moreover, the preparation for this mission represents a continuation of the activities planned in the brigade commander annual training order who was intensified by an about two months additional training and will complete the activities planned for the operational phase of the three structures nominated for this mission.

The brigade multinational military experience is reflected by numerous multinational exercises conducted on three continents and international missions in theaters of operations in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan. The basics were formed long time ago; I can even say that we can learn one from each other.

Starting from the principle “Train as you fight”, the 282nd Mechanized Infantry Brigade has developed, even in these crisis conditions, training facilities collectively known as FOBs, which are faithfully reproducing the conditions of fighting from Afghanistan. In these facilities, soldiers perform missions similar to ones conducted in the theaters of operations. It is a first in the Romanian Army and we are very proud of it.
“Smârdan” Firing Range, a training laboratory for the military

Interview with Colonel Viorel STUHULEŢ, the Commander of “Smârdan” Firing Range

“Smârdan” Firing Range is situated in the southern region of Galaţi County, 15 km far from Galaţi city, on the Smârdan village grounds. It covers about 8,500 ha with 5-6 km spread, approx. 16 km length and a regular shape. Here there can be performed air force training exercises both bombardment and fighting. Over the years took place joint activities with some other countries’ army and air forces. There is a very good relationship with the units who come for firings because we have the same objectives that mean assuring safety and an actual review of the training activities performed in the barracks/bases/camps and can be noticed the results of the performance in the there. In the range situation everybody wish to perform better, to force the engines to the limit, to aim, to observe the result at the target and confirm the good results get in simulators and short ranges.

What can you tell us about the activities executed with the foreign partners?

From the manifold activities that we performed with foreign partners I should mention: „CARPATHIAN EXPRESS 2000” with British Forces, „Smârdan 2000”, „Smârdan 2002” and „Smârdan 2004” exercises with 152 Haute Ariete(Italy) in co-operation with Romanian units, „CHASEUR ACCOMPLI” Romanian - French bilateral exercise, „ROMEX”, Romanian - American bilateral exercise, „LONE FOIL” Romanian - British bilateral exercise. As it can be noticed most of the carry-out exercises were called Smârdan and in this manner it is reminded historical tradition regarding our ancestors’ battles in the Independence War, 1877 - 1878.

Following these activities, both Romanian and foreign military appreciated the range logistics and training conditions, recognising the military professional well trained foreman and current personnel.

What are the logistic facilities provided by this firing range?

We are pleased that Smârdan Firing Range engaging the attention because of its large area, different kind of terrain and endowments and also for the diverse communication routes by road, by rail way, by air and by water. We have 600 places for housing for the military that come here for firing activities, a not quite modern kitchen that assures yet our current demands and a 600 seats mess hall. The only facility we are connected to is electricity, the rest are secured by ourselves: water from our dwell, and heat energy from our central heating.

What are the difficulties you are facing to during activities progress?

The range staff list standard is totally unsatisfactory in order to carry out range operations in good conditions, mainly because the organizational chart was elaborated on the idea of outside services - guard and board - but in the moment we gave up to these utilities we had to manage ourselves. Under these circumstances a great deal of the staff accomplishes some other posts and the activities amount is similar to the ones in any military unit. A great deal of the first time firing range incomers are surprised by the fact that actually this is a military unit and beyond joking I tell them that with the 94 posts we have in the organizational chart we administrate the 86 record buildings. We face difficulties because of the distance from the city and traveling to work and back are more difficult in winter time, when the wind covers with snow the routes and movement is quite an adventure.

Starting March 1, 2009, “Smârdan” Firing Range subordinates to Land Forces General Headquarters. In what manner influenced this change under your command unit’s activity?

Following this subordination we gain a permanent assistance and constant support, even in this more difficult period. Thanks to the removing of some articulations from the chain of command we can deal quickly a great deal of the problems we confronted with. Every time we ask for logistical, financial and even personnel support we get agreement and come up best solutions in order to be on the firing dispositions in due time.

What are the main objectives you act on in the following period?
The primary objectives followed by “Smârdan” Firing Range consists of ensuring the requested circumstances in order to carry out field training exercises, weapons training exercises, live firing exercises following the Army units joint training with NATO countries’ formations, weapons, ammunition and military technique testing that can be confirmed by the range, related to the awarded money.

2011 is an anniversary year for the unit you command. What are your feelings on the brink this anniversary moment?

