



Progress felt by citizens as well

(4 February) Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš visited the Annual Meeting of SVK Air Force Commanders in Zvolen. He appreciated the progress made in the modernisation of air assets and said "Thank You" to airmen and women for maintaining high standards of performance last year.

"The progress achieved in the modernisation of the SVK Air Force results from our efforts to improve the quality of work of our soldiers. I'm pleased that our efforts have come to fruition, because also thanks to the new air assets they can undertake missions more effectively, be that as part of domestic or international crisis management operations," he said.

Minister Gajdoš highlighted the deliveries of Spartan C-27J airlifters and UH-60M Black Hawk multirole helicopters, he said: "Thanks to the new transport aircraft, we have not lost the air transport capability and our airmen can transport material to troops deployed on missions and operations abroad on their own." The Helicopter Wing Prešov is home to nine UH-60M Black Hawks, which also deploy on domestic disaster relief operations. The Minister gave high credit to the Air Search and Rescue Service, SVK Armed Forces. In the afternoon, he paid a visit to the Topographic Institute, SVK Armed Forces.

SVK Army is ready

(6 February) The Defence Minister attended the Annual Meeting of SVK Army Commanders in Trenčín. As part of the Training Year 2019 Assessment, he highlighted the enhancement of the SVK Army's readiness for State defence, the progress in the modernisation of Army equipment, and the deepening of interoperability within the EU, NATO and the UN.

"After long years a significant increase in defence expenditure has created suitable conditions for developing the capabilities of the SVK Army, which is among the basic pillars of the Slovak Armed Forces, especially when it comes to the provision of State defence and cooperation with Allies," said Peter Gajdoš. He thanked SVK Army personnel for their exemplary performance of duties and for representing Slovakia through their participation in missions and operations abroad and international exercises.

"As well as upgrading infantry fighting vehicles, combat reconnaissance vehicles and other specialist vehicles, the motor pool was extended by over 100 different off-road vehicles and we also purchased hundreds of small arms and new communication systems," he said.

Military hospital has a new device

(7 February) The SNP Central Military Hospital Ružomberok has new medical equipment in its Nuclear Medicine Clinic, thanks to which it will be possible to diagnose soldiers and members of the public with heart diseases faster and more accurately. Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš and General Secretary of the SVK MOD Ján Holko attended the launch ceremony for the new cardiac CZT SPECT gamma camera.

This new technology can diagnose potential cardiac diseases much earlier and more accurately, as well as shortening the examination time significantly. Director of the SNP Central Military Hospital Ružomberok MUDr Peter Vaněk said that the new medical device can also be used in a planned preventive programme for SVK service members. "We aim to provide comprehensive preventive diagnosis of oncological, metabolic and cardiovascular diseases in the form of short hospitalisations," he said.

Soldiers receive medals for assisting in exceptional emergencies

(5 February) SVK service personnel received medals for assisting in exceptional emergencies in 2019 during a ceremony at Bratislava Castle. The Minister of Interior Commemorative Medal was presented to 20 soldiers, military policemen, chaplains and psychologists for their assistance at the site of the tower block gas blast on Mukachevo Street in Prešov, at the scene of the bus accident in Nitra, and at the crash site of the MiG-29 fighter jet. "This recognition, too, testifies to the fact that the Armed Forces are ready to respond to different crisis situations to the benefit of the security and safety of what is most precious of all, and that's human life," said Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš. Over 1,800 soldiers, supported by equipment, were deployed to respond to the emergencies. Minister Gajdoš went on: "Respect and thanks go out to all those who responded to the tragic events." Besides service members, awarded today by the Minister of Interior Denisa Saková were also 241 members of the SVK Firefighting and Rescue Corps, voluntary firefighters, members of the SVK Police Corps, members of the SVK Mountain Rescue Service and the Comprehensive Central Rescue Service who were among the first responders to last year's greatest tragedies in Slovakia.



■ On 4 Feb 2020, the SVK Defence Staff hosted the national planning conference for **Ex Toxic Valley 2020**, to be held on 7-18 Sept 2020 in Zemianske Kostolany. The conference was followed by a two-day working meeting with foreign partners. The main planning conference for the exercise will take place between 14 and 16 Apr 2020 in Bratislava.

■ To mark the first written mention of Rožňava dating from 3 Feb 1291, the Rožňava town authorities held a ceremonial meeting, where the **Rožňava Town Award** was presented to the CBRN Defence Battalion (1st Mech Bde, SVK Army). Among the awardees were also the best local sportspeople of 2019, including Maj Marcel Uharček, member of the CBRND Bn.

■ The Peace Support Operations (PSO) Training Unit trained personnel for the 28th and 29th rotations of the SVK **EUFOR Althea** Contingent at the Training and Mobilisation Manning Base Martin in December and January. The training culminated with a tactical exercise dubbed **Flaming Collector 2020**.

