



TC Lešť 100 celebrations

(22 Nov) The Training Centre (TC) Lešť marked a special anniversary – 100 years since the first written record of military training at the Oremov Laz – Lešť training area. The Lešť 100 celebrations took place at the Training Centre's Club 800. In attendance at the ceremony were Deputy Defence Minister Igor Melicher, CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko, SVK Command representatives, former and acting commanders and staff of the TC Lešť, COM NATO MN BG SVK Col Miroslav Vybihal (CZE A), and other distinguished guests.

The 100-year-long history of Slovakia's most important training area was highlighted in the remarks of Director of the TC Lešť Anton Maštalský, Deputy Director of the TC Lešť Col Ľuboš Guláš, Director of the Institute of Military History Col Miroslav Čaplovič, and military historian Capt Martin Vaňourek (CZE A). As they reminded us, Czechoslovak soldiers trained in the area in 1923. In WW2, it was used by the SVK Army whose members joined in with the Slovak National Uprising in Aug 1944. Lešť was liberated from the Nazis by the Romanian Army in Feb 1945. A large Soviet garrison was quartered there from 1968 onwards. The SVK Armed Forces have carried out military training on the ranges since 1993. The NATO MN BG SVK has been stationed at Lešť since 2022.



Freedom and Democracy Day

(20 Nov) Members of the SVK Defence Staff (DS) gathered at the MOD Club for a ceremony to observe Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day. Col Miroslav Arnold, Chief of the Personnel Management Branch (DS), read out the President and Commander-in-Chief's Statement, in which she described 17 Nov 1989 as one of the most significant events in Slovakia's modern history. In his remarks, CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko revisited the significance of the occasion. During the ceremony, 17 service members received commemorative coins from the hands of Gen Zmeko for their exemplary performance of tasks on Ex Strong Cohesion 23-2 (DEPLOYEX).

MOD recognised for organisational excellence

(23 Nov) The quality of public services strongly depends on the quality of public administration. The MOD is pleased to have defended its Effective CAF User (ECU) Certificate, a quality management tool for public sector organisations. To be eligible for the award of the Certificate, the MOD had to comply with the principles of organisational excellence across the Defence processes. In a ceremony at the MOD, Ms Katarína Surmíková Tatranská, Chair of the SVK Office of Standards, Metrology and Testing, presented the ECU Certificate to Mr Peter Krajčírovič, Secretary General of the MOD Service Office. Speaking on this occasion, Ms Surmíková Tatranská said: "Efficiency, the right setting of processes, and systemic solutions are key for a powerhouse ministry. The importance of getting the risk management processes right should not be forgotten either. All these aspects help organisations improve their management systems or tools, with the CAF model being one of them. The MOD is a role model to be followed by rescue services, law enforcement agencies, and those with responsibility for critical national infrastructure (CNI)."



► The SVK Government, on the recommendation of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Robert Kaliňák, has appointed Brig Gen Juraj Štefanka as the new **Director of SVK Military Intelligence**, in succession to Maj Gen Róbert Kleštinec, who had held the position from Sept 2020 to Nov 2023. Brig Gen Štefanka, who previously served as Deputy Director of SVK Military Intelligence from Apr 2018 to Nov 2023 and who has worked with SVK MI since 2001, brings extensive experience of MI ops to the role.

► The opening remarks for the 49th meeting of the **NATO Standardization Office (NSO) Land Operations Working Group (LOWG)**, held at Trenčín Garrison Club on 20-24 Nov, were delivered by COM SVK ARMY Maj Gen Martin Stoklasa, with the emphasis on SVK Army's mission, structure, tasks, modernisation programmes, and international commitments. The goal of the meeting was to finalise the NATO STANAGs for Land Tactical Operations.

► Members of the Military Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Slovak Republic paid a visit to 81 Wing Sliach on 21 Nov. The Defence Attachés (DAs) from 14 countries, who were welcomed to Sliach AB by CO 81 Wing Sliach Col František Pytlík, were briefed on the Wing's history, structure, facilities, air assets, and tasks.

► SVK and CZE airmen of 46 Wng Kuchyňa and 22 Heli AB Náměšť nad Oslovavou paid tribute to the memory of SU-7BM bomber pilot Lt Col František Maxa, who died in a tragic incident after ejecting from the Sukhoi Su-7BM 5609 at the Malacky Air Weapons Range (AWR) on 20 Nov 1969. This led to the establishment of the Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) Service in Czechoslovakia. A requiem mass was celebrated for the Czechoslovak pilot at the 46 Wng Chapel.

