

PALAVRAS DO PRESIDENTE DA LIGA DOS COMBATENTES - GENERAL CHITO RODRIGUES, NO DIA 23 DE MAIO DE 2017 EM DOBOJ-BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA  
GENERAL JOAQUIM CHITO RODRIGUES

Your Excellency the President of Bosnia Herzegovina, Mr. Mladen Ivanic  
Mr. Mayor of Doboj Obren Petrovic  
Authorities  
Ladies and gentlemen  
Paratroopers

Today's day is in the Portuguese Armed Forces, the paratrooper's festive day. Sixty one years ago, on May 23, 1956 an elite unit of the Portuguese Armed Forces was born in Portugal: The Paratroopers.

Today, in the center of Portugal, a pilgrimage of green berets meets once more, celebrating the military feats of these men, at the service of Portugal, in the world and simultaneously evoking the ones, that have fallen and that the paratroopers never leave behind. A year ago, the Mayor of Doboj, Mr. Obren Petrovic visited Portugal, the county of Vila Nova da Barquinha, represented here by Vice-President Mr. Rui Casimiro, and the parachute units stationed in Tancos, here represented by current and former paratrooper's military officers, who have served here in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

There, can you, Mr. Mayor Petrovic, relive the origin of the Green Berets that in 1996 acted in your country and which you have excellent memories of the services then provided.

This gratitude has materialized in the commitment of a closer relationship in the defense of values and culture among our peoples, namely in the conservation of this monument that must be kept alive in the memory of all.

At that time, the President Petrovic signed a protocol of cooperation within League of Combatants of Portugal, establishing commitments therein that has been fulfilled, among which is inscribed this our visit today.

That is why I am here today, representing the Combatants of Portugal, not only evoking the day of the Portuguese paratroopers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also the excellent relations resulting from their performance in this geographical area, but above all, honouring the three paratroopers soldiers and two other unit who lost their lives, has been precisely 21 years

Francisco Ressureição Barradas, 1º Cabo - 3º BIPARA/BAI/FOR, 1996  
Ricardo Borges Souto, Sold - 3º BIPARA/BAI/FOR - 1996  
Ricardo Pombo Valério, Sold - 3º BIPARA/BAI/SFOR, 2004  
Alcino Lázaro Mouta, 1º Cabo - DAS/BAI/FOR, 1996  
Rui Reis Tavares, 1º Cabo - DAS/BAI/FOR, 1996

In Portugal, and in the world, there are about one hundred monuments evoking the Great War (1914-1918) and about three hundred evoking the war of the overseas (1961-1974).

The Bosnia and Herzegovina Monument is the first monument erected by Portugal in honour of the Portuguese combatants of peace and humanitarian operations.

The League of Combatants is responsible for guaranteeing that monuments to combatants are guaranteed their dignity and that they are not destined to the different destiny for which they were erected.

We are hopeful that a nucleus of League of Combatants here will be created and can help us cooperate with Dobož Camara in view of these proposals.

I congratulate for this, not only the parachute troops, but the high entities here present, for having created the conditions, so that this moment could have happened, assuming that the dignity of this space will be guaranteed and that will not be given to another destiny than the proposal for which it was erected.

Our deep honors who have fallen here, in the service of Portugal and Bosnia Herzegovina. The day of blue berets of the United Nations, is recommended to be evoked worldwide on May 29. This will happen in Portugal at the initiative of the League of Combatants and the World Federation of Former Combatants (WFFC). One again these men fallen in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be with us, during the ceremonies in Lisbon.

We thank you once again for your consideration, Mr. President of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Mladen Ivanic has honored us and dignified us with your presence, a symbol of respect and consideration for the Portuguese Armed Forces represented here by their paratroopers and by myself.

I finish with the motto of Portuguese Paratroopers and that we can read in their flag:

*«Honor the country who has such people»*