



State-owned defence companies are making progress

(24 Jan) Over the past three years, DMD GROUP, the state-owned joint stock company with the SVK MOD as its sole stakeholder, has made significant progress financially, personnel-wise and technology-wise. One of the vital factors has been the domestic defence industry's role in the Slovak Armed Forces modernisation programmes.

On his visit to the company, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď said: "Our genuine support has been translated into figures – over the past three years the group of our state-owned companies has more than doubled its sales, reaching over €131m in 2022, whilst increasing the employment levels by more than 15%."

With a workforce of 612 employees, DMD GROUP has ambitious plans to employ another 250 people in 2023. The Minister was briefed by Director General Štefan Škultéty on the state of the projects, including on a new chrome plating facility and new assembly spaces for the CV90s. The company will also invest in green solutions such as a roof-mounted photovoltaic power system with an output up to 2.9 MW and upgrades to its DS37 Hall and lighting systems within its premises.

Minister visits LOTN

(26 Jan) LOTN officially launched production of microwave modules for IAI-ELTA's 3D AD radar systems for the SVK Armed Forces. Alongside aircraft servicing, LOTN now has a production programme for the first time. Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď was given a tour of LOTN's new workplace on 25 Jan.



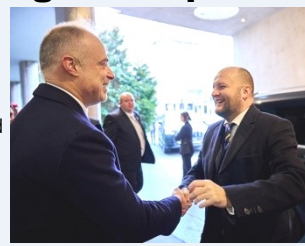
"LOTN's industrial cooperation with Israel's ELTA Systems Ltd as the contractor for 17 3D radars for the SVK Armed Forces is an example of Slovakia's direct defence industrial involvement in the delivery of the Armed Forces' equipment programmes. Thanks to this, SVK businesses will be able to make profit, to create job opportunities, and to gain new capabilities that are the best investment into the future," Mr Naď emphasised.

Under the SVK Armed Forces 3D AD Radar Programme, LOTN is responsible for the entirety of project management involving all Slovak subcontractors. As Director General of LOTN Ľubomír Galko noted, there are two different types of modules – 6,740 pieces altogether – being produced for 17 radar antennas. Additionally, as part of the process of converting to F-16 operations, LOTN has established closer and more intense cooperation with Lockheed Martin Global, Inc., and will participate in the maintenance and repair of some parts of the F-16 Block 70s and in the introduction of a logistics information software for them. Currently, LOTN is getting the infrastructure ready for different types of repairs, specifically to the aircraft's electrical systems, undercarriage, and hydraulic components. Furthermore, it will be involved in the implementation of the ILIAS Defence Platform for the combat aircraft.

LOTN is a traditional aircraft maintenance provider specialising in aircraft MROU services since 1949. Over the duration of its existence, LOTN has serviced hundreds of aircraft and helicopters from a variety of manufacturers for domestic and international customers. Compared to 2021, 2022 recorded the company's growth in turnover by €4.77m, which equates to a 34% rise.

Hungary to join Czechia and Poland in protecting SVK airspace

(27 Jan) Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď made his working trip abroad to Hungary's Budapest to meet Hungarian Defence Minister Kristóf Szalay-Bobrovniczky for talks centred on current security and defence policy issues, the developments in Ukraine, and the forthcoming opportunities for cooperation in the Visegrad Group, including on Slovak airspace protection. Following the meeting, Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď announced: "Today, we can confirm the Hungarian side's interest and the Slovak side's gratitude to Hungary that it will get involved in protecting Slovak airspace. After Poland and Czechia's involvement in this initiative, the Hungarian Air Force will, after the signing of relevant documents, protect Slovak skies. So, a real Visegrad project is now emerging, which testifies to the significance of the V4 as a vital platform for advancing cooperation of our countries." The intent is to sign the joint political declaration on the protection of Slovak airspace at the V4 Defence Ministerial in June 2023. In their conversation, the leaders shared insights into the evolving situation in Ukraine, the ongoing transatlantic processes, and the security situation in the Western Balkans. As well as this, the two discussed their experience of capabilities modernisation in both Armed Forces and the operations of the NATO Battlegroups that were stood up in Slovakia and Hungary in the wake of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The ministers also addressed the V4 defence cooperation agenda. On this note, Minister Naď expressed his appreciation for a good level of engagement with Hungary on the V4's highest visibility project – the V4 EU Battlegroup, which is on standby in the first half of 2023. Slovakia holds the V4 Presidency until 30 June 2023.



► Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď visited the Service accommodation facility in Bratislava's Na Šajbách to witness first-hand the state of standard Armed Forces accommodation. The MOD Accommodation Agency (BARMO) has received a total of €1,085,120 and €346,718 to upgrade its hostels and flats, respectively. BARMO runs four large-capacity hostels and 370 flats. Reconstruction works were conducted in Martin last year, to be followed in Trenčín and Žilina this year. The planned investments in upgrades will exceed €3m.

► From 16 Jan to 10 Feb, 33 SVK Army officers, ranked Lieutenant and specialised in a variety of trades, are taking the **Officer Command & Leadership Course (OCLC)** at different locations in Slovakia, including at 12 Mech Bn Nitra, Nitra Garrison's Koliňanský Hill TG, and Turkish Hill MTA. The aim of the OCLC course, led by the British Military Advisory Training Team (BMATT), is to improve their basic soldiering skills and ability to plan and conduct defensive and offensive operations with small units. COM SVK ARMY Maj Gen Ivan Pach visited the course and spoke with the officers about specific aspects of the training.

