



State Secretary in Trenčín

(24 February) The Slovak Special Operations Forces Command (SVK SOCOM) Trenčín was visited by State Secretary of the SVK MOD Róbert Ondrejčák, accompanied by the acting SOF Commander, Col Pavel Švelka. They discussed the tasks of the new SOCOM and those of SOF as a whole in the context of current hybrid threats, unconventional operations and trends in modern warfare; eliminating the spread of disinformation; and the progressive solutions to cyber security.

While still in Trenčín that same day, Secretary Ondrejčák paid a visit to the SVK Army HQ, where he was welcomed by SVK Army Commander Maj Gen Jindřich Joch. Joined by key Army HQ leaders, they discussed the SVK Army's tasks, capabilities and modernisation.

Modest veteran recognised

(28 February) With the participation of Chaplain General of the Ecumenical Pastoral Service Col Marian Bodolli, Mayor of Veľké Teriakovce Kamil Kučera, Chairman of the Anti-Nazi Fighters Association in Rimavská Sobota Jozef Pupala, other guests and family members, a ceremony was held to present Cpl Jozef Špitál with the 75th Carpatho-Dukla Operation Anniversary Commemorative Badge. It was awarded to him by the Military Paratroopers Club Žilina in cooperation with the Military Paratroopers Club Martin-Vrútky. Jozef Špitál, who celebrated his 98th birthday on 22 Dec 2019, served as a member of the 2nd Czechoslovak Parachute Brigade (1st Czechoslovak Army Corps in the USSR) and today is among Army General Ludvík Svoboda's last living soldiers.

MI Chief on visit to Serbia

(27 February) During his visit to Serbia, Director of Military Intelligence of the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic Gen Ján Balciar was received by Defence Minister Aleksandar Vulin.

At the meeting, the Minister highlighted the level of relations between Serbia and Slovakia as well as the cooperation being developed on the basis of mutual respect for national interests. The Minister conveyed the gratitude of the Republic of Serbia for Slovakia's principled position on the independence of Kosovo. In this connection, he expressed regret over SVK service personnel being no longer part of KFOR.

Both officials agreed that the cooperation between the SRB Military Intelligence Service and the SVK Military Intelligence was at a high level and contributes to developing friendly relations between both countries.



SVK Armed Forces Personnel Office presents TY19 Assessment

(26 February) The General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy Hall hosted the Annual Meeting of Commanders chaired by the Director of the SVK Armed Forces Personnel Office. The meeting was attended by Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko, Chief of Staff for Operations Support (SVK Defence Staff) Col Ferdinand Muriň, Chief of the Personnel Management Branch (Staff for Operations Support, SVK Defence Staff) Col Ladislav Suvák and Chief of the Personnel Support Section Lt Col František Grznár. Deputy Director of the Personnel Office Lt Col Pavol Košovský assessed the Training Year 2019 (TY19) results, set out the main tasks for 2020, and thanked the staff for their work. The Chief of Defence presented his assessment with focus being made on recruitment and stabilisation of military personnel. He promoted and appointed Col František Grznár as Director of the SVK Armed Forces Personnel Office with effect from 1 Mar 2020. Col Ladislav Suvák briefed those present on the new Personnel Management Concept.



■ The Tactical Wing Sliach hosted a **selection of personnel** for the Sept and Dec 2020/Mar, July and Aug 2021 UNFICYP rotations. Up to 340 candidates took an English language test, a basic combat skills test, and an initial interview.

■ Members of the SVK Air Force paid a visit to the **children's ward in the Zvolen Hospital to hand over a TV set and toys, donated by SVK AF personnel, to child patients.**

■ A **meeting of commanders subordinate to Commander 13th Mechanised Battalion Levice** Lt Col Richard Király, took place on 25 Feb 2020. Lt Col Király commended the work and professionalism of the best Other Ranks soldier, Cpl Vladimír Želinský, who became the Best Army Soldier in the Training Year (TY) 2019 and a role model for all members of the Battalion.

■ The **4th M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Ball** was held at the Academy's Social and Catering Centre. Almost 140 participants enjoyed a rich programme and culinary specialties. The AOS Ball was opened with the speech and first dance by the host, AOS Commandant Assoc Prof Jozef Puttera.

