



Rescue and help

(13 March) A serviceman from the Civil-Military Cooperation and Psychological Operations (CIMIC/PSYOPS) Centre, operating under the Martin-based Special Operations Forces, today helped rescue the life of an elderly man after he fainted in front of a pharmacy in Madunice. According to his account, none of the bystanders responded to the situation and they all stepped back, most probably out of fear of coronavirus. Having attended the Combat Life Saver Course, the serviceman assisted a doctor and pharmacists in giving first aid to the elderly man until the ambulance arrived.

Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš said: "I am convinced that the armed forces and their members should stand out as examples in this difficult time. That is why I am proud our servicemen acted in a way as each of us should. On behalf of the entire Ministry of Defence, let me say 'Thank You' to him."

As Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko said, he is immensely pleased to see that if an accident witnessed by even off-duty soldiers occurs, they seize the role of life savers in a responsible and conscientious manner. "In doing so, they make the best of the skills, education and habits they have gained in the professional life. We, soldiers, are part of civil society and I am proud of our soldiers who behave considerably and responsibly," said Gen Zmeko.

To respond to the effects of coronavirus, the SVK Armed Forces have made available up to 500 soldiers, based on the decisions of the Central Crisis Staff and the SVK Cabinet. As part of mixed patrols, they are currently assisting the SVK Police Corps with border checks and the COVID-19 information campaign.

Following the SVK Cabinet's decision to declare an exceptional emergency, the Slovak Armed Forces are ready to deploy additional troops and make available C-27J Spartan airlifters to transport material. The Training Centre Lešt is ready to assist in this emergency as well.

On current challenges in EU

(5 March) Meeting in Zagreb, EU Defence Ministers discussed current challenges in the field of defence and security. At the same time, they paid special attention to ways of deepening the cooperation with NATO and the UN and highlighted the importance of joint international crisis management activities. The meeting was attended by Director of the SVK MOD's International Relations Department Július Demetrian and Ambassador Tomáš Kozák, who works at the SVK Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels. The meeting was dominated by topical issues of cooperation on the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and individual contributions of EU Member States to the EU-led international crisis management missions and operations. In this context, EU Defence Ministers underlined the importance of activities in the Sahel region and in the Near East, especially the tasks executed by members of armed forces in the field of training and advice to local security forces.

Helping with border checks and coronavirus information campaign

(11 March) These days service personnel are deployed on mixed patrols with members of the SVK Police Corps to help them with border checks and the coronavirus (COVID-19) information campaign. Based on the current requirements, the SVK Cabinet has decided to earmark up to 500 service members for this purpose. SVK Armed Forces members from Bratislava Garrison, SVK Army, SVK Air Force, and SVK Special Operations Forces are manning border checkpoints. Deployed at the border crossings at Brodské-Břeclav, Drienota-Starý Hrozenkov, Jarovce-Kittsee, Makov-Bíla Bumbálka, Petržalka-Berg, Rajka-Čunovo and Vyšné Nemecké-Uzhhorod, they are carrying out assistance tasks in support of the SVK Police Corps as part of two shifts, 18 hours a day, until further notification. This most recent deployment of service personnel follows the decisions of the Central Crisis Staff and the SVK Cabinet. Based on the SVK Cabinet's decision to announce an exceptional emergency as there is a threat to public health due to COVID-19, the SVK Armed Forces are ready to deploy additional troops, as required.



■ **U.S. Defense Attaché LTC Jakub Andrews and U.S. Air Attaché LTC Gregory Christiansen**, joined by members of the U.S. Defense Attaché Office and the U.S. Office of Defense Cooperation, paid a visit to the Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade Nitra on 10 Mar 2020. The aim of the working visit was to familiarise the U.S. delegation with the Brigade's mission, history, structure and training objectives.

■ Because of the latest increases in the number of coronavirus-infected patients in Slovakia and the guidance issued by the Crisis Staff, the SNP Central Military Hospital - Faculty Hospital (CMH FH) Ružomberok has made the transition to a **state of emergency**. From 13 Mar 2020 on, CMH FH Ružomberok will provide only urgent medical care until further notification.