On June 15 we celebrate 55 years since setting up. The moment when Colonel Ilie-tenan Alecu Geoarge’s first officer commander and an ambitious staff had a real heroically mission, to build up a military unit and in the same time to coordinate and ensure catering for income units or firings starting July 1956. Subsequently some range equipment building it was possible to widen the capacity of range activities, accomplishing the optimal conditions to execute firings using all types of weapons, ammunition, explosive substances, including different weapons, technique and ammunition testing and confirmation. Our gratification comes from the fact during this period we did not have any accidents and activities carried out safely and our assistance beneficiaries were pleased both for the range facilities and the collaboration with our staff.

In this manner “Smârdan” Firing Range and also the Romanian Army image improved upon Romania and worldwide.

The Romanian Army is well-structured in accordance with its missions

The objectives of the missions carried out by ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) consist in supporting the Afghan government in developing and maintaining the level of security in order to extend the Afghan influence, contributing to stability, security and development in Afghanistan.

Lieutenant Bogdan RĂDULESCU
Translated by: Corina STRAT


The General thanked our country for its contribution to Afghanistan, relieving Romanian military professionalism: “It has been a great opportunity for me having Romanian military forces under my command while being in charge of ISAF. I could say that during that year, a substantial progress was made and the effects of Romanian Contribution were significant in Zabul. What I’ve noticed is that the evolution of the Romanian forces in 2011 gave us the possibility of improving the free traffic on the highway, this issue being essential for an efficient economy and government. This assignment was achieved in a professional way. Being a NATO Commander, it was a privilege to work with Romanian military. They did a great job.” Major general Nick Carter has mentioned the fact that “the Romanian Army is well-structured for the missions that has been invited to take part in the Romanian Armed Forces cooperate very well with the partners within the Alliance and understand the political context”, because in General’s opinion, “counter insurgency is a political matter – a conflict between the government forces and the insurgents for winning the population’s support. At the same time, the Romanian forces are aware of the Afghan population, being able to identify common elements like agrarian economy or the capacity and need of cooperation and thus attaining a higher standard.”
Romanian Forces have developed four Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams that are currently working alongside the Afghan National Army forces to ensure security for the Afghan people. These OMLT's teach, coach, mentor and provide support to develop a self-sufficient and professional ANA force. Much of this increased independence can be attributed to the partnership with the Soldiers of 1-4.

Diaz said that when it comes to his troops and the Romanian forces there really is no delineation. From the beginning, 1-4 platoons have operated alongside Romanian forces sharing command and control over each mission. Diaz also said one of the greatest accomplishments 1-4 has achieved is the relationship that has been forged between U.S. and Romanian Forces.

"I want them (1-4 Soldiers) to leave here knowing they were part of something special," Diaz said. "That their contribution has greatly enabled their partners; not only the Romanians but also the Afghans." It's this legacy of cooperation and teamwork left behind by the Soldiers of 1-4 that Diaz hopes is remembered. It is this concept of partnership Diaz knows his Soldiers will embrace and encourage in others as they grow to become leaders and throughout their military careers.

According to Lt. Col. Eliud Diaz, Task Force Hawk Deputy Commander, the partnership started in 2006 as a battalion-size Romanian task force with a company-size US contingent. Over time, the 1-4 INF increased its role and added more staff personnel and enablers.

"This mission over the span of the last four years has greatly increased the capabilities of our Romanian counterparts," Diaz said. "It has encouraged them on a larger strategic level to the point where they were willing to commit more forces to the mission."

"It has been a pleasure for us to share in this experience with the Romanians," Diaz said. "They have come a long way in their ability to operate independently."

The Romanian Forces have taken on a larger leadership role within the ISAF mission, with one Romanian battalion serving as the main effort for ISAF forces in Zabul Province. In fact, Romanian forces are the only NATO to force to double their contribution to the war in Afghanistan by adding another Infantry battalion to their rotations over the past few years.

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Romania with some of the great personalities and fields of Zabul. The relationship we developed with Romanian Soldiers at every level has built lifelong.
hers alive and moving forward.

What would you like to say to the Romanian partners at the end of the mission?

I am extremely proud of you as you should be of yourselves. It has been a pleasure working with true professionals here in Zabul. Our partnership doesn’t end here, but will continue back in Europe. God bless Romania, and may god bless the soldiers and families that have sacrificed everything for our success.

What positive changes have been made during your mission in Afghanistan?

