
Military training at CU: training must be as close to reality as possible

Military training at CU: it's not Afghanistan, but training must be as close to reality as possible

For them, war isn't just something they hear about in the media, but an actual situation that they could very soon find themselves in or for which they will prepare their charges in the future. During their studies they get a taste of what it's like to test themselves to the limit and must learn to deal with extreme stress – both physical and psychological. All the above applies to students of the Department of Military Science, which this year celebrates the 60th anniversary of its founding at the [CU Faculty of Physical Education and Sport](#). Visitors to the faculty can expect a grand celebration on 24 September, which will see parachutists land in the faculty complex, feel the wind from rotating helicopter blades and see students abseil from the helicopters, as well as demonstrations of hand-to-hand combat and crisis rescue.

The Military Science Department was founded in the 1950s in reaction to the recent war and the requirements of the army of the time. "Every war shows you that you're not well-enough prepared for it. If something works or doesn't work in war, you ask yourself why. The physical fitness of soldiers is, in this respect, of great importance. In the 1950s the army therefore called for the schooling of experts in physical preparation and, as the Institute for Physical Education and Sport was being set up at the time, it also included a department of military science," explains Col. doc. PaedDr. Lubomír Přivětivý, CSc., Head of the FTVS UK Department of Military Science.

Even though the department has seen many changes in the ensuing sixty years (radical reduction in student intake – from fifty applicants accepted in the 1970s to the current five; in the 1970s the department was even an independent institution of higher education), its goal remains the same – to prepare students for the management and command of in-service physical education in the army. Lessons are naturally designed to further this goal – in addition to the same study programmes as civilian students who are only studying physical education and sport, and students of the Department of Military Science also take military subjects and exercises, learning how to create movement and training programmes for soldiers and learn the rules of proper rehabilitation and regeneration. Since the 1990s courses have emphasised so-called special physical education. Students perfect their military swimming and climbing skills, close combat, movement of ice and snow, throwing of grenades, take part in military all-round events, take courses in survival in extreme situations and learn how to lead this type of training programme.

"Psychologically and physically, the most demanding courses are the summer and winter ones, during which students spend several days outside the university. They are subjected to massive pressure during both day and night, don't get enough sleep, food or drink and must perform a variety of demanding tasks. Even though you can never exactly simulate the kind of situation you get in, for example, Afghanistan, you try to get as close as possible to situations in which you could, realistically, find yourself. Even though not all of our students are involved in missions abroad, they get the best possible preparation for it under the guidance of our experts. Graduates primarily take charge of physical education for sections of the armed forces and organisations of the Army of the Czech Republic, and their preparation is often sufficiently flexible and high-quality that they frequently take positions with the 601st General Moravec Special Forces Group in Prostějov, which concentrates the best of the best in the army, or in different sections, where they are accepted to become involved in combat," emphasises Dr. Přivětivý.

During their studies students must thus take a large number of block courses at both faculty and army training centres. The Department of Physical Education further collaborates with a number of similar centres abroad, some of which allow students to undergo short-term training or study trips. These include, for example, the Royal Military Institute for Physical Education and Sport in Eupen, Belgium. In the winter students travel to the special training centre for mountain combat in Saalfelden, Austria.

Visitors will be able to get at least a small taste of what students of military physical education have to learn at the celebrations of the anniversary of the department's founding, which will take place in the afternoon of 24 September on the premises of the CU Faculty of Physical Education and Sport in Prague-Vokovice.