



Germany to provide us with MANTIS

(9 Feb) Germany is to provide Slovakia with two modern MANTIS C-RAM systems to boost SVK air defences on its eastern border with Ukraine, secured by SVK armed forces and assets. As confirmed by Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď, Slovakia is to get the MANTIS systems for free and permanently, based on the SVK-DEU correct relationship, expert talks, and NATO's common goal – to strengthen and protect NATO's Eastern Flank that we are part of. Each of the two MANTIS systems consists of up to eight automatic weapon stations, two radars, and a command post. The package also includes a surveillance radar with a range of up to 100km and specialist training of SVK operators on the equipment.

MANTIS is a stationary, fully automated weapon station designed to keep up round-the-clock air defence cover for ground installations such as military bases, defending against cruise missiles, rockets, artillery and mortar shells, and drones. Germany developed MANTIS to protect the bases where the Bundeswehr troops were until recently stationed in Afghanistan. Germany's statement of intent to provide the MANTIS systems to Slovakia was first released by the SVK and DEU defence leaders during German Defence Minister Christine Lambrecht's visit to Bratislava in Dec 2022.

Military Deed of the Year Awards

(9 Feb) President and Commander-in-Chief Zuzana Čaputová received the laureates of the 25th Military Deed of the Year Awards for 2021 at the Presidential Palace. In her speech recognising the laureates as the right people in the right place and as role models worth following, President Čaputová said: "It is encouraging to see that among them are professionals and people with heart and conscience. They have not just toughness, but also humaneness and compassion hidden under their uniform." The winner of the Award in the Assistance to the Public category was Pte Miroslav Demeter for his role in the recovery effort in the aftermath of the tornado in South Moravia during an off-duty period. The Friend of the Armed Forces title went to the town of Brezová pod Bradlom. Airmen of 46 Wing Kuchyňa and members of 5 SOF Regt Žilina took home the Service to the Country Award for evacuating SVK citizens and our Afghan aides from Afghanistan. Military policeman MSgt Róbert Průčka won the Rescue of Life Award for helping a person involved in a road traffic accident and another one suffering from a sudden medical indisposition, and for his record of blood donations. **The 26th Military Deed of the Year Awards is open for nominations, by email at cinroka@mod.gov.sk or regular mail to the MOD, until 28 Feb.**



Military Forests and Estates has a unique wood registration system

(7 Feb) Since 2005, Military Forests and Estates (VLM) has operated a unique wood registration and management system, with the harvested stacks of logs receiving a barcode tag. Thanks to this, the state-owned company has a detailed overview of real-time (online) data on wood logging, stocks, and deliveries. The public can now access this information via the "Open Data" VLM website at <https://data.vlm.sk/>. As Director General of VLM Ján Jurica noted, the data tracks the volume of harvested tree species by location, removals to storage sites, the total amount of wood stocks by location, deliveries to customers, and sales. The website includes a link to an Android app updating on the current state of wood harvesting, wood stocks, and the place of origin. In the case of wood deliveries to customers, the Certificate of Origin and the Shipping Note are also available for viewing. Defence Minister Jaroslav Naď has appreciated the scope of and easy access to information, saying: "If we speak about transparency, then this is yet another excellent example of honest work and resource management that can be checked, even by the whole public. I am pleased that the MOD Forestry Department knows, so to say, where each log lies."



► Brig Gen Pavol Tököly, outgoing Chief of Staff for Operations Support (COS OPS SPT) at the Defence Staff (DS), has been appointed as **Deputy Commander Slovak Air Force** (DCOM SVK AF) in succession to Brig Gen Ladislav Dovhun, whose appointment as Chief of the Military Presidential Office has been announced.

► Focus of the **Multinational Joint Committee - Military Police Subcommittee** (MJC-MPS) meeting, held on 6-10 Feb in Bydgoszcz, was on the MP support toolkit for Ukraine. Members of the working group were briefed by UKR MP personnel on the security situation in Ukraine. Norway and Romania were introduced as new members to the MJC-MPS.

► The AOS International Courses Department hosted the 9th **Introductory NATO Joint Operations Planning Course** (JOPC), with 20 participants from Tunisia, Armenia, BiH, Hungary and Slovakia taking part.

► On 7 Feb, the Banská Bystrica-based SNP Museum hosted the launch of a new documentary titled **Anna Malinová - A Safe Place of Hiding for Gabčík** by Veronika Homolová Tóthová.

► A selection process has been announced to take place on 17-21 Apr for those service personnel who are interested in working as INFOOPS, CIMIC and PSYOP specialists in **57 Independent Special Operations Forces** (SOF) Detachment. Application closing date is 13 Mar. For more information, check on the internet.