► A ceremony has taken place at **SVK AF HQ Zvolen** to commemorate Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day on 20 Nov. On this occasion, COM SVK AF Maj Gen Róbert Tóth presented selected military and civilian HQ staff with the SVK Armed Forces Honorary Badge, the SVK CHOD Badge, the SVK Air Force Commemorative Medal, and the SVK Armed Forces 30th Anniversary Commemorative Medal.

► To mark **Germany's Day of National Mourning (Volkstrauertag)**, a commemorative service was held on 19 Nov at the German Military Cemetery in Bratislava's Vrakuňa, with German Ambassador Barbara Wolf and DCHOD Lt Gen Ľubomír Svoboda laying wreaths and paying their respects to the war dead. The Day of National Mourning, which always falls on the second Sunday in Nov, has been observed since 1918.

► SVK UNFICYP peacekeepers in Cyprus along with Military Chaplain of Sector 4 Maj Slavko Ganaj took part in the **Radisson Blu Larnaca International Marathon**, competing in all different categories of the marathon – the 42km marathon, the 21km half marathon, and the 10km and 5km road races.

► On Day 2 at the Killington Ski Resort (USA), **Petra Vihová**, skier of the Dukla Military Sports Centre, placed 2nd in the World Cup slalom after two excellent races.

► **Marianna Jagerčíková**, Dukla skimo athlete, finished 3rd in the women's sprint race at the Ski Mountaineering World Cup in Val Thorens, France.

► **Alexandra Filipová**, Dukla kickboxer, won the bronze medal in the K1 +70kg category at the **WAKO World Championships** in Albufeira, Portugal. Lucia Fecková placed 3rd in the women's 55kg Low Kick category and won her 70th medal for Dukla.

► **Vladimír Macura** (18), Dukla weightlifter, won the bronze medals in the men's Olympic lifts and snatch in the +109kg weight class at the **U20 World Weightlifting Championships** in Guadalajara, Mexico.

FULL FIELD KIT

Radio Regina's Full Field Kit programme presents the Oath of Allegiance ceremony at the Háj – Nicovô War Memorial live on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat.

Junior Soldiers are welcomed as new members of Slovak Armed Forces

(24 Nov) New Junior Soldiers (JS) joined the ranks of the Slovak Armed Forces in an Oath of Allegiance ceremony at the Háj – Nicovô War Memorial in Liptovský Mikuláš. On completion of 7 weeks of the basic military training (BMT) programme, 115 Junior Soldiers, also known as candidates for the State Service, passed out of BMT and swore the Oath of Allegiance, pledging to put life and limb on the line to defend their Nation and its citizens. The soldiers of the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country, while liberating Liptovský Mikuláš, lie in rest at the Háj – Nicovô War Memorial. Also at the memorial site is the Slovak Armed Forces Memorial dedicated to the SVK soldiers who have lost their lives on missions and operations abroad over the past 30 years. A livestream video from the Oath of Allegiance ceremony is available on the internet. A total of 831 candidates for the State Service, including 197 women, have completed one of the four BMT programmes at

Tokajik tragedy remembered

(21 Nov) The 79th anniversary of the Tokajik tragedy – when Nazi troops stormed the village and burned it down after executing 32 men on 19 Nov 1944 – was remembered in a wreath-laying ceremony in Tokajik. On behalf of the SVK CHOD and the Armed Forces, Brig Gen Róbert Kecsó along with representatives of the SNP Museum, the Institute of Military History, the MOD Veterans Welfare Service, the SVK Anti-Nazi Fighters Association, local authorities and mayors of the surrounding municipalities paid their respects to the victims of Nazism.

NATO PTEC Marketplace



(21 Nov) The annual NATO Partnership Training and Education Centres (PTEC) Marketplace took place at NATO HQ in Brussels, with the aim of raising the visibility of military training and education

institutions, promoting their courses as well as exchange of information and experience, and establishing new contacts and cooperation opportunities. 24 out of 34 PTECs took part. The Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš was represented at the PTEC Marketplace by its International Courses Branch. The AOS team presented the portfolio of the Academy's courses and joined the PTEC Working Group in discussing the tasks arising from the PTEC WG's last meeting and the proposal to increase the number and availability of courses to Ukrainian military personnel in light of NATO's priorities.

SVK airspace safety



(20 Nov) Held under the auspices of the Slovak Military Aviation Authority (MOD), the AOS Simulation Centre delivered the 'Current Trends and Challenges in Air Traffic Controllers (ATCs)

Training and Education, Their Transfer into Practice, and New Challenges of Increasing SVK Airspace Safety' Workshop, with a focus on new trends in using simulation technologies and their tools to increase the safety of SVK airspace, managed by both military and civilian ATC components. The workshop was attended by MOD and SVK AF experts. The Simulation Centre also hosted the ATC Practical Instructor and Evaluator Course.

