



## **SHAPE Officers' Association Newsletter, October 2017**

### **Summary report of the 57<sup>th</sup> SOA Symposium**

The SHAPE Officers' Association (SOA) held its 57<sup>th</sup> annual Symposium on 5-7 October at SHAPE. Once again, this major SOA event brought back to Casteau members from across the Alliance for academic and social activities. General (Ret) John A. Shaud, SOA President, chaired this year's symposium that like all other SOA activities is designed to preserve and foster the spirit of fellowship among its members and to provide a forum that brings current and former SHAPE personnel together to exchange views and experiences.

In conjunction with the SOA Symposium, General Shaud had a series of encouraging and constructive meetings with the SHAPE leadership (SACEUR, Chief of Staff, Vice-chief of Staff, DCOS Operational and Intelligence) and with a number of National Representatives to include their Dean.

Following tradition, the Symposium began with a Happy Hour on Thursday 5 October. This year's reception was hosted in the beautiful "Salle des Mariages" of the Town Hall of Mons.



SOA members were honored by the attendance of General Markus Kneip, Chief of Staff SHAPE, and his wife at this enjoyable social gathering where participants could meet and greet old friends and get to know other members in a very warm and cordial atmosphere.



The next day, 6 October, the Symposium began with the General Assembly in the SHAPE Club, a very important part of the SOA calendar as all the major decisions pertaining to the life of the SOA are taken. One of these decisions was the election of Major General Marin Natchev, (Ret.) Bulgarian Air Force as the new Chairman of the SOA Executive Committee (see his biography below).



Another highlight of the General Assembly was the awarding of an SOA Scholarship to distinguished high school graduates either sponsored by an SOA member or nominated by the Director General, SHAPE International School. This year's recipients are:

- Jacob Allen Adams (USA), a graduate from the W.T. Woodson High School (Fairfax, Va.)
- Ovidiu-Alexandru Parfene (Romania), a graduate from the SHAPE International School - German Section

- Anaïs Lambert (Belgium), a graduate from the SHAPE International School - International Section.



Each of them was presented with a certificate that comes along with a scholarship award of 1.000 EUR.

The record of decisions of the 57<sup>th</sup> SOA Symposium is provided in a separate section below.

Following lunch at the SHAPE Club, the Symposium continued with a series of excellent briefings on NATO and SHAPE related topics.

These included:

- an ACO Update Briefing by LtCol Claus Richter, Communications Division
- a presentation of Allied Command Transformation (ACT) by Colonel Frank Sander, ACT Staff Element Europe
- a briefing about the SHAPE International School (SIS) Infrastructure Plan by Colonel (Ret.) Benoît Davin, Former Director General SIS.



This informative afternoon session was designed to keep members informed about SHAPE and the military situation in NATO and to enable them to support and propagate the mission and the objectives of SHAPE and, more generally, to help sustain the Alliance.

Importantly, the briefings and dialogue with the presenters enabled the attendees to appreciate how SHAPE has changed since their time in Belgium.

The day ended on a good and swinging note with SOA members attending the SHAPE Friendship Concert at the Théâtre Royal de Mons at which the SHAPE Jazz Band entertained guests from SHAPE and Mons. A lovely reception followed the concert.



Saturday, 7 October, began with a cultural trip that included a visit of the “Bois du Cazier” coal mine near Charleroi, followed by a visit of the “Domaine du Chant d’Eole” vineyard at Mons-Quévy with a tasting of their quality sparkling wine. These visits were very much enjoyed by all participants.

The SOA Symposium concluded with the traditional annual dinner, this year at the Van der Valk Congres Hotel in Mons.



Following a fantastic series of appetizers and a delicious dinner, participants were entertained by the well-known songstress Maria D. who sang a worldwide favorite: “La Vie en Rose”!

Sadly, this also brought this successful symposium to an end. But participants left very satisfied and with a lot of good memories of this great series of events, and hopeful that they will meet one another again at the 58<sup>th</sup> SOA Symposium to be held at SHAPE on 11-13 October 2018.