■ Based on the Guidance of the Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic on Measures to Prevent and Contain the Spread of COVID-19, **viewings of surplus military equipment and material** for the purposes of gifting or selling have been halted until further notification.

■ **Concentrated training for snipers** from the 22nd Mechanised Battalion took place on Valaškovce Training Area and Michalovce Garrison's shooting range at Poruba pod Vihorlatom at the end of Feb 2020. Lasting for 72 hours, the training consisted of 4 phases, during which the snipers were continuously assessed and were subject to psychological checks before and after the most vigorous exertions.

■ The SVK Minister of Defence, the Chief of Defence and the Defence Monthly Editorial Staff have announced the 19th MOD Fine Art Painting & Drawing Contest titled **"Soldiers through the Eyes of Children"**. Thus, once again, primary school pupils have a chance to express their ideas about the life and work of SVK Armed Forces service personnel through paintings and drawings. For more information, go to <https://www.mosr.sk/46758-sk/ziaci-zakladnych-skol-sa-mozu-aj-tento-rok-zapojit-do-vytvarnej-sutaze-vojaci-ocami-deti/>.

■ Drivers are advised by the SVK MOD to drive carefully as **SVK Army convoys** will conduct return **road movements** between 16 and 22 Mar 2020, **transporting oversized cargo** to and from the following locations: Martin – Kamenica nad Cirochou, Sliač – Moldava nad Bodvou, Prešov – Ruská Nová Ves, Sereď – Moldava nad Bodvou, Michalovce – Dubnica nad Váhom, and Martin – Turecký vrch.

Prešov-based ISTAR Bn paras undertake military swimming training

In February, the Deep Reconnaissance Platoon, ISTAR Battalion Prešov, undertook specialist military swimming training at the Delňa Prešov Water Park.

This practical military swimming training programme took place under the supervision of an experienced PT instructor. The first few days gave the paras a chance to improve their front crawl and breaststroke.

This was followed by rescue and combat swimming styles, including a life saving drill, jumps



into unknown waters, untying hands and ankles while underwater, swimming with hands and ankles bound, silent diving, simulated combat action to destroy enemy, and others. These skills were then practised by the paras fully clothed in combat uniform, which is one of the most limiting factors in executing combat activities in the water environment.

Conducting specialist training programmes is a priority for acquiring and maintaining the skills required of SOF and reconnaissance troops.

Triumph of Petra Vlhová



(11 March) After the final women's FIS Alpine World Cup races were cancelled due to coronavirus, Federica Brignone (ITA) topped the overall rankings and grabbed the big crystal globe. Petra Vlhová, member of the SVK Team and the DUKLA Military Sports Centre, clinched the Parallel Slalom and Slalom globes. Petra Vlhová is the first Slovakian skier to have achieved this in history. On her success, Petra Vlhová said: "It is a unique feeling and I'm the happiest person in the world, because I've achieved something I've always wanted to."

Veteran marks 90th jubilee



(10 March) On the occasion of her 90th birthday, Anna Bergerová, veteran of the WW2 anti-Nazi resistance, received a Letter of Commemoration from Defence Minister Peter Gajdoš. The letter was handed over to her by Director

of the SVK MOD's Social Policy Branch Ľubica Fúsková and Chief of the Veterans Welfare and Military Pensioners Section Richard Zimányi. Mrs Bergerová served as a nurse and a runner in the Pugachev and Chapayev partisan groups. Her mother, sister and two brothers joined the resistance movement as well. "I am very grateful to soldiers for inviting me to attend the military parade in Banská Bystrica last August and the pre-Christmas meeting of resistance soldiers and veterans in Bratislava last November. Above all, I'd like to thank them for being present at all anti-Nazi events. I really hope they feel the same way. That I can rely on them. I feel safe with them," she said.

Full Field Kit this week

Live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat Regina Radio, this week our show will bring information on current developments across Defence, including on military response to coronavirus as it presents a threat to the public health. We appreciate your comments, suggestions and opinions. Please, write to us at pinaplna@mod.gov.sk.