■ Lt Col Róbert Parišek, Deputy Commander Training and Mobilisation Manning Base Martin, and Maj Pavol Pocklan, Chief of Staff MLRS Battalion, officially **completed their military careers** with effect from 31 Jan 2020.

■ On 27-31 Jan, the Polish Military Police Training Base Mińsk Mazowiecki hosted a joint staff rehearsal for members of the NATO MNMPBAT staff and the first planning conference by the multinational planning team for **Ex Sharp Lynx 20**, to be held from 30 Sept to 9 Oct 2020 in Poland. Officials of the NATO MNMPBAT also held discussions with representatives of Georgia over Georgia's NATO accession.

■ 41 SVK UNFICYP personnel, led by Chief of the First Aid Station Lt MUDr Zuzana Kendická, participated in a **blood donation session** with the Dheryneia Hospital in Cyprus.

■ Members of the Command Support Company (HQ CSS Bde) conducted this year's first **marksmanship skills improvement training with small arms**. 42 soldiers practised firing pistols and submachine guns on the Lipovnik firing range.

■ Drivers are advised by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be 4 **Allied road movements**, mostly involving POL troops, across Slovakia from 10 to 16 Feb 2020. SVK Army convoys will also transport oversized cargo on the following routes: Sliač – Nemecká, Trenčín – Sereď – Topoľčany, Nitra – Kuchyňa, Nitra – Martin, TC Lešť – Trebišov – Michalovce – Prešov – TC Lešť, Michalovce – Prešov, Hlohovec – Martin, and Martin – PC Sučany.

Dukla Military Sports Centre presents 2019 sports awards

(4 February) The Dukla Banská Bystrica Military Sports Centre (VŠC Dukla) awarded its most successful sportsmen and sportswomen for their sporting achievements in 2019 during a sports awards gala evening. Skier Petra Vlhová was named the most successful sportswoman of 2019. Director of the VŠC Dukla Lt Col Roman Benčík highlighted last year's successes of the Dukla sports men and women, he said: "We could witness the historic successes of Petra Vlhová in downhill skiing, the success of Anastasiya Kuzmina and that of Michal Martikán and Alexander Slafkovský who defended the World Champion title for the 11th time." He continued: "I am pleased to announce that we did achieve our main goal of winning 27 medals. We took home 36 medals from the world top sporting



events. I trust this year we will manage to attain another goal – to take home 3 Olympic medals from Tokyo." Anastasiya Kuzmina placed 2nd and canoe sprinter Peter Gelle placed 3rd in the Sports Woman / Man of the Year category. Among the top ten best performers were also karateka Ingrida Suchánková, slalom canoeist Alexander Slafkovský, biathlete Paulína Fialková, slalom canoeist Michal Martikán, athlete Martina Hrašnová, and sport shooters Patrik Jány and Juraj Tužinský. Slalom canoeist Jakub Grigar became the most successful junior sportsman of 2019. The coach of skier Petra Vlhová won the "Best Coach of the Year" award and the "Collective Performance of the Year" award went to Michal Martikán and Alexander Slafkovský.

MOD to support NGOs

(3 February) The SVK MOD will support interesting projects by NGOs this year too. As part of this call for proposals, the MOD offers a total of €100,000 in grants of between €500 and €50,000 per project to NGOs. NGO applicants have until 31 March 2020 to submit their application. Eligible applicants are the civil associations, foundations, interest associations of legal entities, non-investment funds, and not-for-profit organisations registered in Slovakia. Each applicant can submit only one application. Further information on this can be found at <https://mosr.sk/20263-sk/ziadosti-o-dotacie/>.

Combat Life Saver Course



(4 February) From 27 January to 4 February, the Specialist Medical Activities and Training Division, Office of Chief of Military Medical Services Ružomberok, hosted the **Combat Life Saver Course**, aimed at non-medical trades in the SVK Armed Forces, at its

Liptovský Mikuláš–Ondrašová-based detached workstation. It was attended by personnel drawn from the Army, Air Force, Special Operations Forces, Military Police and the Constitutional Representatives Protection Office (SVK Ministry of Interior).

A spa and guest house for veterans

(5 February) The SVK Ministry of Defence will reconstruct and redesign a recreational hotel at the Zemplínska Šírava Dam as a spa and guest house for veterans. The services should be available to them as early as 2021. The project was approved by the SVK Government. According to Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš, the hotel, run by the Defence Accommodation Agency (BARMO), is closed because it is in bad condition. The reconstruction works include a complex reconstruction of the building, including the façade, roof, heating, interior design, swimming pool, kitchen, dining room, as well as rebuilding access roads, improving the groundworks, and extending the accommodation capacity. Once completed, the guest house will have 95 rooms and 180 beds, of which 60 beds will be reserved for veterans.

FULL FIELD KIT this week

During our show live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat on Regina Radio we will bring more information on a new benefit for service personnel and the cardiac CZT SPECT system that entered service with the Central Military Hospital Ružomberok. We appreciate your comments, suggestions and opinions. Please, write to us pinapoina@mod.gov.sk.