► On 7-8 Feb, the Tatranské Zrubby-based Granite Hotel hosted specialist training on **crime detection and documentation**. Among those undertaking training were Deputy Director of the Police Dept Prešov, chiefs of police stations, and MP investigators.

► As part of Armed Forces activities in schools, personnel from **HQ 1 Mech Bde Topoľčany** in close cooperation with 103 Com Spt Coy Topoľčany have visited three secondary (vocational, technical and business) schools in Partizánske – to brief 3rd-year and 4th-year students on service in the Army as well as the Brigade and Company's mission, organisation and tasks. This was followed by a Q&A session and a demonstration of small firearms in use with the Slovak military.

► The **Bishopric of the Forces and Armed Corps** will celebrate 20 years of its service to military, police, prison and justice guard forces with a Holy Mass at 10:00am on 2 Mar at St Martin's Cathedral in Bratislava. The event is open to everyone and is to be broadcast live via RTVS.

► On 3 Feb, the Central Military Hospital - Teaching Hospital Ružomberok launched complex refurbishment works to the **MOD Aviation Medical Services Centre** in Sliac. The refurbishment works are due to be completed in Dec 2023. The general medicine and specialist practices will remain operational only on a limited basis, and so will car parking spaces.

► To celebrate the first written reference to the town, Rožňava Town Council presented awards to the town's residents. DCOM 103 CBRN Bn Rožňava Maj **Marcel Uharček** was recognised as Rožňava's Best Sportsman.

New rucksacks in warehouses

(7 Feb) SVK soldiers will be issued with a new Multi Mission Pack System (MMPSS). This essential item of personal kit was unavailable for some time, but over 3,500 (1,400 80-litre and 2,120 40-litre) MMPSSs are now in the Army warehouses. An additional 13,000 rucksacks will be supplied in the months to come. The SVK MOD has contracted

them via the NSPA. As well as meeting NATO's highest standards, they are currently in use with most NATO militaries.

Complex rehearsal at Topoľčany

(9 Feb) During a four-day rehearsal on 6-9 Feb, 1 Mech Bde Topoľčany and its subordinate units practised putting soldiers, reservists, registered citizens, and assets into groups and on standby. The aim of the rehearsal was

to test the readiness of HQ 1 Mech Bde Topoľčany staffers to undertake tasks after being given orders to put troops and civilians on standby. The rehearsal tested them time-wise and content-wise while soldiers, reservists, and citizens with call-out notices were issued equipment and reported to groups under a realistic mobilisation procedure. Also put to the test were the duty officers and the mobilisation team, and so was the entire mobilisation and reporting process. Exercise Director and COS HQ 1 Mech Bde Topoľčany Col Gabriel Janovics concluded that all tasks were completed in full.

OCs learn hand-to-hand combat

(9 Feb) At the turn of Jan and Feb, Officer Cadets (OCs) attended the Basic Hand-to-Hand Combat or Combatives Course at the Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš. A total of 14 OCs joined one of the most demanding courses in the Armed Forces under the watchful eye of TC Lešť instructors. They practised basic postures, moves, punches, kicks, blocks, throw and fall techniques, ground fight, and defensive and offensive procedures with hand-held weapons. The course culminated with a final hand-to-hand combat skills test. Despite its highly strenuous nature, all OCs passed it with success.



Another 28 PQOs complete 29th AOS PQO Commissioning Course

(10 Feb) As the 29th Professionally Qualified Officers (PQOs) Commissioning Course progresses at the Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Education Centre, a second group of PQOs has graduated from it. For this group, the course lasted from 26 Sept to 10 Feb.

Of the 78 SVK Armed Forces servicemen and women who started the course, 23 were commissioned earlier in January, 28 from eight different trade backgrounds were commissioned today, and the rest of them are still to be commissioned.

The course, supported by the Armed Forces Academy and military units and facilities subordinate to the MOD and the Armed Forces, is divided into all arms and specialist military training. The course qualifies PQOs for promotion to the ranks of OF-1 and OF-2.

In attendance at the commissioning parade were DCOM SVK AR-

MY Brig Gen Ivan Balog, DCOM SVK AF Brig Gen Pavol Tököly, Director of the Academy's Education Centre Col Jozef Wesselényi, Chief of Field Artillery in the Slovak Armed Forces Col Roman Bobaľ, and other guests.

During the commissioning parade, the PQOs were ceremonially promoted to the most junior officer rank of Lieutenant and received the Certificate of Course Attendance from Deputy Commandant for Education Col Aurel Sabó and Chief of the Education Centre's National Courses Section Lt Col Peter Gerec. Chief of Field Artillery Col Roman Bobaľ handed the Letters of Artillery Officer Appointment over to seven PQOs.

Commandant of the Armed Forces Academy Assoc Prof Jozef Puttera congratulated the newly commissioned officers on completing the PQO Commissioning Course and on their promotion.

