



NATO Defence Ministers meet in Brussels

(17 February) Over the past two days, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď along with other NATO Defence Ministers have taken part in a regular Defence Ministerial in Brussels. The Russia-Ukraine stand-off and the therewith associated need to strengthen the readiness of the Alliance, including its military presence along NATO's eastern flank, were put as a central theme on the agenda. Also in attendance at the meeting were the defence ministers of Ukraine and Georgia. Mr Naď underlined that a sovereign decision by any NATO member state on the strengthening of military presence is always and only for the individual country to take, depending on whether it requests assistance from Allies or it can get by on itself. "We are closely following and assessing the unfolding security situation. We must reckon with every scenario and we are ready to adopt adequate measures in consultation with our Allies and in accordance with our national decision-making process," added Mr Naď.

According to Minister Naď, all these measures are being implemented in response to the Russian Federation's activity on the border of Ukraine and Belarus, especially to Russia's non-transparent and unexplained military build-up. "We want to have a constructive and open relationship with Russia. Dialogue is the best tool for preventing conflicts and misunderstandings and sharing concerns and objections against the action taken by the other side. It is important we keep our diplomatic options for negotiations still open – whether it be at the NATO-Russia Council, at the OSCE or bilaterally with the USA," he said.



During the talks in Brussels, NATO Defence Ministers paid close attention to the new NATO Strategic Concept and energy security in connection with gas supplies from the Russian Federation. "The current developments point to how vitally important our EU and NATO membership is. We are engaged in intense discussions with our allies and partners and are closely coordinating our steps – in a joint, unified and responsible manner," reassured Mr Naď.

At the invitation of French Minister for the Armed Forces Madame Florence Parly, Minister Naď took part in a working dinner. He also held bilateral talks with his partners from Czechia, Canada, Finland and Bulgaria, as well as meeting with representatives of the nations contributing to NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in Latvia.

Preparations for international Ex Saber Strike 22 are in full swing

(16 February) In the coming days, the SVK Armed Forces are making final preparations for multinational Exercise Saber Strike 22. After nearly two years of joint planning and with the training audience from 13 countries, the Slovak Armed Forces are ready to facilitate the reception, staging, onward movement and integration (RSOI) of an exercising NATO unit. The objective of the exercise is to test our joint readiness for rapid and effective movements of Allied armed forces in winter conditions, the conduct of defensive operations and related logistics operations.

CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko said: "We have dealt with the idea of participating in Ex Saber Strike ever since 2019, when we first suggested it during our visit to the commander of the U.S. Army Europe. This exercise has already tested our planning processes and, in the coming days, it will also test our ability to support Allied troops along with our combat units in the conduct of defensive operations. Our participation in this exercise is a standard confirmation of our membership in the Alliance and of our joint efforts to safeguard peace and security in Europe."

In the next days, approximately 2,000 members of the U.S. Armed

Rail operations training conducted in Nitra and Trebišov

(16 February) Army personnel of 12 Mech Bn Nitra conducted rail operations training. The practical phase of the training was carried out at the railhead in Nitra. Soldiers practised the takeover, preparation and handover of flat-bed wagons, the set-up of the universal UNOR steel ramp, the hand and arms signals for guiding military vehicles onto and from flat-bed wagons, and the provision of force protection and security duties. Similarly, rail operations training was also undertaken by personnel of 14 Tnk Bn Trebišov. While Day 1 of the training was focused on theory at barracks, Day 2 saw practical training at the railhead in Trebišov. At six different points, tankies practised various duties, including providing force protection, guarding the railhead and military loads, and setting up the universal UNOR steel ramp. Then, drivers, guided by vehicle commanders with hand and arms signals, conducted the loading and unloading of tracked and wheeled vehicles onto and from the flat-bed wagons.



- Ambush, evacuation and first aid were among the drills practised by 12 Mech Bn recon troops and 5 SOF Regt personnel during **Ex Zniev 2022**.

- Thanks to the Physical Training and Sports Department at the Armed Forces Academy (AOS) working in close cooperation with the Specialist Training Branch at TC Lešť, the **Close Combat (CC) Course** was organised at AOS. Being one of the most physically demanding courses in the Armed Forces, it was attended by selected AOS cadets and led by an AOS PT instructor. All participants passed the final test.

- Members of HQ and STF 12 Mech Bn Nitra, supported by Com Ptn (CS Coy), underwent a **complex command staff rehearsal** on 18 Feb. The aim of the rehearsal was to align the activity of individual HQ and STF teams and to increase their operational readiness in planning defensive operations.

- As construction works to the Gastroenterology Department are being completed, the **Central Military Hospital – Faculty Hospital Ružomberok** reopens ERCP from 15 Feb and EUS from 1 Mar. Patients are requested to make an appointment by phone or email.

