



Soldiers mark Slovakia's 20 years in NATO

(26 Mar) The Slovak Armed Forces celebrated the 20th anniversary of Slovakia's entry into NATO in a ceremony attended by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), Gen Christopher G. Cavoli, who came to Slovakia for a two-day visit at the invitation of SVK CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko.

In his keynote speech, Gen Cavoli called Slovakia a dedicated Ally delivering on its commitments. "For two decades, Slovakia has been a dedicated Ally steadfast in its commitment to the defence of itself and of the entire Euro-Atlantic area, and remains such an ally in a changed security situation when the Alliance's focus is on collective defence," he said, commending the Slovak Armed Forces for their active approach to missions and operations under NATO's flag and immediate response to strengthening Allied presence on NATO's Eastern Flank.

In his Special Orders on the occasion of Slovakia's accession to NATO, Gen Zmeko reminded that the Ukraine war and the deteriorating situation in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa are among today's security challenges. These develop dynamically and have an impact on our Armed Forces and society as they build up their capabilities and readiness to defend our homeland, individually and collectively. During his visit to the MOD on Tue, Gen Cavoli was received by DPM and MINDEF Robert Kaliňák, who also took part in the ceremony. In his meeting with SACEUR, PM Robert Fico emphasised Slovakia's interest in supporting Ukraine with all available non-lethal means, and reiterated the SVK Government's position not to send weapons to Ukraine. PM Fico and Gen Cavoli agreed that it is important to finish strengthening the defence of Allied nations. To this end, PM Fico noted that "the provision of the country's Air Defence (AD) capabilities is of particular importance to Slovakia."

On his visit to MTC Lešť on Wed, Gen Cavoli met and spoke with soldiers of the NATO Multinational Battlegroup Slovakia from Czechia, Germany, Slovenia, Slovakia, the United States and Spain. As well as conducting regular training, their main task is now to prepare the ground for expanding the BG from a battalion to a brigade-sized formation.

Scheduled arrivals of ESP troops

(26 Mar) At their working lunch, SVK CHOD Gen Daniel Zmeko and Spanish Ambassador Lorea Arribalzaga Ceballos reflected on the progress made by ESP troops as they arrive at Lešť and Záhorie training areas. The strengthening of the Alliance's Eastern Flank is continuing with a change to the Battlegroup's command structure. This summer Spain is to take over from Czechia as the Framework Nation (FN) for the Battlegroup, which is being bolstered from a battalion to a brigade.



Poprad remembers victims of first Jewish deportation transport

(25 Mar) To mark the 82nd anniversary of the first Jewish deportation transport from Slovakia, Deputy Defence Minister Martin Vojtášovič took part in a remembrance service honouring the innocent victims of this tragedy in our history.

25 Mar 1942 saw the first transport of 1,000 Jewish women and children in cattle wagons leaving Poprad Railway Station for the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. Of them, only 20 survived. The last survivor, Regina Pretter, passed away in Nov 2023 in Philadelphia.

In her testimony, Nadežda Lambertová, of the Hidden Child Civic Association, said: "Of the 999 girls and young women, only a few returned. My grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins – almost the entire extended family – were put on the next deportation trains and were taken away. Sadly, none of them returned. As a child I survived miraculously when my mother saved herself and me. Most of us who were lucky to survive the Holocaust feel it is our duty, our mission to remember its horrors and to preserve the memory of its victims."

The remembrance service at Poprad Railway Station has been held annually since 25 Mar 1989.



- The K9 Service of the Regional Police Directorate Banská Bystrica organised **joint training for dog handlers and mounted police units** in Krpáčová, with participation from Military Working Dog (MWD) handlers on the Basic Patrol Dog Handler Course, led by MSgt Martin Kmet, MWD instructor of the Training and MWD Branch, MP Dept Vikanová - Hronek. Thanks to new imitation tools and model situations, it was possible to practice SOPs that require a larger number of people such as crowd control, riot prevention, and a suspect's arrest, including finding and detaining a dangerous suspect in a school.

- The command staff of 3 Mech Coy, part of 22 Mech Bn, completed **'Platoon in Defence' training** on Michalovec Garrison's Biela Hora training ground, working in tandem with the Combat Support Company's Engineer and Mortar Platoons.

- The NATO Military Police Centre of Excellence (NATO MP COE) and the NATO Joint Force Training Centre (NATO JFTC), based in Poland's Bydgoszcz, hosted the **10th Provost Marshal Forum** (PMF 2024-10) to share information on the performance of NATO and PfP Military Police Forces, especially from Ex Steadfast Jupiter 2023, Ex Loyal Leda 2024, and NATO MNMPBAT exercises. Slovakia was represented by Lt Col Róbert Bajžik.

