



Slovakia fulfils its contract with Ukraine

(16 Jan) The Ukrainian Armed Forces have taken over the eighth Slovak-made Zuzana 2 self-propelled howitzer (SPH) to bolster Ukraine's defences against the Russian Federation's aggression. The howitzer is the last out of the eight SPHs on order and delivered to Ukraine under a commercial contract signed with KONŠTRUKTA-Defence in June 2022. "As of today, we have delivered an entire battery of high quality artillery systems of Slovak provenance to Ukraine. We believe that the Ukrainian defenders will use them to the point whereby they save as many lives as possible and their country inches ever closer to achieving unconditional victory over the enemy," Minister Naď said. KONŠTRUKTA-Defence has also been awarded another contract for an additional 16 Zuzana 2 SPHs for Ukraine to be funded by Denmark, Germany and Norway.

On Ukraine in Ramstein

(20 Jan) State Secretary Marian Majer attended a multilateral UDCG meeting at Ramstein AB, Germany. Central themes of the meeting included the current situation on the battlefield, recent progress made in increasing defence industry output to the benefit of Ukraine, and the operational needs, materiel support packages and training of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. "The coming months are key for Ukraine, we must not let up now, but keep on helping it with resolve. With our allies, we will, therefore, continue to look for consensus towards strengthening the capabilities of our Ukrainian partners – this move could substantially enable them to take the initiative on the battlefield and achieve unconditional victory translatable into lasting and sustainable peace," Mr Majer said. The U.S.-led UDCG was set up as Defence leaders from over 40 nations first met to discuss support for Ukraine at RMS AB on 26 Apr 2022. Today marked the eighth such meeting.

A responsible and reliable partner

(20 Jan) Slovakia has recently received an additional reimbursement of €41.9m from the European Peace Facility (EPF) fund for the arms assistance it has provided to Ukraine and its armed forces. The funding will go towards purchasing munitions and new equipment for the Slovak military. "With its set of values anchored clearly, Slovakia has behaved responsibly in delivering its assistance to Ukraine since the start of Russia's invasion. Thanks to this, it is a reliable and constructive partner in the eyes of its allies. We remain committed to assisting Ukraine materially, humanitarian-wise, and militarily and to helping it free itself from the hands of the aggressor," Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said. Slovakia also received a refund of €40.2m from the EPF at the end of last year. Since the beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Slovakia has donated €167.8m in aid to Ukraine. SVK military aid to Ukraine has so far included the S-300 AD system, Božena mine-clearing UGVs, five helicopters, small arms, munitions and fuel. Another aid project has seen 30 tracked BVP-1 IFVs transferred to Ukraine in exchange for 15 Leopard 2A4 MBTs to be delivered in stages from Germany.

Slovak Air Force Antonov An-24 crash anniversary marked

(19 Jan) The 41 SVK service personnel and 1 civil servant who died in the crash of the SVK AF Antonov An-24 aircraft while returning home from their NATO-led KFOR tour of duty 17 years ago were honoured in a wreath-laying ceremony at the MOD Reconciliation Memorial, in the presence of Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď. "A lot of good things have been accomplished over the past 30 years of Slovakia's existence. However, there have also occurred a number of tragedies. Sadly, one of them was the Antonov An-24 crash in which our wonderful colleagues, friends and loved relatives perished, leaving behind a deep emptiness. We pledge never to forget them. For us, they will always be the light towards which we will be drawn in our thoughts," Minister Naď said. He had the Service Inquiry Report into the Antonov An-24 Incident declassified in 2020, and joined the families of the victims in visiting Kosovo in Oct 2022. To mark the 17th anniversary, the Slovak Armed Forces also organised a March of Honour up to Borsó Hill.



► In Bratislava on 18 Jan, State Secretary Marian Majer hosted Ukrainian Deputy Defence Minister Denys Sharapov and his delegation for talks on the operational needs of Ukraine's Armed Forces in defence against Russia's aggression. Mr Majer offered his heartfelt condolences to the Deputy Minister for the victims of the tragic helicopter crash in the city of Brovary.

► The SVK Artillery Fire Battery on NATO's eFP in Latvia focused on the transition of fire support from secondary to primary targets during its live fire drills on 19 Jan. As well as conducting its own artillery recce, the Battery worked closely with ITA JTACs, ESP observers and LVA drone operators. The Fire Support Coordination Group ensured integration of all the elements into a functional whole. The drills tested the commanders' knowledge and the artillerymen's manual calculation of firing data, should the automated systems fail. From 24 Jan onwards, the training of the Battlegroup will accelerate, culminating with a certification exercise at the end of March.

► While on duty, members of 53 Field Services Bn Hlohovec witnessed a road traffic accident involving a coach crossing the Donovaly Pass in the late evening hours of Wen 18 Jan. Cpl Ladislav Žiga and Cpl Boris Hasin did not lose their composure and evacuated all the passengers out of the overturned coach and led them to safety before police patrols arrived. Com 53 Fld Svc Bn Hlohovec Lt Col Ladislav Kasper thanked Cpl Žiga and Cpl Hasin for their quick response and professional conduct.

