



UNFICYP

60th Anniversary celebrations

(5 Mar) Deputy Defence Minister Igor Melicher visited SVK soldiers serving with UNFICYP in Cyprus. The Slovak Contingent (SLOVCON) of UNFICYP, our largest deployment abroad, has 240 soldiers. This figure equates to a quarter of the Mission's military personnel.

The immense sense of pride for their work was reinforced at the UNFICYP 60th Anniversary celebrations, in the presence of Ms Annita Demetriou, Speaker of the Cypriot Parliament, and Mr Colin Stewart, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Mission.

Our peacekeepers' work carries strong resonance from political leaders, officers and the citizens of Cyprus, including from our expatriate community.

The meeting between Deputy Defence Minister Igor Melicher and President of the Republic of Cyprus Nikos Christodoulides confirmed our mutual interest in enhancing our bilateral ties and ensuring continued support for the Mission.

Cooperation between our nations is being deepened thanks to the Bilateral Cooperation Plan 2024 - 2025, signed last year, with the spotlight on joint military engagements and exchange of expertise at an expert level.

UNFICYP, one of the longest running peacekeeping missions in the history of the UN, created by UNSC Resolution No. 186 of 4 Mar 1964 with the mandate to prevent the renewal of armed conflict between the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities, has contributed to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and the return to normalcy.

Earlier on 2 Mar, SVK soldiers celebrated 60 years of UNFICYP by completing a 4km run in combat boots and uniform, competing for a SVK Defence Minister's prize. The winning team was made up of SLOVCON COM Lt Col Katarína Gargaliková, DCOM Maj Marek Žáčik, and Senior Chaplain Maj Slavko Ganaj. Afterwards, the military leaders along with SLOVCON soldiers attended a medal presentation ceremony in Famagusta. The celebrations continued at the Slovak camp in Famagusta on 4 Mar with a remembrance service for all personnel deceased while serving with the Mission. The ceremony, attended by DCHOD/COS Maj Gen Peter Babiar, Chief of Ops Brig Gen Ivan Balog, and SLOVCON COM Lt Col Katarína Gargaliková, was led by Senior Chaplain Maj Slavko Ganaj. Also in attendance was the family of departed Cpl Alexander Šimkovič (SVK A). A Requiem Mass was celebrated for him at the Sts Cyril and Methodius Chapel.

On 4 Mar, Nicosia hosted the UNFICYP 60th Anniversary Ceremony, with participation from UNFICYP peacekeepers from the UK, Argentina and Slovakia.



Remembering Slovakia's generals executed in WWII

(5 Mar) Deputy Defence Minister Martin Vojštašovič and DCHOD Lt Gen Ľubomír Svoboda attended a remembrance service at the MOD Reconciliation Memorial on General Viest Square, to pay tribute to the four Slovak generals executed for their role in or support of the Slovak National Uprising. In his remarks, Mr Martin Vojštašovič said: "After the suppression of the Slovak National Uprising, Slovak generals Rudolf Viest, Ján Golian, Augustín Malár and Štefan Jurech met the same fate. They were deported to the Flossenbürg prison camp, where they were executed in the spring of 1945. May today's remembrance service be a mark of our respect to these heroes." First initiated by the SVK Generals Club in Mar 2015, the remembrance service has been held annually at the MOD Reconciliation Memorial.



- A delegation from the Slovak Air Force visited U.S. Air Forces in Europe - Air Forces Africa (USAFE-AFAFRICA), Ramstein Air Base, for a **Force Development Programme workshop**. Topics covered the training of personnel to support F-16 operations, the training of Air Base defence personnel, cooperation in repairing the BAK-12 aircraft arresting system, as well as exploring options to build an F-16 jet engine testing facility.

- A two-week **winter training camp** for the 3rd-year Officer Cadets of the Military Academy took place in the Opalisko ski resort in Závažná Poruba. The trainees practiced downhill skiing, safe movement in the mountains, orienteering, and winter survival skills. This was followed by a speed march to Zárská Chata, while carrying a "wounded" soldier on an improvised stretcher. They also learned to build make-shift snowshoes, which they used during their move in hard-to-reach terrain and deep snow. The Low Tatras Mountain Rescue Service prepared an avalanche prevention brief for them.

- "Immediate Support to Vital Functions", a continuing education study programme, has started at the Central Military Hospital Ružomberok. The first to join the programme were non-medical military health workers. The professional guarantor of the programme is the head nurse of the hospital, Sgt Maj Silvia Šimová.

- Zemianske Kostolany-based personnel of the CBRN Chemical Labs, part of 905 Specialised Combat Support Centre, took over new lab equipment in a ceremony, in the presence of US Dept of State, US EUCOM and US Embassy officials. This **US gift** includes advanced analytical lab devices to improve the analytical capabilities of the chemical labs and facilitate their ambition to become one of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Designated Laboratories.

- The Czech MOD held a regular meeting of the **Military Police Panel Working Group (MPP WG)** in Prague, focused on multinational cooperation under the NATO Standardization Office. The meeting was attended by representatives of 29 NATO nations and PIP countries, NATO HQs and COEs. The SVK Military Police was represented by Lt Col Jaroslav Slančík and Lt Peter Očenáš.