- Skiers of the **Dukla Military Sports Centre** Adam Žampa, Andreas Žampa and Rebeka Jančová and their teammate Petra Hromcová placed 12th in the Mixed Team Parallel race at the Beijing WO.

- Dominika Tatárová, member of the Dukla Military Sports Centre, **won the bronze medal** by defeating Vice World Champion Shaaban in the women's Kumite +68 at the K1 World Cup in the UAE.

- On 13 Feb, Bishop of the Forces František Rábek officiated the **ordination of Deacon Alojz Svedek** at St Sebastian's Cathedral in Bratislava. The new deacon is one of the six permanent deacons in the Bishopric of the Armed Forces and Armed Corps and will serve as a volunteer in support of Bishopric chaplains in Trenčín.

- The MOD has issued a **traffic warning** to motorists as 28 Allied road movements are scheduled to take place across Slovakia from 21 to 27 Feb. Over the same period, the SVK military will conduct road movements from/to: Dubnica nad Váhom – Martin, Prešov – Michalovce, Sliach – Moldava nad Bodvou, Michalovce – Lešť, Prešov – Trebišov, Poprad – Martin and back, Trebišov – Poprad, Močiar – Martin and back, Mierovo – Sliach, Poprad – Nemšová and back, Sliach – Zvolen, Zvolen – Mierovo, Poprad – Prešov, Piešťany – Prešov, Nitra – Piešťany, Prešov – Nitra, Banská Bystrica – Prešov and back, Levice – Zemianske Kostolany and back, Trenčín – Zemianske Kostolany and back, Kuchyňa – Zemianske Kostolany and back, and within the city of Trebišova. Also planned for next week are the following SVK military rail movements from/to: Levice – Sása-Pliešovce and Zemianske Kostolany – Kuchyňa.

Encyclopaedia awarded

(15 February) In 2020, Ikar Publishing in cooperation with the Institute of Military History (VHÚ) Bratislava published the Encyclopaedia of Wars From Early Times To Present, written by historians Vladimír Segeš and Matej Medvecký, of VHÚ, and Tomáš Klubert, of the National Memory Institute. The book was well received by the public and captured the attention of experts. In July 2021, it placed among the most beautiful books of 2020. Also last year, it received a prize from the Literary Fund and the Popular Scientific Publication Award from the Slovak Historical Society. At the beginning of 2022, the Encyclopaedia of Wars placed second and received the Judges Award in the Historical Encyclopaedia category at the 28th Czech Interpreters and Translators Union Competition.



Levice-based soldiers out in winter

(16 February) The Training Centre Lešť hosted winter training for 3 Mech Coy, part of 13 Mech Bn Levice. Focused on stabilisation activities and fighting in built-up areas, the training was inspected by the head of the SVK Army, Maj Gen Ivan Pach. The training culminated with control assignments. 3 Mech Coy underwent coordination checks before engaging in a tactical live fire exercise, supported by the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES 2000). Maj Ladislav Gurský, who was in charge of the training, praised soldiers for their exemplary commitment.

Improvement week at HQ BA GAR

(1 February) At the beginning of February, members of HQ BA GAR improved their skills and gained new knowledge on the courses organised by the SVK Armed Forces. They along with members of the Armed Forces GOH attended the MDMP course at TC Lešť, where they improved on operations planning with some elements of the military decision-making process. GOH personnel also undertook the CQB Course, with the aim of small-sized dismounted units, led by SSgt Marek Mesároš and SSgt Lukáš Kameniar, practising the core tasks in built-up areas. The training objectives were met successfully.



Forces along with some 600 pieces of combat equipment (CE) and combat support equipment (CSE) will move through the Czech Republic and arrive in Slovakia. Subsequently, they will exercise along with nearly 1,300 members of the Slovak Armed

Forces within specifically designated Military Training Areas (MTAs). In addition to Slovakia, the exercise is also scheduled to take place in Germany, Poland, Czechia and in the Baltic states. Ex Saber Strike, a bi-annual multinational training event, is included in NATO's Military Training and Exercise Programme (MTEP). For this reason, it is not related to the latest raft of measures in response to the Ukraine crisis. On conclusion of the exercise, all the deployed NATO units will return to their home bases in Germany. As part of Host Nation Support (HNS), Military Police, assisted by police forces, provides escorts to Allied and Slovak convoys across Bratislava, Trnava, Nitra and Banská Bystrica regions for the purposes of Ex Saber Strike 22, as well as overseeing traffic safety and movements of military columns at the training sites.

After arriving in Kuchyňa Air Base, U.S. Army personnel met with military chaplain Maj Slavko Ganaj and asked him to celebrate Holy Masses in English at the local John Paul II Chapel. American soldiers have thus reinforced the ranks of military parishioners at Kuchyňa.