■ Sgt 1st Class Ivan Mőča, member of HQ Bratislava Garrison and of the Athletics Club Šurany, placed **3rd in the men's long jump** with 5.61m at the Slovak Indoor Veterans Championships in Bratislava.

■ Košice hosted an international scientific conference, entitled **Slovakia and World War 1**, attended by historians and specialists from Slovakia, Hungary, Ukraine and the Czech Republic. The SVK Institute of Military History was actively represented by Jana Zatková with her paper on "Czechoslovak Legion Activity on the Italian Front".

■ Having completed their Basic Military Training (BMT), 200 new soldier trainees (37 women) pledged their **oath to the Slovak Armed Forces** at the Training and Mobilisation Manning Base Martin. Pte Miroslava Mindárová was named Best BMT Graduate.

■ Drivers are advised by the MOD to drive carefully as there will be **six Allied road movements** across Slovakia, mostly involving U.S. and HUN troops, scheduled from 2 to 8 Mar 2020. SVK Army convoys will also transport oversized cargo and conduct road moves on the following routes: Sered' – Martin, Martin – CV Lešť, Nitra – Martin. There will also be SVK Army rail movements from Levice to Dobrá Niva and from Levice to Michalovce.

Mechanised Battalion Trebišov undertake winter training at Lešť

(26 February) For the Trebišov-based 21st Mechanised Battalion, the first three weeks of February were in the spirit of training. Vigorous joint training awaited members of the 1st Mechanised Squadron, Anti-Tank Platoon, Combat Support Company, Repairs Platoon and the First Aid Station at the Training Centre Lešť. The aim of the training, led by Battalion Deputy Commander Maj Martin Socha, was to exercise troops in tactical missions and live firing in harsh winter conditions. Lešť saw drivers of combat vehicles taking off-road training circuits, soldiers firing small arms, mounted weapons and anti-tank guided systems, and members of the Battalion practising close quarters combat (CQC) tactics and defensive and offensive tactics with short preparation time, as well as conducting an operation to halt the enemy's



Prešov-based firefighters on ex

(24 February) Members of the Defence Firefighting Unit at the Helicopter Wing Prešov underwent a theme-based exercise designed to cross high mountainous terrain in difficult conditions and try out orienteering with the use of a map and a compass. The route took them from the village of Drienica up to Mount Lysá and on to the Čergov Mountain Chalet. Then they returned to Drienica through Podbaranie and Baranie. Despite the fresh snowfall and high winds, all members of the Unit coped well with the demands of the training out in the mountains.



Winter field training

(26 February) Members of the Command Support Battalion undertook winter field training in Trenčín's Ostrov (Island), located in the River Váh, with focus on tactical and survival training in winter conditions. The main tasks included improving one's practical skills in the selection of a shelter place, shelter construction, field cooking, field hygiene, and improvised ways to build a fire. Rain and around-zero temperatures in the first hours of the training put an extra strain not just on the soldiers' skills but also on their physical and psychological resilience. Day 2 of the training saw a control exercise to verify the basic combat and all-arms skills of the exercising troops.

'Through the Heart's Eyes' Aid

(26 February) Organised by the Ecumenical Pastoral Service (EPS) of the Forces, the last one of a series of charity concerts, titled 'Through the Heart's Eyes', was performed by Natália Sklarenko (BLR) at the Concert Hall of the Performing Arts Academy, Bratislava.

All the proceeds of €700 from the first concert of 8 Mar 2019 went towards school aids for children in BiH, while a cheque for €1,000 raised from the 2nd and 3rd concerts of 2 July and 25 Nov was presented to children and teachers in Afghanistan. And a total of €552 raised from the last event will be used to help fund the stay of secondary school students from Foča (BiH) at a children's summer biblical camp, organised by the EPS Head Office this July.

advance. Members of the Repairs Platoon carried out repairs in difficult field conditions. Medics of the First Aid Station responded to simulated and real injuries. The end of the training was overseen by Commander 21st Mech Bn

Trebišov Lt Col Róbert Plávka. As part of the 72-hour survival in the field, the coordination of soldiers was checked and a company-level tactical exercise with a live fire phase was conducted. Assessing the training, Maj Martin Socha said: "Of great benefit was that this was a joint training of mechanised, CS and CSS units, which contributed to enhancing their synergy and coordination under simulated combat conditions. I must commend the work of the staffers, especially those from the Operations Section, Intelligence Group and Logistics."