- To mark **National Teachers Day**, commemorating John Amos Comenius's birthday on 28 Mar, Commandant of the Armed Forces Academy (AOS) DS Col Aurel Sabó thanked the Academic Staff for their work and presented the J. A. Comenius and AOS commemorative plaques to eight teachers. Eva Drobá from the Dept of Informatics, AOS, received the Mayor of Liptovský Mikuláš award for her work and contribution to military sciences.

- The Training and Mobilisation Force Generation (T&MFG) Base Martin held a course for **chiefs of the mobilisation centres**, focusing on the in-processing of people at the mobilisation centres to improve the chiefs' theoretical knowledge and unify their practical skills. The course was led by instructors of the MFG Section Martin and the MFG Unit Poprad.

- To improve the efficiency and availability of online IT and CIS services, 6 Sig Regt Trenčín launched the trial operation of the **Service Portal** (SP) website on 2 Apr. You can find a video tutorial on the SP on the Defence Contact Centre's website in its 'Tutorials - Information Systems - ITSM' Section as well as in 'Quick Links'.

- As part of the Slovak Armed Forces' Find Your Home Project, airmen of **46 Wng Kuchyňa** helped the Pezinok-based Centre for Children and Families by clearing the Centre's fences of the wind-dispersed plant and tree species, cutting down a damaged tree, and renovating pieces of furniture.

- Alžbeta Bačíková, racing cyclist of the Dukla Military Sports Centre, placed 2nd in the women's Scratch and Elimination races and fifth in the Points race at the **Good Friday Track Racing London**.

FULL FIELD KIT

Radio Regina's Full Field Kit programme presents the military trials of the Falcon Chemical Recce Detector on Fri at 21.05 with a rebroadcast at 00.30 on Sat.

Members of the Bishopric from and around Bratislava attend Stations of the Cross

(26 Mar) Monday of this Holy Week saw clergy and lay members of the Roman Catholic (RC) Bishopric of the Forces and Armed Corps, including from the Ministries of Defence and the Interior, pray the Stations of the Cross at the Basilica of Nativity of Virgin Mary in Marianka.

The Stations of the Cross Easter Procession up the Calvary Hill in Marianka is organised annually by chaplains of Bratislava-based parishes of the Bishopric. Over 100 believers of the Bishopric community – serving and ex-military, police, fire and rescue personnel, civilians and their families – assembled for this collective worship. Every year light refreshments are served after the solemn procession at the Pilgrims House, hosted by the Bishop of the Forces and Armed Corps, Mons František Rábek.

Elsewhere, military and civilian staff of 1 Mech Bde HQ and its subordinate units, members of the Fire and Rescue Service, and police officers of the Regional Police Directorate followed the Way of the Cross up the Calvary Hill in Topoľčany.

Another success story from ÚVN

(26 Mar) In the latest Best Slovak Hospitals 2023 ranking by General Health Insurance Company (VšZP), the Central Military Hospital - Teaching Hospital (ÚVN) Ružomberok has been voted the best hospital by VšZP insurees in the category of Slovakia's state university and teaching hospitals.

The results of the survey, undertaken by 12,141 VšZP insurees who were hospitalised for at least one night in 2023, were released on VšZP's website.

Similarly, the Central Military Hospital has recently been ranked as the leader of the nation's teaching hospitals in the Dóvera Insurance Company Best Hospitals 2023 ranking.

Kuchyňa hosts Vice Adm Moreno

(26 Mar) To mark the beginning of Spanish troops' deployment to 46 Wng Kuchyňa, Chief of Staff of the Operations Command (COS OCOM) Vice Admiral Alfonso Delgado Moreno (ESP N) visited Kuchyňa Air

Base. Vice Admiral Moreno took part in the Spanish flag raising ceremony and inspected the Spanish unit's working and service accommodation facilities as well as a facility designated for helicopter operations. Afterwards, he attended the briefs delivered by the Commander of the Kuchyňa-based Spanish Contingent and the Commander of 46 Wng Kuchyňa, Col Peter Výrostek.

30th jubilee ISOC is over

(28 Mar) The Military Academy Liptovský Mikuláš hosted a graduation ceremony for the graduates of the International Staff Officers' Course (ISOC) No 30. In attendance at the ceremony were Director

General of the MOD Human Resources Dept Martin Rímeš and Commander Joint Operations Command Banská Bystrica Maj Gen Martin Michalko. The course, which started on 29 Jan, was attended by 15 SVK officers ranked from captain to major, four CZE lieutenants, and five UKR officers. All of them completed the course successfully. The best student on the course was a UKR captain. ISOC No 30 was officially concluded at the graduation ceremony by Commandant of the Military Academy Defence Staff (DS) Col Aurel Sabó, who, in his remarks, reminded that over 500 officers have, so far, graduated from the course.

