



Gen Carsten Breuer visits Slovakia

(6 Feb) Chief of Defence of Germany Gen Carsten Breuer arrived in Slovakia for an official visit upon the invitation of SVK Chief of Defence Gen Daniel Zmeko. In Bratislava, Gen Breuer also had an office call with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Robert Kaliňák.

During the two-day visit, both military leaders discussed DEU-SVK defence cooperation, military training, and the Alliance's defence plans for the Eastern Flank.

Moving on to the Training Centre (TC) Lešť, Gen Breuer met and spoke with Bundeswehr soldiers of the NATO Multinational Battlegroup Slovakia, viewed a static display and live-action demonstration, and toured the TC's training facilities. DEU troops have been serving with the BG since its formation in 2022.

The end of last year saw Germany's Leopard 2A6 MBTs being replaced by Puma armoured infantry fighting vehicles (AIFV) of 92 Mechanised Infantry Demonstration Battalion. Offering a full 360° rotating turret fitted with a 30mm cannon and a thermal vision camera, the Puma AIFV is now the Bundeswehr's main mechanised infantry platform in the BG. In Slovakia, DEU troops also operate Dingo all-protected vehicles (APVs), Boxer armoured fighting vehicles (AFVs), a Büffel armoured recovery vehicle (ARV), and an Elefant heavy equipment transporter (HET).



Dukla Sportswomen of the Year

(5 Feb) During a gala evening at the Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava, three sportswomen of the Dukla Military Sports Centre placed in the top ten of the Slovak Sports Awards. Skier Petra Vlhová (Dukla), who took 3rd place at the Ski World Cup in the 2022 - 2023 season, was unseated from her first place position after three years by skeet shooter Danka Barteková of the Police Sports Club. Slalom canoeist Eliška Mintálová (Dukla), who claimed the silver medal in the women's K1 race at the World Championships London 2023, placed 4th. Athlete Viktória Forster (Dukla), who took the gold medal in the 100m hurdles and the silver medal in the 100m sprint race at the World University Games, finished 6th. Junior judoka Patrícia Tománková (Dukla), who earned the World and European Champion titles, also shined at the event as she was named the Talent of the Year.

Military divers practice cold water ice diving

(8 Feb) In the second week of Feb, the Training Centre (TC) Lešť hosted one-week cold water ice diving (CWID) training. SSgt Vladimír Penička, course leader and instructor of TC Lešť, was in charge of the training for military divers from across the Slovak Armed Forces: 901 Engr Bn Sereď, 5 SOF Regt Žilina, 51 Wng Prešov, and NATO EOD COE Trenčín.

To keep their skillset sharp in cold water and ice environments, Slovak Armed Forces divers are required to conduct cold water ice diving at least once a year. CWID proves to be far from easy and requires specialised SCUBA cold water set-up training and familiarisation.

This time the divers disappeared under the ice sheet into the freezing water of Lake Richnava, where they reached the wreck of a ship that lies on the bottom of the lake at a depth of 18m. Elsewhere, they swam out into a reservoir near Tomaľa, covering depths of up to 38m. An underwater scooter with a computer and a navigation system was used by the divers during the ice diving training.



- The Slovak Government has appointed JUDr. Martin Vojtašovič as Deputy Minister of Defence of the Slovak Republic.

- Upon the invitation of the Commander of the United Arab Emirates Air Force (UAEAF), Slovak Air Force Chief Maj Gen Róbert Tóth attended the **UMEX/ SIMTEX Conference in Abu Dhabi**, centred on the current trends in unmanned aircraft systems (UASs), multi-role remote controlled defence systems, and counter-UASs.

- Prague hosted the **Visegrad Military Medical (VIMMED) Conference 2024**, with the V4 Defence Medical Services (DMS) in attendance. The Conference offered a range of lectures on the latest trends and technologies in military medicine, casualty evacuation (CASEVAC), advanced diagnostic and treatment methods, medical logistics, veterinary support, and protection against WMD.

- The 17th International Conference on Fuzzy Set Theory and Applications (FSTA) 2024, co-organised by the **Armed Forces Academy's Information Technology Dept.**, took place in Liptovský Ján, Slovakia. The conference was opened by AOS Commandant DS Col Aurel Sabó. A total of 85 participants from 12 countries attended the event.

- During an induction ceremony at the AOS Chapel on 6 Feb, Bishop Ivan Elko, of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession Slovakia (ECAC SVK), introduced **Maj Lubomír Kordoš as a new Military Dean** of the Central Office of Ecumenical Pastoral Service in the Slovak Armed Forces and Armed Corps.