### ***Other Planned SOA Activities for 2018***

**10 January:** New Year Happy Hour

**02 February:** Candlemas celebration

**16 - 18 March:** US Chapter Florida Fun Weekend

Quarterly US Chapter luncheons

US Chapter visits to local military historical locations

Envisaged/possible activities in Belgium:

- outdoor porchetta dinner party
- visit of the Soignies cheese factory “Le Bailly”
- visit of the Louvignies Castle
- visit of the Hôpital Notre-Dame à la rose at Lessines

**11 - 13 October:** 58th SOA Symposium (SHAPE)

December: US Chapter Annual Dinner

**More photos about the 57<sup>th</sup> SOA Symposium can be found at**  
<https://photos.app.goo.gl/my0vittgl43ormAp2>

### **Record of decision of the 57<sup>th</sup> SOA Symposium**

At its 6 October 2017 gathering, the SOA General Assembly:

- Noted the SOA activity reports for 2017 and the outlook to 2018 provided respectively by the Co-Chairman, Executive Committee and the Chairman, US Chapter
- Noted the Treasurer’s Financial Report for 2016
- Endorsed the awarding of the SOA Scholarships 2017 iaw the Expanded Programme to:
  - Jacob Allen ADAMS, USA
  - Ovidiu-Alexandru PARFENE, ROU
  - Anaïs LAMBERT, BEL
- Endorsed the carrying forward of 762,23 EUR to the 2018 SOA Scholarships
- Encouraged more SOA membership participation in the SOA Scholarship Program, both financially and in providing applicants

- Agreed to continue to use the SOA General Fund to supplement the SOA Scholarship Fund to:
  - Match all voluntary contributions by SOA members to the SOA Scholarship Fund
  - Allow the awarding of at least two scholarships per year (subject to reassessment in 2018) iaw the Expanded SOA Scholarship Program
- Elected Maj Gen Marin Natchev, BGR F (Ret.) as the Chairman, SOA Executive Committee 2018-2019
- Confirmed the other members of the nominated SOA Executive Committee 2018-2019
- Agreed to amend the Annex to the SOA Constitution to reflect the composition of the SOA Executive Committee 2018-2019
- Agreed to hold the 58th SOA Symposium on 11-13 Oct 18 at SHAPE
- Expressed its appreciation to the Executive Committee for the practical organization of the 57th SOA Symposium
- Requested the Executive Committee to include a summary of the proceedings of this year's Symposium and the detailed Record of Decisions in the next SOA Newsletter for the benefit of the entire SOA membership
- Noted the suggestions made during the General Assembly, to be further considered by the Executive Committee:
  - Publication of the scholarship applicants/nominees' „statement of goals“ to be shared among the SOA membership
  - Establish a special WG focused on ways to better reach out to new members and finding ways to establishing a membership programme with the support of the NMRs
  - Interact with the COM DIV on how the SOA and its members could better serve as „engagers“.

### **SOA Executive Committee 2018-2019**

MajGen Marin Natchev, BGR F (Ret.)	Chairman
Col John Haas, USA F (Ret.)	Co-Chairman
Mr. Günter Bretschneider, NATO CIV (Ret.), DEU	Secretary
LtCol Krzysztof Plazuk, POL A	SHAPE COM DIV Liaison
Mrs. Véronique Leroy, NATO CIV (Ret.), BEL	Treasurer
Mr. Jean Vanderwal, NATO CIV (Ret.), BEL	Assistant Treasurer/Web Content Manager
SrCapt Jean-Marie Boulet, BEL A (Ret.)	Data Base (DB) Manager
Mr. Jack Smits, NATO CIV (Ret.), NLD	Assistant DB/Publications Manager
Col Benoît Davin, BEL F (Ret.)	Scholarships coordinator
Col Raymond Healy, USA F (Ret.)	Volunteer



## **Biography of Major General Marin Natchev, Bulgarian Air Force (Ret.)**

### ***Chairman, SHAPE Officers Association (SOA) Executive Committee***

Marin Natchev retired from the Bulgarian Air Force at the rank of Major General in December 2016 after a tour as Bulgarian National Military Representative at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). As a senior officer, he also served as the Bulgarian Air Force Chief of Staff and as the Director, Operations and Training Division at the Bulgarian Defense Staff.

