

## EDITORIAL

### MIRACLE AT CAPORETTO

In 2018, the publication *Modern Military Challenges* celebrates the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its publication. The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of military professional and scientific texts is an excellent achievement for the Slovenian Armed Forces, which has been off age for quite some time now. Initially, the goals of the Editorial Board were more modest. With the *Bulletin of the Slovenian Armed Forces*, as it was called at the time, they wanted mainly to distribute the knowledge of all those who had returned from various education programmes and trainings abroad. With the efforts of all those who took part in creating it, the publication has grown to gain a scientific and professional character and, as such, it has been indexed in the PAIS International database since 2010.

The Slovenian Armed Forces publishes specialised military literature on the basis of Article 42 of the Defence Act, which within the control of the armed forces also includes a regulation that the minister, in addition to other areas, also decides on specialised military literature. This allows for the care for specialised military literature to be constantly present in the defence sector; however, outside the defence sector, it is unfortunately missing. Military specialised and scientific topics can rarely be found in printed form. As a rule, they are prepared as a result of personal motivation and not so much of the systemic development of the subject matter. For this very reason, specialised military literature needs to be developed all the more carefully, and the development of military scientific topics promoted in cooperation with Slovenian and other foreign institutions, where the critical mass of intelligentsia and funding is significantly higher than in Slovenia.

On this important anniversary, the *Contemporary Military Challenges* are in good shape. The statistics show that, in the two decades, 438 articles have been written by 594 authors. 51 percent of them were members of the Slovenian Armed Forces, 29

percent were from other Slovenian institutions and 12 percent of them were foreign authors. Only eight percent of authors come from the administrative part of the Ministry of Defence. The largest number of external authors participated in 2008, i.e. 50 percent, and most foreign authors in 2010 and 2016. In the former case, the share was 42 percent, and in the latter case, 50 percent of all authors. The share of contributions from the administrative part of the Ministry of Defence, which includes the Defence Policy Directorate in charge of monitoring the defence future and drafting important documents in the field of defence policy has, however, been the smallest in the history of the publication. Indeed, this is a smaller organizational unit, but in terms of substance, a very important one for the defence sector. Nevertheless, or perhaps, for this very reason, the Directorate did not contribute any professional or scientific article in 2013, 2015, and 2017.

We expect and wish that this year this would change.

The first issue of volume 20 is dedicated to the "miracle at Caporetto (Kobarid)". Although our publication is called Contemporary Military Challenges, we wanted to devote attention to the centennial of the First World War, which took place from 1914 to 1918. Authors wrote about various topics related to this anniversary, but the essence is that warfare at that time changed significantly from the so-called "trench warfare" into a completely different form of command and control, which further down in history contributed to the development of various doctrines, strategies and tactics of warfare.

**Tomaz Kladnik**, in his article titled *The First World War and military organisation on the Slovenian territory*, presents some of the basic characteristics of this so-called comprehensive war and all the changes that occurred during the war. He summarizes some of the Slovenian archival records, which illustrate the spirit of that era in Slovenia.

*Slovenian memory of the Isonzo Front* is the title of the article by **Dunja Dobaja and Damijan Guštin**. Their article deals with "Slovenian soldiers", i.e. all those who fought for their narrow homeland, which according to the authors comprised Slovenia or Carniola, Carinthia and Styria. Their units were very diverse in terms of nationality.

In her article *Command and control in the Twelfth Isonzo Offensive* **Valerija Bernik** describes what exactly the "miracle at Caporetto" is, how it happened and what it brought both for the history and the future. Among other things, the author states that important changes at that time were induced by the so-called propaganda of national emotions and patriotic fervour.

**Blaž Torkar and Miha Kuhar** wrote an article *Württemberg Mountain Battalion and the Twelfth Isonzo Offensive*, recalling the memory of a very special battalion

led at the time by Major Theodor Sprösser. A key role was also played by Lieutenant Erwin Rommel. Both of them were specially rewarded for their actions in this offensive because of the new type of warfare, which brought new achievements and has entered the history.

*Analysis of geographical factors of the 14<sup>th</sup> Army battlefield in the Twelfth Isonzo Offensive* is an article by **Anton Ribič**, who in great detail presents to the reader the natural characteristics of the location and the climate in which battles of the Isonzo Front took place. Due to these two factors, a variety of activities took place during the battles in a very special way, and, as the author says, there were mutual effects of space and military force.

This year's first issue brings a military stroll through the past, and the next one will be dedicated to recruitment and retention of personnel in modern armed forces.

We wish you pleasant reading!