- The 5th international event of the **EU-funded Interdisciplinary Education and Training on Hybrid Warfare Project** was held at the Armed Forces Academy Liptovský Mikuláš, with participation from 62 international delegates, including 45 students. The HW Project is coordinated by the Ludovika University of Public Service in Budapest. Six countries are involved in the project. This has entered its final test phase this year.

- Five priests embarked on their career with the **Roman Catholic (RC) Bishopric of the Forces and Armed Corps** at the beginning of this year. They were welcomed into the Bishopric community during their induction ceremonies as Bishop of the Forces and Armed Corps František Rábek introduced Fr Marek Olčák to Sereď Garrison at Mass on 22 Jan, Fr Dávid Šturák to HQ Jnt Spt Bde Trenčín and Fr Jozef Kornecky to Nitra Garrison at Masses on 5 Feb. Later on 16 Feb, Fr Peter Halkoci and Fr Alexander Andrejko will be inducted as Staff Chaplain in Zvolen and as Military Chaplain in Rožňava, respectively.

- The 30th **International Staff Officers' Course (ISOC)** began at the International Courses Dept of the Military Academy Liptovský Mikuláš. This ISOC, being attended by 15 SVK officers ranked captain to major, four CZE lieutenants, five UKR officers, takes nine weeks to complete.

- The **Grand Prix Pilsen 2024** in the Olympic 10m Air Pistol and Air Rifle 60 Shots shooting events took place in Pilsen. Lt Peter Baláž, pursuing full-time doctoral studies at the AOS Engineering Dept, placed 4th in the 10m Air Pistol 60 Shots Men event in the very tight finals.

- At the Junior Open European Championships Jakuszyce in Poland on 11 Feb, **biathlete Ema Kapustová (DUKLA)** won the junior women's 9km Mass Start event and took the bronze medal, while biathlete Jakub Borgula (DUKLA) finished 4th in the junior men's 10km sprint race.

UN delegation visits Cyprus

(8 Feb) A UN delegation led by the Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Cyprus, Ms Maria Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, visited Sector 4 of UNFICYP under SLOVCON's responsibility.

The visiting delegation familiarised themselves with the operational environment and the current situation in Cyprus. In Deryneia, they were welcomed by SLOVCON Commander Lt Col Katarína Gargalíková. In Varosha, they received operational and field briefs and toured the UN posts there. Ms Cuéllar praised the professionalism of the SLOVCON peacekeepers.

AOS's hand-to-hand combatants

(9 Feb) The Armed Forces Academy (AOS) Liptovský Mikuláš hosted the Hand-to-Hand Combat Course for Officer Cadets (OCs). Only those with the best results in Level 7 Physical Training qualified to join one of the most physically

challenging courses in the SVK Armed Forces. They practiced the basic combat stance and moves, grips and grabs, punches, kicks and blocks, throw and fall techniques, ground fighting, and defensive and offensive fighting with a long weapon under the watchful eye of the TC Lešť Instructor Team. The close combat course was passed by only seven OCs. Among them was an OC of the French Military Academy.

Emergency abandonment of aircraft

(6 Feb) On 30 Jan 2024, airmen of 46 WNG Kuchyňa went through SOPs for emergency situations that may occur during airborne deployment. The training was centred on the work of loadmasters (tasked with safe cargo operations), jumpmasters (tasked with managing airborne jump operations), C-27J Spartan aircraft crews, and parachute specialists who coordinated their action in catching, towing and reeling a paratrooper, caught up in the lines, back inside the aircraft with the use of the HUPRA system.

1 Mech Bde gunners - operators conduct live firing training in Feb

(9 Feb) Live firing training for BVP-1 and BVP-2 IFV gunners - operators of the SVK Army's 1 Mech Bde took place on Levice Garrison's firing range at Devičany. Members of the Martin-, Nitra- and Levice-based Battalions tested their theoretical knowledge and carried out live firing both day and night.



The live fire training, directed by Capt Juraj Darida of 13 Mech Bn Levice, took place at five different facilities. The first and main one was the firing range where the IFV gunners engaged moving and disappearing targets, while stationary or on the move.

The best day live fire results were achieved by Cpl Ján Mariančí and Cpl Marek Treu (11 Mech Bn), Cpl Martin Šomšák (12 Mech Bn), and Cpl Marián Belanský and Cpl Marek Baláž (13 Mech Bn). The best live fire results in low visibility conditions were accomplished by Cpl Marek Treu and Cpl Ján Bodorík (11 Mech Bn), Cpl Marek Krivý (12 Mech Bn), and Cpl Marek Baláž and Cpl Adam Trubinský (13 Mech Bn). At the other facilities, the gunners rehearsed rectification of faults on equipment, knowledge of armaments, munitions and weapon systems, the cannon loading process, and the specifics of live firing. The BVP-1 and BVP-2 IFV gunners - operators of 1 Mech Bde completed all the assigned tasks to the highest quality.