- EOD and CBRN specialists of **905 Specialised Combat Support Centre Nováky** took samples and identified unknown substances in a barracks building and at Mokrá airfield, both operated by 52 Abn Bn Jamnik. They practiced SOPs for sampling and the interaction between EOD and CBRN specialists in the performance of professional tasks.

- At 11 Mech Bn Martin on 5 Mar, a **Slovak National Uprising (SNP) awareness raising event** featured a lecture by historian Juraj Lepš from the SNP Museum, a presentation by the Golan Military History Clubs Banská Bystrica and Trnava, a discussion on SNP operations by WWII veteran Vladimír Štrmeh and military personnel.

- The Military Academy Liptovský Mikuláš has started the **Professionally Qualified Officers Course No. 32** for 69 graduates of universities and colleges in the Preparatory State Service and 34 MOD Other Ranks, NCOs, and Officers in the Temporary and Permanent State Service.

- To mark the 21st anniversary of the **RC Bishopric of the Forces and Armed Corps**, priests, deacons, employees and lay members of the Bishopric attended a Holy Mass at St Sebastian's Cathedral, in the presence of the Apostolic Nuncio, Mons Nicola Girasoli.

- **Military Forests and Estates (VLM)** has purchased nine automated external defibrillators (AEDs) for its facilities. These have been placed on the Slovakia-wide Public Access Defibrillators (PADs) map on the internet. A Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) course with the use of the defibrillator was delivered for the staff at two VLM facilities.

- **The Central Military Hospital - Teaching Hospital Ružomberok** is among Slovakia's best faculty and university hospitals in the Dóvera Insurance Company ranking. Almost 9,000 Dóvera clients took part in the patient survey.

- Skier Rebeka Jančová, **Dukla Military Sports Centre**, won the women's Giant Slalom event at the FIS Alpine Skiing Kvíjell (NOR).

FULL FIELD KIT

Radio Regina's Full Field Kit programme presents the Spike Missile System Operator Course on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat.

Moving Leopard 2A4 Main Battle Tanks (MBTs) by rail

(7 Mar) 4 Tank Company, part of 14 Tank Battalion Trebišov, operates Leopard 2A4 MBTs. To be able to conduct training at the Training Centre Lešť, Slovak tankmen had to learn to transport their Leopards by rail.

According to Battalion Chief of Staff Maj Juraj Kešef, this training activity set a historical milestone, he said: "The two-day rail movement training took place at the Trebišov railroad as a point of embarkation and its successful completion has opened up new possibilities. Day 1 was dedicated to theory and Day 2 to driving all the Battalion's wheeled and tracked platforms – Land Rovers, Aktis and Tatra trucks, T-72s, and Leopard 2A4s – onto flatbed wagons. For the first time, we managed to load our Leopards



on a train. In doing so, we were supported by personnel of a German company and members of 701 Military Transport Centre."

As 4 Tank Company Commander Capt Rastislav Bodnár said, the Leopard 2A4 is heavier and larger than the T-72. Special flatbed wagons were, therefore, hired from Poland, given that Slovak Rail does not operate this type of wagons. In the future, 13 of them will be purchased in order to transport the SVK Leopard tanks by rail.

Both senior and junior drivers were successful in driving the German tanks onto the wagons. They highly appreciate that the Leopard 2A4 MBT offers a lot more manoeuvrability and is easier to handle in action.

Lt Gen Laubenthal's visit

(7 Mar) German Deputy Chief of Defence Lt Gen Markus Laubenthal (DEU A) made an official visit to Slovakia upon the invitation of CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko. For two days, both leaders engaged in talks on mil-to-mil cooperation, training and exercises, and defence plans. Gen Zmeko presented Lt Gen Markus Laubenthal with the Slovak Chief of Defence Commemorative Cross 1st Grade for his long-term contribution to SVK-DEU defence cooperation.

A musical bow to women



(8 Mar) On International Women's Day (IWD), celebrated across garrisons, units and the Ministry of Defence, servicewomen and civilian women were congratulated on their

achievements, personally and professionally, with the Army Band Banská Bystrica staging a concert for them at Trenčín Garrison Club. For hundreds of serving and civilian women, the Army Band prepared a rich "bouquet" of music from films and musicals.

Slovak Air Force and LOTN

(5 Mar) Commander of the Slovak Air Force Maj Gen Róbert Tóth welcomed delegations from Aircraft Repair Company Trenčín (LOTN), the Ministry of Defence, the Defence Staff, and 51 WNG Prešov to the Slovak Air Force Headquarters Zvolen, to host a meeting on the maintenance and additional specialist equipment for UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters to boost their operational capabilities and interoperability with NATO's air forces.

First jumps by Prešov-based paras



(7 Mar) To further hone up their parachuting skills, paratroopers of 65 Recce Bn Prešov opened their parachuting season over Prešov airport. Four new paratroopers, including one female para, completed their first jumps. While

experienced paras jumped from 400 metres, the novices jumped from 600 metres. To earn the 3rd Class Paratrooper Badge, they must complete five jumps. After the debut jump they will have a jump with the reserve parachute, a night jump without materiel, and two daylight jumps with materiel (inside the equipment container).