► Capt Roman Markovič, Pte Oliver Minka and Pte Andrej Pauliny, all members of the Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš, have earned the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge (GAFPB) after being tested for it on such varied activities as a series of chin-ups, a shuttle run, a 1km sprint, CBRN, first aid, shooting, a 12km speed loaded march with 15kg, a 100m swim in uniform, etc. They received the GAFPB from Lt Col René Diefenbach (NFIU SVK) on 17 Jan.

► As in the past years, this year, too, the Bratislava Garrison Club hosted a ceremony to mark Artillery Day, with DCHOD/COS Maj Gen Peter Babiar presiding over it and with Coordinator of Fire Support/Chief of Artillery Col Roman Bobaľ giving a speech. Maj Gen Babiar handed the Slovak Chief of Defence Commemorative Cross 3rd Grade over to three members of the Rifles and Artillery Guild. COM BA GAR Col Miloslav Arnold received a Letter of Thank You from the Guild for his work. And the Guild awarded its Honorary Badge to (Ret'd) Lt Col Marián Bryndza.

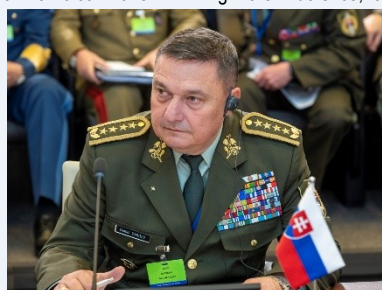
► A team of the MOD Forestry Department visited children in a kindergarten in the village of Plavecký Peter as part of the first of a series of educational engagements for pre-school kids. In addition to a knowledge quiz, they taught the kids how to make wooden charms.

► On the eve of St Sebastian Day commemorating the Saint Patron of the Bishopric of the Forces, priests, deacons and representatives of the Bishopric gathered on 19 Jan for a Mass at the Bishopric Cathedral dedicated to St Sebastian. Bishop of the Forces Mons František Rábek asked members of the parish for prayers for the SVK service personnel who died in the plane crash at the village of Hejce 17 years ago. The solemnity of this event was reinforced by the fact that Pope John Paul II set up the Slovak Roman Catholic Bishopric of the Forces 20 years ago.

SVK CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko attends NATO MCCS in Brussels

(19 Jan) Slovak Chief of Defence General Daniel Zmeko attended this year's first NATO Military Committee in Chiefs of Defence Session (MCCS) in Brussels on 18-19 Jan 2023.

Chair of the Military Committee Admiral Rob Bauer welcomed 30 Allied Chiefs of Defence and their counterparts from Finland and Sweden to the event. He noted that the last meeting of the MCCS with Russia took place a year ago. But then, the security and political situation in Europe and in the whole world changed. Yet, NATO has demonstrated its unity, adaptability and resilience. In his remarks, the Deputy Secretary General stressed that NATO "must retain the military capacity and capability to defend the Alliance against all challenges, now and in the future, including in multi



-domain operations." He further identified three areas of important work in the run-up to the 2023 NATO Summit: investing more in defence, ramping up production of weapons and

ammunition, and transforming NATO for the digital age. Topics covered included the strengthening of the Alliance's Defence and Deterrence posture by increasing readiness, developing capabilities and interlinking national and NATO military planning. The Chiefs of Defence also discussed the military situation in Ukraine and NATO's missions and operations. Gen Zmeko is the first SVK CHOD to take over

the honorary role of the Dean of the NATO Military Committee for 2023. The role is taken on by Allied CHODs on an annual rotational basis.

MOD remembers WW2 victims



(22 Jan) On behalf of the MOD, Secretary General of the Service Office Peter Kozák paid tribute to the 148 residents of Kľak and Ostrý Grúň who died when the villages were burned down by Nazis in Jan 1945. "Despite the fact that 78

years have passed since the tragic events, we vow not to forget WW2's crimes and victims," Mr Kozák said. He further pointed to the documented war crimes perpetrated by Russian service members in Ukraine today. "They come to remind us of WW2's tragedies. As a result, we should not be indifferent and insensitive to pain and suffering," Mr Kozák emphasised.

Marian Majer in Estonia

(20 Jan) Meeting at the joint initiative of the UK and Estonia, defence ministers gathered at the Tapa base in Estonia for discussions on arms supplies for Ukraine. Slovakia was represented by State Secretary Marian Majer. The aim of the meeting was to coordinate military aid for Ukraine, to identify future possibilities, and to provide an update on the military packages delivered most recently. Slovakia has been kept informed of the needs of Ukraine's Armed Forces, including for MBTs, artillery guns, air defence systems, training, and maintenance. "We understand that in this situation speed is a very important factor, making our assistance to Ukraine effective – which is why we are closely consulting with our allies, both at joint meetings like this one and bilaterally," he added.

Aircraft Protection Team certified



(18 Jan) A Military Police (MP) Aircraft Protection Team (APT) was certified for military flights. On the certification exercise, the APT team undertook the specific tasks of air marshals protecting crews and passengers from security

threats. The APT team's actions were closely observed and assessed by a panel of external assessors, involving tactical, skills at arms, PT and police instructors as well as psychological and medical professionals. The certification exercise tested the APT team's skills through scenarios simulating different levels of threat to the crew, passengers and aircraft. As part of the exercise, the APT team was exposed to decreased air pressure and low oxygen levels aboard an aircraft. The exercise was supported by the DUKLA Military Sports Centre Banská Bystrica.