Major General Natchev began his career as a Mig-21 fighter pilot and later flew Mig-21s, Mig-29s and SU-25s. He also has a limited flying experience as a pilot on other fighter jets and helicopters. After qualifying in the Mig-21, he was assigned to the 21<sup>st</sup> Intercept Regiment at Uzundjovo, district of Haskovo.

Major General Natchev's command assignments included tours as Commander, 3<sup>rd</sup> Squadron at Graff Ignatievo Air Force Base and as Base Commander of the 21<sup>st</sup> Air Force Base at Uzundjovo, district of Haskovo. While holding the position of Chief, Training Directorate of the Bulgarian Air Force Staff, he completed a tour as Commander, Kabul International Airport, International Security Forces Afghanistan.

Major General Natchev graduated from the Bulgarian Air Force Academy "G. Benkovski", Class of 1982 and received his pilot rating in April 1982. He is a graduate of the Senior Officer Course at the Bulgarian War College in 1991 and of the General Staff Course at the National Defense University, Washington DC in 2000.

Since October 2017, Major General Natchev is the Chairman of the SHAPE Officers Association (SOA) Executive Committee.

Major General Natchev and his wife Teodora reside in Jurbise, Belgium with their two sons.

### **SOA Scholarship Fund**

Thanks to the generosity of SOA members and in keeping with the funding principles of SOA Scholarships we were in a position this year to award three scholarships to most deserving high school graduates (see summary of the General Assembly above).

The success of the SOA Scholarships program depends however heavily on continued voluntary donations from SOA members. You are therefore encouraged to support it by making a donation.

In Europe, the account number is: Fortis Bank, SOA Scholarships Account. IBAN: BE09 0357 9189 9957 (BIC: GEBABEBB).

For American SOA Members desiring to make a donation: please contact your local Chapter.

### **SOA Memories fo SHAPE**

Some time ago a history project lead by Tom Bowers, US Chapter Core Committee, was initiated to collect data and stories about experiences at SHAPE. Information about members' service, including duties and experiences, should indeed not be lost to future generations, and the history of SHAPE would be enriched with such information.

Thus far some 50 of our members have submitted such information and these SHAPE memories allowed the SOA, with the permission of the individuals concerned, to provide a valued contribution to the SHAPE 50th Anniversary in Mons exhibition in March/April 2017. Furthermore, the SHAPE Historian still has plans for a publication about the history of SHAPE that would include most interesting accounts of memories about time at/with SHAPE.

We want therefore to encourage those of you who have not yet contributed to this initiative to share with us their memories of SHAPE and invite those who have already submitted this information to possibly provide additional inputs

### ***The extent of your participation is voluntary.***

Information from completed questionnaires will be uploaded to a Google Docs site (in a Group called "SOA Member Forum") so others may read it. That site is accessible only to SOA members by invitation. You will have received such invitation from Jim Stiles recently. The information might also be used to compile general histories of SHAPE (as seen through the eyes of members), but only in a collective sense, and your name would not be used without your permission.

By submitting this information, you give the SOA permission to upload the information to an Internet site that is accessible to only other members of that organization. If any of the information is used to compile a general history of SHAPE by SOA members, your name will not be used without your permission.

On the SOA Member Forum (under "SHAPE History) you will be able to see completed questionnaires and get an idea of what others have said about their memories.

If you encounter any difficulties joining, or using the features of the SOA Member Forum please contact us by email at: [soa.us1961@yahoo.com](mailto:soa.us1961@yahoo.com)

If you choose to participate, please email your responses to [tbowers@live.unc.edu](mailto:tbowers@live.unc.edu).

This effort is also aimed at spouses; we want to learn about their experiences, too.



**Questions about your service at SHAPE**

*Dates of service:*

*Service branch or civilian status:*

*Highest rank or grade held at SHAPE:*

*Duty assignment(s) at SHAPE:*

*SACEUR while you were at SHAPE:*

*Your memories of SHAPE (general description of your duties to include the most significant work areas or pressing tasks at that time; where you lived and shopped, schools, your experiences living in the surrounding communities, etc.):*

*While not strictly "History", what are your views of how NATO appears to be changing (i.e. how do you, as former staff, perceive subsequent NATO activities, operations, and decisions):*