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Our Veterans Had To Wait For Thanks.

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Group Room R 10

13 October 2004

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The Velvet Revolution in 1989 meant the end of governing of only one political party and return of our society to the democracy. But the revolutionary changes in society didn't appear in military instantly. The politicians didn't support radical and fast reform in the military and the Army used only cosmetic adjustments in its structure and functioning. The most visible change was the end of politicalization. The soldiers of the Czech and Slovak federative republic didn't have to be loyal to the communist party, but they still followed the old military regulations.

Not even after the Czechs and the Slovaks had split in 1993, the new situation didn't influence the life in the military. The leaders didn't care about ethics in that way how ethics would deserve. What's a pity that they have forgotten references of Thomas Gary Masaryk, the first Czechoslovak president who considered ethics as an important part of a democracy state. His ideas weren't only theoretic statements. He and other politicians in that time created the military program and explained to the people the mission and importance of military and they were patrons of morale.

The Czech republic is a young country ^{on} ^{considering} in relation to the separation of the Czech and Slovak federative republic in 1993 but it has been involved in military operations and peacekeeping missions abroad since the begin. Due to this new role of our armed forces our soldiers stand face to face with new problems. For instance, a killing of a man was always regarded as a most serious crime against law and morale. On the opposite side killing of an enemy who ^{laugh} fought against us is acceptable, according to the law.

The other thing are our veterans. Our country went through two war conflicts during its history and today continues under NATO partnership. World War I and World War II left many

veterans and their families. Unfortunately the communistic politician system which came after 1948 separated the veterans into two groups. Veterans who were fighting on the west battle front, particularly in the Czechoslovak legions and members of RAF, and these who were fighting on the east battle front. In spite of these two groups fighting for the same purpose, they didn't get the same prize. In that moment we can see the first mistakes in ^{some respect} ethics thinking and behavior. The military always reflects the society. The common military values such as honesty, courage, bravery, faithfulness, self-sacrifice and sense for responsibility were ^{pr} proclaimed, but the reality was different. The professional soldiers and patriots who didn't agree with the communistic system had to leave military service and communists sent most of them to ~~the~~ jail. The communists charged them with treason and activity against the state. The only thing the soldiers did was fight for independence and democracy. The communistic government tried to manipulate them. They encouraged them to lie and betray their friends. They killed many of them insisting on the human values. Some of the war heroes died after torture in the prisons. Only a few of them had luck and immigrated abroad. They fought for their country but they had to leave it due to lack of fairness, esteem and morale. Here we can see the roots of treatment of veterans.

After the Velvet Revolution in 1989, our society, which was more than 40 years under communistic regime, was not prepared for progressive and fast changes. In the next years ~~an~~ ^{played an important role.} ~~important role had~~ media and immigrants who returned to the Czech Republic. They started to change society's view of the problem. They wrote articles to the newspapers and magazines and spoke publicly on radio and television. The Czech people began to read the forbidden books during the communistic era; they had more and more information. Our society has begun changing step by step.

Our soldiers participated in Desert storm in Iraq in 1991. After that all media discussed the problem of syndrome of Gulf War Syndrome. The other soldiers began to fulfill tasks in IFOR, SFOR, AFOR, KFOR, UNPROFOR and as military observers in the World. Until this moment nobody perceived this problem and admitted some measure but our society began to think more about ^{ethical} ethics questions. How was our recognition of our veterans? Do they have families? Do we have some programs for them?

Since 1999 we have been a member of NATO. Ethics ^{have} ~~has~~ become for NATO- soldiers a stable part of ^{the} their life. The media and advertisement help the relationship between military and society, which is vitally important. Also the ethics codex of the soldier helped to keep a level of morale. This codex contains morale values which every soldier should have. The morale codex has been a part of transformation of the Czech armed forces. For the Czech soldiers it has meant responsibility and sense of obligation, self-sacrifice, courage, faithfulness and honesty. Other components which ^{we} ~~has~~ begun ^{to participate actively} actively participating on keeping ethics values, ^{al} ~~has been~~ ^{are} the public relations office, juridical service, service of the military priests and all levels of command.

In 1999 the Czech republic approved ~~and~~ a law about veterans of all wars. We have to thank them and realize we as a society ^{that} have obligations to their families too. The new law tells us also that our veterans ^{are entitled to} need long-term medical treatment. Nowadays the government respects needs of people who were involved in armed conflict.

On 11 November we celebrate, with other countries, an international Veterans Day. We invite veterans to our units where they discuss with our young soldiers experience, motivation, enthusiasm and respect. Some of our veterans have become patrons of different units and relationships ^s have ^{become more} ~~been~~ intensive.

Due to our participation in NATO mission^s in Iraq, Kosovo and Afganistan the number of our veterans increases. It is very important for our society to treat these people the way they deserve to be treated. We have ^{learned} learnt from the time period after velvet revolution. Our government hesitated and many old veterans of World War II died without any thanks. They got their medals ^{posthumously.} in memoriam.