► In honour of the victims of the Antonov An-24 disaster at the village of Hejce, Zvolen Garrison hosted the **15th Lt Col ThLic Michal Štang Mini-Soccer Memorial Tournament**. Also in attendance were AOS OCs. They placed 4th amid fierce competition, with teams from 103 CBRN Bn Rožňava, 81 Wing Sliach, and the Presidential GOH finishing in first, second and third places. OC Pte Adam Pirhala was named Best Player of the Tournament.

► Poland's Bydgoszcz hosted the NATO MP COE Operational Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) **Coordination Conference** on 23-26 Jan. In attendance at the conference were representatives of the NATO MP COE participating countries. The aim of the conference was to work on the first draft of the revised NATO MP COE Operational MOU.

► 14 Tank Bn Trebišov hosted **training on MP operations** in the third week of January. The aim of the activity was to train 16 members of the Battalion on road traffic control during convoy movements on public roads before being officially tested by MP instructors and police officers of the Police Traffic Department Trebišov.

► As part of the SVK Armed Forces' engagement with schools, **Air Officer Cadets** visited the Private Primary School for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Children in Košice. They spoke about their military jobs and answered questions about military aviation.

► Biathlete Michal Adamov, member of the Dukla Military Sports Centre Banská Bystrica, won the silver medal at the **16th Winter European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF)** in Italy's Friuli Venezia Giulia region.

► During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, vicars, priests and deacons of the Roman Catholic Bishopric of the Forces along with Bishop František Rábek and representatives of **Ecumenical Pastoral Service** in the Forces gathered for a joint Holy Mass at St Sebastian's Cathedral on 24 Jan.

AOS to accept 157 Officer Cadets in the next academic year

(27 Jan) The General M. R. Štefánik Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš guarantees job opportunities for its graduates across the MOD and the Armed Forces. In the 2023/2024 academic year, the total number of Officer Cadets (OCs) to be admitted to AOS is planned at 157. This figure relates to all types of

education at undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate levels in the Academy's accredited study programmes: Security and the Defence of the State; Electronic Weapons Systems; Military Signals and Information Systems; and Weapons Systems, Weapons and their Components. In addition, AOS OCs can also begin their cadetship at the Aviation Faculty of the University of Košice (TUKE), where the BSc degree is awarded in the Air Traffic Control (ATC), Pilot Training (PT), and Aircraft and Space Technology (A&ST) Programmes, while those interested in the second level of studies can follow the Air Transport Management and Aircraft and Space Engineering Programmes.



Further, based on an agreement between the CZE and SVK MODs, SVK soldiers can undertake the six-year Military Medicine Programme in the field of general medicine in Czechia, concurrently at the Faculty of Military Medicine of the University of Defence in Brno and at the Faculty of Military Medicine of Charles

University in Hradec Králové. Also on offer is the five-year Armed Forces Management & Employment Programme (CBRN Commander) at the Military Leadership Faculty of the University of Defence in Brno. Some of the advantages of studying at AOS include OCs enjoying the status of active duty soldiers and welfare support throughout the study. This means free accommodation and catering, the current rate of pay and benefits for a Private, military clothing and equipment, and welfare. Further information on the study opportunities at AOS can be accessed via the AOS website, the Armed Forces Recruitment Centres and their website at www.budemvojak.sk, or you can attend the Academy Open Doors Day on 24 Feb.

Open competition for SCO

(25 Jan) The MOD is pleased to announce open competition for the Service Complaints Ombudsman (SCO) to make sure individual rights of service personnel are better protected. Those interested should apply for the role no later than 14 Feb 2023.

"The Ombudsman is one of the priorities we have set ourselves to give soldiers even wider possibilities to protect their rights and justified interests. By way of an annual report, this institution will be a source of feedback on the protection of the soldier's fundamental rights and freedoms and of proposals and recommendations for redressing grievances," Defence Minister Naď said. Those who can apply for the position are all civil servants and citizens who meet the job requirements, including a college degree, at least 10 years of experience in the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and other regular conditions for joining the State Service. The role of SCO was established by the Active Duty Soldiers State Service Amendment Act 2023, which came into effect on 1 Jan 2023.

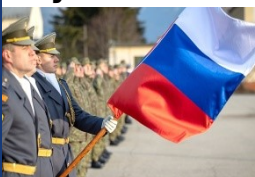
SNP Museum to restore memorials



(24 Jan) Working closely with the SVK MOD, the SNP Museum Banská Bystrica has received €3,322m from the ESIFs. The funding will go towards refurbishing and restoring two Cultural Heritage Sites (CHSS): the SNP Museum

& Memorial and the burn-out village of Kalište. The tender documentation is now being drafted before the works to the sites are put out to tender. The priorities of the project include replacing windows on both sides of the Museum's building, fixing and insulating the roof, and replacing the tiles, as well as restoring Kalište to its original state. The funding will allow the CHSSs, as Director of the Museum Marian Uhrin himself put it, "to be restored to a condition and appearance befitting the historical significance of the Slovak National Uprising".

20 years of NCOA marked



(27 Jan) The Slovak Armed Forces gathered for a ceremony to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Non-commissioned Officer Academy (NCOA) at the Training and Mobilisation Force Generation Base Martin. In attendance were COM SVK ARMY Maj Gen Ivan Pach, CSEL for the Slovak Armed Forces Sgt Maj Marcel Kaniak, and other guests. Sgt Maj Kaniak presented the NCOA with a SVK flag that used to be flown at HQ ISAF during his tour of duty in Afghanistan's Kabul. The NCOA delivers education and training for NCOs to get them ready for training and leading other soldiers.