

= 1st Croatian Guards Corps =

The 1st Croatian Guards Corps (Croatian : 1 .@.@ hrvatski gardijski zbor) was a special formation of the Croatian Army (Hrvatska vojska ? HV) directly subordinated to the Ministry of Defence rather than the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia and reporting directly to the President of Croatia . The corps was established in 1994 by the amalgamation of various HV special forces . The 2 .@.@ 500 @-@ strong unit was organised into the 1st Croatian Guards Brigade (1 .@.@ hrvatski gardijski zdrug ? HGZ) , a multi @-@ purpose special forces combat unit , and four battalions tasked with ensuring the security of the President of Croatia and carrying out ceremonial duties . The HGZ took part in a number of military operations during the Croatian War of Independence and the Bosnian War . It was disbanded in 2000 , when its components were amalgamated with other HV units to form the Special Operations Battalion , the 305th Military Intelligence Battalion , and the Honour Guard Battalion .

= = Establishment = =

On 25 February 1994 , the special forces of the Croatian Army (Hrvatska vojska ? HV) were reorganised when all HV 's special forces units were combined to form the 1st Croatian Guards Corps (1 .@.@ hrvatski gardijski zbor) . In April , personnel of the 8th Military Police Light Assault Brigade (itself only established in September 1993) were also transferred to the corps , ultimately making the corps 2 .@.@ 500 @-@ strong . In addition to special forces operations , the corps was also tasked with providing security for the President of Croatia . The corps was organised into four specialised battalions and the 1st Croatian Guards Brigade (1 .@.@ hrvatski gardijski zdrug ? HGZ) , a multi @-@ purpose special forces combat unit . The HGZ was considered the elite unit of the HV . The entire corps was directly subordinated to the Ministry of Defence rather than the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia , and reported directly to the president . It was commanded by Major General Mile ?uk . ?uk and his deputy were based in the Presidential Palace , while the bulk of the corps was based in nearby Tu?kanac barracks . The HGZ was capable of fielding up to 300 troops in combat . It was commanded by Colonel (later Major General) Miljenko Filipovi? , who had previously commanded the Zrinski Battalion ? one of the special forces units amalgamated into the corps .

= = Combat service = =

The HGZ took part in several battles of the Croatian War of Independence and the Bosnian War . In late November and December 1994 , it participated in Operation Winter ' 94 , the joint offensive of the HV and the Croatian Defence Council (Hrvatsko vije?e obrane ? HVO) which pushed the Army of Republika Srpska (Vojska Republike Srpske ? VRS) from the western parts of the Livanjsko field in Bosnia and Herzegovina . Elements of the HGZ also saw action along the Novska ? Oku?ani axis of advance in the HV 's Operation Flash offensive that took place in western Slavonia in early May 1995 . By this time , the HGZ also commanded its own artillery and Mil Mi @-@ 24 helicopter gunships , in addition to Mil Mi @-@ 8 transport helicopters . The HGZ redeployed west of Livno once again in early June to take part in Operation Leap 2 , extending the salient that had been created in late 1994 west towards Bosansko Grahovo and Glamo? . The unit participated in the capture of those towns in late July 1995 during Operation Summer ' 95 .

In preparation for Operation Storm , the HV 4th Guards and 7th Guards Brigades were pulled back from positions facing the VRS that had been established during Operation Summer ' 95 , and were reoriented south towards the Army of the Republic of Serb Krajina (ARSK) . The ARSK was protecting the northern approaches to Knin ? the capital of the unrecognised Republic of Serbian Krajina ? which Croatia claimed as part of its own territory . As the two brigades turned over the positions north and west of Bosansko Grahovo to the HV 81st Guards Battalion , the HGZ was deployed to the rear of the battalion , tasked with intervening in case of any VRS attack towards Bosansko Grahovo . On the second day of the operation , 6 August , after Knin was captured by the

HV , the HGZ was airlifted from the Livanjsko field to the village of Rovanjaska north of Zadar . They then linked up with the 2nd Battalion of the 9th Guards Brigade and advanced east to capture the villages of Muškovac and Kaštel Štetački . On 8 August , the HGZ participated in an operation against the last significant ARSK pocket in the area of Donji Lapac and Srb , alongside the three guards brigades and special police forces .

In September 1995 , the HGZ took part in Operation Mistral 2 , which extended HV and HVO control in western Bosnia and Herzegovina and captured the towns of Jajce , Žepče and Drvar , moving the confrontation line north towards the Bosnian Serb capital of Banja Luka . In October , the HGZ also participated in Operation Southern Move , which captured the town of Mrkonjić Grad , and reached the southern slopes of Mount Manjača , 25 kilometres (16 miles) south of Banja Luka .

= = Reorganisation = =

The corps was disbanded in 2000 and its constituents reorganised . A part of the HGZ was amalgamated with the Special Combat Skills Centre Žepče to form the Special Operations Battalion . The remainder of the brigade was amalgamated with the Reconnaissance @-@ Sabotage Company based in Pula , the 350th Sabotage Detachment , the 280th Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Platoon , and the 275th Electronic Warfare Company to form the 305th Military Intelligence Battalion . The elements of the corps which were tasked with security of the President of Croatia and ceremonial duties were reformed and the Honour Guard Battalion was established in their place .