The tactic infrastructure has developed along the A1 highway by strengthening and reopening some locations realized with special efforts, an infrastructure that was destined to increase the possibilities of control during the day and during the night. We have also put into operation the Operational Centers of District Command, these establishing the relation with the Operational Center of Provincial Command in Qalat. Our presence in the responsibility area increased, while the missions organized and unrolled by the Romanian forces in the province have diversified. The Romanian team has integrated very well into the framework of Combined Team Zabul and I consider that it had worked on equal positions according to people’s responsibility. Another positive change the Romanian soldiers fully benefit from is the support offered by our American partners, the allied forces. These MRAP vehicles ensure higher protection during the missions performed in the area of responsibility from the whole province. An eloquent example is the incident that occurred on the 1st of May when four Romanian soldiers of the 26th Infantry Battalion “The Red Scorpions”, during a mission of patrol along the A1 highway, were hit by an improvised explosive device. The high protection of the MRAP vehicle saved our soldiers’ lives. We thank again our partners for this help and assure them of our gratitude.

What message would you like to give the next unit?

Our colleagues of the first mechanized Brigade who will begin their mission in June must know that within the Combined Team Zabul team, a team they will belong to for a period of six months, they will find the achievements of a team that has functioned like an entity and I wish them to carry out their missions at the same standards. I am convinced that the future component of Combined Team Zabul will continue to support the Afghan population from Zabul to develop a secure and lasting society. I wish my colleagues of both the Romanian Army and the American Army, in a word to the new Combined Team Zabul, had and easy and eventless mission, and not least to return home to their families and friends in good health.

The managers’ raw material is represented by their subordinates’ potential and by the managerial talent” – H. Botlinger.

In his relations with the whole team in CTZ, the commander of the structure has acted as a member of the team and as the leader of the team, Colonel James R. Blackburn was simultaneously the command and the engine of the team, initiating and directing actions and training people to achieve them. We have together led to the accomplishment of the missions that we assumed and we can express our content with the fact that we have achieved remarkable things for the Afghan people and society. In the end we send them our best wishes and we are proud that have been part of the remarkable team in such a demanding, but honorable mission.

Anytime, anywhere and irrespective of the conditions we can say: Semper Prompti or Toujours Prêt. Our deeds of arms fully strengthen these mottos.
The military ceremony took place on the 24th of February, at the Land Forces Headquarters, in the presence of the deputy chief of the General Headquarters, general-lieutenant Dan Ghica-Radu, brigadier general, Ariton Ionita – the chief of The Land Forces, major general, Gabriel Gabor – the head of the Personnel and Mobilization Department within the Romanian Ministry of National Defense and the other heads of the major state structures of the Land Forces.

The Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary ambassador of the French Republic in Bucharest, His Excellency Henry Paul, awarded a gold medal, two silver medals and four bronze medals to the military personnel and the privates within the Romanian Land Forces. It was also awarded the commemorative medal “Afghanistan” to four other military personnel.

In the opening of the medal ceremony, the chief of the Land Forces Staff, Ariton Ionita, addressed to the present audience to specify that the moment is both honorable and important because it offers us besides the joy of recognizing the value, the honor, the professionalism and friendship of the Romanian soldiers, as well as the opportunity to reconfirm the French-Romanian military partnership relations, privileged relations that have started since October 1916, when general Henry Mathias Berthelot arrived in Romania as a chief of the French military mission. General Ariton Ionita also expressed his certainty that the Romanian military conferred with medals are honorable representatives of the Romanian Army as well as of the Romanian people, and thanked them once again for the way they represented their country and the military who are still acting in the theatre operations.

In his turn, the French Republic ambassador, His Excellency Henry Paul, talked about General Bethelot and confirmed that this one is the historical testimony of the relationships between France and Romania. He also recalled that last year he moved the ceremony, he used to organize in Bucharest on the 11th of November, to last, and he was honored to lay a wreath in memorial of the French general, in the presence of the Land Forces staff and the military who served their country in Afghanistan. His Excellency reminded that France is involved in Afghanistan under UN mandate together with other 45 states - 24 members of the UN, especially with Romania, focusing on the idea that the French military presence is needed along the Romanians because France wants to obey the international commitments, to assume its responsibilities and to lobby for its values.

France fights against the terrorist threats the same as Romania, supporting common security.

At the end of the ceremony, His Excellency, ambassador Henry Paul, specified for the military press present at the event, that the awarded medals within the ceremony “prove that our relationships are based on the same concepts and values and share the same ideals: peace, stability and democracy in Afghanistan. The French Ministry of Defense suggested giving medals to the Romanian military who fought besides the French military within mutual military formations. “The awarded medals have different values” - explained the ambassador Henry Paul. The National Defense medals are such as “War Cross”, which are given prior and are different: the Gold Cross, the Silver Cross and the Bronze Cross but the Commemorative Medal is a medal that reminds of the French support in Afghanistan. “

The French Republic ambassador, with credentials within Romania, conferred honorary medals, given by the French Ministry of Defense to those soldiers who carried out successfully Romanian-French operations in Afghanistan in the theatre of operations, in 2010.