

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

THE 90th BIRTHDAY OF VLADIMÍR MĚRKA



This May, Colonel (Retd.) Associate Professor RNDr. et PhMr. Vladimír Měrka, CSc., celebrates his 90th birthday.

Our honouree is well known to readers of Military Medical Science Letters as, over the years, he has published many scientific papers and was the diligent author of countless studies. Due to his lifelong work and the results of pedagogical and scientific endeavour, Professor Měrka belongs among the most important personalities in the field of military medicine at Hradec Králové.

On the occasion of this auspicious jubilee, let us recall the most significant milestones of his life and his career as university scientist and pedagogue. He was born on May 19th, 1924, in Košice, Slovakia, and grew up in a teacher's family – his father taught at a grammar school. He first attended school in Košice and then continued in Nitra. His family was forced to leave Slovakia after the founding of the Slovak State and they ended up in Ostrava. In 1943, he finished at the Czech Real Grammar

School in Moravian Ostrava – Přívoz. However, during the Protectorate, universities were closed to the would-be student who wanted to study for a degree in pharmacy. Thus, in August, 1943, he started work as an assistant in a pharmacy in Silesian Ostrava. After the war, he was able to start his studies at the Masaryk University in Brno qualifying firstly in pharmaceutics (PhMr., 1947), and then in natural science (chemistry, biology, RNDr., 1950).

Dr. Měrka first came into contact with the military in 1948 when he started basic training at the School of Medical and Pharmacy Reserve Officers. Further training took place after graduation from the university in 1950. He then saw military service in the Central Military Depot in Bystřice pod Hostýnem where he made the key decision to join the Army (15.10.1951). He thus became a military professional, first as a pharmacist and, at the end of 1955, as a teacher in the Department of Organization and Tactics of Medical Service at the Purkinje Military Medical Academy in Hradec Králové. In 1963, he held the rank of Major and moved to the Department of Military Epidemiology. In 1969, Lieutenant-Colonel Měrka completed his thesis (candidate dissertation) and consequently qualified as Associate Professor in 1977. His scientific work is attested by more than 200 publications, several monographs and summaries of military research projects. A typical characteristic of his work was co-operation with national and international research institutes in Poland and Germany, and he gained several awards for his success in promoting such international co-operation. As a university teacher, he lectured on microbiology, parasitology and problematics of disinfection to undergraduate and postgraduate students. He also contributed in the areas of pre-attestation, specialized preparation and the training of military medical reservists.

He worked in the Department of Military Epidemiology until 1987 when his active military service ended. He continued as a civilian, at first full-time then part-time, in the Faculty Information Centre. There he could apply his multiple language skills - German, English, Russian, French, Polish,

Hungarian and Latin – as a translator and reviewer specializing in the theory/concept of activities relating to international military medical systems. After 1989, his dedication significantly helped to establish new international relations for the Medical Corps and its establishments. These proved useful during training for foreign humanitarian missions both before and after the Czech Republic joined NATO. We also cannot forget the role of Vladimír Měrka as guide for many foreign delegations to Hradec Králové's places of historic and cultural interest as well as to other locations in the Czech Republic. He remained devoted to such activities until 2011.

Dear Vladimír, we have reminded the professional public of the most important parts of your rich life, and of sixty years of imaginative pedagogical, scientific and research-work. Thank you for your meritorious work on behalf of the Medical Corps, the Faculty of Military Health Sciences and not forgetting the Society of Military Physicians, Pharmacists and Veterinarians of the J. E. Purkinje Czech Medical Association. We all wish you, and yours, good health and well-being in the following years!



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