

A Commemorative Certificate For Merit In The Development Of Parachuting.



This photograph was taken in 2003 in Zilina. I (Jan Hanak) am receiving a Commemorative Certificate for Merit in the development of parachuting from Lt. Colonel Sebo, the commander of the paratroopers.

I entered the army in Trenčín, where they had signal corps. Right during the entrance procedures they announced that everyone who'd played first and second league hockey should report. In Bohemia the army team was Dukla Litoměřice, and the second army team was composed of players from Moravia and Slovakia. That one was based in Prešov. The main army hockey team was Dukla Jihlava. So I reported. About 30 of us got into Prešov. They did a selection for the team there, and I got onto it as well. Besides this, I was a member of the paratrooper brigade. I liked that a lot. Back then I was very physically fit. Paratroopers undergo very tough training. The value of food for soldiers was determined according to calories expended during training. For example gunners, tank crews and the infantry got 14 crowns a day. Paratroopers got 30 crowns. So you can imagine what the training was like. Parachute jumps aren't the main part of paratrooper training. The jump itself is only a way of getting somewhere quickly. But once there you have to perform tasks that are extremely physically as well as mentally demanding. Besides this, we had hockey practice and on the weekends hockey games. First we played on the regional level. From there we battled our way to the second league. Finally we got into the first league, but by then I was already leaving for civilian life.